

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

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Pizza Hut to Pay \$360,000 for Settlement of Sexual Harassment Complaint

EEOC Settlement Also Includes Anti-Discrimination Training and Monitoring of Company

LOS ANGELES - The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) today announced the settlement of a sexual harassment lawsuit against Pizza Hut, the national restaurant chain based in Dallas, Texas, for \$360,000 on behalf of four female former employees who were subjected to a sexually hostile work environment. The settlement also includes a number of anti-discrimination training obligations, review of appropriate complaint procedures, and record-keeping and reporting obligations to be monitored by the EEOC over the duration of the two year term of the Consent Decree.

Among other things, the EEOC's lawsuit alleged that former female employees were sexually harassed by a co-worker at a Pizza Hut restaurant in Diamond Bar, Calif. The harassment included sexual touching and groping. The litigation was filed in the Central District of California in September, 2000 (EEOC v. Pizza Hut of America, EDCV 00-774 RT (Ex)).

The lawsuit also alleges that Pizza Hut had notice of the sexual harassment and failed to prevent and/or promptly correct the unlawful behavior. In addition, the suit charged the employer with the constructive termination of the women.

"Sexual harassment is still a serious problem in our workforce that employers should pay attention to," said Gregory Gochanour, Acting Regional Attorney for the EEOC's Los Angeles District Office. "EEOC guidelines and Supreme Court rulings make it crystal clear that employers are responsible for taking swift action to address and correct sexual harassment once they become aware of it. In this case, Pizza Hut failed to do so."

Olophius Perry, Director of the EEOC's Los Angeles District Office, said: "In addition to providing a substantial amount of monetary relief to the victims, the settlement puts in place extensive mechanisms to help prevent discrimination in the future. By monitoring the employer for the next two years, the Commission will be in a position to act quickly should discrimination or retaliation occur."

In addition to enforcing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin, the EEOC enforces the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act 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.