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Firefighter wants her suspension reviewed

□ The woman says she was suspended because she discussed sexual harassment.

By Karen Pankowski

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

WINTER PARK — A female city firefighter has asked state and federal officials to investigate her allegation that she was suspended without pay because she spoke to the news media about sexual harassment in the department.

Judy Manor, 41, the department's only female firefighter and a 10-year veteran, wrote the Florida Commission on Human Relations in Tallahassee and the Miami office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission this month about filing complaints against the Winter Park Fire Department.

Officials in both agencies said they could not comment on specific cases but they routinely review letters before deciding whether to open a formal investigation.

Winter Park Public Safety Director Jim Younger said he had not been notified of the complaints. But he said Manor was suspended because she was unable to meet some of the physical demands of the job.

In a letter to the agencies, Manor said her co-workers shunned her after she told the news media that firefighters had watched pornographic videotapes on the job.

"I have since been suspended from my job, I believe, in retaliation for making a comment to the press acknowledging the truth," Manor wrote.

Manor was interviewed by *The Orlando Sentinel* and other news media after a Winter Park resi-

dent made the porn tape issue public in February. Manor said that tapes had been shown and complained it was sexual harassment because it made her uncomfortable.

An investigation by the city's Civil Service Board found that Winter Park firefighters had watched X-rated videotapes at the Fire Department over the years but the practice was infrequent and had been stopped.

Younger said Manor was suspended in May without pay for six months because she could not complete a mandatory training exercise and because she had other problems handling the physical work required of firefighters.

"It had nothing to do with her comments to any reporters ... about any tapes in the city," Younger said. "The suspension is fair because she's being paid to perform the duties of a Winter Park firefighter, and she's displayed either the inability to perform them or desire not to perform them."

City officials said Manor can return to work if she can complete the training.

Manor said she did not finish the April exercise because she was concerned for her health.

A foot injury last year has caused her to be out of shape, she said. She said the department has allowed overweight or injured male firefighters, including one with a cast, to continue to work by giving them light duties.

Younger said such practices are "in the distant past" and would not be allowed under today's department standards, which are being updated and will soon include medical and physical fitness requirements.

Manor is scheduled to appeal her suspension to the city's Civil Service Board on Tuesday.