

Two Uber passengers sue, alleging rape

 [cbsnews.com/news/uber-female-passengers-lawsuit-alleges-rape/](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/uber-female-passengers-lawsuit-alleges-rape/)

By Dara Kerr CNET November 14, 2017, 5:45 PM

Another lawsuit alleging rape has been filed against Uber.

Two women are seeking class-action status for the suit on behalf of all "female riders that have experienced rape, sexual assault or gender-motivated harassment at the hands of their Uber drivers." The two women are remaining anonymous.

"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 lawsuit claims.

"Uber must make drastic changes to prevent another female rider from harm," Jeanne M. Christensen, a partner at law firm [Wigdor LLP](#) who's representing the women, said in an email.

Uber, valued at \$68 billion, is one of the largest ride-hailing services on the planet, operating in about 70 countries. But with its growth, the company has come under fire for numerous allegations of drivers committing sexual assaults. Last month, [#MeToo campaign](#), which gained steam on Facebook and Twitter, was a way for people who've faced sexual assault or harassment to share their experiences. Hundreds spoke out against Uber on social media sites, saying they'd been harassed by drivers. Female drivers also said that passengers had sexually harassed them.

A handful of states, including California, Massachusetts and Texas, have previously [launched investigations](#) into Uber, claiming it routinely fails to adequately screen drivers and has hired drivers with criminal histories. Reports of alleged sexual assaults by Uber drivers make news [headlines](#) several times a month.

At least three lawsuits have been filed against the company for these allegations, including a separate complaint brought by Wigdor LLP on behalf of two other "Jane Does" in 2015. Uber [settled](#) that suit in November 2016. Another lawsuit was brought in 2015 by a woman who was [raped by an Uber driver in India](#). Uber also settled that suit, but the issue was reignited last spring after it was alleged that Uber executives [obtained and mishandled her medical records](#).

Uber's website says the company is "dedicated to keeping people safe on the road" and that its technology "enables us to focus on rider safety before, during and after every trip."

Regarding the new lawsuit, a company spokeswoman told CNET, "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."

Uber has been beleaguered by [dozens of issues](#) over the last year. Those kicked off with a [#DeleteUber movement](#) in January, then moved onto workplace sexual harassment allegations and an [internal investigation](#) led by former US Attorney General Eric Holder. In June, Uber's board of directors [forced CEO Travis Kalanick](#) to resign.

Now Uber is trying to [turn things around](#) with new CEO Dara Khosrowshahi. Last week, Khosrowshahi wrote a [LinkedIn blog post](#) about Uber's "new cultural norms" saying what made the company successful won't get it to the next level. One of his eight new cultural norms is, "We do the right thing. Period."

The new lawsuit against Uber was filed in California's U.S. District Court for the Northern District. The two women say their Uber drivers assaulted them in two separate incidents, according to court documents.

One woman, who lives in Florida, alleges her Uber driver took her home and raped her in October 2016. The other

woman, who lives in Los Angeles, alleges an Uber driver assaulted her while she was asleep in the back seat of his car and then took her home and raped her. In both instances the women were intoxicated.

The two women say Uber's background checks are inadequate and the company has misrepresented how safe the service actually is. The lawsuit is asking the court to force Uber to change the way it screens drivers and be more transparent about what it knows in regard to alleged sexual assaults by its drivers.

"The company must come forward with information about how many reports it has received about rapes, sexual assaults and gender-motivated harassment to allow consumers to assess whether Uber really does provide safe rides, especially to women," Christensen said in an email. "It is time for Uber to 'Do the right thing. Period.'"