

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY CHARGED IN CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Port Orchard, Washington -- A Kitsap County Sheriff's deputy has been summoned into Kitsap County Superior Court to respond to a charge of criminal conduct that occurred while he was in an off-duty status.

Deputy Michael L. Kleinfelder, 33, was charged Monday with one count of Rape of a Child (3rd degree) by the Kitsap County Prosecutor. The charge stems from a complaint, filed by the parents of a female juvenile, that Deputy Kleinfelder had engaged in a consensual sexual relationship with their daughter, who, at the time, was under 16 years of age.

The charge is a class 'C' felony.

The Sheriff's Office received the complaint on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2003. As the allegations contained in the original complaint were criminal, the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office was contacted and detectives from that office immediately assumed responsibility for the investigation. Deputy Kleinfelder was placed on administrative leave on Thursday, Feb. 13, 2003, pending outcome of the investigation.

The investigation was concluded at the end of March and the results of the investigation were presented to the Kitsap County Prosecutor's Office for review and a decision on criminal charging.

Deputy Kleinfelder is scheduled to make his first court appearance on Monday, April 21, 2003. Since the Prosecutor's Office has charged Deputy Kleinfelder, a departmental internal administrative investigation has also been initiated.

Deputy Kleinfelder started work with KCSO as a deputy sheriff in January 1999 as a field deputy working out of the department's patrol division. He holds collateral duty assignments as a field training officer and as a member of the Sheriff's Office SWAT Team.

“I am saddened by the allegations as contained in the complaint and the facts as known to me so far. Deputy Kleinfelder has performed admirably as a field operations deputy. He was an exemplary officer,” said Sheriff Steve Boyer. “However, individuals make choices and they must be held responsible for their actions. The public expects, and holds, their sworn peace officers to a higher standard level of conduct, both on and off duty.

“Kitsap County Sheriff’s Office is a professional law enforcement agency that is chartered to uphold the law and provide for the safety of our communities. I expect my deputies and staff to set the example in their personal and professional endeavors. This complaint, while difficult, will be handled ethically and in accordance with established procedures and the rule of law, in the interest of all involved: the victim and her family, the officer, the agency and the citizens of the county. This is to ensure a fair trial and to protect the privacy of the victim,” said Sheriff Boyer.

Media inquiries:

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