

# Uber's 'Inadequate' Driver Screening Led To Rape, Women Say

 [law360.com/articles/985145/uber-s-inadequate-driver-screening-led-to-rape-women-say](https://www.law360.com/articles/985145/uber-s-inadequate-driver-screening-led-to-rape-women-say)

By [Braden Campbell](#)

Law360, New York (November 14, 2017, 6:13 PM EST) -- Two women who say they were raped by Uber drivers hit the ride-hailing company with a multimillion-dollar California federal class action Tuesday alleging its “woefully inadequate” driver screening process has allowed drivers to sexually assault or harass more than 1,000 riders.

The women, who filed suit under Jane Doe pseudonyms, allege Uber purports to provide “the safest ride on the road” while maintaining lax background check, monitoring and safety policies despite hundreds of reports of rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment by riders.

“Over the last seven years, Uber has done everything possible to continue using low-cost, woefully inadequate background checks on drivers and has failed to monitor drivers for any violent or inappropriate conduct after they are hired,” the women allege. “Nothing meaningful has been done to make rides safer for passengers — especially women.”

The women accuse Uber of making “an intentional decision to look the other way when hiring and supervising drivers ... as a calculated cost-cutting device.”

They claim the company’s background checking methods “cannot assure ... that the driver behind the wheel does not have a history of violence” or identify other red flags that would lead “a reasonable company” to look into their history.

They claim the company uses an online portal that does not require would-be drivers to verify their identities, allowing “numerous drivers” to use false identities, social security numbers, licenses or photos. They further claim the companies Uber had contracted to check up on applicants have done a poor job of flagging dangerous drivers. The women note Massachusetts failed more than 8,000 of about 71,000 Uber and [Lyft](#) drivers who applied after the state implemented a stricter background check policy. Of these, 1,599 were found to have committed violent crimes and 51 were registered sex offenders, the women claim, also citing similar data for Maryland’s stricter background checks.

The women allege they and other women have been attacked by drivers who passed Uber’s screening process. Jane Doe 1, a Florida woman, alleges she was raped by a convicted felon after hailing a ride while intoxicated, and Jane Doe 2, a California woman, similarly claims she was raped by an Uber driver after going to a restaurant with friends. They said they believe more than 1,000 passengers have been raped, sexually assaulted or harassed by Uber drivers, describing several other alleged attacks on women by their drivers.

The suit calls for Uber to implement several safety measures including barring registered sex offenders or those convicted of assault or rape from driving for the company, interviewing applicants in-person and inspecting their vehicles and installing tamper-proof cameras in all Uber vehicles. They also call on the company to disclose information including the number of rape and assault reports it receives and how it investigates them.

Class attorney Jeanne M. Christensen of [Wigdor LLP](#) reiterated that call for transparency Tuesday.

“The company must come forward ... to allow consumers to assess whether Uber really does provide safe rides, especially to women,” Christensen said in a statement. “Uber must take drastic changes to prevent another female rider from harm.”

The suit includes claims Uber violated California fraudulent and unfair business practice laws and its Consumer Legal Remedies Act, and that the company is responsible for assault and battery against the women.

The women seek to represent a class of all individuals in the U.S. who were raped, sexually assaulted or sexually harassed by their Uber driver over the last four years. They seek more than \$5 million, but do not specify precise damages.

Uber has been hit with similar suits alleging its policies allow women to be mistreated, including [two September suits](#) by women alleging they were victims of sexual assault and harassment.

An Uber representative did not immediately respond Tuesday to a request for comment.

The class is represented by Jeanne M. Christensen and Elizabeth J. Chen of Wigdor LLP and Jamie C. Couche of Anderson & Poole PC.

Attorney information for Uber was not available Tuesday.

The case is Jane Doe 1 et al. v. [Uber Technologies Inc.](#), case number [3:17-cv-06571](#), in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

--Additional reporting by Melissa Daniels. Editing by Alyssa Miller.