

Fired SpaceX workers sue Elon Musk over workplace abuses

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A lawsuit filed by fired SpaceX workers argues that lewd or sexist comments posted by chief executive Elon Musk at his X social network set a tone for culture in the private space exploration company.

Workers fired by SpaceX filed a lawsuit Wednesday accusing Elon Musk of fostering a sexist "Dark Ages" culture at the company he

founded.

The [civil complaint](#) filed in a California court in Los Angeles contends Musk had the workers terminated after they published an [open letter](#) detailing their concerns and calling on the American aerospace firm's board to distance itself from the SpaceX chief executive.

"Elon Musk trumpets SpaceX as the leader to a brave new world of space travel," the court filing says.

"But (he) runs his company in the Dark Ages—treating women as sexual objects to be evaluated on their bra size, bombarding the workplace with lewd sexual banter, and offering the reprise to those who challenge the 'Animal House' environment that if they don't like it they can seek employment elsewhere."

The suit charges Musk and SpaceX with [sexual harassment](#), discrimination, retaliation, and wrongful termination.

"Musk thinks he's above the law," plaintiffs' attorney Laurie Burgess said in a statement. "We look forward to holding Musk accountable for his actions at trial."

The fired workers have already filed a complaint with the US National Labor Relations Board, but that has been stalled by a lawsuit by Musk trying to derail it.

"Filing this suit marks an important milestone in our quest for justice, for holding leadership accountable, and for implementing responsible changes in workplace policies for our colleagues at SpaceX who continue to toil in a hostile work environment," plaintiff Paige Holland-Thielen said in the statement.

"We hope that this lawsuit encourages our colleagues to stay strong and to keep fighting for a better workplace."

SpaceX in 2022 fired each of the eight former workers represented by the [suit](#), the filing said.

According to the lawsuit and complaints to regulators, SpaceX nurtured a hostile work environment where jokes about sexual harassment were commonplace, women were paid less than men and workers who complained were dismissed.

"Musk knowingly and purposefully created an unwelcome hostile work environment based upon his conduct of interjecting into the workplace vile sexual photographs, memes, and commentary that demeaned women and/or the LGBTQ+ community," plaintiffs' attorneys said in the statement.

In their complaints, the engineers describe a sexist [corporate culture](#), where sexual comments and other forms of harassment were tolerated or made light of.

They also contended that Musk's often inappropriate online humor was being emulated internally, setting the tone at the workplace.

SpaceX did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Tesla, Musk's other flagship company, has been the subject of similar accusations of racism and sexual harassment at its California site.

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