



JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR

LAMAR A. DAVIS
COLONEL DEPUTY SECRETARY

State of Louisiana
Department of Public Safety and Corrections
Public Safety Services

October 27, 2023
4750/0501/SDS/23-24055
HQ-01-961

Trooper First Class Taylor Scrantz
Louisiana State Police
Troop A

VIA PERSONAL DELIVERY
IA#2300037 OLA #P-200052

**Re: 8-HOUR SUSPENSION and
40 HOURS REMEDIAL DRIVER TRAINING**

TFC Scrantz:

Pursuant to the authority granted to me as Appointing Authority by the Louisiana State Police Commission Rules 12.1 and 12.2, and in accordance with Rule 12.7, you are hereby notified that you are being suspended without pay and allowances for a total of eight (8) hours and you shall complete forty (40) hours remedial driver training because you violated Louisiana State Police (LSP) Procedural Order (P.O.) 242 *Vehicle Use, Maintenance, and Repair-2. Vehicle Usage Limitations and Requirements*.

You are a commissioned officer with permanent status. You hold the rank of Trooper First Class. At the time of the crash, you were Troop A's Public Information Officer. You have been employed with LSP for approximately five and a half (5 ½) years.

On Tuesday, May 18, 2021, you were assigned to work a supplemental patrol detail due to the flooding on U.S. Interstate 10 (I-10) and U.S. Interstate 12 (I-12). The flooding caused both interstates to be closed. While responding, you crashed your fully marked State Police Unit, a Chevrolet Tahoe, into a Hyundai Elantra. The Elantra was occupied by Olivia New and Heather Wilhite. Ms. New was the operator of the Elantra and Ms. Wilhite was her passenger. This fleet crash was investigated by Lieutenant Markus Smith.¹ Upon arrival, he interviewed you, Ms. New, and Ms. Wilhite. Lt. Smith observed that your unit sustained moderate to heavy damage to the front end;² and the Elantra sustained moderate to heavy damage to the driver's side front and rear doors.³

¹ See Exhibit 1. Louisiana Uniformed Crash Report #2021-000584.

² See Exhibit 2. Photograph of the damage to TFC Scrantz's unit.

³ See Exhibit 3. Photograph of the damage to the Hyundai Elantra.

Based on his investigation, Lt. Smith noted that you were traveling north on Louisiana Highway (LA) 3246 in the left turn lane; you approached the intersection LA-3246 and the I-10 westbound on ramp, where a red light was displayed for your direction of travel; Ms. New was traveling south on LA- 3246 in the outside travel lane and had a green light displayed for her direction of travel, when she approached the intersection; you failed to yield to oncoming traffic and impacted the driver's side of Ms. New's vehicle.

On July 18, 2023, I instructed LSP Internal Affairs to initiate an administrative investigation to determine whether your conduct on May 18, 2021, violated P.O. 242 *Vehicle Use, Maintenance, and Repair-2. Vehicle Usage Limitations and Requirements*. IA Captain Saleem El-Amin assigned the investigation to LSP TFC Tony Washington, and TFC Ashton McRae assisted with the investigation. In preparation for his investigation, TFC Washington reviewed the crash report and the voluntary statements written by you,⁴ Ms. New,⁵ and Ms. Wilhite.⁶ TFC Washington interviewed you and Lt. Smith. Lt. Smith's statement during his interview supported the information he included in his crash report. Ms. New and Ms. Wilhite declined to be interviewed because they retained legal representation for the damages (property and personal injury) they sustained.

On July 27, 2023, TFC Washington and TFC McRae interviewed you. You stated that you were Troop A's Public Information Officer and for that reason, your assigned unit was not equipped with an in-car camera; therefore, there was no video recording of the crash. You stated that you were assigned to work a supplemental patrol detail due to the flooding on I-10 and I-12, causing both interstates to be closed. You stated that you did not remember who assigned you to this detail nor did you remember whether you were instructed to travel to the location with your emergency lights and sirens activated ("Code 3"). You explained that you drove into the turn lane as you approached the traffic signal; the southbound travel lanes had a green light, and vehicles in three (3) of the four (4) travel lanes yielded to your unit. You further explained that as you proceeded to turn left, your unit hit a silver Elantra, which was southbound in the far right lane traveling on LA 3246. You stated that you notified Region 1 Communications after the crash and requested an ambulance for possible injuries.

