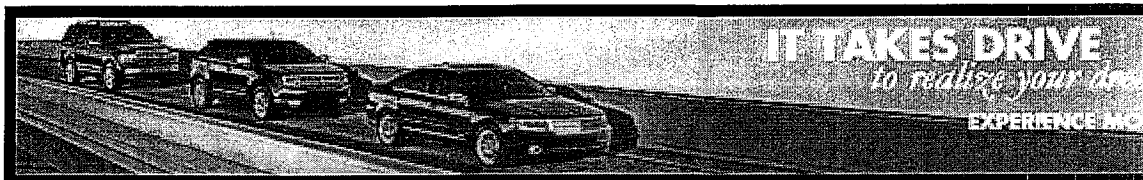


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<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-settlement12oct12,1,4498024.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

## City Council Settles Firefighter's Harassment Claim

By Sandy Banks  
 Times Staff Writer

October 12, 2006

The Los Angeles City Council agreed Wednesday to pay \$220,000 to settle a claim by a city firefighter who said he was sexually harassed by the captain at his fire station, then retaliated against by supervisors when he complained.

Firefighter John Hernandez alleged that Capt. John Gonzalez tormented him with lewd and sexually suggestive insults and gestures from October 2003 to February 2005, causing nightmares, eating problems and emotional distress.

When Hernandez lodged an official complaint, Gonzalez was transferred, but Hernandez was declared psychologically unfit and ordered on medical leave for nine months.

Afterward, he was reassigned to the department's maintenance bureau.

Hernandez won his former job back, but the 18-year veteran was "mercilessly drilled, shunned by management [and] prohibited from riding on the truck as a fireman," according to his claim.

His settlement also provides a year of paid administrative leave — worth \$104,000 — allowing Hernandez to leave the department with 20 years of service and a retirement pension.

The settlement is the second in recent weeks resulting from complaints by firefighters of sexual harassment.

A female firefighter was awarded \$320,000 last month because of her supervisor's persistent sexual advances.

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