

# OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL CITY OF BALTIMORE



**Isabel Mercedes Cumming**  
**Inspector General**

## **Investigative Report Synopsis**

OIG Case #25-0004-I

Issued: October 29, 2024



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



October 29, 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.

During an ongoing investigation involving the Department of Public Works (DPW) Bureau of Solid Waste (BSW), the OIG requested records of “reported heat-related illnesses for DPW employees from January 2021 to the present”, from both DPW and Risk management. The OIG identified omissions in the documentation provided. Risk Management’s provided records showed twenty-six (26) heat-related illnesses, while DPW’s spreadsheet listed only sixteen (16) between January 2021 and July 2024.

### **Heat-Related Illness Requests**

On July 25, 2024, the OIG requested records of reported heat-related illnesses from DPW for employees from January 2021 to the present. On the same day, the OIG also requested the same records from Risk Management.

The OIG received the records from Risk Management and DPW. Risk Management stated they would work with the City’s third-party worker’s compensation claim administrator (Worker’s Comp Administrator) for the records. DPW also said the Worker’s Comp Administrator provided the reported heat-related illness records.

Risk Management’s records contained reported illnesses up to July 25, 2024.<sup>1</sup> The OIG received DPW’s records on August 9, 2024. While reviewing both records, the investigation found that DPW’s spreadsheet was missing ten (10) employee-reported illnesses that were present on Risk Management’s heat-related illness spreadsheet. Moreover, the column numbers on DPW’s spreadsheet were not sequential, and some rows appeared to have been removed before being provided to the OIG.

Among the ten (10) illnesses omitted, the employees reported descriptions that included various instances of lightheadedness, dehydration, blacking out due to heat, dizziness and vomiting, heat stroke, fainting, chaffing due to excessive heat, and cramping. Six (6) of the ten (10) employee-reported illnesses that were not found on DPW’s spreadsheet occurred on days when temperatures reached 90°F or higher, with two (2) that occurred on a 103°F day.

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<sup>1</sup> Three (3) employee illnesses reported on the DPW spreadsheet were not present in the Risk Management records. However, these claims were opened during August 2024.

**REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE**

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

The nature and result of six (6) illnesses that were missing from DPW's spreadsheet were listed as "syncope."<sup>2</sup> According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, syncope is another word for fainting or passing out.<sup>3</sup> There are several types of syncope, including heat.<sup>4</sup> Syncope can be triggered by dehydration and upright posture.

## **OIG FINDINGS**

The investigation revealed omissions between the number of DPW heat illnesses reported by DPW and Risk Management. The OIG requested all reported heat-related illnesses for DPW employees. Ten (10) illnesses were not provided on DPW's spreadsheet. The absence of information in response to the OIG's document request is concerning, especially if the same incomplete information was provided to the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health and the law firm reviewing DPW's heat standards. Removing information could obstruct multiple investigations. The matter has been turned over to law enforcement for further review.

Sincerely,



Isabel Mercedes Cumming  
Inspector General

CC: Hon. Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City  
Hon. Nick Mosby, Baltimore City Council President  
Hon. Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller  
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council  
Hon. Ebony Thompson, Baltimore City Solicitor

<sup>2</sup> The "nature and result description" is column L on the excerpt of DPW's spreadsheet used in the full OIG report and is referenced in DPW's response letter. Column K on the spreadsheet excerpt is cause description.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/syncope-fainting>

<sup>4</sup> <https://koreystringer.institute.uconn.edu/heat-syncope>