



TEXAS
JUVENILE JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Three TJJD Staff Arrested in Edinburg

Officers with the Texas Juvenile Justice Department's (TJJD) Office of Inspector General (OIG) arrested three TJJD employees last week on charges of Official Oppression and Tampering or Fabricating Physical Evidence at the Evins Regional Juvenile Center in Edinburg.

On June 10, 2013, the OIG received allegations of excessive use of force and opened an investigation on Juvenile Corrections Officers (JCO) Juan Tamez and Julian Fuentes. On June 21, a second allegation, this one from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, alleged that JCO Fuentes used excessive force against TJJD youth.

On June 21, 2013, JCO Tamez was arrested for Official Oppression and on June 24, JCO Fuentes was arrested for the same charge. On June 27, 2013, Evins Director of Security Pete Martinez was arrested for Tampering or Fabricating Physical Evidence.

Three youth were identified as victims but the investigation did not reveal serious injuries sustained by the youth. Additionally, seven Evins staff members were identified as having knowledge of the instances of abuse but failed to report it. These seven have been suspended pending the outcome of on-going administrative investigations conducted concurrent with the criminal investigations.

TJJD has a strictly enforced zero-tolerance policy in all areas of abuse, neglect or exploitation and employees are required to report suspected instances of abuse to law enforcement. TJJD Executive Director Michael Griffiths traveled to Evins facility on Monday, July 1, to meet with staff to reaffirm the agency's zero tolerance policy and that violators will be dealt with swiftly and severely.

"These allegations are abhorrent and we will pursue all criminal and administrative remedies to the fullest extent," Griffiths said. "We have an excellent leadership team and staff at Evins who overall have made great strides to improve the facility culture. I am confident that this is a result of a small number of staff rather than a representation of the entire campus."

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