

Handy Worker Files Suit, Claims She Made Only \$14 For 30 Hours Of Work

Add another lawsuit to the gig economy saga.



[Photo: Flickr user Ruth Hartnup]

SARAH KESSLER | 07.09.15 | 5:45 PM

In the wake of a California court's ruling last month that Uber misclassified a former driver as an independent contractor, a Massachusetts woman named Maisha Emmanuel has filed a similar lawsuit against on-demand cleaning service Handy.

In the proposed class action suit, Emmanuel—who started working for Handy in May this year—says that the company treated its workers like employees by imposing detailed requirements on their work, grading them and maintaining the option to terminate them based on its rules. "The cleaners' services are fully integrated into

Handy's business, and without the cleaners, Handy's business would not exist," the filing reads.

Meanwhile, the lawsuit argues, Handy passes on many of the costs of doing business to the workers, by classifying them as independent contractors. Emmanuel says, for example, that she was required to work for free to reimburse the company for the cost of her cleaning supplies—and, as a result, only made \$14 for her first 30 hours of work.

The claims are similar to a lawsuit filed by Handy workers in California in October, as well as suits brought against companies like Uber and Lyft. In fact, Uber just filed an opposing motion to a class-action suit today.

As these type of lawsuits become a trend, some "gig economy" companies are rethinking their business models. Grocery delivery startup Instacart and package delivery startup Shyp, both on-demand companies that previously relied on independent contractors, announced within the last month that they would turn portions of their workforces into employees.

"They almost can't help but step into the shoes of the employer," New York labor lawyer Alek Felstiner told me earlier this year when asked about the threat of lawsuits to gig economy startups. "They are going to have a choice between taking actions that make them more marketable, and thus becoming vulnerable as employers under these laws, and remaining completely hands-off. But they can't really can't have their cake and eat it, too."

[via *Ars Technica*]