



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Energy

INSPECTION REPORT

DOE-OIG-20-41

May 2020

REVIEW OF ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING IMPROPER USE OF FLEET VEHICLES



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

May 14, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION

Deborah Thomas

FROM: Deborah M. Thomas
Acting Assistant Inspector General
for Inspections, Intelligence Oversight,
and Special Projects
Office of Inspector General

SUBJECT: INFORMATION: Inspection Report on “Review of Allegations
Concerning Improper Use of Fleet Vehicles”

RESULTS IN BRIEF

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) received allegations that General Services Administration (GSA) fleet passenger vehicles (Government vehicles) leased by the Department of Energy were: (1) being used for personal use; and (2) being parked at a local mass transportation center, the Regional Transportation Center (RTC), which was known as a target for theft and/or vandalism. We did not substantiate the allegation that Government vehicles were being used for personal use, but we substantiated the allegation that Government vehicles had been parked at RTC, where Government vehicles had been stolen and/or vandalized. However, in response to the thefts and/or vandalism, a management official directed personnel not to park Government vehicles at the parking lot and took a number of corrective actions.

BACKGROUND

GSA provides vehicles and fleet management services to Federal agencies, including the Department of Energy. The Department leases Government vehicles at many locations, including the Nevada Field Office and the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS), which is approximately 65 miles northwest of the field office. The following entities (and corresponding management and operating contractors) also operate Government vehicles in Nevada: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) — Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC; Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) — Triad National Security, LLC; NNSS — Mission Support and Test Services, LLC (MSTS); and Sandia National Laboratories — National Technology and Engineering Solutions of Sandia, LLC. MSTS manages the majority of Government vehicles stationed in Nevada, including vehicles for the Nevada Field Office.

Federal regulations require that Government vehicles be used for official purposes only, which is defined as “using a Government motor vehicle to perform your agency’s mission(s), as authorized by your agency.”¹

In October 2018, the OIG received allegations that: (1) employees were using Government vehicles for personal use to commute to NNSS; and (2) Government vehicles were being parked at RTC, which was known as a target for vehicle theft and/or vandalism. We initiated this inspection to determine the facts and circumstances surrounding the allegations.

RESULTS OF INSPECTION

We did not substantiate the allegation regarding employees using Government vehicles for personal use, but we substantiated the allegation regarding Government vehicles being parked at RTC, where some Government vehicles had been stolen and/or vandalized. In response to the theft and/or vandalism, the Nevada Field Office Manager directed personnel not to park at RTC and took a number of corrective actions.

Actions Taken or Planned

In November 2018, the OIG referred these two allegations to the National Nuclear Security Administration. The allegations were then forwarded to National Nuclear Security Administration’s Nevada Field Office for action. National Nuclear Security Administration’s Audits and Internal Affairs later received responses from several Department and contractor entities. Below we have summarized the responses, which were received prior to the start of our inspection:

- In February 2019, the Manager of the Nevada Field Office confirmed that vehicles had been parked at RTC, in accordance with the *GSA Internal Motor Vehicle Management Manual*. However, based on Government vehicle thefts, the Nevada Field Office directed that parking be discontinued at RTC in October 2018.
- In April 2019, a LANL official did not substantiate the allegation that specific LANL employees were using Government vehicles to commute from RTC to NNSS.
- In July 2019, the Manager of the Nevada Field Office and MSTs worked with GSA to begin equipping Government vehicles with telematics and to ensure Government vehicles were parked in locations that were safe and compliant with GSA policies.
- In August 2019, MSTs Internal Audit Report, *Government Vehicle Usage, (U241)*, identified issues with employees using Government vehicles and not completing the forms required for offsite vehicle use. The audit recommended installing telematics on all Government vehicles that regularly leave NNSS. MSTs management stated that it had addressed the concerns regarding the required approval forms for offsite Government vehicle use and would continue to install telematics with a projected completion date of September 2021.

¹ 41 CFR § 102-34.200, *Official Use of Government Motor Vehicles* [See A.2.2, PDF Page 3 of 4, left column, first full paragraph, purple highlight].

- In October 2019, the Manager of the Livermore Field Office reported that he found no instances of misuse of Government vehicles.

Using Government Vehicles for Personal Use

We did not substantiate the allegation that employees stationed in Nevada were using Government vehicles for personal use in commuting to and from NNSS.

Local policy states that the only commuter transportation available to and from NNSS is the commuter bus. Further, it states that when a commuter bus is available, using a Government vehicle to routinely travel to and from NNSS is considered commuting and not official business.

