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Inspector General

STEVE QUISENBERRY
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Office of the Inspector General

January 2, 2025

D'Andrea L. Walker
County Administrative Officer
400 Washington Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204

Re: OIG Investigative Report – Case No. 24-019

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General (“the Office”) is to provide increased accountability and oversight in the operations of the Baltimore County Government (“the County”) by identifying fraud, waste, and abuse, while also striving to find ways to promote efficiency, accountability, and integrity.

In April 2024, the Office received a complaint alleging a supervisor (“the Supervisor”) within a division of the Department of Public Works and Transportation’s Bureau of Engineering and Construction (“the Division”) was misusing their assigned County vehicle by driving it home during the workday instead of reporting to job sites to conduct inspections or to the office to perform their other duties.¹ In response to the complaint, the Office initiated an investigation that consisted of a review of various records and employee interviews. The records examined included applicable policies and procedures, time and attendance records, and NexTraQ data associated with the Supervisor’s assigned County vehicle (“the Vehicle”).

For the time period examined by the Office, which was March 2022 to June 2024, the Office was not able to substantiate the claim that the Supervisor was driving the Vehicle to their home address during the workday as opposed to reporting to job sites or to the office. However, the records examined did show that over an extended period of time, the Supervisor had driven the Vehicle to a residence located in Parkville, Maryland (“the Residence”) on numerous occasions and the Residence had nothing to do with the Supervisor’s official duties or responsibilities. Further, the records showed that on many of those occasions, the Supervisor spent a significant amount of time at the Residence during their workday without taking any form of leave.²

¹ The complaint named two individuals – the Supervisor and another employee. Although the Office initiated an investigation into both individuals, this report is focused on the Supervisor, as the Office considered the employee’s vehicle misuse to be de minimis and consistent with the vehicle use policy.

² When assessing the NexTraQ data, the Office used one hour as a threshold for what was considered an excessive stop at the Residence.

The investigation also revealed that management was not complying with Section 1.15.4 of the County's Personnel Manual, which concerns the monitoring of County vehicles. As noted in the County's Vehicle Management Policy, certain County vehicles, such as the Vehicle, are outfitted with GPS tracking equipment and there is an expectation on the part of the County that someone in a managerial role is reviewing the GPS data to ensure employees are using the vehicles as expected. However, the investigation revealed nobody within the Division had access to the NexTraq system; and therefore, such a review was not being done. This was concerning because there are approximately 12 employees within the Division who are assigned to a County vehicle. That concern is amplified by the fact that this is the third report the Office has issued regarding vehicle misuse.

I. Applicable Policies and Procedures

A. Vehicle Management Policy

Below are the applicable subsections from Section 1.15 of the County's Personnel Manual titled "Vehicle Management Policy."

Section 1.15.1: Overview

The County has installed Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking equipment in all County-owned vehicles. The purpose of the equipment is to improve overall efficiency and reduce vehicle operating costs by ensuring that County vehicles are operated within established guidelines.

Section 1.15.3: Scope

This policy applies to all County employees operating a County vehicle at any time and for any purpose. This policy does not apply to police vehicles and fire equipment (but does apply to Fire Marshal vehicles).

Section 1.15.4: Policy

All County vehicles will be monitored for compliance with these standards. Department Heads or their designees are responsible for monitoring the GPS data. All work requests for a given individual must match the vehicle tracking information for a given day.

Section 1.15.4.1: Tracked Parameters

Tracked parameters include:

- Exit Zone – Exiting the borders of Baltimore County without prior approval.
- Excessive Stops – A vehicle being stopped at one location for an extended period of time based on agency assignment—over 90 minutes during work hours.
- Posted Speed – Exceeding the posted speed limit by more than 12 mph.

- Excessive Speed – Exceeding the highest posted speed limit in the County by more than 12 mph—over 77 mph.
- Excessive Idle – Allowing the vehicle’s engine to idle for more than 15 minutes at a given stop.

B. Baltimore County Assigned Vehicle

Below is the applicable subsection from Section 5.16 of the County’s Personnel Manual titled “Baltimore County Assigned Vehicle.”

