



HONOR ★ DUTY ★ COURAGE

City of San Antonio Fire Department

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Dear Members of the San Antonio Fire Department Family,

As everyone is aware, six cadets were recently dismissed from Cadet Class 2016 Bravo. It has been the practice of the SAFD and the City of San Antonio not to discuss personnel matters, especially as they relate to civilian employees, but the continued misinformation communicated through both mainstream and social media compel me to share the details of their resignations/terminations.

Let me begin by stating that, at the beginning of every Training Academy class, cadets are required to learn the Rules and Regulations, as well as the Cadet Code of Honor. Cadets must sign off that they understand those Rules and Regulations, and that they will seek clarification from a Training Officer should any part of said Rules and Regulations become unclear. SAFD Training Officers, in explicit detail, explain the high standards cadets are expected to meet, and that failure to do so will result in their dismissal from the SAFD Training Academy. It is also made extremely clear to cadets that they are “at will” civilian employees who must earn the right to wear the proud uniform of a SAFD Firefighter, the uniform that each of you wear every day. Expectations for cadets are extremely high, and they are held accountable should they fail to meet those expectations. These expectations are exactly the same for the cadets that enter the San Antonio Police Academy.

The San Antonio Fire Academy Rules and Regulations state clearly:

“As a fire cadet, you are considered a civilian employee. Cadets are reminded that the activities of fire personnel are subject to public scrutiny and review at all times whether on or off duty. As such, cadets should remember that these same high ethical standards likewise apply in their individual activities regardless of duty status. Any act, which may bring discredit to you, the Department, or the City of San Antonio, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.”

On August 4, 2016, eight SAFD cadets were at University Hospital doing clinical rotations, as part of their EMT-Basic training at the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio (UTHSC-SA). The rotations began at 6:30 a.m. and were to conclude at 2:30 p.m., with an hour lunch break at or around 10:30 a.m. When they broke for lunch on August 4th, they approached their UTHSC-SA preceptor, who supervised and oversaw the cadets, and they asked to leave so they could use the remainder of the day to prepare for their final exam scheduled for August 9, 2016. Specifically the documentation received from UTHSC-SA stated:

"The preceptor, who had ~~proctored students (Cadets) in the ER~~ every day that week, agreed to dismiss them early and stated that they should use this extra time wisely and to not do anything stupid as they were supposed to be in the ER till 14:30 (2:30 p.m.) that day."

Six of the cadets did not go home to study, as they had led their preceptor to believe they would, but instead made the decision to go to Twin Peaks restaurant. They remained for varying lengths of time, ranging from 1.5 to 8 hours. It must be noted that two cadets doing their clinical rotations that same day chose not to join their fellow cadets at Twin Peaks. A seventh cadet did join them later in the afternoon after completing a ride out with a medic unit. At approximately 6 p.m., another patron of the restaurant, who saw them at University Hospital earlier in the day, recognized them as SAFD cadets. This person sent an email to SAFD Training Academy staff expressing what he had seen.

When questioned about the incident, six of the seven cadets admitted to drinking alcohol and subsequently driving home. During orientation held prior to the start of every class, cadets are instructed "not to consume alcohol, on duty or off duty, while attending the Fire Training Academy" and to further avoid consuming alcohol during their probationary period. ~~They are also told to avoid restaurants such as Hooters, Twin Peaks, etc. while attending EMT-Basic training at UTHSC-SA.~~ The disregard and violation of the Cadet Code of Honor and the Rules & Regulations is what led to the eventual discipline. An important mitigating factor was that most of the cadets were at Twin Peaks during City time.

The factors before the SAFD as a result of the cadets' actions were the following:

- They mislead the UTHSC-SA staff to release them early to study;
- They went to a location they were instructed not to go to;
- They admitted that they consumed alcohol;
- They knew that some of the time was still considered City time; and,
- They admitted that they all operated a motor vehicle after consuming alcohol.

The complaint was thoroughly investigated and the cadets' own written statements corroborated the infractions mentioned above. The decision was made to dismiss the cadets from the class, but to also give them an opportunity to resign in lieu of termination to avoid any permanent mark on any future career.

On August 18, 2016, each cadet was individually brought in and informed of the department's decision. Academy staff explained to the cadets why they were being released and that they could decide between either resignation or termination. Both options and subsequent ramifications were explained to the cadets. The results of the individual discussion resulted in four cadets resigning and two being terminated.


The SAFD unequivocally expects cadets to meet the high standards expressly communicated to them, those of the San Antonio Fire Department, and those expected of our public servants.

If a cadet cannot follow the rules during the training and probationary period, can the SAFD reasonably rely on that same cadet to follow departmental rules and regulations when they become a firefighter?

While I understand that this personnel action may seem severe, I assure you that the decision on this matter was made only after careful deliberation and consideration of the facts. It is important to note that this unfortunate incident does not preclude a career with our department for these individuals. To the contrary, per local Civil Service Commission rules, they remain eligible to reapply and retest for future entry into the SAFD should they choose to do so.

As stated at the beginning, it is generally not the practice of the SAFD to discuss civilian personnel matters. Although it was my intent to protect the privacy and humility of the six cadets involved, the malicious rumors and misinformation circulating throughout the department left me with no other option but to lay out the facts. It is my sincere hope that personnel now understand the circumstances that led to this extremely difficult decision.

Yours in Service,



Charles N. Hood