



Lakewood
Police Department

MEMORANDUM

TO: Derek Schroeder, Police Agent
FROM: Philip Smith, Chief of Police
DATE: June 4, 2026
SUBJECT: Notice of Termination

Background:

On March 9, 2026 at approximately 0100 hours, you were present with several of your peers at a bar located on W. Bowles Ave. In Jefferson County. While at the location, Mason Fine sustained an injury to the back of his head and believed a glass was thrown at him while in the bathroom stall. Bar staff contacted the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, who responded to investigate. You provided deputies with a description of a male dressed in all black clothing as a possible suspect, seen leaving the bathroom. Deputies, believing this was an assault, located and contacted a nearby vehicle driven by a male matching the vague description and determined he was not involved.

During the subsequent interview on scene by JCSO deputies, you advised them several times that you were in the bathroom and heard a glass break, never once asserting you had anything to do with what caused Fine's injury. The fabrication of facts led to additional resources on scene and in contacting an uninvolved citizen who was subjected to an investigative detention.

JCSO deputies gathered video evidence and determined Fine entered the bathroom several minutes prior to you, and you were seen carrying a glass. No one else was seen entering or exiting the bathroom until you both emerged with Fine holding his head, now injured. JCSO deputies located a broken glass in the bathroom that was of a similar composition to the one you were seen carrying into the bathroom.

You then responded to the hospital to be alongside Fine while he received medical care. JCSO deputies pulled you aside and sequestered you in a breakroom to conduct another interview. You remained steadfast in your version of events and were given ample opportunity to clarify, amend, or rectify your statement. You failed to take this opportunity to provide a truthful account of the events. You admitted to drinking and being under significant stress but failed to accept responsibility when provided with an opportunity to do so. When further confronted with the investigative facts, you said you didn't throw the glass. Sgt. Angela Garza responded to the hospital and asked you directly if you had thrown the glass, which you denied and later acknowledged was untruthful.



The following day, you went to Fine's residence and admitted to him that you had thrown the glass that caused his injuries as a result of being stressed and upset over the loss of a sports bet. This was witnessed by another coworker, Riley Lahue. Both Fine and Lahue encouraged you to promptly report your misconduct to your supervisor, Sgt. Weems. That same night, you sat with Sgt. Weems following roll call and admitted to him that you were responsible and lied to JCSO deputies and Sgt. Garza. Sgt. Weems directed you to contact the investigating deputies to clarify and amend your original statements. While you later asserted that clarity was achieved after a period of rest and sobriety, the evidence indicates that, at the time of the incident, you were lucid and capable of coherent thought and communication. You demonstrated awareness of your actions and the circumstances surrounding the event. Furthermore, your motivation to provide an updated and more accurate account to JCSO stemmed from your understanding from Fine that criminal charges were not likely to be pursued. This awareness and ability to articulate the situation were present throughout the night of the incident.

You were placed on administrative leave the following day, March 10th, and this investigation commenced. You were later interviewed by Professional Standards investigators at which time you provided a different account of events from what was entered into an official criminal justice record with the Sheriff's Office. During the interview, you admitted you lied to deputies and Sgt. Garza. You were aware of your faculties that night and how alcohol contributed to your decisions; however, you admitted you intentionally withheld the truth, which hindered and delayed the course of a lawful investigation.

On June 1, 2026, you met with Chief Philip Smith, Police Commander Sean Donovan, and Luisa Kimmey, HR Business Partner, as part of the consideration of disciplinary action. In this meeting you were given the opportunity to provide any relevant information or clarification to the matters at hand.

Disciplinary Decision:

The multiple acts of misconduct occurring between March 9th and March 10th, 2026, support the determination to terminate your employment with the City of Lakewood and are all in violation of the following policies:

Policy/Rule Violation:

Personnel Policies 4.20.020 (C)

PP-1022: Conduct Unbecoming

Employees shall conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in such a manner as not to discredit the Department. Unbecoming conduct shall include that which brings the Department into disrepute, or impairs the operation or efficiency of the Department.

PP-1024: Conformance to Laws

Employees shall obey all laws of the United States and of any state and local jurisdiction in which the employees are present.

A conviction of the violation of any law shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of this section. Lack of a criminal complaint or an acquittal of a violation of law shall not preclude internal administrative disciplinary action.

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PP-1026: Cooperation with other Officers and Agencies

Employees shall cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

PP-1037: Integrity

The public demands that the integrity of its law enforcement personnel be above reproach. Departmental employees shall scrupulously avoid any conduct, which might compromise the integrity of themselves, their fellow employees, or the department, and have the obligation to report the dishonesty of others. Ethics training will be conducted for all personnel at a minimum of biannually.

PP-1066: Violation of Rules

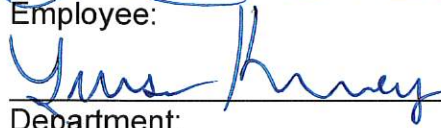
Employees shall not commit any acts or omit any acts, which constitute a violation of any of the rules, regulations, directives, orders, or policies of the Department, whether stated in this Code of Conduct or elsewhere. Ignorance of the rules, regulations, directives, orders, or policies shall not be considered a justification for any such violations.

Effective Date of Termination – June 4, 2026

Appealing the Disciplinary Action

An appeal of a termination may be initiated only by filing written notification with the Director of Human Resources, Cory Peterson, within 10 calendar days following receipt of written notification of the disciplinary action. Please review Chapter 4.06.010 of Lakewood's Municipal Code for more information on disciplinary action and appeal procedures.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have received this notice.


Employee: _____

Department: _____

JUNE 4th 2026.
Date
6/4/2026
Date:

CC: Personnel File

Attachments:

Chapter 4.06.010 of the Lakewood Municipal Code – Appeal of Disciplinary Action
Administrative Regulation 35-0012 – Conduct of Appeals of Disciplinary Actions
Administrative Regulation 35-0013 – Modification of Disciplinary Action by City Manager

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