Section 5.16.1 County Vehicles May not be Used for Personal Business

1. This policy is established pursuant to the Baltimore County Code, Section 2-281. It establishes rules under which employees may be assigned County vehicles for business use.
2. Only County employees may operate County-owned vehicles. Only employees and other persons on official County business may be transported in County vehicles.
3. No person may operate or be transported in a County vehicle unless they are a County employee, or if not a County employee, are on related official County business that requires the use of that particular vehicle at that time (this includes children and spouses of employees). No personal belongings are to be in a County vehicle (except items required by the employee in the performance of his job). No pets may be transported in a County vehicle.
4. Employees who are using a County vehicle to accomplish their official assigned duties may use the County vehicle for transportation to stores or restaurants to purchase normally consumed food items at designated break times or lunch. Similarly, employees may also use such vehicle to travel to their residence for lunch. One-way travel distance is limited to the immediate vicinity of work location.
5. Whenever the County-owned vehicle is parked or otherwise left unattended, the operator shall remove the keys, activate any theft alarm and lock all doors, hatches and trunk lids.

C. Department of Public Works and Transportation’s Vehicle Use Policy³

Below are the applicable sections from the Department of Public Works and Transportation’s (DPWT’s) Vehicle Use Policy, which was effective June 2024. A copy of the Vehicle Use Policy in its entirety is attached to this report as **Exhibit 1**.

³ Although the Department of Public Works & Transportation’s updated Vehicle Use Policy was not in effect until June 2024, the policy was distributed to employees during the relevant time period examined by the Office for this report.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth DPW&T's Vehicle Use Policy in order to ensure that all employees are aware of the expectations, responsibilities, and to provide guidelines for operating a county-owned vehicle.

Policy

Operating a county-owned vehicle is [a] privilege, not a right. When operating a county-owned vehicle, employees must agree to this policy and obtain permission from their Bureau Chief or the employee's immediate supervisor.

Vehicle Management System

The County has installed NexTraq Positioning System tracking equipment in certain County-owned vehicles. The equipment will improve overall efficiency and reduce vehicle operating costs by ensuring the County vehicles are operated within the established guidelines. For NexTraq Procedures and Standards, please refer to NexTraq GPS Tracking Vehicle Management, located in the Personnel Manual.

Use of County-Owned Vehicle

County-owned vehicles are to be used for business-related purposes. In some instances, employees may be allowed to take home a county-owned vehicle, but only after the Take Home County Vehicle Request has been approved by the Agency Head, Director of Budget and Finance, and the County Administrative Officer. For parameters regarding Take Home Vehicle Assignments, please refer to Section 5.16.4 in the Personnel Manual.

II. Background on the Division

The Division provides contract administration and construction inspection services throughout the County for all new and rehabilitation contracts, including sanitary sewers, water mains, roads, bridges, storm drains and pumping stations. The Division is staffed by a chief, program managers, chief inspectors and field inspectors. The Division's main office is located in the County Office Building in Towson. The Supervisor, as well as other employees in the Division, split their workday between the Towson office and time spent in the field performing duties such as inspecting construction job sites or attending construction-related meetings. Employees who are assigned duties in the field are also assigned to a County vehicle.

III. Role of the Supervisor

The Supervisor serves as a project manager by coordinating work between contractors, consultants, the County, and local government agencies on "vertical" projects. Such projects include structural items such as pumping stations, bridges, and water towers. In addition to their own duties, the Supervisor manages the work of two chief inspectors. The Supervisor is classified

as a 35-hour per week employee who works Monday to Friday from 7:00a to 3:00p with a one-hour unpaid lunch break.⁴ According to the Supervisor’s job description, the Supervisor should spend 80 percent of their time indoors and 20 percent of their time outdoors. The Office took this to mean the Supervisor would spend the majority of their workday performing their assigned duties at the Towson office. The Supervisor has a County-issued cellular phone and laptop, which they use to carry out their assigned duties. The Office was told the Supervisor and others in the Division are permitted to telework on occasion or as needed. However, neither the Supervisor nor their two direct reports had a signed telework agreement or “Flexible Work Arrangement” on file in Workday.⁵

IV. The NexTraq Program

The County’s NexTraq program is managed by the GPS Program Manager who is responsible for managing user accounts and enforcing rules implemented by executive management. Every County agency is supposed to have a designated employee who is responsible for reviewing reports for their agency and documenting issues that need to be brought to management’s attention. Employees with access to the NexTraq program can log in to the system to monitor vehicles and run reports for specific drivers or vehicles. There are different types of reports available under the “Reports” tab in NexTraq, such as a “Start/Stop” report, which documents each time a vehicle begins to move, stops, and the total amount of time a vehicle is “stopped” or idle at a specific location. The program can also send “Alerts” for events such as speeding, excessive idle time, or leaving the County boundaries. NexTraq users also have the ability to create “Report Subscriptions,” which can be delivered to a specific email address on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

