



Richmond Office of the City Auditor

Office of the Inspector General

Fighting government waste, fraud and abuse

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Richmond City Auditor/Inspector General

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Mr. Robert Steidel, Director
Department of Public Utilities

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has completed an investigation of employee abuse of time within the Department of Public Utilities (DPU). This report presents the results of the investigation.

Allegations:

The OIG received a complaint that accountability over a DPU employee's work hours is not being verified.

Legal & City Policy Requirements:

1. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, §15.2-2511.2, the City Auditor is required to investigate all allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse. Also, City Code section 2-231 requires the Office of the Inspector General to conduct investigations of alleged wrongdoing. In addition, during this investigation the investigator referred to the following regulations:
2. The City's Personnel Rule 5.2 (13) related to the Material falsification of any city document or employment or employment application,
3. The City's Administrative Regulation 5.13 Time and Attendance Policy
4. The City's Administrative Regulation 6.5 Employee Rideshare Program

Background:

The subject employee, an Office Support Specialist II, generally is expected to conduct the following administrative duties:

- Answer telephone
- Greet visitors and customers and collect pertinent information in prescribed forms
- Handle issues and paperwork related to a specific DPU program
- Send standard form letters to vendors and customers and refer more involved cases to the supervisor

Methodology:

1. The investigator obtained and analyzed the following:
 - Employees' time and attendance records
 - Employee email file
 - Employee's GRTC bus pass usage
2. Interviewed
 - Human Resources Liaison
 - Operations Manager
 - Subject Employee
 - Timekeeper
3. Other investigative procedures, as deemed necessary

Referral to Human Resources:

During the review of the subject employee's email, the investigator discovered numerous emails with inappropriate content and verbiage, which was forwarded to the Department of Human Resources for appropriate action.

Findings:

The subject employee commutes to work from Petersburg to Richmond via the GRTC bus, 95 Express. The subject employee attends an educational institution in Petersburg. To accommodate this effort, DPU has allowed the employee to work at various hours during the work week. The work hours were scheduled to begin as early as 6:00am and ending as late as 5:30pm.

The investigator analyzed time and attendance data and information received from GRTC during the period of Jan. 1, 2014 through Nov. 18, 2014. The investigator found that the 95 Express bus leaves Petersburg at 6:30am and arrives at 9th and Broad Street at 7:15am. Therefore, on many occasions, the subject employee was found to be riding the bus when the employee was scheduled to be at work. In addition, the data showed the subject employee leaving work earlier than scheduled time to catch the GRTC 95 express bus going to Petersburg. The investigator calculated data from available information showing that the employee either arrived late and/or left early without working their scheduled time. The GRTC records showed that the subject employee did not work 96 hours and 49 minutes during the investigative period totaling \$1,469.29.

An interview of the subject employee's supervisor revealed:

- No one verified if the employee arrived to work on time and/or left work early prior to the end of the scheduled time.
- There were no other records or mechanisms to verify the above information for any non-exempt employee reporting to the supervisor.
- Employee was required to follow compressed schedules as assigned.

During the interview, the subject employee stated that they ride the GRTC bus and occasionally would get a ride from co-workers. The investigator could not verify if the employee arrived or left work at their scheduled time since a co-worker provided transportation. Accordingly, any abuse during the time they rode with a co-worker could not be quantified.

The investigator contacted the Human Resources Liaison for DPU regarding the investigation. The Liaison stated that the subject employee received a written reprimand on June 24, 2014 for violating Administrative Regulation 6.5, Employee Rideshare Program. The reprimand referred to the dates of March 25, 2014, May 5, 2014, and May 6, 2014. During this process, DPU management was aware of the subject employee's abuse of time and Rideshare privilege. The employee acknowledged the previous reprimand. However, the employee could not explain the continued abuse of time and the Rideshare program violations subsequent to the reprimand.

Conclusion:

Based on the findings, the OIG concludes that the allegations are substantiated. The OIG recommends appropriate disciplinary action against the subject employee and their supervisor. Further, DPU should consider recouping the lost time from the subject employee.

There needs to be more efforts made to verify accountability over employees' time. Using mechanism such as Kaba time clocks may be beneficial.

If you have any questions, please contact me at extension 5616.

Sincerely,

Umesh Dalal

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City Auditor/Inspector General

cc: Christopher Beschler, Acting CAO
James Jackson, Interim DCAO
City Council Members
City Audit Committee