

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SAFETY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE

In the matter of the Appeal of )  
CHRISTOPHER M. HALLMON ) FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS  
OF LAW AND ORDER

I. INTRODUCTION

This matter came before the Public Safety Civil Service Commission (Commission) in the appeal of Christopher M. Hallmon (Appellant) from his suspension by the Seattle Fire Department (Department).

1.1 Appearances.

1.1.1 Appellant. The Appellant was present and represented by Jon R. Gillis, Vice President, Seattle Fire Fighters Union Local 27.

1.1.2 Department. The Department was represented by Steve Bailey, Deputy Chief of Personnel.

1.1.3 Commission. Daniel Oliver, Chairman; Barbara Laners and Maura O'Neill, Commissioners; Dallas Shockley, Secretary and Chief Examiner.

1.1.4 Witnesses. Witnesses for the Department were: Lieutenant M.J. Graham, Battalion Chief Jim Morton, Deputy Chief Paul Hargrove, and Captain Michael Brooks; Witnesses for the Appellant were Fire Fighter Cheryl Taylor, Battalion Chief Ed Edwards, Lieutenant Keith Stevens, Fire Fighter Dave Beisel, Fire Fighter John Claiborne, Fire Fighter Charles Hawkins, Deputy Chief Stewart Rose, Captain Jim Loso, Fire Fighter James Fossos, and the Appellant.

1.2 Proceedings.

On May 14, 1990, Fire Fighter Christopher M. Hallmon was notified of a one (1) shift (24 hours total) suspension by the Chief of the Seattle Fire Department for negligence in the operation of a vehicle.

1.3 Summary of Positions.

1.3.1 Appellant. Fire Fighter Hallmon admits that he was at fault in causing the accident but contends that there was mitigation in that he had not been properly trained in tillering.

1.3.2 Department. The Department asserts that Chief Claude Harris acted in good faith and there was good cause for the one shift suspension and that the discipline was appropriate based on similar prior incidents.

1.4 Commission. Having considered the hearing record in this matter, including the credibility of witnesses and exhibits presented to us, and the arguments of the parties, and pursuant to our authority under Article XVI of the City Charter and Chapter 4.08 Seattle Municipal Code, we enter the following:

## II. FINDINGS OF FACT

2.1 On April 26, 1990 at 1210 hours, Fire Fighter Christopher M. Hallmon, while assigned to Ladder 10, A-8 and tillering Ladder 10 on a response, oversteered while turning a corner, hitting three parked cars at the intersection of Melrose Ave. E. and E. Denny Way.

2.2 At the time the Appellant first began tillering and to this date the Department does not have formal training and certification program for tillering on aerial apparatus.

2.3 The Appellant received all his tillering training within his company from an experienced tillerman and began tillering independently upon approval of the apparatus driver.

2.4 Prior to April 26, 1990, five crew members on Ladder 10 alternated in tillering duty.

## III. CONCLUSION OF LAW

3.1 Christopher M. Hallmon is a civil service employee with the rank of Fire Fighter. The Commission has jurisdiction on the subject matter of and the parties to this action.

3.2 The notice and appeal to this Commission have been brought by the respective parties in a timely fashion.

3.3 Pursuant of the City Charter and Ordinance (SMC 4.08.100), the tenure of every person holding civil service employment shall be only during good behavior and acceptable performance. Fire Fighters may be suspended, demoted or discharged only for cause.

3.4 Fire Fighter Hallmon failed to exercise due care and caution in the operation of Department apparatus on previous occasions.

3.5 The Commission strongly supports progressive discipline.

3.6 In this instance there was mitigation because Fire Fighter Hallmon had not been trained sufficiently in tillering.

3.7 The decision of the Chief to suspend Fire Fighter Hallmon was made in good faith.

3.8 Based on the independent determination of the Commission, there was good cause for the imposition of discipline against Fire Fighter Hallmon but the suspension action is amended by the following:

IV. ORDER

4.1.1 Fire Fighter Christopher Hallmon is hereby assessed sixty (60) demerits and one (1) year probation.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT

5.1.1 We recommend that Fire Fighter Christopher M. Hallmon not be assigned to operate any Fire Department apparatus until he has been trained and certified to operate said apparatus.


5.2.2 We recommend that the Department develop and implement a formal training and certification program for the operation of all Fire Department apparatus.

Signed at Seattle, Washington the Eighth day of January, 1991.

PUBLIC SAFETY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE

  
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Daniel Oliver, Chairman

  
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Maura O'Neill, Commissioner

  
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Barbara Laners, Commissioner