

Dear Major Santana,

This situation involves several County employees that work for Miami-Dade Fire Rescue in the training division.

There is a history of cover ups as it relates to wrongdoing in the fire department. Especially as it relates to certain individuals, depending on who you are friends with determines what if anything will happen. There is a feeling that, there is a double standard not just within the fire department, but also within the County. Those who know someone get off and those who do not go down. We sent this to Ms. Smith the fire department's human resource director first and nothing has been done! Major Santana we will see if this becomes another cover up?

Fire Lt. Lisa Hart currently has a bid in the training division's Probationary Development Office (PDO). Lt. Hart also has a history of abusing the fire departments leave policy I-N-25. **Attachment #1**. Lt. Hart's job within PDO is to monitor/track probationary firefighters per policy II-E-34 **Attachment #2 (Pages 6-10)**. Lt. Hart had been absent from work from approximately Nov. 07- March 08. Lt. Hart's absence was well known within the training bureau. Again Lt. Hart's job was to keep track of the probationary firefighters assigned to her. **Attachment #3**. In January Capt. Jerome Byrd Sr. Lt. Hart's immediate supervisor finally determined that Lt. Hart's continued absences could no longer be explained away. Although there had apparently been previous discussions held reference Lt. Hart's absence between Capt. Byrd and Div. Chief Dave Downy nothing was done to address it. Capt. Byrd eventually emailed Chief Downy expressing his concern with Lt. Hart's continued absences and not following any type of call in procedure. **Attachment #4** Although Capt. Byrd made it clear that there had been no communication with Lt. Hart Div. Chief Downy still gave the go ahead to pay her. Lt. Hart also did not follow policy I-A-7 **Attachment #5 (Page 35-36 Reporting for duty)**, she also apparently did not follow the procedure outlined in two different emails Capt. Byrd sent to the PDO staff reference reporting for duty. **Attachments # 6 & 7**. On top of Lt. Hart being **AWOL** because of her abuse of leave Lt. Hart did not have the time on the books to receive a full pay check. Remember Lt. Hart was missing for approximately 3 months. Lt. Hart's Par Report **Attachment #8** clearly points this out. Lt. Hart should have been in a **non pay status** yet she continued to receive a pay check. Lt. Hart getting paid is fraud. As you can see from her paychecks her time was also manipulated to keep her on the books when she actually had none. **Attachment #9**. Capt. Gonzales took over for Capt. Byrd and she questioned Lt. Hart's leave in a email between the two on March 8, 2008. **Attachment #10** He again pointed out the dates that Lt. Hart was a no show.

If this was just about Chief Downy wanting to look out for a friends wife that would be one thing, but this also involves the probationary firefighters Lt. Hart had a responsibility to monitor. Again if you look at **Attachment # 2 PDO Responsibilities** there was much that she was suppose to be doing. Because Lt. Hart was not coming to work the firefighters that she had a responsibility to test and evaluate received nothing. Because of this Chief Downy needed to come up with a way to cover for Lt. Hart being AWOL.

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Chief Downy and Capt. Gonzales decided to bring in all the probationary firefighters instead of just bringing in Lt. Hart's people beginning on April 1<sup>st</sup> and ending on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Because the firefighters were from several different classes meaning they were at different stages of their careers they devised a plan to provide in some cases a years worth of testing and evaluations in one day class 115B. To accomplish this Capt. Gonzales took several shortcuts breaking several rules and even some state statues. During their probationary year firefighters take four fifty question written exams that are given to them by the person who is keeping tabs on them, a one hundred question final near the end of their probationary year. The written test line up with the modules that the probationary firefighters have to complete. All the firefighters brought in by Chief Downy and Capt. Gonzales were given a fifty question written test even those that should have been taking a 100 question final exam. To make sure that they passed the written test Capt. Gonzales gave them the answers during the review. The firefighters brought to the test site on April 2<sup>nd</sup> were ordered by Capt. Gonzales and others to tear up the written exams and throw them in a box as they exited. **Attachment #11** These test should be a part of each firefighters file and should not have been destroyed. Destroying the written test violated both County and state policies. Capt. Gonzales also had the firefighters copy off of each others rookie books something that should not have happened per the rules. Capt. Gonzales has also removed the files from headquarters where they are suppose to be kept in an attempt to keep anyone from seeing them. The files are now being kept in a trailer that training uses that is behind fire station 26 located at 3190 NW 119 St. Removing the files from headquarters which goes against the procedure put in place by Capt. Byrd which was addressed in an email he sent November 14, 2007 to PDO staff. **Attachment #12.** Probationary firefighters are made to sign a pledge stating that they will not falsify a matter, verbally or in writing. **Attachment # 13.** In essence Capt. Gonzales gave the firefighters an order to cheat! Capt. Gonzales and others also signed off on all the firefighters rookie books, although again people are at different stages in the process. This means that a rookie four months out in operations who had another 7-8 months to go got the entire book signed off in one day. **Attachment #14.** These workbooks are used to not only make sure that the probationary firefighter is making progress, but also to make sure they know what they are doing. This places everyone in danger, because people assume that the firefighters know what he or she is doing. By having them simply copy off of each other, you don't know what they know. The probationary firefighters should not have been put in this position. This should have affected about 35 firefighters, the people that Lt. Hart was responsible for instead all the other firefighters were made to attend so that it would not be so obvious what was going on. This entire situation was put in motion by Div. Chief Downy, because he is suppose to be friends with Lt. Hart's husband. But Chief Peacon and Capt Gonzales were all part of this.

Along with what you are receiving there are several ways to check everything out Major Santana. Lt. Hart drives a county car, her gas card, swipe card, and sunpass can all be checked for the timeframe in question. If they say she was going to see the firefighters at fire stations she would have been required to place her name in the station log book per the email sent from Capt. Byrd. **Attachment #7.** There are rosters with the names of all the firefighters that were called to the testing site. All of their rookie books can be

checked to see if in fact they have been signed off and by whom. You can check the firefighters files, you can also check the dates on all the paper work. Check all the units that were are of service because of this. For instance on April 11<sup>th</sup> eight units were out of service, because of personnel shortage. **Attachment # 15.** Lastly everyone should be spoken to, the probationary firefighters as well as everyone in PDO. This was not a secret in fact Capt. Byrd had Capt. Gonzales go to Lt. Hart's house to check and see if she was there. She got no response. While you may have bigger cases Major Santana if you look at Lt. Hart's salary that she received fraudulently you are talking about thousands of dollars. Not to mention the overtime paid out to cover other units. You are talking about a lot of tax payers money to cover for one person. We guess it's good to have friends in high places?

We will see Major Santana if this becomes another cover up!