

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

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PROFESSIONAL TRANSIT MANAGEMENT TO PAY \$450,000 FOR RACE AND NATIONAL ORIGIN HARASSMENT

EEOC Consent Decree Also Includes Work Force Training, Other Injunctive Relief

DENVER – The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announced today that it has settled a discrimination lawsuit alleging racial and national origin harassment against Professional Transit Management, doing business as Springs Transit. The Colorado Springs facility will pay \$450,000, to be divided between six class members, according to the terms of the consent decree resolving the case – which also includes significant injunctive relief, such as training.

The EEOC's lawsuit (Case No. 06-cv-01915 in federal district court for the District of Colorado) alleged that Springs Transit maintained a racially hostile work environment for minority workers. In particular, several employees, including supervisors, routinely used egregious ethnic slurs for African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians in the workplace. On one occasion, a co-worker commented that it should not be against the law to shoot Mexican men, women and children or to shoot African Americans and Chinese people. This employee also allegedly stated, "If I had my way I'd gas them [referring to Black employees] like Hitler did the Jews."

There were other threats of violence against minorities including references to "shooting" them and "gassing" them or "killing" them. Many of these remarks were made in front of supervisors who did nothing to stop it and sometimes participated in the abusive behavior. Likewise, management was aware of the hostile environment and did nothing to end it.

"Race discrimination at work has been illegal in this country for over 40 years," said Phoenix District Director Chester Bailey, whose district includes Colorado. "Employees should know that they can file charges with the EEOC because of job discrimination."

In addition to the monetary relief contained in the consent decree, Springs Transit will be required to implement an equal employment opportunity training program for non-supervisory employees, supervisory employees, and human resource employees that will ensure that the entire work force receives the required training.

EEOC Phoenix Regional Attorney Mary Jo O'Neill, said: "The EEOC takes seriously its obligation to ensure that every employee works in an environment free of harassment and racially-based threats. We are pleased that Springs Transit will be implementing a training program for all of its employees to make sure that this type of hostile environment will not occur in the future."

Nancy A. Weeks, supervisory trial attorney in the EEOC's Denver Field Office, which brought the suit, added, "The egregiousness of the threats and racial and national origin harassment in this case is stunning. We are pleased that the minority employees at Springs Transit have been compensated in some way for the terrible treatment they endured."

On February 28, 2007, EEOC Chair Naomi C. Earp launched the Commission's E-RACE Initiative (Eradicating Racism And Colorism from Employment), a national outreach, education, and enforcement campaign focusing on new and emerging race and color issues in the 21st century workplace. Further information about the E-RACE Initiative is available on the EEOC's web site at <http://www.eeoc.gov/initiatives/e-race/index.html>.

In Fiscal Year 2006, the EEOC received 27,238 charges alleging race-based discrimination, accounting for 36 percent of the agency's private sector caseload. Historically, race-based charges have been the most frequent

type of filing with EEOC offices nationwide.

The EEOC enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at <http://www.eeoc.gov>.

This page was last modified on May 17, 2007.



[Return to Home Page](#)