During interviews with Department and contractor officials, we learned that there was a limited number of Government vehicles used to transport employees to and from NNSS. For example, an LLNL official informed us that a Government vehicle had been used to transport multiple employees because the employees' duty hours began prior to the earliest available commuter bus or ended after the last available return bus. In another example, Sandia National Laboratories officials informed us that a van had been authorized to transport employees for safety reasons because the employees had a 4-hour round trip commute in addition to a 10-hour workshift. Other authorized uses included Federal employees from the Nevada Field Office attending meetings and conducting oversight visits, and transporting visitors and officials to NNSS.

Vehicles Parked at the RTC

We substantiated the allegation that Government vehicles had been parked at a local mass transportation center, RTC, where some Government vehicles had been stolen and/or vandalized. Specifically, we confirmed that five vehicles were stolen and/or vandalized resulting in approximately \$35,000 in costs/fees. However, as of October 2018, the Nevada Field Office Manager had directed that all Government vehicles be removed from RTC and that Government vehicles be parked at NNSS or the Nevada Field Office's North Las Vegas Complex. MSTS, in consultation with GSA, is taking steps to improve security at RTC by adding enhanced video surveillance and specifying lots for parking Government vehicles. In June 2019, GSA authorized MSTS and the Nevada Field Office to resume parking Government vehicles equipped with telematics at RTC.

In addition, the Los Alamos Field Office and the Sandia Field Office are in the process of installing telematics and plan to request permission from GSA to resume parking at RTC. An LLNL official informed us that due to other priorities, LLNL has decided not to install telematics at this time but may later install them and resume parking at RTC.

PATH FORWARD

Based on discussions with Department and contractor officials, and a review of the allegations, we determined that a number of corrective actions have been taken or are in process. We believe that the enhanced security measures undertaken at RTC, combined with full implementation of telematics by MSTS no later than September 2021, should reduce the likeliness of theft and/or

vandalism. Additionally, we believe that the installation of telematics by MSTs could also provide management with an enhanced ability to detect potential unauthorized uses of Government vehicles.

We are not making any recommendations at this time. We appreciate the support and cooperation provided by your office during this inspection.

Attachments

cc: Chief of Staff

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVE

The Office of Inspector General received allegations that: (1) employees were using Government vehicles² for personal use to commute to the Nevada National Security Site; and (2) Government vehicles were being parked at a local mass transportation center, the Regional Transportation Center, which was known as a target for vehicle theft and/or vandalism. We conducted this inspection to determine the facts and circumstances surrounding the allegations.

SCOPE

This inspection was conducted from November 2019 through April 2020 at the Nevada Field Office in Las Vegas, Nevada and the Nevada National Security Site in Mercury, Nevada. Our scope included a review of the use of Government vehicles at the Nevada Field Office and Nevada National Security Site during calendar years 2018 to 2019. Our review included the following management and operating contractor entities operating Government vehicles in Nevada:

- Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory — Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC;
- Los Alamos National Laboratory — Triad National Security, LLC;
- Nevada National Security Site — Mission Support and Test Services, LLC; and
- Sandia National Laboratories — National Technology and Engineering Solutions of Sandia, LLC.

The inspection was conducted under Office of Inspector General project number S20HQ005.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the inspection objective, we:

- Reviewed Federal and contractor requirements documents regarding management and use of Government vehicles;
- Conducted interviews with Nevada Field Office and contractor officials to gain an understanding of how each entity managed its fleet and enforced official use policies;
- Determined the current status of Government vehicles parking at the Regional Transportation Center and future plans for parking at the Regional Transportation Center; and

² General Services Administration (GSA) fleet passenger vehicles (Government vehicles) leased by the Department of Energy.

- Reviewed related reports on the subject of official use of Government vehicles.

We conducted this inspection in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*. We believe that those standards require that we plan and perform the inspection to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our conclusions and observations based on our inspection objective. This inspection included a limited review of controls and compliance with laws and regulations to the extent necessary to satisfy the inspection objective. Because our review was limited, it would not necessarily have disclosed all internal control deficiencies that may have existed at the time of our inspection. We did not rely on computer-processed data to satisfy our inspection objective.

An exit conference was held with the National Nuclear Security Administration and representatives from the Federal and contractor entities at Nevada on April 15, 2020.