V. Analysis of NexTraq Records

As part of its investigation, the Office examined NexTraq data associated with the Vehicle for the time period March 2022 to June 2024. The examination consisted of reviewing NexTraq Start/Stop reports for the Vehicle, which as noted in the prior section of the report, documented how long the Vehicle was at different locations on a given day. The Office then compared the NexTraq data to the Supervisor’s time and attendance records. During the Office’s analysis, it was discovered that the Vehicle had frequented the Residence, which is located less than five miles from the Supervisor’s office, on numerous occasions for extended periods of time. While the Vehicle had frequented other addresses during the workday that seemingly were not work-related, there was insufficient evidence to refute the Supervisor’s claims that they were working while at those locations. Thus, the Office chose to focus on the Supervisor’s trips to the Residence for purposes of this report.

Accordingly, the Office conducted an online search of the Maryland State Department of

⁴ There were conflicting statements made to the Office about the duration of the Supervisor’s lunch break. However, for purposes of analyzing the Vehicle’s NexTraq data to identify instances of misuse, the Office gave the Supervisor credit for the longer lunch break of one hour.

⁵ Workday is the online time and attendance tracking system utilized by the County. It should be noted that employee lunch breaks are not currently documented in Workday.

Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) database for the Residence, which showed it was owned by an immediate family member of the Supervisor (“the Relative”). A copy of the SDAT record for the Residence is attached to the report as **Exhibit 2**. During the investigation, the Office learned the Relative was elderly and had become ill in late 2022. The investigation also revealed that it was known to the Supervisor’s manager, as well as others in the Division, that the Supervisor would occasionally visit the Residence during their workday to pick up mail or drop off food to the Relative.

According to the NexTraaq data, the Vehicle stopped at the Residence on 141 different days between March 2022 and June 2023.⁶ During this same time period, there were approximately 334 workdays. Thus, the Vehicle went to the Residence on about 42 percent of the workdays during that 16-month span. Of those 141 stops at the Residence, the Vehicle was there for varying periods of time. As noted on page one (see footnote 2), the Office focused on stops greater than one hour. The following table summarizes the stops that were greater than an hour:

#	Date	Vehicle Stop Time	Vehicle Start Time	Duration Vehicle Stopped at the Residence
1	03/22/2022	12:40p	1:53p	1 hour & 13 minutes
2	03/28/2022	12:29p	2:09p	1 hour & 40 minutes
3	04/04/2022	11:52a	1:24p	1 hour & 32 minutes
4	04/08/2022	11:06a	12:20p	1 hour & 14 minutes
5	04/12/2022	11:28a	12:34p	1 hour & 6 minutes
6	04/21/2022	11:16a	12:49p	1 hour & 33 minutes
7	04/25/2022	11:11a	12:18p	1 hour & 7 minutes
8	04/26/2022	7:56a	1:33p	5 hours & 37 minutes
9	05/10/2022	11:20a	12:37p	1 hour & 17 minutes
10	07/05/2022	9:40a	12:01p	2 hours & 21 minutes
11	07/19/2022	11:59a	1:11p	1 hour & 12 minutes
12	07/22/2022	10:26a	12:19p	1 hour & 53 minutes
13	07/25/2022	9:54a	11:05a	1 hour & 11 minutes
14	08/02/2022	12:16p	1:46p	1 hour & 30 minutes
15	08/15/2022	11:31a	1:09p	1 hour & 38 minutes
16	08/22/2022	11:27a	12:33p	1 hour & 6 minutes
17	08/23/2022	11:23a	12:44p	1 hour & 21 minutes
18	08/29/2022	11:22a	12:33p	1 hour & 11 minutes
19	09/01/2022	12:30p	1:58p	1 hour & 28 minutes
20	09/07/2022	11:18a	1:11p	1 hour & 53 minutes
21	09/09/2022	11:37a	1:01p	1 hour & 24 minutes
22	09/12/2022	11:52a	12:59p	1 hour & 7 minutes
23	09/15/2022	11:20a	12:33p	1 hour & 13 minutes
24	09/16/2022	11:20a	12:22p	1 hour & 2 minutes
25	09/27/2022	11:25a	12:26p	1 hour & 1 minute

⁶ While the Office reviewed NexTraaq data for the Supervisor’s County vehicle for the time period March 2022 to June 2024, the NexTraaq data related to the Residence was only available from March 2022 to June 2023.

