For Immediate Release
May 08, 2013

Update #3: St. Petersburg Police Officer Injured in a Traffic Crash Receives a 5 Day Suspension

Assistant Chief Luke Williams, who is the Acting Chief of Police of the St. Petersburg Police Department this week while Chief Chuck Harmon is on vacation, completed his internal review of the traffic crash investigation of Officer Timothy Reyes that occurred on March 24, 2013 (two previous media alerts are copied below).

Assistant Chief Luke Williams suspended Officer Timothy Reyes without pay for five days for failing to use “due care” while operating his police cruiser and ordered him to receive remedial driving training.

The discipline in this situation was progressive in nature, since Officer Reyes had previously been at fault in another traffic crash on September 26, 2011 (according to Department policy, any prior discipline within 18 months is taken into consideration when considering any disciplinary action against an employee).

The traffic crash investigation revealed that Officer Timothy Reyes, 29, who has been a sworn officer since May 3, 2010, was traveling 110 MPH in a 40 MPH zone in his marked police cruiser (with his emergency equipment activated) while attempting to catch up to an authorized police pursuit in progress.

Officer Reyes told investigators that he was eastbound on 54th Avenue South in the 1900 block when an unknown vehicle slowly exited a driveway into an apartment complex on 54th Avenue South, forcing him to maneuver to his left to avoid striking the vehicle.

Two citizen witnesses to the crash indicated they did not see another vehicle in the area at the time of the crash. A third citizen witness to the crash saw a white vehicle in the area of the crash, but did not know if it was involved or not.

The investigation revealed that a driver’s side tire of Reye’s police cruiser struck the raised concrete median in the middle of 54th Avenue South. He lost control of the police cruiser and began sliding sideways toward the south curb of 54th Avenue South.

Officer Reyes’ police cruiser struck the south curb of 54th Avenue South, flipped over on its roof and then struck a wood utility pole and a metal fence that borders the Osprey Pointe apartment complex.

Several fragments from the pole and fence damaged two vehicles that were parked and unattended in the apartment complex parking lot.

The police cruiser continued sliding on its roof until it struck a tree prior to its final point of rest.
Officer Reyes, who was wearing his seat belt, had to be extricated from the police cruiser by the Fire Department personnel and was then transported to a local hospital where he was treated and later released for his injuries.

The total damage estimate for the cruiser and other property damage was $30,754.00.

Officer Reyes five-day suspension from work began on May 7, 2013.

Information provided by Bill Proffitt on Wednesday May 8, 2013 at 12:30 p.m.

Updated Information:  St. Petersburg Police Officer Injured in a Traffic Crash

Date/Time of Release:
March 24, 2013 @0630

Incident Type:
Injury crash 2013-018049(On duty police officer involved)

Date/Time of Incident:
March 24, 2013 @0117

Address/Location:
1900 blk of 54 Avenue South

Incident Synopsis:

A 2011 Ford, marked St. Petersburg Police cruiser, being driven by on duty Police Officer Timothy Reyes was eastbound on 54 Avenue South. As Officer Reyes approached the entrance to the Osprey Pointe Apartment complex located in the 1900 blk of 54 Avenue South, a dark colored vehicle pulled out.

Officer Reyes steered his cruiser to the left and avoided making contact with the vehicle. Officer Reyes’ cruiser did make contact with the center median of 54 Avenue South which caused the police cruiser to begin side sliding across the roadway in a southeast direction.

The marked St. Petersburg police cruiser struck the south curb of 54 Avenue South causing the vehicle to roll onto its roof.

Once on its roof, the police cruiser struck a Progress Energy light pole and the metal fencing which surrounds the Osprey Pointe apartment complex.

A portion of the debris from the initial crash struck a 2011 Ford Fusion, Florida tag 157LCB which was properly parked and unattended in the complex parking lot.
Officer Reyes was transported to Bayfront Medical Center where he was treated and released.

Driver of the Ford Crown Victoria (Police Cruiser)
Officer Timothy Reyes
1300 - 1 Avenue North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33705

Owner of the Ford Fusion (Properly parked and unattended)
Hester Jeco
1720 - 54 Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33712

Release Prepared by:
Officer S. A. Pierce(Van 2)

For additional information, please contact the St. Petersburg Police Public Information Office at 727-893-7550 during normal business hours; weekdays from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Here is the Original Media Alert

St. Petersburg Police Officer Injured in Traffic Crash

This information is very preliminary; we do not have many details at this time.

On Sunday March 24, 2013 at about 12:39 a.m., the St. Petersburg Police Department investigated a call of an Auto Theft at the Chevron gas station located at 1st Avenue South and 34th Street South.

It appears an unknown suspect stole a white 2002 Cadillac Deville from that location when the driver of the vehicle left it unattended with the keys inside and the engine running.

At about 1:03 a.m., a St. Petersburg Police Officer driving a marked patrol cruiser was in the area of 8th Avenue South and 43rd Street South looking for the stolen Cadillac when a silver Kia swerved into oncoming traffic and intentionally drove at the police officer, striking his vehicle.

The Kia caused minor damage to the police officer’s cruiser and fled away. The officer was not injured. Supervisors authorized a pursuit of the silver Kia since it had committed an Aggravated Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer.

Officers pursued the Kia into southern St. Petersburg.

A short time later, a police officer who was NOT involved in the pursuit was driving his marked patrol cruiser eastbound on 54th Avenue South; the officer was moving into the area to assist the officers involved in the pursuit of the silver Kia.

At 54th Avenue South and 19th Way South, another vehicle pulled-out in front of the marked police cruiser - either from a private drive or a side street, not sure at this point - causing the police officer to swerve to avoid a collision.
The police officer struck a telephone pole, cutting the pole in two, causing the marked patrol cruiser to flip upside down, pinning the officer inside of his vehicle.

St. Petersburg Fire Rescue extricated the officer from the marked patrol cruiser.

The officer has been transported to a local hospital with a serious injury, but the officer’s condition is NOT life-threatening.

The officer’s name will not be released at this time.

The police officers involved in the pursuit of the silver Kia terminated the pursuit after the cruiser crash and the silver Kia has not been located at this time.

This is all of the information that we are releasing at this time.

Information provided by Bill Proffitt on Sunday March 24, 2013 at 2:40 a.m.

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