

## THE EEOC TAKES ACTION AGAINST TWO BUSINESSES FOR ALLEGEDLY HARASSED EMPLOYEES



The EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) recently filed civil suits against two businesses on behalf of employees who allegedly suffered sexual harassment. In both cases, the EEOC was unable to make a settlement prior to litigation. One of the companies is Northwest Motorsport, a used-truck dealership in Puyallup, WA. The EEOC claims that the general manager continually harassed the business' Internet marketing manager, a male whose Filipino national origin was the focal point of numerous derogatory remarks. Other comments reportedly made were of a sexual nature. The employee complained to his superiors, but the harassment persisted, causing him ultimately to quit his job. The harassed worker stated that the communal office he shared with the general manager was so confined that the two were only a foot apart. He further noted that, in addition to remarks of his national origin, the supervisor made distasteful observations regarding the man's body and his wife. "It was humiliating and wrong," he said. "I have never faced anything remotely like this in past jobs." Help at Home, Inc. is also facing civil action. The company, a home healthcare service for elderly and disabled persons, allegedly did nothing to correct the regional director's sexual harassment of two female employees. The women, working at the company's office in Hillsboro, MO, reportedly had to contend with graphically sexual remarks from the director, including a report on a reputed sexual tryst at the workplace between the man and another employee. The two women complained to the worksite's branch manager, who in turn brought the complaint to the attention of the Vice President. All three employees were subsequently terminated. Harassment of employees based on national origin or sex, permitting a hostile work environment and retaliating against an employee for complaining about unlawful acts are all violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The EEOC filed the lawsuits in the respective district courts. In the male employee's case, the suit is pursuing monetary damages for the worker and for Northwest Motorsport to implement remedial procedures at its workplace. "Everyone is entitled to a discrimination-free workplace," the EEOC's San Francisco Regional Attorney William R. Tamayo said in a press release. With regard to the male worker's case, he wanted the Filipino-American community to know that the agency is in place to help every worker. Furthermore, Tamayo stressed that employers are required by law to safeguard their employees and will be held accountable for their managers' actions. Michael Baldonado, the EEOC's District Director, said that the male employee "deserved better" and that a worker should never be left with no option but to quit simply "to escape persistent harassment." Apropos the trio of terminated female employees, Barbara A. Seely, the Commission's St. Louis District Regional Attorney, noted that, in this day and age, companies should know that women have the right to perform their job duties in a workplace with no sexual harassment. Likewise, employers should defend employees who complain about unlawful behavior from co-workers or supervisors. "The EEOC is committed to eliminating sexual harassment and retaliation for protected activities from the workplace," Seely said.