

Paramedic Loses Job After Exposing Alleged Hazards Inside Station

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AMITY TWP., Pa. -- A paramedic has lost his job after exposing alleged hazards inside his station's building.

John Fekety, a former paramedic with Southern Berks Regional EMS, said he was fired on June 1 for sharing information with 69 News about hazards he said were found inside the EMS station in Amity Township, Berks County.

"There's so many answers, but the bottom line is yes," said Fekety, in response to a question about whether he thinks it was appropriate to speak out.

Fekety claimed pictures sent to 69 News showed a number of problems, including a stink bug infestation and mold in shower stalls.

On May 6, lawyers for Teamsters Local 429, the union that represents the paramedics, sent a letter to George Mang, executive director of Southern Berks Regional EMS, stating the union president examined the station and was "appalled by the condition of the building."

Fekety spoke with 69 News 11 days later.

"I knew that I was putting my neck on the line by speaking up," said Fekety.

On June 1, less than two weeks after the 69 News story aired, Fekety lost his job.

According to Fekety's termination papers, the paramedic was fired for "violating company repeater policy" and the "unauthorized interview with the media which caused irreparable harm to the company's well being."

"Three people have gone through the handbook and could not find any such policy," said Fekety. "They admitted that, oh well, they never got around to actually publishing that part of the policy."

The station's repeater policy states employees have to let the station know their location at all times while on the job.

Fekety said management told him he did not check in before talking with 69 News on May 17.

According to the termination letter, Fekety had multiple EZ Pass violations.

Fekety said there were just a pair of violations for twice using the turnpike. Fekety said he did not have enough change to pay the tolls and asked a turnpike worker how to resolve the problem.

"He said, 'Well, they'll just send the company a bill. Don't worry about it,'" said Fekety.

Mang referred questions about Fekety's termination to Southern Berks' lawyer, who in turn said, "No comment."

In reference to the 69 News story in May about the station's working conditions, Mang said the facility was "supposed to be temporary, but we believe we found a new location."

Fekety said he was still working at the station.

Fekety said people are still working in the building.

Fekety said he wants to be a paramedic and get his job back with Southern Berks Regional EMS.