

October 31, 2003
AUD 04-0026

**An Investigative Report by the Office of
Auditor General On**

**Investigation of
Inquiry into the
Radio Section of
the Office of
Communications**

An inquiry was conducted of the management practices and procedures within the Radio Section of the Office of Communications.

We received 85 allegations falling within seven overall categories. The allegations are:

- Improper Use of WMATA Resources
- Falsification of Time and Attendance
- Unsafe Working Conditions
- Supervisory Favoritism
- Falsification of Work Records
- Lack of Training and Safety Meetings and
- Low Morale Within the Radio Section

Five of the areas were found to be substantiated based on our investigation. Two areas (alleged unsafe working conditions and alleged supervisory favoritism) were not substantiated as alleged but did contain concerns that SMNT and COMM management should consider for further review.

We substantiated that personnel were :

- Using WMATA vehicles for personal errands, some of which were during normal work hours
- Abusing established lunch periods, late in arriving for work, failed to report to work, and could not be reached as scheduled. The supervisor/lead man were failing to assign sufficient work for the shift and the employees were finishing their assignments early and improperly documenting their activity to cover the entire shift
- Improperly completing the vehicle log sheets and improperly accounting for travel time and mileage. Employees were instructed to modify the categories of time to preclude usage of other categories. Time worked on assignments were modified to ensure coverage of the eight hour shift regardless of the time actually worked on the task.

We made 50 recommendations for corrective actions to implement to ensure improvement in the work processes and environment.

The General Superintendent SMNT and the Superintendent COMM have already taken some corrective actions and will ensure that additional corrective action is taken in accordance with our recommendations.

**This Document is
for Internal Use
Only**

October 31, 2003

administrative processing actions, with [REDACTED], OPAS, regarding training issues, with [REDACTED] Office of Employee and Labor Relations, regarding union contract issues and with [REDACTED], SARP, regarding safety issues.

As a result of our meetings, [REDACTED] stated that with the agreement of his senior management he will develop a plan of action to address the concerns raised.

Discussion:

A. It is alleged that Radio Section employees are improperly utilizing WMATA resources.

1. Alleged Improper use of WMATA Vehicles:

During interview several employees admitted to utilizing WMATA vehicles for personal errands during scheduled work time.

The employees stated that they finished their assigned work prior to completion of their entire shift and would then spend the remaining time in places such as Best Buy, Radio Shack, a bicycle repair shop, 7-11 stores or restaurants.

The employees stated that because they had completed their work, although they were still on the clock, and/or because some did not take their lunch break during the assigned lunch period, they believed they could take the remaining time pending the end of their shift to run personal errands.

During interviews it was also determined that during the year, on several occasions, employees would cruise past prostitutes on the way to a Chinese American restaurant (Yum's).

Some employees stated that they had ridden with another employee who after getting coffee or something to eat would then spend time talking with the prostitutes while remaining in the WMATA vehicle.

One employee who admitted to having spoken with prostitutes stated that the prostitutes would approach the car when he stopped at red lights while in route to the restaurant. The employee stated that he had not engaged in this activity since approximately December 2002.

None of those interviewed stated any awareness of this activity continuing past the December 2002 time frame.

Other employees stated that due to the fact that they finish their assigned work prior to completion of their shift (anywhere from 1.5 to 2.5 hours early), they

October 31, 2003

sometimes sleep in the vehicle in the bus garage yard or other location until time to return to the shop. One employee stated that he had on occasion returned to the shop early and slept in one of the back rooms.

One employee stated that he had observed a second employee doing grocery shopping in the WMATA vehicle. He also observed the employee, upon returning to the shop area, placing the groceries in his personal vehicle from the WMATA vehicle. When asked about this incident, the accused employee denied the event which allegedly occurred over four years ago.

██████████ crew supervisor on the midnight shift, stated that on two separate occasions, although it had been several years ago, he followed ██████████ ██████████ AA technician, who was driving a WMATA vehicle and proceeded to take it to his personal residence. According to ██████████, the vehicle was parked in the alley of ██████████ residence while ██████████ went inside. When asked about these occurrences, ██████████ stated that ██████████ had forgotten items which were required to perform ██████████ work and had temporarily gone to obtain them. ██████████ denied spending time at ██████████ residence while assigned work and stated that ██████████ never leaves WMATA premises during a shift.

