

Former police officer sentenced to 7 to 9 years on child rape conviction

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BOSTON — A former Newbury police lieutenant was sentenced to seven to nine years in state prison on Tuesday after being found guilty of raping a young girl.

Gary Clifford, 49, of Salisbury was found guilty after a three-day trial and a day and a half of deliberations of two counts of rape of a child and four counts of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14.

He was also sentenced to a lifetime of parole upon his release from prison, ordered to register as a sex offender, undergo sex offender treatment and have no contact with the victim or her family.

Although the girl is not related to Clifford, they did know each other, said prosecutors, who had requested a 12- to 15-year sentence.

Clifford repeatedly assaulted the victim at his home between 2001 and 2003 while she was between 9 and 11 years old, prosecutors said. The victim, now 13, testified at Clifford's trial.

Clifford has resigned from the Newbury Police Department.

Although the crimes took place in Essex County, the Essex district attorney's office referred the case to Suffolk County for prosecution because Clifford, as a police officer, had worked with Essex prosecutors.

Clifford is challenging the lifetime parole portion of his sentence. A hearing is scheduled for May 16.