

Administration

1769 E. Moody Blvd Bldg 2
Bunnell, FL 32110



www.flaglercounty.gov

Phone: (386)313-4001

Fax: (386)313-4101

Written by:

Julie Murphy, PIO, MPIO

Flagler County

Communications Coordinator

(386) 313-4039

Email jmurphy@flaglercounty.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flagler County adopts new Fire Rescue protocols in response to criminal allegations of former paramedic

September 17, 2024 – Flagler County Fire Rescue adopts new protocols in response to horrific sexual assault allegations that led to the arrest last week of a former paramedic that reportedly occurred while he was on duty.

Fire Rescue immediately implemented the following enhanced safety and security measures:

- Mandatory Two-Person Protocol – All ambulances will now have two personnel riding in the back when patients are considered vulnerable or underage to ensure additional oversight and support.
- Psychological Evaluations – Mandatory psychological evaluations will be conducted for all Fire Rescue new employees to support their mental health and professional conduct. This procedure was implemented before knowledge of this incident and will continue.
- Enhanced Surveillance – Current external 360-degree cameras used for driver awareness will have an additional camera installed in the back of all vehicles for awareness of activities in the patient compartment for additional safety.
- Rescue Supervisor on All Ambulances – In August, before awareness of this criminal allegation, Fire Rescue established the Rescue Supervisor position for all ambulances within the county to ensure oversight on all units.

“These actions reflect our unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of the people we serve,” said Fire Rescue Chief Michael Tucker. “We want to emphasize that the actions of one individual do not reflect the dedication and heroism of our entire team. The men and women of Flagler County Fire Rescue are life-saving heroes who work tirelessly to protect and serve our community. The arrest of this individual for his alleged depraved criminality does not diminish the exceptional and compassionate work performed by our entire team every day.”

According to a news release issued by the Flagler County Sheriff's Office, James Tyler Melady, 37, “confessed to his crimes” of sexual battery and video voyeurism when interviewed by Major Case Unit detectives who coordinated with the Daytona Beach Police Department that found the evidence while investigating a separate crime.

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District 4

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District 5

“We want to express concern and extend our support to the victim and her family,” said County Administrator Heidi Petito. “The actions described are deeply disturbing and completely contrary to the values of our organization, and the principles we uphold in our service to the community.”

Upon learning of the allegations, Flagler County immediately cooperated with the investigation to ensure the safety of our community.

Melady, who was hired in June 2018, was put on an unrelated administrative leave on May 8 after failing a drug test for a medication for which he no longer had a prescription. He subsequently resigned and has not worked for Fire Rescue in the past four months.

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