

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
CITY OF BALTIMORE



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

Investigative
Report Synopsis

OIG Case # 24-0026-I

Issued: December 10, 2024



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



December 10, 2024

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is to promote accountability, efficiency, and integrity in City government, as well as to investigate complaints of fraud, financial waste, and abuse. The following synopsis is a condensed version of the full report provided to City management officials and does not contain all investigative information.

In December 2023, the OIG received a complaint alleging fraud involving a fuel card issued to a former Baltimore Police Department (BPD) officer. Specifically, the complaint cited that a fuel card issued to a former BPD officer was used to purchase fuel after the officer's separation in April 2022. Approximately 429 gallons of fuel were estimated to have been purchased fraudulently, totaling \$1,903.07.

Background

The Department of General Services (DGS) is responsible for managing City fuel sites. In special circumstances, City employees can refuel vehicles at commercial sites using fuel cards; fuel cards act like credit cards and are assigned to eligible City employees. Requests for fuel cards are submitted by agency coordinators to a DGS Operations Officer (DGS Operations Officer). The DGS Operations Officer receives the requests, assigns fuel cards to employees, and oversees fuel consumption by City agencies.

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) utilizes fuel cards to purchase fuel at commercial locations in special circumstances. The BPD Asset Coordinator (BPD Asset Coordinator) is responsible for requesting, managing, and discarding fuel cards, as well as managing the allocation and return of Departmental equipment and uniforms. When an officer separates from employment with BPD, the officer submits a completed BPD 221 Form (BPD form)¹ with their accompanying departmentally issued equipment and City form AM 241-2-2, Employee Clearance Checklist (City form).² Both forms are added to the officer's personnel file.

OIG Investigation

Investigation of Former Employee's Card Usage

OIG was provided with lists of employees assigned active fuel cards. The OIG compared the lists and found that the former officer was still documented as having a fuel card. The OIG also obtained the purchase history of the former officer's fuel card. The fuel card was used on 30 occasions to purchase fuel after the officer's separation, between April 2022 and August 2022, totaling \$1,903.07 for approximately 429 gallons of fuel. The OIG contacted the commercial fuel locations to obtain surveillance footage; however, none of the fuel locations had saved video from that time.

¹ BPD Form 221 (BPD form) lists all departmental property that would be assigned to and returned by an officer. The form documents the employee, the departmental property, the date it was returned, the signature of who it was returned to, and why it was returned.

² City form AM 241-2-2 (City form), Employee Clearance Checklist documents the employee's information and lists general City property that may be assigned.

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

HOTLINE: 443-984-3476/800-417-0430 EMAIL: OIG@BALTIMORECITY.GOV WEBSITE: OIG.BALTIMORECITY.GOV

This public synopsis is only a summary of a more comprehensive report of investigation submitted to the appropriate City management official

The OIG interviewed the former officer's supervisor (Supervisor) who reported the officer's assigned property was returned by a retired BPD Major (retired BPD Major). The retired BPD Major declined an official interview request but said that they returned a box of the officer's departmentally issued property to the officer's Supervisor but could not recall what property was in the box. The OIG reviewed the officer's separation paperwork, including the BPD form and the City form. Fuel cards are listed as returnable property on the City form but not on the BPD form. According to interviews conducted, the City form is not filled out in its entirety because the BPD form is considered the primary form to complete.

Other Active Cards

The OIG's review of the lists provided by the BPD Asset Coordinator and the DGS Operations Officer revealed that 16 other former BPD employees who had separated from the City still had active fuel cards. The OIG reviewed the active cards assigned to the former employees who separated within the last two years and found no fuel was purchased following their separation dates.

Protocol for Cancellation

The OIG interviewed the BPD Asset Coordinator, who reported cards should be canceled when employees separate from BPD or are no longer eligible for a card. The BPD Asset Coordinator learns of separations and ineligibility from departmentwide issued human resources orders, notice from command staff, or the respective employee. When the BPD Asset Coordinator becomes aware of such an instance, they contact the DGS Operations Officer to cancel the card.

The OIG obtained communications from the BPD Asset Coordinator requesting the DGS Operations Officer to cancel the card in May 2023, approximately a year after the officer separated from the department. The OIG obtained additional communications from the BPD Asset Coordinator to the DGS Operations Officer requesting the cancellation of 12 other former employees. Those 12 former employees were still listed as active fuel card holders.

Findings and Current Status

The OIG investigation supports the allegation that the former BPD employee's card was utilized following their separation for a total of \$1,903.07. However, due to the length of time that has transpired since the transactions took place, the OIG was limited in its ability to identify the individual responsible for the transactions.

The OIG recommended the BPD review all fuel cards assigned to its employees to determine and cancel any outstanding cards. The OIG also recommended the BPD update the property return form to include all departmentally issued property. BPD has since implemented additional internal policies and procedures to ensure fuel cards are managed according to updated policies. BPD has also reported a partnership with DGS to ensure additional accountability and cooperation in the department's fuel management.

Sincerely,



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

CC: Hon. Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City
Hon. Zeke Cohen, Baltimore City Council President
Hon. Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council

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