#	Date	Vehicle Stop Time	Vehicle Start Time	Duration Vehicle Stopped at the Residence
26	10/04/2022	1:33p	3:52p	2 hours & 19 minutes
27	10/06/2022	10:39a	11:58a	1 hour & 19 minutes
28	10/14/2022	9:50a	11:00a	1 hour & 10 minutes
29	10/17/2022	11:00a	1:33p	2 hours & 33 minutes
30	10/18/2022	11:30a	1:30p	2 hours & 0 minutes
31	10/24/2022	12:36p	2:06p	1 hour & 30 minutes
32	10/31/2022	11:45a	1:26p	1 hour & 41 minutes
33	11/01/2022	10:59a	12:04p	1 hour & 5 minutes
34	11/07/2022	11:04a	12:45p	1 hour & 41 minutes
35	11/09/2022	11:13a	12:17p	1 hour & 4 minutes
36	11/17/2022	12:04p	1:29p	1 hour & 25 minutes
37	12/05/2022	1:49p	3:02p	1 hour & 13 minutes
38	12/06/2022	11:51a	2:15p	2 hours & 24 minutes
39	12/08/2022	11:28a	1:57p	2 hours & 29 minutes
40	12/09/2022	12:20p	2:35p	2 hours & 15 minutes
41	12/13/2022	11:11a	1:10p	1 hour & 59 minutes
42	12/16/2022	11:22a	1:12p	1 hour & 50 minutes
43	12/19/2022	10:55a	12:35p	1 hour & 40 minutes
44	12/20/2022	12:17p	2:09p	1 hour & 52 minutes
45	01/03/2023	12:41p	1:54p	1 hour & 13 minutes
46	01/05/2023	11:14a	1:51p	2 hours & 37 minutes
47	01/10/2023	1:47p	2:56p	1 hour & 9 minutes
48	01/23/2023	11:02a	12:09p	1 hour & 7 minutes
49	01/24/2023	9:32a	12:28p	2 hours & 56 minutes
50	01/25/2023	12:33p	2:03p	1 hour & 30 minutes
51	01/26/2023	11:49a	1:04p	1 hour & 15 minutes
52	01/30/2023	10:38a	12:02p	1 hour & 24 minutes
53	02/01/2023	11:39a	2:19p	2 hours & 40 minutes
54	02/02/2023	12:22p	4:42p	4 hours & 20 minutes
55	02/03/2023	12:10p	4:44p	4 hours & 34 minutes
56	02/06/2023	7:07a	12:36p	5 hours & 29 minutes
57	02/14/2023	8:48a	11:13a	2 hours & 25 minutes
58	02/24/2023	12:07p	2:00p	1 hour & 53 minutes
59	03/08/2023	11:58a	1:06p	1 hour & 8 minutes
60	03/15/2023	10:54a	12:01p	1 hour & 7 minutes
61	03/17/2023	8:31a	9:45a	1 hour & 14 minutes
Total Time the Vehicle Spent at the Residence				110 hours & 20 minutes
Average Time Spent at the Residence				1 hour & 48.5 minutes

As can be seen from the table, the Vehicle stopped at the Residence for more than an hour on 61 occasions, which equates to about 43 percent of the 141 stops at the Residence. The total time spent at the Residence on those 61 occasions was a little over 110 hours with an average stop time of one hour and 48.5 minutes. On 15 of the 61 occasions or about 25 percent of the time, the

Vehicle was at the Residence for two or more hours. Finally, there were four occasions the Vehicle was at the Residence for four or more hours. While the Office was told part of the Supervisor's duties included inspecting construction job sites throughout the County, the Office found no supporting evidence that there were any inspections or other job-related duties being performed at the Residence during the Supervisor's workday. Thus, absent the Supervisor taking their lunch break at the Residence, there would be no reason for the Supervisor to drive the Vehicle to the Residence on any of the 141 occasions. Further, even if the Supervisor had been taking their lunch break at the Residence, there were still 61 occasions, as reflected in the table, in which the Supervisor had abused their given lunch break.

