

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Investigations of Improper Activities by State Employees, July 2007 Through December 2007

ALLEGATION I2006-0665 (REPORT I2008-1), APRIL 2008

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's response as of April 2009

We investigated and substantiated an allegation that the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (Corrections) wasted state funds by leasing unnecessary parking spaces from a private facility. In addition, Corrections mismanaged state resources by failing to properly oversee the parking spaces under its control, and it misused state resources by allowing state employees to park their personal vehicles for free in some of the leased spaces.

Finding: Corrections mismanaged state resources and wasted state funds by leasing more spaces than it needed.

Our review of vehicle parking assignments at a state-owned parking facility under Corrections' control and a nearby parking facility where it leased additional parking spaces revealed that, as of December 31, 2007, Corrections was leasing 26 more parking spaces than it needed for the state-owned vehicles at one of its regional headquarters. Although Corrections may have needed to lease 29 spaces when it first entered into the lease in August 2006, we found it needed only three of the leased spaces for that purpose as of October 1, 2007. As a result of failing to manage the number of parking spaces it needed, Corrections wasted at least \$11,277 in state funds from October 1, 2007, through December 31, 2007.

Our investigation found that Corrections had 56 parking spaces under its control as of October 2007. Of those spaces, 27 were state-owned spaces at the regional headquarters building and 29 were leased spaces at a nearby private parking facility. However, as of December 31, 2007, Corrections was using only 10 of the 27 state-owned spaces for state-owned vehicles. For the remaining 17 spaces, three were left unused, employees were allowed to park their personal vehicles in seven of the spaces at no cost, and another seven spaces were assigned by Corrections to another state agency. Similarly, we found that Corrections parked state-owned vehicles in only 20 of the 29 leased spaces at the nearby private parking facility. Four of the remaining nine spaces at the private facility were unused and state employees were allowed to park their personal vehicles in five spaces for free. Corrections misused a state resource by allowing state employees to park their personal vehicles in five of the leased spaces for free.

Our review determined that since at least October 2007, the date of the information provided to us, five employees have parked privately owned vehicles at no cost in private parking facilities leased by the State. In addition, information we obtained suggests that three of these employees have parked privately owned vehicles in the private parking facility since at least January 2006. The information also suggests that

Investigative Highlight . . .

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation wasted nearly \$11,300 in state funds by leasing unneeded parking spaces and misused state resources by allowing five employees to use them at no charge for their privately owned vehicles.

Corrections allowed other employees to park privately owned vehicles at the State's expense before October 2007. When asked to clarify when specific individuals began parking privately owned vehicles at either the state-owned or private parking facility, officials at the regional headquarters informed us that the regional headquarters did not maintain records documenting when employees were assigned parking spaces. Further, when asked to explain the criteria used for determining which employees were allowed to obtain free parking for their vehicles, the officials told us that they followed the practice in place before their arrivals, which was to have supervisors assign spaces vacated by departing employees to the new employees hired to replace them. Corrections did not adequately maintain records to document when it began allowing its employees to use the parking spaces for their privately owned vehicles, so we could not quantify the full extent to which state funds were used to provide free employee parking. Nevertheless, Corrections misused state resources by allowing some leased parking spaces to be used for personal purposes.

Corrections' Action: Corrective action taken.

Although Corrections initially reported that it needed to lease five spaces at the private parking facility, it subsequently informed us that it canceled its lease with the private parking facility in April 2008. As a result, Corrections is no longer paying for the 29 parking spaces it had leased in the private facility. Based on the terms of its lease agreement, the cancellation resulted in an annual savings of more than \$50,000.