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## Juvenile detention officer charged with molesting a child

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MEMPHIS, TN - (WMC-TV) - A DeSoto County juvenile detention center jailer is behind bars and charged with molesting a child while off-duty.

Jeffrey Harwell, 48, found himself on the other side of the law after his arrest Thursday night by Hernando Police.

"I can tell you that he is 48 years of age and we're investigating a juvenile female that's involved for an alleged molestation," said Lt. Michael White.

Harwell remains in the DeSoto County jail on a felony charge of 'molestation – touching a child with lustful purposes.' His bond is set at \$1,000,000. White says the department is still investigating an allegation of sexual abuse.

"This was all off site, off duty; nothing involved the sheriff's department whatsoever," White said.

Even though the alleged incident took place off jail property, Harwell is suspended from his job without pay at the juvenile detention center pending the outcome of the investigation.



Jeffrey Harwell (Source: DeSoto County Sheriff's Office)

White couldn't discuss specifics of the case because a juvenile is involved.

"Of course being a father myself, you know it hits home, you think about your own children," White said.

Additional charges could come as a result of the ongoing investigation.

A spokesman for the DeSoto County Sheriff's Department said Harwell will likely have a preliminary hearing next week.

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