

## Fireman ousted over toilet paper

Contributed by Elgin Jones  
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POMPANO BEACH — A veteran Pompano Beach firefighter, who is white, has been fired for putting toilet paper with President Barack Obama's image on it in the fire station where he was based.

Clint Pierce, 50, admitted installing rolls of toilet paper imprinted with Obama's photograph in two bathrooms at Fire Station 103, located at 3500 N.E. 16th Ter. in the Cresthaven neighborhood.

The offensive toilet paper was discovered on or about Oct. 19 by a black firefighter, Daron Davis, who filed a complaint.

### Posting

political materials on public property violates the city's ordinances and workplace rules. Pierce had been warned twice before about his actions and had been directed previously not to do so again and to remove the materials. His employment record shows he faced disciplinary action before over similar occurrences.

### Pompano

Beach Assistant Fire Chief John Jurgle conducted an investigation into the latest incident. In his report to Chief Harry Small, he charged Pierce with "bringing discredit" upon the city and the fire department.

### Small,

in his letter of termination to Pierce, concluded there was "no evidence to indicate that Pierce's actions were racially motivated, but rather they were politically motivated."

Small and Jurgle noted that this was not the first time Pierce had used city property to display his political views.

### In

November 2011, he was ordered to remove "negative political bumper stickers" from his locker at the station and instructed to "refrain from any further posting of political messages on any city property."

### "The

placing of the toilet paper on October 19, 2012, represents a clear

violation of the direct order you were given back in November of 2011. Posting this toilet paper was also a tasteless and disrespectful treatment of the current President,” Small wrote to Pierce.

“While the past election year has been notable for intense negative campaigns from both political parties, city property, and especially the firehouse, is no place for such material to be displayed,” Small wrote.

Cresthaven, which is located in the northeast area of the city, is predominantly white but has seen an influx of black and Hispanic residents over the past few decades.

The city’s 217-member fire department comprises 21 blacks, 20 Hispanics and two Asians.

As word about the toilet paper incident circulated through the community and at early voting sites leading up to the Nov. 6 elections, members of the black community reacted with outrage. Several residents appeared before the Pompano Beach City Commission demanding action against Pierce.

His firing has drawn mixed responses.

“I think the community won and some faith has been restored in the fire department,” said Ed Phillips, a former Pompano Beach city commissioner and a business owner.

But Carlene Duncan, a business owner and city activist, insisted the issue was racial in nature. “It’s an insult to any decent person. We know what you do with toilet paper and if this is what he thinks of the president, you know how he feels about other black folk he has to serve.”

Resident Carmen Jones said she was not satisfied. “This is the culture of the Pompano Fire Department,” she said. “If this incident had not made international news, I don’t believe we would have received this small

level of justice.”

Pierce, who was hired in 1993, and had a current annual salary of \$68,924, could not be reached for comment. His union, the Professional Pompano Beach Firefighters, Local 1549, did not respond to questions as to whether he will appeal his firing.

\* Pictured above is Clint Pierce, left, and Daron Davis , right.