

## 6.1.4: Case Study: EEOC Sues T.M.F Mooresville for Racial Harassment and Constructive Discharge at Hampton Inn

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### Employer Allowed Black Housekeeper to Racially Harass White Coworkers, Federal Agency Charges

MOORESVILLE, N.C. – T.M.F. Mooresville, LLC, operating as Hampton Inn & Suites in Mooresville, North Carolina, subjected white housekeeping employees to harassment and a hostile work environment based on their race, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) alleged in a lawsuit filed today.

According to the EEOC's complaint, from at least April 2017 through approximately October 2018, an African American housekeeper employed by the company created a racially hostile work environment for Caucasian housekeeping employees, including Rhonda Kendrick, Jennifer Sipes, and Candice Sanders. An African American housekeeper referred to the white employees in racially derogatory terms, routinely chastised them, and interfered with their ability to perform their jobs.

The Caucasian employees reported the racial harassment to the company on multiple occasions, but instead of taking action to remedy the hostile conduct, the employer allowed the harassment to continue and escalate. In August 2018, Kendrick was forced to quit her job as a result of the racially hostile work environment.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects employees from race discrimination and harassment in the workplace. The EEOC filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. T.M.F. Mooresville, LLC, Civil Action No.: 3:21-cv-00446) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its voluntary conciliation process. The EEOC seeks monetary relief for the three white employees, including compensatory and punitive damages. The EEOC also seeks injunctive relief against the company to end any ongoing harassment or hostility based on race and to take steps to prevent such unlawful conduct in the future.

"An employer violates federal law when it fails to take action to remedy race-based harassment in the workplace," said Melinda Dugas, regional attorney for the EEOC's Charlotte District. "Title VII protects employees of all races and guarantees them the right to work in an environment that is free from racial harassment and hostility. Employers who are aware of such conduct have a legal and moral obligation to take action to eliminate it."

EEOC District Director Thomas Colclough said, "All employees deserve and should expect a workplace that is free of racial harassment. The EEOC will continue to stand watch and demand that all types of unlawful harassment are eradicated from the workplace."

The EEOC's Charlotte District Office has jurisdiction over North Carolina, parts of South Carolina, and parts of Virginia.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at [www.eeoc.gov](https://www.eeoc.gov).

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