

# OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL CITY OF BALTIMORE



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

## **Investigative Report Synopsis**

**OIG Case # 19-0082-I**

**Issued: July 16, 2019**





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



July 16, 2019

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigated a security breach in the Abel Wolman Municipal Building (Municipal Building) by a terminated Department of Public Works (DPW) employee. The OIG was alerted to the physical presence of the former employee by officials of DPW. While employed by the City, the individual's office was located within the Municipal Building; however, they were found to have violated the City's security policy and were terminated as a result.

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 investigation found that on May 6, 2019, the terminated employee returned to the Municipal Building and accessed non-public floors and offices, including employee workstation areas and locations containing sensitive material and equipment. The investigation found that the employee was provided unfettered access by a front desk security guard who did not follow proper procedures. In addition, the presence of the former employee was not communicated to the proper officials until after they left the building.

The City utilizes an outside vendor to provide security guards and other security services for its facilities. In the Municipal Building, guards are stationed at a desk in front of the elevators and check each person's credentials, including scanning non-employee identifications into a tracking system and ensuring the log book is signed. The investigation revealed that the guard working the desk on May 6<sup>th</sup> did not follow proper security protocol. Despite being told directly by the individual that they had been terminated from City employment, the security guard allowed them access to the elevators without scanning identification, signing into a log book, or confirming the individual was allowed access to non-public areas. The OIG spoke with the guard who said he did not follow protocol because he recognized and knew of the former employee. The security vendor has since barred the guard from working at any City-owned locations.

The terminated employee was inside the Municipal Building for over two hours and was seen by multiple current employees, including a former colleague of the individual who spoke with the individual for over an hour. Several employees who interacted with the individual were aware of the circumstances surrounding the former employee's termination and thought it was unusual for the individual to be walking around the offices; however, no employee alerted security to the individual's presence. The OIG interviewed the terminated employee who said they returned to the building to converse with former colleagues and admitted to accessing non-public areas that contained sensitive equipment and information. The terminated employee also stated that they knew the security guard should have scanned their identification but did not question the decision

**REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE**



to allow them access to the building. The OIG did not find any indication that the individual damaged any equipment or took any material out of the building.

Eyewitness statements and security footage revealed the former employee wore what appeared to be a tactical vest, and a badge similar to those issued to law enforcement. The former employee indicated to others that they were not law enforcement and that the uniform was part of their position as a process server. During the OIG interview, the former employee admitted the vest and badge were not required as part of the job as a process server and that they purchased the items online. Several employees who interacted with the individual said that they found the uniform to be unusual and they assumed the former employee was now in law enforcement and so the former employee's presence was not questioned.

The OIG found a lack of policies and procedures to account for who should have access to non-public City facilities and how employee terminations are communicated from departments to the proper security personnel. In a response from the Department of General Services (DGS), which is responsible for security oversight of City facilities, the agency will review current security policies and procedures and implement changes where necessary. DGS will also implement immediate security changes to prevent similar incidents from occurring and will work to increase employee awareness of preventing unauthorized access to City workspaces. DGS and the Department of Human Resources will work alongside each other to address the procedures for terminated employee access to City facilities. In addition, DGS will work with the security services vendor to update their protocols for validating the identification of all employees and visitors to City buildings.

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  
Hon. Joan M. Pratt, Baltimore City Comptroller  
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council  
Hon. Andre M. Davis, City Solicitor

**REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE**



CITY OF BALTIMORE

BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG, Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

800 Abel Wolman Municipal Building  
200 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

July 8, 2019

Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General  
Baltimore City Hall  
100 Holliday Street, Room 640  
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: OIG Management Alert (related to Security Breach and OIG Case #2018-0857)

Dear Ms. Cumming,

The Department of General Services (DGS) received a copy of your memo on the above referenced Case and subsequent incident. We have spent the past month having discussions (both internal and with other agencies) on how best to address this matter in a way that provides lasting results. The safety and security of the City staff in, and visitors to, City buildings is something that we take extremely seriously. In this response we will highlight the recent changes that have been put in place, forthcoming short-term solutions and the long-term options that we are researching and pursuing.

Recent Changes

Over the last several years DGS has made improvements to the downtown building campus and other buildings under DGS purview that are occupied by city agencies, as well as non-city entities, outside of the downtown footprint. These changes have included the following:

- The addition of 200+ security cameras.
- The addition of access control across the buildings in key areas.
- Capabilities for guard locations to view interior and exterior building cameras.
- Exterior foot patrols of the downtown campus to enhance presence and provide better response to exterior issues.
- The creation of a security command center to enhance 24/7 viewing of cameras for the entire DGS building portfolio as well as assist Rec and Parks on a couple of key locations. Security staff will also provide escort to parking areas when requested by building staff.
- The introduction of Visitor Pass Plus to the four key downtown (City Hall, Abel Wolman, Harry Cummings and Benton) buildings. This software houses visitor information for 30 days and flags "barred" individuals, with the information being shared at all four buildings.

In the past month, we have taken the following additional steps:

- Worked with our security company vendors to review and update their protocols on responding to incidents and validating the identification of all employees and visitors entering the City buildings in which they are deployed.
- Procured stanchions for deployment in the 4 buildings to better direct traffic and ensure that all employees and visitors must walk up to and past a security guard station upon entry.
- Received a quote from the security company vendors for additional security personnel who will within the next few weeks be stationed at the 4 buildings to provide additional coverage and patrol capability.
- Met with the Department of Public Works (DPW) leadership to discuss this particular incident, but more importantly the opportunities that exist for our two agencies to work together on improving the security of the Abel Wolman (and by extension other City buildings) and performing an assessment of the use of space as it pertains to access for the members of the public.





- Initiated conversations with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) on procedures related to the termination of individuals (particularly in cases where the circumstances of the termination are of concern to the agency) and DGS's notification in those cases.
- Met with the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to discuss the availability of funding (grant or otherwise) for the purchase of magnetometers for use at the building entrances.

#### Short-term Changes

Over the next few months, DGS will work on creating a building security campaign and educational outreach effort. We will compile materials for managers and for employees on the following:

- See something, Say something – the need to report suspicious behavior
- Access Control – not permitting or assisting employees who don't have the proper authorization to access specific areas of the work place
- BMOREALert notification system – signing up to receive notification of incidents at work

Over the next few weeks, the four main downtown campus buildings (excluding City Hall) will be physically reconfigured to allow for an additional security presence closer to the main doors, in addition to the existing security guards in the lobbies.

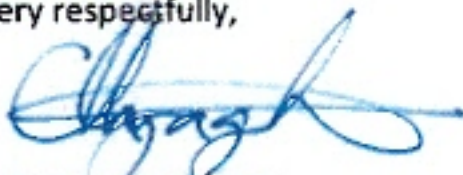
#### Long-term Changes

As we enter new (or renew existing) leases with our tenant agencies, we will incorporate discussions related to their security needs and concerns.

As we engage our customer agencies in further conversations about our building security needs, we are certain that there will be additional improvements (physical, organizational cultural and procedural) that will occur. We are committed to addressing this with urgency in order to avoid a repetition of the incident that brought the matter to light.

If you have any questions at all, please feel free to call me.

Very respectfully,



Chichi Nyagah-Nash  
Acting Director, Department of General Services

Cc: Kimberly Morton, Mayor's Chief of Staff  
Hon. Andre M. Davis, City Solicitor  
Rudolph S. Chow, Director, Department of Public Works