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Teens in Custody Following Riot at Care Center

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Samantha Hayes Reporting

A place for troubled teens is the focus of an investigation tonight, following a riot that broke out there over the weekend. Six teens are now in police custody and there is a lot of damage to the facility.

The officers who were at the Cottonwood Youth Academy first at 11pm Saturday say it was a riot, and the situation was chaotic. South Salt Lake

called for help from other police departments. We wanted to know if there was any indication of problems at the facility before this weekend, here's what we found out.

The Department of Child and Family services licensed the Cottonwood Youth Academy. Three weeks ago Ken Stettler got a call from a staff member who no longer works there.

Ken Stettler, Director of Licensing: "The concern was these were kids who were difficult to handle and she didn't know if the staff was completely qualified to handle them properly."

Stettler says his department started investigating Cottonwood Youth Academy after that complaint.

Ken Stettler: "She noted issues of clients in areas they were not supposed to be in so we have to look at that as well."

Now they have even more to investigate.

Capt. Chris Snyder, South Salt Lake Police Dept.: "The call came in as pretty chaotic, actually came in as a riot."

Saturday night police say some residents at the academy assaulted another resident. When the staff tried to intervene, residents assaulted the staff.

Chris Snyder: "Extreme property damage, holes in the walls, ceiling tiles punched out, a window was broken."

Police arrested six teenagers, no one was seriously hurt.

Captain Chris Snyder, South Salt Lake Police: "Our concern, obviously, is that they are adequately staffed and able to handle these situations in the future."

That's one area the state says it will investigate immediately; the consequences depend on what it finds out.

Ken Stettler, Office of Licensing: "Anywhere from a corrective plan, all the way to revocation of their license if it is that serious."

The Cottonwood Youth Academy would not comment on the investigation or what happened there over the weekend.

Video

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