

# 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

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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

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