

Houston County sheriff's deputy charged with domestic violence

[2015 Domestic Violence Non-Lethal Sheriff Sergeant Houston County TX](#)

Dothan police arrested a longtime Houston County Sheriff's deputy over the weekend, charging him with third-degree domestic violence for a dispute with his stepchild.

Dothan Police Sgt. Maurice "Mac" Eggleston confirmed police officers arrested James Leck Killingsworth, 55, of Alabaster Drive, after responding to his home for a domestic dispute.

Police charged Killingsworth with misdemeanor third-degree domestic violence.

According to the Dothan City Jail docket, police booked Killingsworth into the Dothan City Jail around 5:15 p.m. on Valentine's Day. He was released from custody after he posted \$500 bail.

Eggleston said in an email the incident involved Killingsworth and his stepchild, a minor, and started after the juvenile would not follow directions. Eggleston said police also arrested the juvenile, charging him with the same crime.

Houston County Sheriff Donald Valenza said he was aware of the arrest, and that Killingsworth was placed on paid administrative leave.

"We'll put him in administrative leave so we can look into what happened," Valenza said. "He's suspended with pay because you're innocent until proven guilty."

Valenza said he understands Killingsworth was the one who actually called the police for an incident involving his teenage stepson.

Valenza said Killingsworth serves as a patrol deputy, and has been employed with the Houston County Sheriff's Office for 10 to 12 years.

Eggleston said both people were arrested due to the incident meeting the requirements of Alabama domestic violence law, and that both were "mutual combatants."

"Officers came and saw signs of a physical altercation," Eggleston said.

Eggleston said the juvenile was released to the custody of a parent after his arrest by police.

Killingsworth became the second local law enforcement officer to be charged with domestic violence within the last week.

Ashford police arrested a Webb police officer on a similar misdemeanor third-degree domestic violence charge last Tuesday. Ashford police arrested Jeffrey Lee Schulmerich. He was later released from the Houston County Jail after posting \$1,000 bail.