VI. Analysis of Time and Attendance Records

The Office examined the Supervisor's time and attendance records for the 141 workdays that the Supervisor had driven the Vehicle to the Residence between March 2022 and June 2023. The records showed the Supervisor did not take any form of leave during the time periods the Vehicle was at the Residence on those dates. According to the Supervisor's manager, the Supervisor would have been granted leave had they requested it on any of those occasions, and the Supervisor confirmed this during their interview. It is worth noting that as of mid-July 2024, the Supervisor had hundreds of hours of vacation and thousands of hours of sick leave. Thus, the Supervisor would have had ample vacation or sick time available during the relevant time period to either visit the Relative or care for the Relative.

VII. Relevant Interviews

The Supervisor

In July 2024, the Office conducted a recorded interview of the Supervisor concerning their alleged misuse of the Vehicle and the following information was provided:

The Supervisor is a 35-hour per week employee with a designated schedule of 7:00a to 2:30p with a 30-minute lunch break.⁷ Since about 2005, the Supervisor has been assigned to a County vehicle. The Supervisor was aware that County vehicles are equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking equipment. However, the Supervisor was not familiar with the NexTraq program or whether anyone in the Division was actively monitoring NexTraq for vehicle misuse. The Supervisor confirmed that they had signed the County's Vehicle Management System Policy in October 2012, which sets forth compliance standards for County vehicles including unauthorized use. By signing the Policy, the Supervisor acknowledged they would "comply with the policy" and that a "failure to do so may subject [them] to disciplinary action." A copy of the Vehicle Management System Policy signed by the Supervisor is attached as **Exhibit 3**.

During the 2022/2023 time period, the Supervisor was assigned to the Vehicle. During that time frame, nobody else drove the Vehicle. When questioned about the 141 times the Vehicle was at the Residence between March 2022 and June 2023 according to NexTraq, the Supervisor

⁷ This differs from the Supervisor's job classification that states the Supervisor is to work from 7:00a to 3:00p with a one-hour unpaid lunch break. Regardless, the Office gave the Supervisor credit for the one-hour lunch break when analyzing the NexTraq data for misuse of the Vehicle.

admitted they had driven the Vehicle to the Residence on numerous occasions to visit the Relative, who was an immediate family member who was sick at the time and has since passed away. The Supervisor explained they would leave work on their way to “wherever” and just stop to see if the Relative was okay. While the Supervisor could not recall all of the times that they had driven the Vehicle to the Residence, they admitted it occurred more frequently in late 2022 and early 2023 as the Relative’s health was declining. The Supervisor estimated the stops lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to a couple of hours. When asked if their manager knew they were taking the Vehicle to the Residence during the workday, the Supervisor said they may have mentioned it to their manager. The Supervisor never transported the Relative anywhere in the Vehicle.

The Supervisor does not telework, and they were not formally teleworking from the Residence on any of the 141 occasions that the Vehicle was located there according to the NexTraQ data. However, the Supervisor stressed that they work throughout the day, even outside of normal working hours, via their County-issued cellular phone. Therefore, the Supervisor was able to handle work-related tasks while visiting the Relative at the Residence. Such tasks included responding to emails and reviewing documents. The Supervisor asserted that they try to balance their time to ensure they get their work completed. This ensures they are not “screwing the County” and the County is not “screwing [them].” With that said, the Supervisor was not able to justify the 61 longer stays at the Residence as outlined in the table, nor were they able to prove that they were working the entire time they were at the Residence on those occasions. When asked why they did not take leave for any of those 61 visits to the Residence, considering they had ample amounts of vacation and sick leave, the Supervisor had no good justification. Although, it is worth noting that at one point during the interview, the Supervisor stated they hoped to add their unused sick leave to their pension calculation. While the Supervisor denied “stealing time” from the County throughout the interview, by the end of the interview, the Supervisor was apologetic for their actions and asked how they could “make it right” with the County.

The Supervisor’s Manager

In May 2024, the Office conducted a recorded interview of the Supervisor’s manager (“the Manager”) regarding the alleged misuse of the Vehicle by the Supervisor and the following information was provided:

The Manager confirmed the Supervisor was assigned to the Vehicle, which was equipped with GPS. The Manager had “heard of” NexTraQ, but they did not have a username and had never logged into the program. When asked if anyone in the Division had access to NexTraQ, the Manager responded “not that I know of.”

