

EEOC News

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ELDORADO STONE OPERATIONS TO PAY \$475,000 TO SETTLE EEOC SEX HARASSMENT SUIT

Agency Says Company Fired Four for Complaining About Misconduct

SEATTLE – The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) today announced it has settled its sex discrimination and retaliation lawsuit under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act for \$475,000 and significant remedial relief against Eldorado Stone Operations, LLC, a leading stone veneer manufacturing company whose headquarters are in San Marcos, Calif.

The EEOC's suit alleged that Eldorado Stone Operations failed to prevent one of its supervisors in its Carnation, Wash., plant from sexually harassing two female employees and then fired four other employees of both genders in retaliation when they complained about the harassment. The EEOC said the harassment was both verbal (inappropriate sexual remarks, such as commenting on an employee's breast size) and physical, culminating in an alleged attempted sexual assault on one of the women.

The settlement, in the form of a Consent Decree, was filed with U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington (Civil No. CV03-2768 JLR). In addition to the monetary relief for the victims, Eldorado Stone Operations, LLC also:

- C Reaffirmed its commitment to comply with laws against employment discrimination;
- C Retained a consultant to review and audit its workplace practices and implemented a new written policy setting out anti-discrimination/equal employment opportunity guidelines which will be distributed to all employees in its Carnation, Wash., facility;

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- C Will oversee management training regarding discrimination; and
- C Will provide EEOC with information concerning any future complaints of discrimination.

Sexual harassment violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment or pregnancy) or national origin and protects employees who complain about such offenses from retaliation.

"All employees deserve to work in an environment free from harassment and intimidation," said EEOC Seattle District Director Jeanette Leino. "We are pleased that the parties were able to resolve this matter and that Eldorado Stone agreed to a variety of corrective measures to prevent problems in the future."

A. Luis Lucero, Jr., Regional Attorney for Seattle District office added, "Discriminatory practices in the workplace are not only extremely damaging to the victims but to the employer as well in terms of low morale and loss of productivity. The EEOC continues to encourage all employers to be vigilant in their workplaces and either institute anti-discriminatory policies or enforces those they already have. In this way everyone wins."

In addition to enforcing Title VII, the EEOC enforces the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA), which protects workers age 40 and older from discrimination based on age; the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits gender-based wage discrimination; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the federal sector; Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments; and sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Further information about the Commission is available on the agency's web site at www.eeoc.gov.

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