

## Mesa Cop Charged with Sex Crimes in the Line of Duty

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A Mesa police officer has been indicted on three felony sex-crime offenses, all of which allegedly occurred while he was on duty.

Justin Cherry, 34, is charged with two counts of sexual assault and one count of sexual molestation of a child.

### See also:

*-Walter Knox, Former Mesa Cop, Accused of Sexual Assault in Scottsdale*



finalmug.jpg.jpg

Courtesy of Mesa Police Department

Officer Justin Cherry

All three incidents occurred on separate occasions, and the victims did not know each other, says Jerry Cobb, spokesman with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office. Cobb would not release additional details but said all three incidents allegedly occurred in 2013 while Cherry was "a uniformed officer investigating possible crime."

County Attorney Bill Montgomery comments: "We will not hesitate to prosecute sworn peace officers when sufficient evidence exists to support charges of criminal conduct. Those we entrust with enforcing the law will be equally held to account when they violate it."

Cherry's charge of molesting a child under the age of 15 additionally was labeled a "dangerous crime against children," a special marker that allows for an enhanced sentence if the accused is found guilty. Not all sex crimes against children fall into this category, nor are all dangerous crimes against children sexual in nature. It is unknown why Cherry's charge carries this enhancement.

The Mesa Police Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but other

sources report that Cherry has been on administrative leave since last August, when the allegations against him first arose. The County Attorney's Office is unaware of previous accusations against Cherry, Cobb says.

Cherry was indicted for the incidents last week and turned himself in on Friday. He is being held without bond.