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Kirby Rainesberger, Esq.
Tampa Police Department
Legal Unit
411 N. Franklin Street
Tampa, FL 33602

Re: PAT Testing

Dear Kirby:

I am writing to you regarding the PAT Test and some issues that have been brought to the PBA's attention. These issues are related to blood pressure testing and the manner in which it is being conducted.

When the PAT Test time stated in the SOP was re-instituted as the required passing time, the PBA requested that firefighters or paramedics stand by to provide emergency medical care should the need arise and check blood pressure, as had been done in past years. In response to that, members of our own training staff were drafted to take blood pressure readings. While we certainly believe that our training staff is well qualified to train our officers, we are not as comfortable with their qualification to check officers' blood pressure readings.

Simply put, we do not think that the Department is handling the blood pressure issues responsibly. First, using TPD personnel to take blood pressure readings is simply a bad idea. They don't have the training or experience to do this. It puts the training staff, the officers and the City in a very bad position should something happen to one of our officers during training. We believe this to be an unacceptable risk, and we ask that you stop using our personnel and begin using trained firefighter/paramedics immediately. At present, we are aware of at least one situation where an officer left the training facility and within an hour, had a blood pressure reading within the acceptable range. The reading was taken by a firefighter/paramedic trained and experienced in conducting blood pressure measurements. Maybe this was a coincidence, but why take the risk?

The second issue involves sending our members to their own personal doctors after our training staff determines that their blood pressure is high. The Union believes that if the City becomes aware of a high blood pressure reading while a bargaining unit member is working or on duty, it is a workers' compensation issue. Please let me know your position on this matter.

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Please contact me after you have had the opportunity to review these issues. I am hopeful that we can quickly resolve these matters as I believe that it is in the best interests of all of our bargaining unit members to do so.

Very truly yours,

Robert T. McCabe