



PRESS RELEASE

12-24-13

EEOC Sues Guardsmark for Retaliation

Security Guard Fired for Opposing Sexual Harassment, Federal Agency Charged

DETROIT - Security giant Guardsmark retaliated against a security guard who opposed a sexually hostile work environment by firing him, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleged in a lawsuit filed today.

The lawsuit alleges that Guardsmark terminated Christopher Smith in retaliation for his role in a woman's sexual harassment complaint. According to the lawsuit, another security guard used security cameras to zoom in on women's private parts. Smith told the security guard to stop, but the guard continued to engage in the behavior. Smith told a woman about the guard's actions, and the woman filed a sexual harassment complaint with the contractor for whom she worked. Guardsmark responded by firing Smith.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits retaliation. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC v. Guardsmark, Case No. 2:13cv15229), filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan), after first attempting to settle the case through its conciliation process. The agency seeks to recover monetary compensation for Smith, including back pay and compensatory damages for emotional distress, as well as punitive damages.

"Title VII protects employees from being retaliated against for opposing sexual harassment even if they complain to someone else, like a co-worker or client," explained Nedra Campbell, trial attorney for the EEOC. "Employees like Smith who oppose the illegal acts of a co-worker should be commended, not fired."

Guardsmark provides security services to companies throughout the world. According to its website, www.guardsmark.com, Guardsmark, LLC, is one of the largest security firms in the world with over 19,000 employees and offices in more than 400 cities.

Eliminating policies and practices that discourage or prohibit individuals from exercising their rights under employment discrimination statutes, or that impede the EEOC's investigative or enforcement efforts, is one of six national priorities identified by the EEOC's Strategic Enforcement Plan.

The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at www.eeoc.gov.