During ██████████ interview ██████████ Supervisor, stated that with the exception of one occurrence of an employee allegedly driving past prostitutes while on official WMATA business, ██████████ was unaware of these activities occurring. Documentation provided by ██████████ confirmed that an employee did receive a written warning regarding ██████████ activities during ██████████ assigned duty hours, and specifically mentioned was the prohibition on discussions with prostitutes.

██████████ stated that it was not official policy to allow employees to spend time doing personal errands when they were supposed to be at work.

██████████ stated that corrective action would be taken to include once again reminding the employees that they are required to take their lunch break as scheduled and not to utilize WMATA time for other activities.

██████████ stated that the issue of ██████████ being followed home on two occasions by ██████████ was never brought to ██████████ attention for if it had been, he would have taken corrective action regarding the incidences. ██████████ stated that ██████████ may be mistaken regarding the timing because ██████████ does remember vaguely something about ██████████ going home before he ██████████ became a supervisor, but ██████████ has no recollection of any such activity since then.

Based upon the information obtained, this allegation is substantiated.

October 31, 2003

7. Allegedly The Technicians On The Midnight Shift Finish Early But Cover Their Time Until 0600 or 0630:

While the following comments pertain to the midnight shift, technicians on the day and the swing shift also stated that they finish early. Day shift employees stated that most men return to the shop by 1400 or 1415 at the latest. Technicians stated that they spend the remainder of their time putting equipment away, finalizing paperwork not completed in the field and maybe entering data into the computer, if they are the senior person. Others stated that they sit and wait.

Personnel on the swing shift stated that they usually return to the shop around 2200 and finalize paperwork or sit and wait for the end of the shift.

Technicians working the midnight shift stated that as a general rule they are through all of their assignments no later than 0400 or 0500 hours and due to revenue service beginning, they are limited in what they can accomplish.

Some technicians stated that on each shift there is probably between 1.5 and 2 hours of dead time based upon completion of assignments and being out of the way of operations.

Some technicians stated that they could accomplish more work, but there is an understanding that they are only expected to complete a certain number of assignments and therefore they do not request more work when their original assignments are completed.

The technicians stated that they either go to the nearest 7-11 or sit and wait until they can return to the shop when they finish early. They stated that due to a prohibition on returning before 0600, they are left on their own to cover the time, reported to be anywhere from 1 to 3 hours on any given shift, depending on the technician and the assignment.

Several technicians again repeated that [REDACTED] disappears early in the morning, once the work is completed and does not reappear until 0700 when it is time to sign out. Several technicians who have worked with [REDACTED] reported that it is not unusual when working at one of the bus garages to finish work around 0200 or 0300, at which time [REDACTED] will bid the crew goodnight and drive off. When this occurs, they will not see [REDACTED] until time to sign out later that morning.

██████████ admitted that on the midnight shift there is often a lack of sufficient work to cover the entire eight hour shift for ██████████ as the crew leader and sometimes for the ██████████ stated that ██████████ has tried to get the ██████████ to use the time to read manuals and become more familiar with the equipment but most of the time the technicians just want to sit and talk.

Mr. Johnson stated that when ██████████ lacks sufficient work ██████████ is supposed to be clearing the console of bus tickets at Greenbelt so that they have an up to date list of buses still awaiting service.

Mr. Johnson stated that if the men in the field lack sufficient work to fulfill their entire shift then they are not doing what they should be doing in the system.

Mr. Johnson stated that he is unaware of these issues and again reiterated that ██████████ crew leader on the midnight shift, ██████████ acting supervisor on the swing shift, and ██████████ crew leader on the day shift, are responsible to ensure that appropriate work is assigned and to follow up ensuring that the men are working.

He stated that a couple of times he asked ██████████ where ██████████ was and was told that the ██████████ was still out and on way back. He stated that he was not informed that there was an issue with ██████████ departing early.

Mr. Johnson stated that he would inform the midnight staff that all men need to be back by 0700 unless a specific reason exists and is coordinated ahead of time.

As previously stated by Mr. Johnson, this is another reason to eliminate single man crews being dispatched.

