

\*\*\*\*\* RANK 5 OF 7, PAGE 1 OF 4, DOCUMENT NUMBER 2  
\*\*\*\*\* DAT MAR 18 1989 ED: FINAL  
\*\*\*\*\* SECTION: LOCAL PAGE: 1B LENGTH: 20.87" MEDIUM  
\*\*\*\*\* ILLUSTRATION: photo: Firefighters John Pocock and Bob Harris  
\*\*\*\*\* (HIALEAH-FIRE DEPARTMENT)  
\*\*\*\*\* SOURCE: ANGELO FIGUEROA Herald Staff Writer  
\*\*\*\*\* DATELINE:

\*\*\*\*\* MEMO:

\*\*\*\*\* :\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\* SMOKERS NEED NOT APPLY  
\*\*\*\*\* AS HIALEAH CRACKS DOWN  
\*\*\*\*\* ON PUFFING FIREFIGHTERS

\*\*\*\*\* Bob Harris, a 22-year veteran of the Hialeah Fire  
\*\*\*\*\* Department, remembers when he would trudge out of a smoldering  
\*\*\*\*\* home or warehouse hacking and coughing and gasping for fresh  
\*\*\*\*\* air, covered head to toe with black, grimy soot.

\*\*\*\*\* Then he would light up a smoke.  
\*\*\*\*\* Those days are over. The Hialeah Fire Department is the  
\*\*\*\*\* only one in Dade County and one of the first in the state to  
\*\*\*\*\* stop hiring people who smoke. Since October, new city

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\*\*\*\*\* firefighters are forbidden from\*smoking\*both on and off the job.  
\*\*\*\*\* People who hired on before October can still smoke in the  
\*\*\*\*\* engine room or outside, but many, like Harris, have kicked the  
\*\*\*\*\* habit rather than face the hassle.

\*\*\*\*\* "They're always harassing me about\*smoking,"\*said  
\*\*\*\*\* \*firefighter\*Jim Kidd. "They say I should quit\*smoking,\*it's bad  
\*\*\*\*\* for me and so on."

\*\*\*\*\* Kidd said in some stations no one else smokes and he can  
\*\*\*\*\* feel the tension when he lights up.

\*\*\*\*\* The Hialeah firefighters' union is all for the new policy.  
\*\*\*\*\* "It's really a health issue," said union president Michael  
\*\*\*\*\* McCann, who figures that only about 35 of Hialeah's 207

\*\*\*\*\* firefighters still smoke. "Heart and lung disease is the No. 1  
\*\*\*\*\* killer of firefighters. We're already exposed to high levels of  
\*\*\*\*\* smoke and toxic chemicals and\*smoking\*can't help the situation."

\*\*\*\*\* However, some firefighters who haven't sworn off cigarettes  
\*\*\*\*\* say there is something about fighting a fire that makes you want  
\*\*\*\*\* to light up when the job is done.

\*\*\*\*\* Kidd believes nicotine cravings are activated by working  
\*\*\*\*\* inside a smoke-filled building. Although he concedes his stamina  
\*\*\*\*\* is curtailed somewhat by\*smoking,\*Kidd -- who is 5 foot 10 and  
\*\*\*\*\* weighs 170 pounds -- considers himself in excellent condition

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\*\*\*\*\* for a man of 49.

\*\*\*\*\* Hialeah soon may not be the only Dade fire department to  
\*\*\*\*\* shun smokers. The Professional Firefighters of Florida is  
\*\*\*\*\* backing a bill in the Legislature that would make the policy a  
\*\*\*\*\* mandatory statewide condition of employment. As in Hialeah, the  
\*\*\*\*\* \*smoking\*ban would apply only to new hires.

\*\*\*\*\* James Brannock, Metro-Dade Fire Department assistant chief,  
\*\*\*\*\* said he has received a copy of Hialeah's policy and would like  
\*\*\*\*\* to see a similar rule adopted by the county -- if the union  
\*\*\*\*\* agrees.

\*\*\*\*\* Hialeah officials admit they would have a hard time busting  
\*\*\*\*\* someone for\*smoking\*off the job. If they ever do, they might  
\*\*\*\*\* have to answer to the ACLU.

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\*\*\*\*\* Robyn Blumner, executive director of American Civil  
\*\*\*\*\* Liberties Union of Florida, said the off-duty requirements may  
\*\*\*\*\* violate constitutional rights of privacy.

\*\*\*\*\* "We're not going to challenge the contractual agreement in  
\*\*\*\*\* Hialeah, but we will be monitoring any state legislation and  
\*\*\*\*\* will seriously consider mounting a challenge if legislation is  
\*\*\*\*\* enacted," she said.

\*\*\*\*\* Hialeah Fire Chief Thomas Hyle said the new policy protects  
\*\*\*\*\* firefighters who may someday become disabled.

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\*\*\*\*\* A\*firefighter\*disabled because of heart or lung disease,  
\*\*\*\*\* hypertension or tuberculosis is eligible for an annual  
\*\*\*\*\* disability allowance equal to 75 percent of his or her salary,  
\*\*\*\*\* due to laws that presume the illness developed as a result of  
\*\*\*\*\* the job, Hyle said.

\*\*\*\*\* "But if a\*firefighter\*smokes three packs of cigarettes a  
\*\*\*\*\* day for 25 years, how can we know for certain that his  
\*\*\*\*\* disability was caused by the stress of the job, or because of  
\*\*\*\*\* toxic materials and smoke inhaled over the years?" Hyle asked.  
\*\*\*\*\* "Why should the taxpayers be burdened with having to pay that  
\*\*\*\*\* disability for the rest of the\*firefighter's\*life? Take out the  
\*\*\*\*\* \*smoking\*and we can say for sure the disability was a result of  
\*\*\*\*\* the job."

\*\*\*\*\* "I just hope the city doesn't get religious about it," said  
\*\*\*\*\* \*firefighter\*John Pocock, a smoker. "What gets me is that some of  
\*\*\*\*\* these guys go out drinking in bars all night where there is a  
\*\*\*\*\* lot of smoke and then they come to the station house and  
\*\*\*\*\* complain about\*smoking."\*

\*\*\*\*\* ADDED TERMS:  
\*\*\*\*\* END OF DOCUMENT.

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