

# Molthop introduces new guidelines

The heat has been taken out of the controversy of firefighters using vacation time to attend school which flared up in February. At that time, veteran firefighter Dan Bennett was suspended and threatened with being fired for going to school during his vacation.

Bennett, a three-year veteran with the Winter Park Fire Department, had got into hot water in February because he was studying for a degree in psychology which was not related to his job. Shortly after being reinstated, Bennett quit the fire department.

New guidelines were introduced Tuesday night by Fire Chief Mike Molthop.

They were accepted and ap-

proved by the Civil Service Board.

Changes to the standard operating procedures include a new section headed "personal educational programs."

The departmental guide, drafted by Molthop, states: "Any educational class that an employee wishes to attend that does not conflict with the employees' duty schedule requires no approval from this department. If the class is going to have an effect on the duty schedule of the employee, then the employee must coordinate his attendance to this class with the Chief or Assistant Chief in advance of enrolling. This procedure must be followed in order to gain approval for time away

from work.

"Employees with less than three years of employment at this department will not be approved to attend personal educational classes that interrupt their duty time."

"They can go to school any time that they want while off-duty, but if they want to go in the daytime then they must get permission," Molthop told the board.

Vice Chairman of the board Rick Proctor said of the new guidelines, "It appears to be very fair and I think it helps to clarify the grey areas in the other standard operating procedures, which I don't think were unfair but may have been open to misinterpretation."

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