

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Office of the Inspector General

Inspector General



### **Executive Summary Concerning the Results of an Office of the Inspector General Investigation Into Misconduct Violations by an Employee of the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation**

**2012-0574**

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#### **INVESTIGATIVE SYNOPSIS**

The D.C. Office of the Inspector General (OIG) completed its investigation into allegations that a D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) employee had been stealing equipment and supplies owned by the District government, as well as fuel for his personal vehicles.

During this investigation, OIG investigators interviewed several DPR employees, including the subject, and D.C. Department of Public Works (DPW) employees. OIG investigators also reviewed surveillance tapes of the DPW fueling station and conducted a demonstration with a DPW employee at the fueling station whereby fuel intended for a vehicle was transferred to a gas can, despite the lack of a fuel ring sensor on the can. OIG investigators also obtained and reviewed DPR End of Shift Reports and DPW Fleet Management Reports, which document fuel usage of DPR vehicles by date and time.

The investigation revealed that there are 10 DPR employees, working in shifts, responsible for monitoring the security of District parks and park buildings. DPR provided these employees with four Ford Explorers to visit and monitor the park sites mainly located in the Northwest section of the city. DPR did not assign a vehicle to a specific employee; however, the investigation revealed that DPR employees tended to drive the same vehicle. After each shift, the DPR employees completed a report that included the shift worked, the vehicle driven and the work accomplished. Investigators also learned that these DPR employees drive, on average, between 25-40 miles per shift.

The OIG investigators examined fuel logs for a specific District-owned vehicle, while the subject was on duty from September 12, 2011, through August 29, 2012. Specifications for this vehicle revealed that the fuel tank capacity is 22.5 gallons, with an estimated mileage of 16 miles per gallon. Investigators noted a pattern of excess fuel usage for this vehicle throughout a 12-month period after learning that DPR employees drive an average of no more than 40 miles per shift and a full tank of fuel was not needed to

complete a shift. In fact, the DPR employees interviewed stated that once the vehicle had a full tank of gasoline, they did not need to refuel the vehicle for 2 or 3 days; and when they did, it was only to adhere to a DPR policy requiring that the fuel tank not fall below half-full.

From mid-March 2012 to mid-June 2012, OIG investigators noticed that fuel logs showed a pattern in which the subject obtained fuel in excess of the amount needed to perform his/her duties. The fuel log data is as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>Location<sup>1</sup></u>
March 15, 2012	9:04 p.m.	20	Fort Totten <sup>2</sup>
March 16, 2012	8:46 p.m.	5	Fort Totten
March 16, 2012	9:06 p.m.	10	Fort Totten
April 3, 2012	6:16 p.m.	18.7	Fort Totten
April 3, 2012	9:42 p.m.	10.0	Fort Totten
May 4, 2012	1:26 p.m.	14.2	Fort Totten
May 4, 2012	1:27 p.m.	2.2	Fort Totten
May 4, 2012	1:30 p.m.	10.9	Fort Totten
May 5, 2012	9:04 a.m.	4.5	Fort Totten
May 7, 2012	6:45 p.m.	10	Fort Totten
May 7, 2012	6:48 p.m.	16.3	Fort Totten
May 8, 2012	9:59 p.m.	5	Fort Totten
May 26, 2012	11:18 p.m.	23.5	Fort Totten
May 27, 2012	10:32 p.m.	14.8	Fort Totten
May 29, 2012	3:33 p.m.	21.4	Fort Totten
May 30, 2012	9:42 p.m.	19.4	Fort Totten
June 6, 2012	8:24 a.m.	10	Fort Totten
June 6, 2012	12:57 p.m.	22.5	Fort Totten
June 7, 2012	8:41 p.m.	10	Fort Totten
June 7, 2012	10:36 p.m.	21	Fort Totten

Furthermore, the OIG showed the fuel logs for this DPR vehicle for May and/or June 2012 to five DPR employees and they each confirmed that the fuel consumption record appeared to be excessive.

OIG investigators interviewed the subject, who denied obtaining District-owned fuel for personal use; however, the subject admitted that on one occasion he/she did fill a gas can at the direction of a former DPR employee. The subject further explained to OIG

<sup>1</sup> There are three locations where a DPR employee is supposed to fill the District vehicle with gasoline: West Virginia Avenue, U Street, N.W. Fire/Police, and Fort Totten. OIG investigators contacted DPW officials to identify Terminals 8 and 12 as noted on the fuel logs as the locations where fuel was obtained by UPR's. According to DPW officials, Terminal 8 is the Fort Totten fueling station and Terminal 12 is the West Virginia Avenue fueling station.

<sup>2</sup> OIG investigators visited each of these fueling stations and determined that all were unmanned. Fort Totten was noted as being in an area where the fueling station was often dark and lowly lighted.

investigators how he/she was able to fill the gas can despite the lack of a fuel sensor ring on the can. Investigators noted that the subject's description of this process mirrored the demonstration conducted by DPW employees on September 5, 2012.<sup>3</sup>

The OIG presented this case to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, which declined prosecution in favor of administrative remedies.

### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Based upon the evidence, the OIG did not **SUBSTANTIATE** that the subject stole District government equipment and supplies; however, the OIG **SUBSTANTIATED** that he/she violated the District's standards of conduct by: a) impeding government efficiency or economy; and, 2) affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of government when he/she obtained gasoline belonging to the District of Columbia that was not needed to perform his/her duties as a DPR employee. Even though the subject denied obtaining District gasoline for personal use, the evidence established that the subject obtained District fuel that far exceeded the need to perform District duties; and therefore, the excess fuel had to be for non-District purposes. According to the fuel logs, the OIG established that from mid-March 2012 to mid-June 2012, the subject placed fuel in the District vehicle: (1) multiple times on the same day, (2) on successive days, and (3) on one occasion, three times in a day without any justification for abnormal usage. A closer examination of the fuel logs highlighted that the subject obtained fuel for non-District business. For example, according to the fuel log, on May 29, 2012, the subject obtained 21.4 gallons of fuel, supposedly for a DPR vehicle that holds 22.5 gallons of gasoline. The next day, May 30, 2012, the subject obtained 19.4 gallons of fuel supposedly for the same District vehicle, which means that this vehicle, which travels at a rate of 16 miles per gallon, was driven approximately (19.4 x 16) 310 miles the day before. On another occasion, according to the fuel logs, on May 26, 2012, the subject obtained 23.5 gallons of gasoline; however, the vehicle could only hold 22.5 gallons of gasoline.

Accordingly, this investigation has **SUBSTANTIATED** that the subject violated both DPM § 1803.1(a)(3) (Impeding government efficiency or economy) and (6) (Affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of government).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of this investigation, the OIG recommends that DPR:

- Address the subject's conduct with any administrative action deemed appropriate;
- Ensure that all DPR employees are trained appropriately regarding the District's Standards of Conduct;

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<sup>3</sup> On September 5, 2012, OIG investigators met with DPW employees to determine if a gasoline could be filled after starting the pump to fuel a vehicle. This demonstration revealed that once the nozzle entered the fuel tank, the fuel ring sensor activated and allowed fuel to enter the vehicle; however, DPW officials were able to remove the nozzle and fill a gasoline can that was within about 12-18 inches of the fuel ring sensor.

- Ensure that DPR officials require employees to record on the Fuel Log (during refueling) and on their Shift Reports (at the start and end of each shift) the vehicle odometer reading; and
- Establish controls to monitor fuel logs and usage by DPR employees.

*July 15, 2013*