

**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
CITY OF BALTIMORE**



**Isabel Mercedes Cumming  
Inspector General**

**Investigative  
Report Synopsis**

**OIG Case # 23-0051-I**

**Issued: May 20, 2025**



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General  
City Hall, Suite 635  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202



May 20, 2025

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is to promote accountability, efficiency, and integrity in City government and investigate complaints of fraud, financial waste, and abuse.

The OIG received a complaint alleging that, in 2023, a Department of Public Works (DPW) supervisor accepted payment to allow an unauthorized individual to dispose of trash at the Sisson Street Drop-Off Center (Sisson Street), located at 2840 Sisson Street, Baltimore, Maryland, 21211. Drop-off centers are DPW facilities where residents of the City of Baltimore (City) can dispose of waste, primarily household trash and recyclable items.

### **Bribery Allegation**

The OIG received a complaint stating that an individual (Individual) allegedly paid a DPW Solid Waste supervisor (DPW Supervisor) \$500 per year to dispose of prohibited items at a DPW site. Witnesses reported that the Individual was initially denied entry to Sisson Street but was then later allowed to enter. Witnesses said the Individual claimed he pays the DPW Supervisor \$500 a year to dump anything they want.

The investigation was able to identify the Individual. The Individual stated they do have a trash-hauling business and occasionally dumped trash at Sisson Street. According to the Individual, employees would let them drop off cardboard and up to eight bags of trash. The Individual denied paying Sisson Street employees but said they had donated food for a Thanksgiving party for employees in 2022. Additionally, the Individual claimed an employee once requested \$20 from them. The Individual said they provided the \$20 to the employee, but another employee retrieved and returned the money.

The DPW Supervisor denied ever receiving payment for access to the citizen convenience centers, including Sisson Street. The DPW Supervisor explained that DPW employees sometimes receive food or monetary gifts. The OIG subpoenaed financial records and did not find evidence of the alleged bribery.

### **Residency & Waste Hauler Verification**

During the investigation, the OIG learned that employees checking residents into the drop-off centers should verify City residency on their identification, inspect the material they wish to drop off, and record their vehicle license plate information. Once residents are checked in, they are directed to a location to drop off their items. DPW employees stated that waste haulers were not allowed to utilize the residential drop-off centers and must use the Quarantine Road Landfill (QRL) or the Northwest Transfer Station (NWTS) instead.

#### **REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE**

HOTLINE: 443-984-3476/800-417-0430 EMAIL: [OIG@BALTIMORECITY.GOV](mailto:OIG@BALTIMORECITY.GOV) WEBSITE: [OIG.BALTIMORECITY.GOV](http://OIG.BALTIMORECITY.GOV)

*This public synopsis is only a summary of a more comprehensive report of investigation submitted to the appropriate City management official*

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) issues licenses for waste haulers.<sup>1</sup> Anyone contracting with others for the collection, transportation, or disposal of solid waste or engaging in the collection, transportation, or disposal of solid waste must have a license and is required to dispose of their waste at QRL or NWTS. DPW also operates the small hauler program, which provides haulers with vehicles weighing less than 7,000 pounds with flat rate disposal fees.<sup>2</sup> Small haulers must also use QRL or NWTS and are prohibited from using the citizens' convenience centers.

During observations, it appeared that employees were not checking customers' identification prior to dumping. The Individual stated that the employees at Sisson Street do not ask for identification. The OIG found multiple records showing that the Individual was not a resident of Baltimore City, Maryland.

The DPW Supervisor and multiple employees stated that it was difficult to determine if people using the convenience centers were haulers. These employees expressed a belief that multiple haulers used the citizens' convenience centers to dump. The OIG also heard conflicting information from employees regarding the rules at citizen convenience centers, including the allowable number of visits and allowable amount of waste. The OIG found information on DPW's website<sup>3</sup> stating that City residents are limited to no more than two loads per day and no more than five loads per week.

### **Investigative Findings**

The OIG did not substantiate the bribery allegation but, during the investigation, found evidence that at least one small waste hauler and potentially more were using citizens' convenience centers for drop-off. Small waste haulers are not permitted to use citizens' convenience centers for drop-off. DPW employees reported that it is difficult to distinguish a waste hauler from a citizen allowed to use the convenience center.

The OIG recommended that DPW review the commercial hauler program for opportunities to improve convenience center processes. Specifically, the OIG recommended that DPW evaluate the check-in process and train employees with formal operating procedures. In their response, DPW stated that they will be creating a comprehensive information script and training program for staff.

Sincerely,



Isabel Mercedes Cumming  
Inspector General

CC: Hon. Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City  
Hon. Zeke Cohen, Baltimore City Council President  
Hon. Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller  
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council  
Hon. Ebony Thompson, Baltimore City Solicitor

<sup>1</sup> <https://health.baltimorecity.gov/waste-hauler-license>

<sup>2</sup> <https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/Small%20Haulers%20Program.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://publicworks.baltimorecity.gov/solid-waste/drop-off>

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