



NEWS Texas/Southwest

TYC accused of pepper spray ruling breaches

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The Associated Press

AUSTIN – The Texas Youth Commission is violating a court order regulating the use of pepper spray against incarcerated youths, two advocacy groups contend in court filings.

Advocacy Inc. and Texas Appleseed sued the troubled youth corrections agency Sept. 13 over its increased use of pepper spray and are asking a state court to force the agency to comply with the Sept. 28 court order. Under that order, commission officials agreed to give the groups a copy of a letter advising employees of restrictions on pepper spray, as well as details of all incidents in which pepper spray was used since Jan. 1.

Jim Hurley, a commission spokesman, said: "It was my understanding we were providing them with those reports ... and the memo we sent out (reinstating earlier restrictions on the use of pepper spray) has been pretty widely circulated."

The groups charge that commission staff members have used pepper spray in violation of both the court order and agency policy. They charge that administrators at TYC facilities have been instructed to use pepper spray on youths, in violation of the court order.

No hearing date has been set.

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