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Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 1:20 PM

To: ALL VCSO <ALLVCSO@volusiasheriff.gov>

Subject: Relationships in the workplace

All VSO members,

You have probably heard rumors about inappropriate behavior by some former instructors at our Training Academy. I just want to address this subject once and for all, and put it to rest.

On July 4, 2023, I learned of a report that two instructor deputies had each been involved in a relationship with a deputy recruit. Upon hearing these allegations, we immediately opened an internal investigation to determine the facts and circumstances.

Both instructor deputies resigned from the agency during the internal investigation. In spite of their resignations, we continued with the internal investigation. The investigation is now concluded. The findings are that both instructor deputies engaged in a separate sexual relationship with a recruit, under their training and supervision, and in so doing violated several VSO General Orders. The findings of the internal investigation are now a permanent part of each of the former instructor deputies' personnel file.

I want to make it clear that these relationships, while consensual, were inappropriate, unacceptable and a violation of VSO's General Orders. These types of relationships will not be tolerated or condoned in this agency.

I'm not the relationship police, and I know relationships can develop in any workplace. However, when one party holds a position of influence over the other at work, this imbalance of power can result in the appearance of coercion, intimidation, and/or favoritism. The only good news here is we found zero evidence of that.

To avoid putting your career and reputation at risk over an inappropriate relationship in the future, I ask you to review GO-022-10.III.F.2 (Relationship in the Workplace).

Thank you to all of you reading this who do such an incredible job every day, free from these types of distractions. I know you will remain laser-focused on the important work we have to do, and I sincerely appreciate it.

Sheriff Chitwood