



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 17, 2015

Texas Whataburger Employee Denies Service to Local Police Officers

For the second time in two weeks, a fast-food restaurant has denied service to customers simply because they are police officers, underscoring once more that stereotyping comes in all forms.

On Tuesday evening, two police officers in Lewisville, Texas, were refused service by a Whataburger employee. According to the officers, the employee stated that the restaurant does not serve police officers. Whataburger reports that the employee has since been terminated and has issued a formal apology.



Officers Michael Magovern and Cameron Beckham were scheduled to work overnight traffic security on Tuesday night and decided to grab a quick meal at Whataburger before their shift began. When the officers attempted to place their order, an employee at Whataburger told them, “We don’t serve police.” “He said it with a straight face, no smile, and just stared at us,” said Magovern told KRLD NewsRadio 1080. “Even if he was joking, I’m not going to eat here because I don’t trust that.”

Officer Beckham echoed those sentiments, indicating that regardless of whether the employee was joking, he did not feel comfortable consuming food prepared in the restaurant after that statement. “It really strikes a nerve personally and professionally because maybe he’s joking or maybe he’s not, but how do we trust that individual or that company to cook anyone’s food now,” Officer Beckham added. “It was just bold for somebody to say that,” Magovern added. “I’m not going to judge his heart, but it kind of put me off.”

Later that day, Whataburger responded to the situation on Twitter, calling the employee’s actions “completely unacceptable” and promising to take action.

By Wednesday, Whataburger announced that it had terminated the employee who had refused to serve the officers:

We were appalled to hear of an employee refusing service to two officers, as we have proudly served first responders across our system for decades. As soon as we heard of this isolated incident, we began our own internal investigation overnight. The employee that refused service is no longer employed with Whataburger. We’ve also invited the officers back today so we can apologize in person and make this right.

Magovern told Fox 26 that he does not wish to hold this against Whataburger, and that he knows the employee’s behavior was not a reflection of company policy. “I knew right off the top this was not a Whataburger corporate issue,” said Magovern. “This was a single location, employee with a problem.”

Magovern also alluded to a similar incident that took place several days ago at an Arby’s in Pembroke Pines, Florida, wherein an employee refused serve to a female police officer. “We’ve seen it on social



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media. We heard it on the news,” Magovern remarked. “You know, 17 years as a firefighter and now 13 years as a police officer this is the first time this has ever happened to me.”

On September 1, Pembroke Pines officer Sgt. Jennifer Martin was refused service at a local Arby’s because she was a police officer. Arby’s took swift action, firing the manager and suspending another employee at the location. Executives met with presidents of the Miami-Dade and Broward County Police Benevolent Associations to discuss the incident.

“This is yet another example of the hostile treatment of our brave men and women simply because they wear a badge,” PBA president John Rivera said. “It is unacceptable and warrants much more than an apology.”

Arby’s also released a statement of apology. “We once again apologize to the police officer involved and the Dade-Broward County police community for this isolated incident,” according to the company’s statement. “Arby’s has always been and will always continue to be a champion of the police in every community across America.”

“We believe this was based on a misunderstanding and ill-considered joke gone awry,” the company explained.

Arby’s restaurants in two Florida counties even offered free meals to police officers all day on Friday, September 4, to make up for the actions of the terminated employee, but according to CNN, few officers took advantage of the opportunity.

Local 10 News reported that days after the Arby’s incident, a local McDonald’s served breakfast and lunch to the Pembroke Pines Police Department to show their support. A local radio station, Magic 102.7, and Whole Foods Market also reportedly “offered up all sorts of goodies to the officers,” drawing appreciative words from the department on its Facebook page.

“We’re proud and honored for being part of such an amazing community,” was posted on the department’s Facebook page. “A special thanks goes out to the individuals, businesses, and organizations who took time out of their day to visit the PD and show their support in person.”



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