The Manager described the Supervisor as an employee who is responsive and always available by telephone or email. With that said, the Manager did not know the “granular” details of what the Supervisor was doing on a daily basis.

The Manager was told the Office analyzed the Supervisor’s NexTraQ data, which revealed the Vehicle was stopped for extended periods of time at the Residence. The Manager was aware the Relative lived at the Residence, and the Supervisor occasionally “stopped by” the Residence in the Vehicle to pick up mail. However, the Manager was not aware the Supervisor

was going to the Residence that frequently or for extended periods of time as indicated by the NexTraq data. The Manager agreed with investigators that because the Supervisor had worked for the County for a long period of time, the Supervisor had accrued plenty of vacation and sick leave that could have been used to visit the Relative or tend to the Relative's needs. The Manager stated they would have approved of any such requests from the Supervisor.

VIII. Conclusion

Based on the results of the investigation, the Office substantiated the allegation that the Supervisor had misused the Vehicle. While the misuse did not involve driving the Vehicle home or not reporting to work in the Vehicle as required, it did involve driving the Vehicle to the Residence. Specifically, between March 2022 and June 2023, the Supervisor drove the Vehicle to the Residence to either check on the Relative or to handle tasks that needed to be performed for the Relative, neither of which pertained to the Supervisor's official duties and responsibilities within the Division. Of particular concern were the 61 occasions in which the Supervisor remained at the Residence for over an hour and did not take any form of leave, despite having numerous hours of vacation and sick leave. During their interview, the Supervisor admitted that the Manager would have likely approved such leave requests. This point was reinforced by the Manager during their interview.

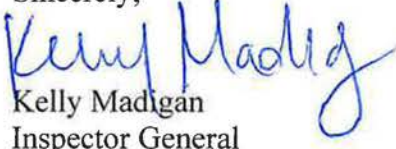
While the Supervisor stated they were able to work via their County cellular phone while at the Residence, there was no evidence to support that any meaningful work was being performed by the Supervisor during these extended visits. In mitigation, the Residence was less than five miles from the Supervisor's office. Further, it could be argued that some of the time the Supervisor was at the Residence constituted the Supervisor's lunch break. As noted in footnote 4, the Office received conflicting information about how much time the Supervisor got for lunch. During their interview, the Supervisor represented that their work schedule was from 7:00a to 2:30p with a 30-minute lunch break, while the Supervisor's job classification indicated the Supervisor's work schedule was 7:00a to 3:00p with a one-hour unpaid lunch break. Regardless, there were numerous occasions in which the Supervisor drove the Vehicle to the Residence and spent amounts of time that far exceeded even the more liberal one-hour lunch break. It should be noted that these times do not take into account the time it took the Supervisor to drive to and from the Residence.

Based on the findings set forth in the report, the Office provides the Administration with the following recommendations:

- The Chief of the Division, or a designated employee, should be given access and training on the NexTraq program so they can monitor vehicle use as necessary. It should be noted that on October 31, 2024, the Office received an updated list of NexTraq users within the Department of Public Works and Transportation and there was still not an active user within the Division on that list.
- The Office recommends the Division should consider a more formal way, such as a work order, to verify the work being performed in the field by employees with managerial responsibilities such as the Supervisor.

- One of the Office's prior recommendations to the Administration was to have the County Auditor conduct a review of the NexTraQ system and its users to determine if the program is being underutilized across County government. In light of the findings in this report and the fact that this recommendation is still open, the Office again recommends that the County Auditor conduct such a review.

This matter is being referred to you for an official response. Please respond in writing by January 31, 2025. In the response, please indicate what actions have been taken or what actions you intend to take regarding this matter. If those actions include personnel matters, please include that information as well. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kelly Madigan
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General

cc: James R. Benjamin, Jr., County Attorney
Lauren Buckler, Director, Department of Public Works and Transportation
Renee Coleman, Director, Office of Human Resources
Elizabeth J. Irwin, Acting County Auditor



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR., *County Executive*

LAUREN T. BUCKLER, *Acting Director*
Department of Public Works and Transportation

Department of Public Works & Transportation

Vehicle Use Policy

Created: March 2024

Effective: June 2024

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth DPW&T's Vehicle Use Policy in order to ensure that all employees are aware of the expectations, responsibilities, and to provide guidelines for operating a county owned vehicle.

