

The Star-Ledger

N.J. prison officer charged with falsifying reports after pepper spraying inmate

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NJ Advance Media for NJ.com and The Star-Ledger

Published Sept. 4, 2020

A New Jersey prison officer pepper sprayed an inmate “without any apparent justification” and then lied about it, the state attorney general’s office said Friday.

Jovanny Galindo, 32, of Neptune City, was charged Thursday with conspiracy to tamper with public records or information, according to a press release. The third degree charge could put him in prison for up to five years and carry a \$15,000 fine.

Galindo is a senior correctional police officer at Mid-State Correctional Facility, an approximately 700-bed prison on the grounds of Fort Dix, in Burlington County. He joined the state payroll in 2015, according to online pension records.

On June 16, Galindo approached a seated prisoner and sprayed him in the face with oleoresin capsicum spray, also known as pepper spray, officials said. In his “special custody” and “use of force” reports, Galindo claimed the inmate ignored a command, started to argue with and later threatened Galindo, according to the release.

But those excuses were not true, concluded investigators in the attorney general’s Office of Public Integrity and Accountability and the prison system’s Special Investigations Division, and the two groups said Galindo had instead violated the corrections department’s use of force policy.

A voicemail left with a number listed for Galindo was not immediately returned. Calls to two other numbers under Galindo’s name were not answered.

It was not immediately clear if he has a lawyer.