

Trainee Abuse Scenario

Shortly after taking command, I was faced with my first trainee abuse test. Before taking command, a Drill Sergeant in one of the companies did not like the way in which several of his soldiers were wearing their PT sweatpants. They were wearing them as if they were “back on the block;” wearing the sweatpants with the waistband down off their hips and around their thighs. In an effort to correct what he thought was a deficiency, he would walk up to the soldier in question and tell the soldier how to wear the sweatpants correctly. The DS would then, as a matter of punctuating his on-the-spot correction, grasp the soldier’s sweatpants drawstring and pull vigorously on it, pulling the drawstring up and over the soldier’s head and around his neck. The maneuver caused the soldier to walk bent over at the waist, which he did until the DS told the soldier to recover.

This matter came to my attention when the DS did this in public at the small PX in the reception battalion area. A concerned on-looker (a company commander in another battalion) gave me a call to bring it to my attention. I conducted a preliminary investigation, then ordered an AR 15-6 investigation. Based on the investigating officer’s findings, I determined that the DS was guilty of “...expos[ing the soldier] to...[an]... activity which...[was]...cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful (TRADOC Reg 350-6, 2-6e(1)).”

I generated a memorandum of reprimand and presented it to the DS.