Policy

Operating a county owned vehicle is privilege, not a right. When operating a county owned vehicle, employees must agree to this policy and obtain permission from their Bureau Chief or the employee's immediate supervisor. When operating a county owned vehicle, employees must:

- Possess and maintain a valid state driver's license based upon position requirements (non-commercial/commercial).
- Shall comply with the regulations pertaining to the vehicle's operation, maintenance, and must obey all traffic laws, including wearing a seat belt (as mentioned in DPW&T's [Mandatory Use of Seat Belts Policy](#)) at all times while operating the county owned vehicle and using a hands-free device for cellular devices, as mentioned in the [Cell Phone Usage Policy](#) on page 25 in the OHR Employee Handbook.
- Maintain the cleanliness of the county owned vehicle in the employee's possession, including not smoking in the vehicle. Refer to page 25 in the OHR Employee Handbook to review the [Smoke Free Policy](#).
- Report any accident, theft, or malicious damage involving a county owned vehicle to their supervisor immediately. For guidelines on reporting an accident please refer to the [Flow Chart for Accident or Employee Injury Procedure](#).
- Not disable the GPS tracking equipment. Disabling the tracking system can result in discipline up to including termination.

Vehicle Management System

The County has installed Nex Traq Positioning System tracking equipment in certain County owned vehicles. The equipment will improve overall efficiency and reduce vehicle operating costs by ensuring the County vehicles are operated within the established guidelines. For Nex Traq Procedures and Standards, please refer to [Nex Traq GPS Tracking Vehicle Management](#), located in the Personnel Manual.

Use of County Owned Vehicle

County-owned vehicles are to be used for business related purposes. In some instances, employees may be allowed to take home a county owned vehicle, but only after the Take Home County Vehicle Request has been approved by the Agency Head, Director of Budget and Finance, and the County Administrative Officer. For parameters regarding Take Home Vehicle Assignments, please refer to [Section 5.16.4](#) in the Personnel Manual.

For questions regarding this policy, please contact the DPW&T HR Department.

[View Map](#)

[View GroundRent Redemption](#)

[View GroundRent Registration](#)

Special Tax Recapture: None

Account Identifier: [REDACTED]

Owner Information

Owner Name: [REDACTED]

Use:

RESIDENTIAL

Mailing Address:

BALTIMORE MD 21234-3541

Principal Residence:

YES

Deed Reference: [REDACTED]

Location & Structure Information

Premises Address:

BALTIMORE 21234-3541

Legal Description:

Map: Grid: Parcel: Neighborhood:

Subdivision:

Section:

Block:

Lot:

Assessment Year:

Plat No:

Plat Ref: [REDACTED]

Town: None

Primary Structure Built
1952

Above Grade Living Area
1,188 SF

Finished Basement Area
300 SF

Property Land Area
6,678 SF

County Use
04

Stories Basement Type
1 1/2 YES STANDARD UNIT

Exterior
ASBESTOS SHINGLE/

Quality Full/Half Bath
4 1 full

Garage Last Notice of Major Improvements

Value Information

	Base Value	Value As of 01/01/2023	Phase-in Assessments As of 07/01/2023	As of 07/01/2024
Land:	72,000	74,700		
Improvements	116,300	149,000		
Total:	188,300	223,700	200,100	211,900
Preferential Land:	0	0		

Transfer Information

Seller:

Date:

Price:

Type:

Deed1: [REDACTED]

Deed2:

Seller:

Date:

Price:

Type:

Deed1:

Deed2:

Seller:

Date:

Price:

Type:

Deed1:

Deed2:

Exemption Information

Partial Exempt Assessments:	Class	07/01/2023	07/01/2024
County:	000	0.00	
State:	000	0.00	
Municipal:	000	0.00 0.00	0.00 0.00

Special Tax Recapture: None

Homestead Application Information

Homestead Application Status: Approved 06/23/2008

Homeowners' Tax Credit Application Information

Homeowners' Tax Credit Application Status: No Application

Date:

Vehicle Management System Policy

1.0 Overview

The County has installed Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking equipment in all County-owned vehicles. The purpose of the equipment is to improve overall efficiency and reduce vehicle operating costs by ensuring that County vehicles are operated within established guidelines.

