



City of Richmond Office of the Inspector General: Investigative Report

OIG CASE #: 25-0014-I
INSPECTOR GENERAL FOSTER CURTISS

Executive Summary

The City of Richmond (COR) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated an investigation on November 20, 2024, after receiving information from a Program and Operations Manager in the Department of Public Utilities (DPU). The complainant alleged that a DPU employee (“SUBJECT”) extended their workers’ compensation leave after sustaining an injury during their assigned work shift.

- **The SUBJECT allegedly abused their workers’ compensation leave after sustaining an injury in January of 2024.** The OIG interviewed the Investigator with the Bureau of Risk Management, who provided information they received from the SUBJECT’s assigned claim adjuster. The claim’s adjuster stated that the DPU employee is currently receiving ongoing physical therapy and that their treating physician advised them they cannot return to work at this time. The alleged loss to the COR is undetermined. Based on the investigative findings, the OIG determined that the allegation that DPU employee abused their workers’ compensation leave is *unsubstantiated*.

Background

On November 20, 2024, the OIG received a complaint from a Program and Operations Manager in DPU. The complainant stated that an employee at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (SUBJECT) was injured in a fall at work in January 2024 and underwent surgery for the injury on February 8, 2024. The SUBJECT has been out of work since. The Program and Operations Manager was concerned that the SUBJECT employee was abusing their workers’ compensation leave by remaining out of work when they should have been medically cleared to return to their assigned duties and had concerns that the SUBJECT was actively working at his self-owned business after seeing multiple images on Facebook of the SUBJECT without his Air cast on his foot.

Observations

The investigation included a comprehensive review of the medical documents provided, formal interviews, and extensive surveillance. The OIG investigators conducted surveillance at the SUBJECT’s residence. No behavior was observed that indicated the SUBJECT employee falsified their work-related injury or abused workers’ compensation.

At no point during the investigation were any photographs or videos located that indicated the SUBJECT was participating in any physical activity outside the scope of recommended medical care.

The OIG investigator spoke with the Bureau of Risk Management, which contacted the assigned claim's adjuster for the SUBJECT. The claim's adjuster stated that the SUBJECT employee received physical therapy (PT) treatment and recently attended their last appointment on March 7, 2025. The SUBJECT has continued to report persistent pain from their work-related injury. Documents provided indicate that the SUBJECT attended all required medical appointments and PT treatments. According to the treating physician, the SUBJECT employee cannot meet the job demands due to their current physical condition and, therefore, cannot return to work.

Allegations and Findings

Allegation (COR/OIG): A report or claim of potential fraud, waste, or abuse involving the COR. Allegations may be **received** by OIG from the public, the COR employees, contractors, or other sources, or **initiated** by OIG through proactive reviews.

Classification after OIG inquiry/investigation:

- **Substantiated:** Evidence meets the applicable standard of proof (e.g., **preponderance of the evidence**) and indicates the alleged conduct likely occurred.
- **Unsubstantiated:** Evidence does **not** meet that standard. This classification does **not** state the claim is false; it reflects insufficient evidence to prove it.

Note: "Preponderance of the evidence" means **more likely than not**. If OIG policy uses additional outcomes (e.g., **partially substantiated, inconclusive**), those may be applied as appropriate.

Based on the information reviewed and the surveillance conducted, the OIG did not identify evidence to support the allegation that the SUBJECT committed abuse by extending his workers' compensation leave after his documented work-related injury.

As a result, the allegation was determined to be **unsubstantiated**. There is no actual financial loss to COR.

Foster Curtiss

Foster Curtiss, Inspector General