Almost without exception those interviewed believed that part of the problem stems from an excess of technicians. Several senior technicians stated that at this time they believe that they are overmanned between 2 and 4 people and one said it may be as high as 5.

Initially Mr. Johnson agreed that they were overmanned by between 2 and 4 personnel but stated that he had no control over who he received. He stated that he was not part of the interview team who hired technicians and he had no say on who would come to his shop. He stated that as a result he believes he does not necessarily get the type people he needs as far as technical qualifications.

In his second interview, Mr. Johnson stated that he had changed his mind and after some thought believed that once the new communications system was installed that he would have sufficient work for all the men he had and he didn't want to go on record stating that he had too many technicians.



Despite Mr. Johnson's second comment, there is still a need to review the manpower assignment within the Radio Section especially with a need to determine if additional supervisory personnel are required, especially for the swing and midnight shift.

Based upon the information provided, this allegation is substantiated.

8. Allegedly Technicians Reduce Time Required to Accomplish Assigned Work By Splitting The Work List But Crediting Each Other With All Work Performed:

Several technicians stated that it is not uncommon for one or two technicians to do the work and a third technician assigned to get credit although the amount of work performed by the third person is minimal. As an example, several technicians stated that when they are working on buses in the garage, two men are working on the bus and the most senior man sits and runs the "stunt box" from the truck. The "stunt box" is used to check the repairs being made to ensure that the signal is properly responding. The men state that each individual gets the same amount of time credited although the man running the "stunt box" may in reality sit and read most of the shift as he never leaves the truck.

Mr. Johnson stated that the person responsible for operation of the "stunt box" should be accounting for his time differently than that of the technicians doing the repair work. The ZZ code for the operation of the "stunt box" is different.

What apparently is occurring is that in order to minimize the administrative work, the senior technicians sometimes report all the technicians as performing the same work.

Because of the need for each technician to have eight hours accounted for during his shift, each man on the team gets the same credit in time for each transaction. As an example, to stop and fill up the vehicle should be a 15 minute action but review of time sheets reflects entries such as 0.5 hours to 1.0 hours to refuel.

If there are two men in the vehicle, the time required to complete the refueling task is doubled so each man gets the same credit. At a minimum this means that an action which takes 15 or 20 minutes maximum will be reflected at either ½ hour or one hour.

One technician [REDACTED] stated that on occasion [REDACTED] has worked with [REDACTED] and they will take separate vehicles to perform base station preventive maintenance inspections and communications checks. [REDACTED] stated that on occasion [REDACTED] will split out the two types of work to be performed

October 31, 2003

and ask [REDACTED] which [REDACTED] wants to do. As a result, they work independently instead of together and complete all of the assigned work in less time.

Mr. Johnson stated that he was not aware of this type activity happening because the two man crew is supposed to work together doing the preventive maintenance inspections (PMI's) and communications checks. He stated that this is something he will have to address with the crew leaders, especially [REDACTED]

He stated that there are times when there is bench work required in the shop where two men will be held back for conducting equipment testing but otherwise the only personnel who should be remaining is the team with the person calling buses (bus validation).

Several technicians complained that there is not enough work and when they ask about the assignments, are told to just do what you've been given. Mr. Johnson stated that the crew leader can pull additional work from the Bus Data Base and make assignments. Again, it is an issue of the lead man being willing to make the effort to obtain additional work if the work assigned for the night is deemed insufficient.

Based upon the information provided, this allegation is substantiated.

9. Allegedly Technicians Sleep On Duty During Shift Down Time:

Technician [REDACTED] stated that when they finish their assignments they are on "standby" and can spend up to two hours doing nothing. [REDACTED] stated that they often sleep or return to the shop early and sometimes then sleep.

[REDACTED] admitted that on occasion when [REDACTED] has completed his assigned work, [REDACTED] sits in the vehicle somewhere on WMATA premises and has "caught [REDACTED] dozing off."

[REDACTED] stated that it is very difficult early in the morning when awaiting the return of the work crews and the office work is caught up to constantly be alert. [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] may have on occasion dozed off for a few minutes.

Other technicians have reported returning early to the shop and sitting in a side room out of the way until the end of shift. While they did not admit to sleeping, they did admit to sitting and talking, reading or just being idle during the down time.

Several technicians including Technicians [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] have stated that they have been directed by [REDACTED]