

US anti-discrimination agency sues Tesla over 'pervasive' racism

September 29 2023



A lawsuit filed by a US anti-discrimination commission contends that abusive graffiti aimed at Black workers was part of "pervasive" racism at the electric car maker's plant in Fremont, California.

A federal anti-discrimination agency filed a lawsuit Thursday accusing Elon Musk's Tesla of allowing "pervasive" racism at its Silicon Valley

car plant and retaliating against Black workers who opposed such abuse.

Black workers at Tesla's factory in Fremont, California, have routinely endured stereotyping, racial insults and hostility since at least 2015, according to the suit filed in [federal court](#) by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Tesla "subjected Black employees at its [manufacturing facilities](#) in Fremont, California... to severe or pervasive racial harassment and created and maintained a hostile work environment because of their race," the lawsuit said.

"The racial misconduct was frequent, ongoing, inappropriate, unwelcome and occurred across all shifts, departments and positions," the commission said.

Tesla did not respond to a request for comment.

Racist graffiti at the plant included swastikas, nooses and threats, according to the suit. Some of the graffiti was allegedly on vehicles rolling off the production line.

The commission said Black workers routinely endured racist slurs including variations of the "N-word," along with "monkey" and "boy."

"Slurs were used casually and openly in high-traffic areas and at [worker hubs](#)," according to the EEOC.

Tesla supervisors and managers witnessed racial abuses but did not intervene, and Tesla failed to take steps to address the misconduct, according to the suit.

Black Tesla workers who complained of racist treatment found

themselves switched to undesirable duties or shifts, written up unjustly or even discharged, the lawsuit maintained.

"After I voiced my unhappiness, I started getting written up for every little thing that was acceptable before—like listening to music while working," [court documents](#) quoted a Black Tesla worker as saying.

The commission said it was unable to reach a settlement with Tesla.

The [lawsuit](#) seeks unspecified damages along with compensation for wronged Black workers and an order that Tesla curb racism at the factory.

The Fremont plant has been under scrutiny previously, with California suing Tesla last year alleging discrimination and harassment against Black workers at the facility, which the complaint called a "racially segregated workplace."

The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, which enforces the state's civil rights laws, said it had received hundreds of complaints from workers.

Tesla at that time released a statement saying it "opposes all forms of discrimination and harassment" and that it is committed to providing "a workplace that is safe, respectful, fair and inclusive."

Separately, a number of female Tesla workers filed lawsuits in 2021 alleging [sexual harassment](#) at the Fremont plant, and a Black worker was awarded millions of dollars in a separate racism case.

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Citation: US anti-discrimination agency sues Tesla over 'pervasive' racism (2023, September 29)

retrieved 29 February 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2023-09-anti-discrimination-agency-sues-tesla-pervasive.html>

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