

Glass maker will pay \$10 million settlement in discrimination case

CHICAGO (AP) — Libby-Owens-Ford Co. will pay up to \$10 million for lost wages and make 342 jobs available to women over a five-year period under the settlement of a sex-discrimination lawsuit with the government, attorneys said Thursday.

"This settlement is historic for its cooperative disposition of a major lawsuit," Charles A. Shanor, general counsel of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, said at a news conference announcing the agreement with the Ohio-based glass manufacturer.

The settlement still must be approved by a federal judge.

The EEOC filed the lawsuit in 1978 after receiving a complaint from a woman who said she had been denied a job at the company's Ottawa, Ill., plant because she didn't

meet minimum height and weight requirements, he said.

Under a 16-year-old policy, the company required factory employees to be at least 5 feet, 4 inches tall and weigh at least 110 pounds.

About 1,700 women were refused work at eight Libby-Owens-Ford plants, and probably three times that many refrained from applying because they knew the company's policy, said Margaret L. Herbert, an EEOC attorney who worked on the case.

All would be eligible to benefit under the proposed settlement, to be advertised in five states where the company operates plants and in three where it once did, said EEOC attorney John P. Rowe.

Byron Quandt, a company spokesman, said, "LOF's position is

that its hiring requirements were job-related and necessary for the safe and efficient operation of its plants.

"We felt at the time that . . . certain jobs in glass manufacturing and fabricating require a certain level of reach, strength and stamina in order to be safely performed.

"The key thing was safety."

Quandt added that the height-weight requirement was used by the company under terms of a 1971 consent decree reached in federal court in Toledo to set hiring guidelines.

Under its new agreement with EEOC, "the LOF has denied any liability for any violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act but has agreed to the terms of the settlement to avoid the cost of any further time-consuming litigation," he said.

Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

Under terms of the settlement, outreach programs will be established to try to locate women excluded from jobs because of the company's height and weight requirements, EEOC attorneys said.

That will include five areas where the company runs plants: Toledo, Ohio; Ottawa, Ill.; Sherman, Texas; Mason City, Iowa; and Lathrop, Calif. Also included will be areas in which it operated plants that since have closed: Brackenridge, Pa.; Charleston, W.V.; and Clinton, N.C.

Other U.S. plants and plants in Canada and Mexico are not covered by the settlement, Herbert said.

The company has 8,300 employees in North America.



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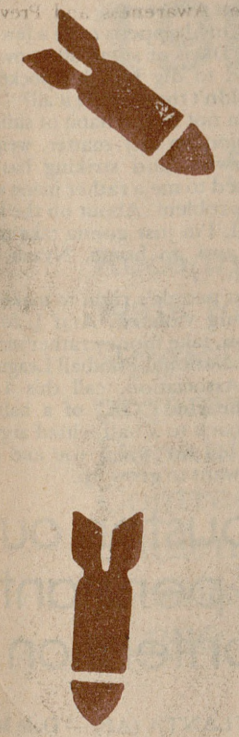
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