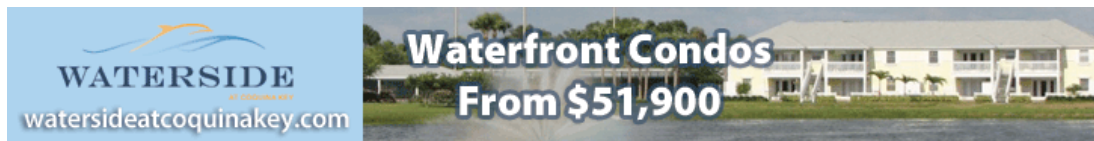


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St. Petersburg officer resigns over sexual allegations involving teenager

By [Jamal Thalji](#), Times Staff Writer
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ST. PETERSBURG — A police officer resigned from the force this summer before he could be fired over allegations that he had sexual relations with a 15-year-old girl.

Officer Edward Smith was 26 when he and the girl started having sex in December 2009, according to an internal affairs investigation.

The victim, now 16, reported the allegations to the Bradenton Police Department on June 20.

Smith denied the accusations, the report said, but resigned from the St. Petersburg Police Department the next day.

The department continued its investigation. In a report released Thursday, St. Petersburg police Chief Chuck Harmon said that he would have fired Smith had he not already quit.

The Pinellas-Pasco State Attorney's Office also investigated the case but declined to prosecute Smith. The office could not say why it reached that conclusion.

St. Petersburg police will forward their findings to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and ask the state to pull Smith's law enforcement certification. The FDLE would have to hold a hearing first.

"If they decide to revoke his certification, he will not be able to be a law officer in Florida again," said St. Petersburg police spokesman Bill Proffitt.

According to the internal investigation, a relationship started in December 2009 and lasted until the girl came forward. They had sex multiple times in

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Bradenton, Gibsonton and St. Petersburg, the report said.

The girl decided to report Smith after the two had a fight via text message, the report said.

The girl's mother told police she believed her daughter and found it odd that Smith bought her personal items such as shampoo. Another relative said the girl had shared intimate details of the relationship with her.


In his resignation letter, Smith wrote that he was leaving "due to personal reasons." Smith, now 27, could not be reached for comment Thursday.

In August, a detective re-interviewed the girl, who stood by her accusations.

In September, a detective asked Smith to come in for another interview. He declined, the report said, saying he would not return to police headquarters "if his life depended on it."


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