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Court: Fire lieutenants should have own union

WINTER PARK — Lieutenants in the city's fire department should be in a separate bargaining unit than firefighters, the 1st District Court of Appeal in Tallahassee has ruled.

The union representing the firefighters, Winter Park Professional Firefighters, Local 1598, had asked the court to overturn a similar ruling by the state Public Employees Relations Commission.

PERC had decided — and the city agreed — that lieutenants should have a separate bargaining unit because they are supervisors.

Union vice president Lt. Larry Niren said he does not know if the union will appeal. The ruling means the lieutenants will have to negotiate their own contract with the city rather than having one contract that covers them as well as firefighters.