

Meyers, Robert (COE)

INQ 08-186

From: Meyers, Robert (COE)
Sent: Thursday, December 11, 2008 5:23 PM
To: Feuer, Jane (MDFR)
Subject: RE: Gifts of Gratitude

Ms. Feuer:

If MDFR personnel were to accept the Macy's gift cards, they would not be in violation of the county's ethics ordinance and they would have nothing to report, as the value falls below the \$100 threshold. Our office does not interpret AO 7-1, which bars county employees from accepting tips or gratuities. Although the ethics ordinance permits the employees to accept the gift cards, I believe I could make a compelling argument that the gift cards were actually tips. Under the circumstances, I would recommend returning the gift cards, informing the donors that their generosity is much-appreciated, but Miami-Dade County has a policy of not accepting gifts for services rendered.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Robert Meyers, Executive Director
Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

From: Feuer, Jane (MDFR)
Sent: Thursday, December 11, 2008 2:27 PM
To: Meyers, Robert (COE)
Subject: Gifts of Gratitude

Good Afternoon Mr. Meyers,

I was asked to present this situation to your office for guidance.

In November, 2008 a MDFR engine and rescue responded to a medical call for a cardiac arrest. The patient unfortunately succumbed to the medical condition but the efforts of the crew (5 FF and 2 LT) was deeply appreciated by the patient's son and daughter. In recognition of the "incredible" efforts of these personnel, the family forwarded a \$50.00 Macy gift card to each employee. Please be advised that the employees who responded to the emergency call neither requested or solicited this gift in any way.

Please advise if this gift falls under the definition of a gratuity or is prohibited under the terms of the Ethics Ordinance.

Your assistance in this matter is appreciated. Please feel free to contact me at 786-331-5115 should additional information be required.

Jane Feuer
Assistant Director for Administration
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department

12/11/2008