

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL CITY OF BALTIMORE



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

Investigative Report Synopsis

OIG Case # 20-0062-I

Issued: October 07, 2020



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
City Hall, Suite 635
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202



October 7, 2020

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The Mission of the OIG is to promote accountability, efficiency and integrity in City government, as well as to investigate complaints of fraud, financial waste and abuse. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) received a complaint alleging a Department of Transportation (DOT) employee (Employee 1) stores personal business items inside a DOT Facility (Facility). Additionally, it was alleged Employee 1 was selling the items stored in the facility on a resale platform online.

The OIG found furniture and other items were stored inside the Facility and sold online by Employee 1. The OIG determined the placement of the furniture in the hallway of the Facility may violate Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.¹ Additionally, the OIG found some DOT employees were not aware of the City's property disposal process when handling surplus property from closed City buildings.

The OIG was able to corroborate the allegations during an inspection of the Facility. As shown in Figure 1 below, the OIG observed several items in the hallway to include living room furniture, tables and desks. Figure 2 displays miscellaneous items and workout equipment in the supply area of the Facility. The location of the furniture and other items could be an obstruction for employees and in part violate OSHAS regulations.

Figure 1 Furniture impeding hallway access at Facility

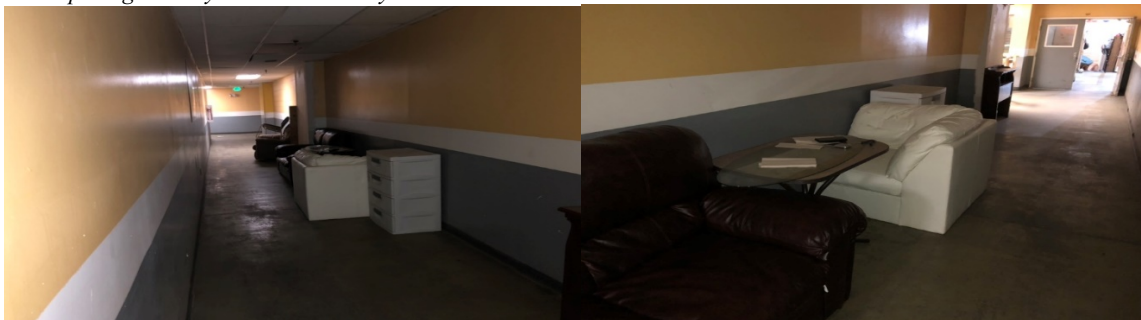


Figure 2: Slot machine, shopping cart, bench press and weights in Facility's supply area



¹ According to OSHA's website, their mission is "to ensure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance". OSHA's website is <https://www.osha.gov/aboutosha>.

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

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The OIG reviewed resale platforms online and located Employee 1's seller profile advertising for hauling services.² Numerous items listed as "sold" on Employee 1's seller profile revealed the items were photographed in the hallways and workplace areas of the Facility.

During an OIG interview, Employee 1 confirmed they stored items at the Facility, including the furniture observed by the OIG during the inspection and said the items were obtained from their personal hauling business performed on their personal time. Additionally, Employee 1 confirmed they sold the items on a resale platform online. The OIG reviewed the items sold on the online seller account and could not conclusively determine if the items belonged to the City.

Employee 1's Supervisor (Employee 2) told the OIG that a set of exercise weights kept inside the Facility were obtained while cleaning out a City building. Employee 2 stated the weights were brought to the Facility instead of being discarded and were being used by the employees at the Facility. Employee 2 stated they were unaware of the removal process for surplus property.³ According to the City's Property Disposal Program, AM-306-1, the Bureau of Procurement's (BOP) City Purchasing Agent has the sole authority to determine the disposition of surplus property, including the movement and storage of such property. It was never certain the equipment would have been discarded.

In conclusion, the OIG determined that Employee 1 uses the Facility to store furniture and other items from his personal business and advertises some of those same items for resale online. The storage and placement of these items in the hallway of the Facility may violate OSHA regulations. Additionally, the OIG found the DOT employees are violating the City's property disposal policy.

Sincerely,



Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General

Cc: Hon. Bernard C. "Jack" Young, Mayor of Baltimore City
Hon. Brandon Scott, President, City Council
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council
Hon. Dana P. Moore, Acting City Solicitor
Hon. Joan M. Pratt, Baltimore City Comptroller

² Resale platforms are local marketplace websites where secondhand items are posted for sale.

³ The City's Administrative Manual (AM) defines surplus property as items no longer needed for the efficient operation of the City. Additionally, the AM defines surplus property as "property that has been declared excess and which cannot be utilized by any City agency will be considered surplus".

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