Starbucks pays £45,000 for firing barista with dwarfism
Coffee chain sacked Elsa Sallard after three days' training amid claims she would pose a danger to staff and customers

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Starbucks has agreed to pay $75,000 (£45,000) to settle a disability discrimination lawsuit brought on behalf of a Texan barista who claimed she was fired because she has dwarfism.

The global coffee giant sacked Elsa Sallard in 2009 after three days of training at a branch in El Paso. She had requested to use a stool or stepladder to help prepare orders and serve customers but was ignored. Later that day Starbucks fired Sallard, saying she would pose a "danger" to customers and employees.

Robert Canino, a lawyer for the equal employment opportunity commission, which filed the lawsuit, said the settlement "sends the right signal from the corporate office". He added: "The Starbucks customer environment is one that is often considered comfortable and progressive. By fostering that same environment for people behind the counter, Starbucks reinforces a positive public image."

The coffee company welcomed the settlement and said it had a long history of working with communities and organisations to provide equal employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It agreed to provide training on disability issues for managers and supervisory employees at the firm's branches in the area.

A Starbucks spokesman said: "Reaching an equitable agreement with the equal employment opportunity commission allows Starbucks to reinforce this commitment, as well as focus on training to ensure that all of our partners are treated fairly."

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