

# *LAFD invites federal scrutiny once again*

Staff of the city of Los Angeles Fire Department can't seem to get out of their own way when it comes to making their outfit look bad.

First came the news in the early summer that while the vaccines against a deadly global pandemic had been available for months, fewer than 50% of the uniformed members of one of Southern California's chief health-care and disaster-services providers had bothered to get their shots.

That puts not just themselves but thousands of members of the public at risk.

This week an LAFD captain and 31-year veteran of the department embarrassed himself and his colleagues by filming a wild rant — in his uniform, on duty in his fire station — in which he labels new rules requiring vaccines for city employees “total tyranny” and says he is so upset about this supposed intrusion into his privacy that, “I am so hopping mad right now, you have no idea. My head could pop.”

This is the kind of cool head we want protecting Los Angeles? There are plenty of qualified firefighters eager to be his replacement if he can't handle the “tyranny,” especially for the \$346,047.52 in total com-

pensation he received in 2019.

But perhaps even more damning for the department as a whole is the federal Justice Department review, announced earlier this month, of allegations by Black, Latino and female firefighters about systemic bias against them within the LAFD.

Fellow firefighters had demanded the investigation after “accusations that a high-ranking white official in the LAFD received preferential treatment after he was reported to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on duty at the department's headquarters,” the Los Angeles Times first reported.

A Black woman in the department says a White firefighter challenged her decision to go after a battalion chief position. “There are things going on that are just not right, and I've seen it time and time again throughout my career,” she said. “I just don't see it changing without someone stepping in and applying oversight.” LAFD policies have invited federal investigations before, including in the early 1970s, when White firefighters made up 95% of the department. It's inviting such oversight again unless changes are made.

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