Prior Discipline

This is your fourth (4) preventable fleet crash between 2015 and 2021. The cost of damages for the four (4) crashes totaled \$10,966.23.

1. Crash #1 – On Friday, August 7, 2015, TFC Scrantz struck a light pole in a St. Landry Parish parking lot. (Letter of Counseling)
2. Crash #2 – On Wednesday, October, 25, 2017, TFC Scrantz struck an occupied vehicle during a pursuit. (Letter of Reprimand)
3. Crash #3 - On Friday, September 28, 2018, TFC Scrantz struck a utility pole cable support in an Iberia Parish parking lot. (Letter of Reprimand)

⁴ See Exhibit 4. TFC Scrantz's written statement.

⁵ See Exhibit 5. Olivia New's written statement.

⁶ See Exhibit 6. Heather Wilhite's written statement.

4. Crash #4 – On Tuesday, May 18, 2021, TFC Scrantz entered an intersection with lights and sirens activated, but did not yield to traffic, and struck a silver Hyundai Elantra.

DETERMINATIONS

1. Vehicle Usage Limitations and Requirements.

P.O. 242.2. This policy provides, in pertinent part:

2. Vehicle Usage Limitations and Requirements

- ii) Personnel shall drive all Department vehicles with prudence and care, mindful that abuse, misuse or recklessness reduces the operating efficiency of the Department's fleet.
- vi) Personnel shall observe all traffic laws and agency regulations when operating Department vehicles. Officers are granted specific exemptions in Louisiana Revised Statutes (La. R.S.) 32:24, *Emergency vehicle; exceptions*.

La. R.S. 32:24.B(2) allows an emergency vehicle to proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down or stopping as may be necessary for safe operation. La. R.S. 32:24.D does not relieve the driver of an authorized vehicle from the duty to drive or ride with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor does this provision protect the driver from the consequences of his/her reckless disregard for the safety of others.

You violated this policy because you failed to operate your motor vehicle with prudence and care on May 18, 2021, while reporting to reopen I-10 after a flooding event. You disregarded your red traffic control signal before crashing into another vehicle. Not only was Ms. New's vehicle damaged as a result of your actions, you also caused personal injuries to both Ms. New and Ms. Wilhite. Additionally, the "Emergency vehicle exception" does not apply because you were not instructed to treat this detail as an emergent situation requiring the activation of your lights and sirens. Furthermore, this violation is even more egregious because you have been previously counseled and disciplined⁷ for failing to operate your unit in a prudent and safe manner.

For the above listed policy violations, you are suspended for eight (8) hours without pay and allowances. Your suspension will begin Thursday, November 9, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. and you will return to duty on Monday, November 13, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. You are also required to complete forty (40) hours of remedial drivers training through the LSP Training Academy.

Any future violations may result in more severe discipline, up to and including termination.

⁷ Exhibit 7. TFC received letters of reprimand for the fleet crashes he caused on October, 25, 2017, and on September 28, 2018. At the time, a letter of reprimand was considered discipline. However, as of August 11, 2021, the Louisiana State Police Commission determined that a letter of reprimand was a non-disciplinary action.

COURTESY • LOYALTY • SERVICE

"An Equal Opportunity Employer"

P.O. BOX 66614, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70896

TFC Scrantz
Louisiana State Police
Troop A
October 27, 2023
Page 4

You have the right to appeal your suspension to the Louisiana State Police Commission. The time limits and procedure for appealing are contained in Chapter 13 of the State Police Commission Rules. A copy of Chapter 13 can be obtained from the State Police Commission. Their current mailing address is P.O. Box 66555, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70896-6555. Their current telephone number is (25) 925-7057. Their fax number is (225) 925-7058.

Further, your attention is directed to LSP P.O. 201.5.iv, which states:

- iv) No officer shall work escorts, paid off-duty details, or overtime in any pay period wherein he has taken leave without pay, been suspended without pay, placed on forced or administrative leave, or worked at a reduction in pay as a result of a disciplinary action unless authorized by the appointing authority.

Sincerely,



Colonel Lamar A. Davis
Superintendent, Louisiana State Police

cc: Lt. Col. Chavez Cammon; Lt. Col. Jody Hasselbeck; Major John Riles;
Captain Aaron Marcelle; Internal Affairs; Office of Legal Affairs; Human Resources