

Ely officer admits to sexual relationship with teen

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[2014 Cop Pedophile](#) Jason Allen Carlson

An Ely police official admitted Tuesday to having an inappropriate sexual relationship with a girl under the age of 18.

Sgt. Jason Allen Carlson, 38, pleaded guilty to a gross misdemeanor charge of misconduct of a public officer at a hearing in State District Court in Virginia.

Carlson, who was described as an acquaintance to the girl's parents, carried out a relationship with the teen during late 2014 and early 2015, according to a criminal complaint.

The charges state that he would occasionally bring the teen on ride-alongs and had regular contact with her, both on and off duty. He admitted to having sexual intercourse with the girl at a residence near Ely in December 2014 when she was 17.

"I engaged in sexual contact with an individual who was at least 16 but had not reached the age of 18," Carlson stated in a plea petition. "I knew I could not do so."

The age of consent in Minnesota is generally 16, but certain exceptions apply for those who are under 18.

A St. Louis County grand jury in October 2015 indicted Carlson on a felony third-degree criminal sexual conduct charge, alleging that he was in a "position of authority" over the victim.

Carlson, of Aurora, was set to go to trial Tuesday on that charge, but entered into a plea agreement with St. Louis County prosecutor Gary Bjorklund on the reduced charge.

The maximum sentence for a gross misdemeanor is one year in jail and a \$3,000 fine. The agreement stipulates that Carlson, who has been free on pretrial conditional release, will not face any jail time, but other terms of probation will be left up to the court.

Sixth Judicial District Judge Gary Pagliaccetti scheduled sentencing for Feb. 24.

Carlson, who has been with the Ely Police Department for more than 11 years, was placed on paid administrative leave after the indictment was issued. His name remained on the city's webpage as of Tuesday afternoon — one of two sergeants, the second-highest ranking in the seven-member department.

Ely Police Chief John Lahtonen said the city attorney was expected to address Carlson's employment status at a City Council hearing that was scheduled for Tuesday night.

Defense attorney James Carlson of Bloomington, Minn., did not immediately return a call from the News Tribune seeking comment on behalf of his client.