

Lawyers seek group suit over alleged Uber sex assaults

 [bbc.com/news/business-41988098](https://www.bbc.com/news/business-41988098)

Uber is facing group litigation over its safety practices after complaints of sexual assault committed by drivers.

The suit accuses Uber of creating "a system for bad actors to gain access to vulnerable victims".

It says the firm has resisted changes, such as more stringent background checks, that would improve passenger safety.

An Uber spokesperson said: "These allegations are important to us and we take them very seriously."

The lawsuit was filed by two anonymous women, including a Florida woman who police say was raped by an Uber driver after he took her home.

The law firm working on the case, Wigdor, is seeking to broaden it out into group litigation - a class action suit.

It wants to represent any individuals who have suffered abuse at the hands of drivers, which it estimates could exceed 100.

"Uber must make drastic changes to prevent another female rider from harm," said Jeanne Christensen, a partner at Wigdor.

Longstanding issue

Concerns about Uber's screening procedures for drivers have dogged the company for a number of years.

Wigdor brought a similar lawsuit on behalf of two women in 2015, which was later settled. [More women](#) have come forward this year.

Reviews of Uber driver applications by two US states, Maryland and Massachusetts, have led to rejections of thousands more applications than under Uber's own system.

Last year, the firm reached settlements in at least two cases over its safety claims, including one brought by prosecutors in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

[The firm this month announced it would donate \\$5m](#) over five years to organisations working to prevent sexual violence.

Tuesday's lawsuit says Uber has made the profit-motivated decision to "look the other way" when it hires and supervises drivers.

It says Uber has skirted regulators by classifying itself as a technology company but it is essentially a taxi company with drivers that should be considered employees.

"Court orders are needed to force change that Uber should have taken voluntarily," it says.

An Uber spokesperson said: "Uber received this complaint today and we are in the process of reviewing it. These allegations are important to us and we take them very seriously."