RELATED REPORTS

Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General

- Administrative Investigation on [*Alleged Misuse of Government-Owned Vehicles at the Sacramento VA Medical Center*](#) (17-04127-266, November 2018). The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Office of Inspector General (OIG), Administrative Investigations Division received an allegation that a Senior Executive Service Director violated VA policy regarding Government-owned vehicles by allowing VA employees to take Government-owned vehicles home overnight and on weekends. The VA OIG did not substantiate this allegation. However, the VA OIG found that a General Schedule-15 Associate Director improperly authorized another employee to approve no-cost travel orders. The employee then used this authority to allow other employees to take Government-owned vehicles home overnight and on weekends with the provision applicable to temporary duty station travel with no-cost travel orders. The Senior Executive Service Director was unaware of this policy and immediately rescinded it upon learning about it. The VA OIG did not substantiate another allegation regarding use of rental cars that were not tracked by a fleet manager.
- Administrative Investigation on [*Alleged Misuse of Government-Owned Vehicles within the Long Island and Calverton National Cemeteries in New York*](#) (18-00884-251, September 2018). The VA OIG received three allegations: (1) Employee 1, a Senior Executive Service Executive Director, improperly stored his personally-owned vehicle in a garage on Long Island National Cemetery and instructed subordinates to drive him to and from his residence on Long Island National Cemetery, and also to and from the airport; (2) Employee 2, a Senior Executive Service Executive Director, asked subordinates to drive him in a Government vehicle to and from his residence to the airport; and (3) Employee 1 and Employee 3, a General Schedule-13 Assistant Director, misused VA resources by taking two Government vehicles instead of riding together. The VA OIG found that allegations for Employee 1 and 2 were not substantiated because 70 Comptroller General 196 (January 22, 1991) allows for use of Government vehicles to transport employees to and from their residences and an airport as long as it is in the best interest of the Government. In addition, Employee 1 did not improperly store his vehicle on cemetery property because he resided in the Director's residence and had a legitimate reason to park his personal vehicle on cemetery grounds. Lastly, the VA OIG found that Employee 1 and Employee 3 did not violate VA policy by taking separate Government vehicles to the same travel location.

Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General

- Audit Report on [*USDA's Management Over the Misuse of Government Vehicles*](#) (50099-0003-21, September 2018). The objective of the audit was to assess whether Office of Property and Fleet Management effectively enforced controls to prevent and detect the misuse of Government vehicles by United States Department of Agriculture employees. This report was a followup to a 2017 audit that concluded Food Safety and Inspection Service and Office of Property and Fleet Management needed to improve controls over employee vehicle misuse complaints. In this 2018 followup audit, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Forest Service were reviewed and similar issues were identified. The review

found that agencies did not properly investigate allegations of employees misusing Government vehicles and that agency employees operated Government vehicles without sufficient documentation to support authorization and qualification requirements.

Department of the Interior, Office of Inspector General

- Investigative Report on [*Allegations of Misuse of Government Property by BIA Supervisors Mostly Unfounded*](#) (18-0007, June 2018). The Department of the Interior's (DOI) OIG investigated allegations that three supervisors in a Bureau of Indian Affairs regional office were involved in a variety of incidents that included misusing and failing to properly account for the office's specialized communications vehicles and misusing take-home Government-owned vehicles. The DOI OIG did not find any evidence that specialized communications vehicles had been misused but did find that the Bureau of Indian Affairs did not consistently require operational plans for the Government-owned vehicles' use. In addition, the DOI OIG also found that one of the supervisors accidentally caused \$10,500 in damage to one of the vehicles in 2016, and his managers did not follow Bureau of Indian Affairs property management policy because they did not inquire about the accident. Further, the DOI OIG identified one example of misuse of a take-home Government-owned vehicle when one of the supervisors acknowledged occasionally making personal stops in his Government-owned vehicle on his way home from work.

Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General

- Investigative Report on [*Findings Concerning Misuse of Government Vehicle, Position, and Subordinates' Time by a U.S. Marshal; and Failing to Report Misconduct and Other Misconduct by a Chief Deputy U.S. Marshal*](#) (September 2016). The Department of Justice (DOJ) OIG initiated an investigation of a United States Marshal and a Chief Deputy United States Marshal based on information it received that the United States Marshal misused his official Government vehicle and the Chief Deputy United States Marshal failed to report misconduct and misused Government property. The DOJ OIG found that the United States Marshal violated Federal regulations and United States Marshals Service policy by using an official Government vehicle for personal matters and asked subordinates to drive his Government vehicle to various locations to facilitate his handling of such personal matters during work hours. The DOJ OIG also found that the Chief Deputy United States Marshal violated Federal regulations and United States Marshal Service policy by failing to report the United States Marshal's misconduct by misusing Government property to store personal belongings and by authorizing a subordinate's personal use of Government property.

FEEDBACK

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