

# Sheriff's deputy accused of molesting 15-year-old girl

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The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office headquarters located at 6010 Cattleridge Blvd. [Herald-Tribune staff photo / Mike Lang]

**By**  
**Staff Writer**

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*Former Sarasota County Sheriff's Deputy Jacob D. Pond resigned during internal affairs investigation*

SARASOTA — A Sarasota County Sheriff's Office deputy resigned last year after it was discovered that he was under criminal investigation by the Venice Police Department for allegedly molesting a 15-year-old girl, the Herald-Tribune has learned.

Jacob D. Pond, 26, was hired by the Sheriff's Office on Dec. 4, 2017. Six days later — Dec. 10, the day the incident allegedly took place — Venice police investigators notified the Sheriff's Office about the case.

"They (Venice Police) started an investigation," said Chief Deputy Col. Kurt Hoffman. "That's how we become aware of it — after he was hired. He passed the pre-employment (background check)."

According to internal affairs reports, the victim stayed overnight at Pond's home with her mother, Pond's girlfriend. The victim told investigators she awoke to find Pond masturbating while touching her leg and buttocks.

Pond was working in the jail with a training officer when the allegations were received by the Sheriff's Office. He was placed on paid leave Jan. 30, 2018 — almost two months later — while investigators started an internal investigation.

The deputy asked for a polygraph test to "clear his name," according to internal affairs reports. But during the pre-polygraph interview, Pond allegedly confessed to the allegations and resigned before taking the polygraph test on Feb. 12, 2018.

During a sworn, audiotaped interview, Pond first denied the allegations, but he later told detectives it "could be possible" he didn't remember what happened the night of the incident. According to internal affairs reports, Pond told investigators he wasn't truthful because he was trying to convince himself he didn't commit the act.

Pond, an Army National Guard veteran and emergency medical technician, received a \$40,000 salary. No criminal charges have been filed against him yet.

Attempts by the Herald-Tribune to contact Pond were unsuccessful. Venice police did not return calls seeking comment for this story.

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