

Discrimination

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Out right discrimination is rare among most trucking companies. Big companies have policies that assure equal treatment as a rule, but one must deal with the individuals in the company and that is where this story starts.

Recently, I was contacted by a lady who we will call Abby. Abby is a mid 30 year old from NY, separated, mother of two. The first part of this year, she decided to become a truck driver and contacted a major company that has a terminal close to her home. This company had openings for local drivers and offered training. Abby applied and was accepted to their program.

The company pulled doubles so the training was intense and rigorous. Abby's trainer told her at the end of her training time that the terminal manager had said that she had to train an additional 4 weeks or so. Abby complied and in due course got her own truck.

Everything went ok for awhile. Abby was always on time and had no accidents or incidents. She then had a problem with a dock worker at a warehouse. This dock worker kept making suggestive comments to Abby, it had started while Abby was still with her trainer and the trainer had to take the dock worker to task. When Abby went solo, the man started again and went further, bumping into her when she was carrying something and making off color remarks. Abby tried to handle it herself to no avail and went to the dock supervisor. It did no good.

Finally, Abby went to her terminal manager for advice. She didn't want him to handle it for her, just wanted some idea of how to go about handling it to where she could continue working with the dock worker. The terminal manager made a big deal out of it and his attitude changed towards Abby.

Abby started getting shorted on her hours in her check. The toll sticker expired on her truck and the terminal manager refused to replace it or reimburse her for the tolls. She started hearing rumors that the terminal manager was 'out to get her'. Abby was stubborn and stuck it out thinking she was paying her dues, so to speak.

In August, Abby pulled a muscle in her back moving her pup dolly. She made it back to the terminal but could not get out of the truck. Her fleet manager/supervisor helped her out of her truck and drove her home. The next day, she called the terminal manager and he said that she had not reported the injury. Abby went to the doctor, had to take a couple of weeks off and reported back to duty when workman's comp released her. The terminal manager sent her to the company doctor who also released her.

The terminal manager refused to let her return to work until she got an independent medical evaluation from still yet another doctor. During the time Abby was off, another man, who had hurt his back, was off and returned to work full duty and her position was filled by a new hire. After waiting a month, Abby applied for unemployment, but the terminal manager said she was still employed. He set her independent medical evaluation appointment for 6-8 weeks from the end of August. She had no income coming in.

Abby called the terminal manager and asked him why this evaluation was necessary when two

other doctors had released her. The terminal manager said that the corporate office personnel manager wanted it done. Abby contacted him. The personnel manager knew nothing of it.

Abby is a smart lady. She contacted workmens comp, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and the Federal and NY Labor Boards and filed a complaint, and wrote the President of the Board of the company she drove for, explaining what was happening. Nothing is resolved at this time, but fur is flying.

In Abby's case, it was one or two individuals that discriminated against her not the company itself.

If you think you are being discriminated against, make sure that you truly are; then act. Document all alleged incidences of discrimination. Talk to the highest official in the company that you can reach in person. If they cannot/will not help you, then go over their head. Write the president of the company and include concise examples of how you are being discriminated against. Send copies of your documentation.

If you still have not received assistance, contact an attorney to find out what your state laws are. Contact your state Labor Board and the EEOC. Remain calm and professional or you will not be taken seriously.

Discrimination is a horrendous thing to have to experience in this day and age. It happens. Make sure that it is discrimination though and do not use that complaint because you are not doing your job or for an excuse to get back at your company or company personnel.