

*The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

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## LOWE'S COMPANIES, INC. SUED FOR RACE DISCRIMINATION

### ***EEOC Litigation Says Home Improvement Giant Rejected Qualified Black Job Applicants***

MEMPHIS, Tenn.-- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) today announced the filing of a race discrimination lawsuit under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act against Lowe's Companies, Inc., doing business as Lowe's Home Center's Inc. The suit charges the world's second largest home improvement retailer with failing to hire a class of qualified African American applicants due to their race at its Reload Distribution Center in Vonore, Tenn.

The EEOC's lawsuit, Civil Action No. 3-04-CV-133, in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, Knoxville Division, charges that Curtis Carter, Tiffany Carter, and a class of African Americans, all qualified applicants, were denied positions in Lowe's Reload Distribution Center between 2002 and 2003 because of their race. The EEOC filed suit after exhausting its conciliation efforts to reach a voluntary pre-litigation settlement. The lawsuit asks the court to order the company to provide back pay, interest on back pay, compensatory damages for emotional and psychological harm, and punitive damages.

Katharine Kores, Regional Attorney for the EEOC's Memphis District Office, said, "Hiring decisions based on race are clearly illegal. One of the important reasons for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was to eradicate this type of discrimination. Unfortunately, as we approach the 40th anniversary of Title VII this July, there is much work that remains to be done as evidenced by cases like this one."

In addition to being a leading global home improvement company, Lowe's, headquartered in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, is the 14th largest retailer in the United States. It employs more than 130,000 people and sells a complete line of home improvement products and equipment. The company serves more than seven million do-it-yourself and commercial business customers each week through 875 stores in 45 states.

The site at issue, Lowe's Reload Distribution Center, services more than 139 Lowe's Home Improvement Center Stores. The stores rely on the Distribution Center to supply and re-supply more than 100 sale items such as assorted lumber products, plumbing supplies, and other bulky items. As of March 2003, the Reload Distribution Center employed 43 employees.

EEOC enforces Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment or pregnancy) or national origin, and protects employees who complain about such offenses from retaliation; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, which protects workers age 40 and older from discrimination based on age; the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits gender-based wage discrimination; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the federal sector; Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments; 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](http://www.eeoc.gov).

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