2.0 Purpose

This policy is adopted and designed to establish standards concerning the operation of County vehicles and the use of GPS to ensure that County employees are working in a safe and secure environment.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all County employees operating a County vehicle at any time and for any purpose. This policy does not apply to police vehicles and fire equipment (but does apply to Fire Marshal vehicles).

4.0 Policy

All County vehicles will be monitored for compliance with these standards. Department Heads or their designees are responsible for monitoring the GPS data. All work requests for a given individual must match the vehicle tracking information for a given day.

The following are parameters that will be monitored for compliance. Exceeding the established threshold set for these standards will be considered violation of this policy and may subject the violator to disciplinary action at management discretion. Additional parameters may be set as deemed necessary.

4.1 Tracked Parameters

1. **Exit Zone**
Exiting the borders of Baltimore County without prior approval.
2. **Excessive Stops**
A vehicle being stopped at one location for an extended period of time based on agency assignment.
3. **Excessive Speed**
Exceeding the posted speed limit.
4. **Excessive Idle**

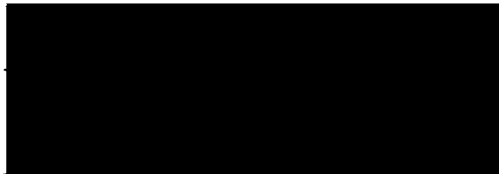
Allowing the vehicle's engine to idle for more than ten (10) minutes at a given stop.

5. Unauthorized Use of Vehicle

4.2 Removing, altering or disabling GPS equipment installed in the County vehicles is strictly prohibited, unless required by the agency for security purposes.

4.3 Revision History

I acknowledge that I have read and I understand all information in the GPS vehicle tracking policy. I understand the adopted policy for driving County vehicles and will seek verification or clarification where necessary. I will comply with the policy and I understand that failure to do so may subject me to disciplinary action.



Employee Signature

10/17/2012

Date



Employee Human Resources ID Number

DPW - DCCA

Agency



KATHERINE A. KLAUSMEIER
County Executive

D'ANDREA L. WALKER
County Administrative Officer

January 28, 2025

Ms. Kelly Madigan
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
Baltimore County Government
400 Washington Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204

RE: OIG Investigative Report – Case No. 24-019

Dear Ms. Madigan:

Thank you for bringing forth this matter. I have reviewed the findings as described throughout the case report. It should be noted that the Supervisor mentioned in the report is no longer an employee of Baltimore County.

Several recommendations have been made to the Administration, which are presented along with responses below.

Recommendation: Provide the Chief of the Division, or a designated employee access to NexTraq.

Response: A review will be conducted of Division employees to determine those that should have access to NexTraq. Any employees identified will be provided access to NexTraq. Employees have been reminded of the County Vehicle Use Policies. In addition, employees have completed the appropriate telework agreements if they were not already in place.

Since this happened, a review was conducted and supervisors are being provided access. Special emphasis of proper vehicle use was provided to employees in September 2024 which was before this report came out, but after the events occurred. So we have stop gaps in place already and are continuing to evaluate as needed.

Recommendation: Consider a more formal (i.e. Work Order) system for the Division to verify work performed in the field.

Response: Work Orders are currently generated in the County by CityWorks. CityWorks was initiated to ensure that the Department has record of discrete, short-term assignments that are completed, usually in a single day. These tasks are generally related to preventative maintenance of County assets.

The Division referenced in this report does not operate in a fashion that Work Orders would accommodate, but rather provides routine monitoring and inspection of long-term capital projects that may span several years.

A random audit of NexTraq start/stop reports may be compared to assigned project locations to validate travel to ongoing projects. However, emergent situations such as water main breaks, resident complaints unrelated to capital work, etc. would still occur and would need consideration in this audit process.

Recommendation: Have the County Auditor conduct a review of NexTraq usage across the County.

Response: We will further consider your recommendation and make a determination.

Again, thank you for reaching out regarding this matter. If you have questions or need further clarification, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



D'Andrea L. Walker
County Administrative Officer

cc: James R. Benjamin, Jr., County Attorney
Elizabeth J. Irwin, Acting County Auditor
Lauren Buckler, Director, Department of Public Works and Transportation
Renee Coleman, Director, Office of Human Resources