



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Inspector General

Date: September 9, 2024

Mr. Lincoln Saunders
Chief Administrative Officer
City of Richmond

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has completed an investigation within the Department of Public Works. The OIG received an allegation of abuse of time. This report presents the results of the investigation.

Authority:

1. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, §15.2-2511.2, the Inspector General is required to investigate all allegations of fraud, waste, and abuse.
2. City Code § 2-214 requires the Office of the Inspector General to conduct investigations of alleged wrongdoing.

Allegations:

1. The Senior Mason abused city time by engaging in non-work activities during work hours on July 7, 2024, in violation of City of Richmond Administrative Regulation 5.13 Time and Attendance.
2. The Senior Mason abused the use of a city vehicle in violation of the Department of Public Works Fleet Management City Policy and Procedure: Vehicle Use.

Background:

The subject of the investigation is a Senior Mason with the Department of Public Works. The Senior Mason uses an assigned city vehicle in the course of his assigned duties. The Senior Mason was assigned city vehicle #164273 a White Ford F-250 truck.

The OIG received a complaint alleging the Senior Mason was parked during work hours at the Walgreens at Chamberlain Avenue and Brookland Park Boulevard on July 7, 2024, for over an hour and appeared to have a non-city employee in the city vehicle.

Findings:

On July 8, 2024, the investigator interviewed the complainant who indicated when he/she arrived at Walgreen a city truck was parked in the lot where he/she observed a city employee wearing a City of Richmond shirt appearing to be filling out paperwork.

The complainant stated a female was on the passenger side of the truck with the door open. The complainant proceeded to conduct business inside Walgreens and upon his/her return to their vehicle he/she observed the city employee no longer wearing his/her City of Richmond shirt and a woman was inside the City vehicle and inappropriate behavior was taking place.

The investigator also spoke to another witness who stated when they arrived at the Walgreens, he/she saw a city truck parked in the Walgreens parking lot and a woman was on the passenger side of the vehicle with the door open leaning in the vehicle. This witness said they began taking pictures and an argument ensued between the witness and the unknown female. This witness stated that the unknown female began taking pictures of him/her and throwing trash at him/her. Eventually the unknown woman went back to the city vehicle.

On July 8, 2024, the investigator interviewed the subject employee who stated he/she has been an employee with the City of Richmond for 45 years. The investigator asked about an incident that took place on Sunday. The employee stated a man was taking pictures of his/her vehicle. When the investigator asked why he was taking pictures, the employee stated he/she did not know why the man was taking the picture and he/she was there to get his/her prescription. The employee also stated that a homeless lady came from across the street and asked for money. The investigator asked if the unknown female was in the city truck and the employee said no.

The employee stated that the unknown female opened the passenger door and asked him for money which he told her he had no money. The employee then stated the unknown female was not in the truck she was just sitting on the edge of the seat. The investigator advised the employee that action constitutes the unknown female being in the truck. The employee reiterated she was homeless and asking for money. He/she further stated that he was not propositioned by the unknown female, and he/she did not have any money to give her. The employee stated after the unknown female argued with the witness, he/she got out the city truck and went into the Walgreens regarding his/her prescription. He/she said he spoke with an African American female at the pharmacy desk and when he exited Walgreens the witness was in their vehicle and was taking pictures of the city truck.

The investigator contacted and obtained video from Walgreens showing the parking lot. The investigator reviewed the video. The video shows the following:

Time	Description
12:14 PM	Employee arrives in Walgreens parking lot in city truck.
12:22 PM	Unknown female comes to city truck and opens passenger door and enter city vehicle carrying a bag.
12:27 PM	Unknown female gets out of city vehicle and remains there with passenger door open.
12:28 PM	Unknown female gets back into front passenger seat of city truck.
12:39 PM	Unknown female gets out of city truck and remains there with passenger door open.

12:43 PM	Unknown female removes bag from passenger seat and opens back door and places bag on back seat and remained at open front passenger door.
12:44 PM	Unknow female walks to back of city truck and looks in back and returns to open passenger door.
12:46 PM	Unknown female opens back door fumbles around and returns to the front open passenger door.
12:57 PM	Unknown female opens back door again and returns to the open font passenger door.
12:59 PM	Unknown female opens back door and retrieves bag and returns to the open front passenger door.
1:07 PM	witness and unknown female began arguing.
1:08 PM	Witness goes into Walgreens and unknown female returns to the open front passenger door.
1:10 PM	Unknown female closes front passenger door and leaves.
1:12 PM	Unknown female returns to city truck and opens front passenger door engages with city employee and closes door and leaves.
1:13 PM	Witness returns to vehicle and left location.
1:21 PM	City truck backs out of parking space and left location.

Based on review of the video there is no evidence to support that the Senior Mason engaged in inappropriate behavior with the unknown female.

The Investigator spoke to the Walgreens manager and asked was an African American female working on Sunday and the manager advised the investigator no African American females were working on Sunday. The video also shows that the city employee never exited the city truck and could not have gone inside of the Walgreens.

The Senior Mason abused city time by engaging in non-work activities as detailed above in the table. City of Richmond Administrative Regulation 5.13, Time and Attendance, Section II., Procedure, 2. states, "The use of electronic timesheet must accurately portray the hours worked for each day the employee is in attendance." The Senior Mason did not accurately report actual time worked on July 7, 2024.

The Senior Mason abused the use of a city vehicle by having a non-city employee in his assigned city vehicle for non-work-related purposes in violation of Department of Public Works, Fleet Management, City Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 3, II., B. Official Use Only, which states, "Operators shall use fleet vehicles for official city business only. Operators guilty of misuse are subject to disciplinary action by their agency and may lose their privilege to operate a fleet vehicle. Vehicles art to be operated in a manner that avoids even the appearance of impropriety."

The allegation the Senior Mason abused city time by engaging in non-work activities on July 7, 2024, in violation of City of Richmond Administrative Regulation 5.13 Time and Attendance is **Substantiated**.

The allegation the Senior Mason abused the use of a City vehicle in violation of the Department of Public Works Fleet Management City Policy and Procedure: Vehicle Use is **Substantiated**.

Conclusion:

Based on the findings, the OIG concludes that the two allegations are substantiated.

Recommendation:

The OIG recommends appropriate disciplinary action be taken regarding this matter in consultation with the Department of Human Resources.

If you have any questions, please contact me at extension 1840.

Sincerely,



James Osuna
Inspector General

cc: Robert Steidel, DCAO Operations
Bobby Vincent, Director, Social Services
Honorable Members of City Council