

Department of Public Works
Response
Case # 27-0001-I

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT, Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Matthew W Garbark, Director
Abel Wolman Municipal Building, 6th Floor
200 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

July 8, 2026

Ms. Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
100 North Holliday Street, Suite 640
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: DPW Response to OIG Case #25-0027-I, dated July 1, 2026

Inspector General Cumming:

This correspondence will serve as the Department of Public Works' (DPW) official management response to OIG Management Alert OIG Case #27-0027-I, dated July 1, 2026 (the "Alert"). The Alert references a complaint alleging poor working conditions at the Department of Public Works' (DPW) Patapsco Wastewater Treatment Plant (Patapsco Plant) located at 3501 Asiatic Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21226. The complainant alleged that DPW employees work in unsafe work conditions and were currently working in extreme heat with temperatures at 86° Fahrenheit (F).

We have removed all loose rock and debris and completed concrete repairs to the areas noted in Figures 1 and 2 of the Alert.



Figure 1. Floor repair at entrance to RSPS 2

In response to the air-conditioning system and its availability, DPW had a contractor on site during the OIG visit to address the HVAC repairs. The repairs to the building's HVAC system were completed on the day of the 7/1 visit. Regarding the temperature in the locker room and the air conditioner, upon follow-up inspection on 7/2/26, we checked the air conditioning unit itself and found the discharge air was 60° F, while the wall temperature across the locker room was 76° F. See figures 2 and 3 below



Figure 2. Temperature on AC discharge



Figure 3. Temperature on wall across from AC unit

During our initial walk-through on 7/2, we discovered the unit was off upon entry, so we turned it back on. Note that if the air conditioner is turned off by staff, the room temperature will rise to a concerning level, so running the unit consistently is important. We also noted the air conditioner filter was clean and free of buildup. See Figure 4 below. To take the heat concerns a bit further, we also have a pedestal fan near the locker room entrance to help move the building's conditioned air through the locker room. See figure 5 below.



Figure 4. AC Filter free of debris

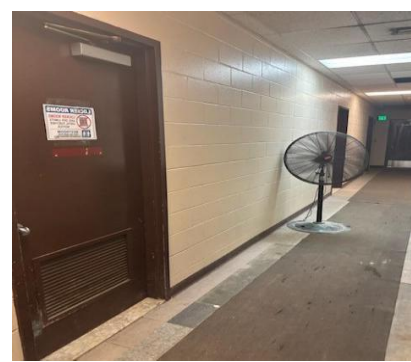


Figure 5. Pedestal fan available for use

Regarding the noted issues with the showers and a broken urinal, both items were submitted for replacement/upgrades previously and are in the process of being scheduled for completion. Additional shower areas and bathrooms are available in the primary and Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) areas for staff, while the showers at Return Sludge Pump Station 2 (RSPS 2) are being addressed. In response, we have closed off the locker room area in the RSPS 2 building, leaving the bathroom usable and accessible, and have temporarily relocated staff to the Primary and ENR Building's locker room areas to store their belongings, allowing improvements to the necessary facilities. **See figures 6 and 7 below.** Additionally, there is a second fully functional urinal directly adjacent to the currently out-of-service urinal. **See figure 8 below.**



Figure 6. Restricted Access to RSPS 2 shower

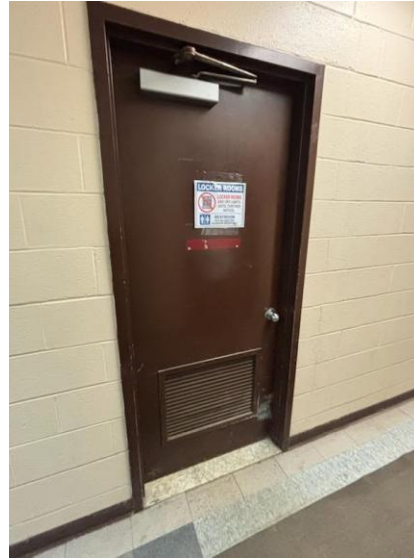


Figure 7. RSPS 2 Men's Room Door w/signage



Figure 8. Men's Room Urinals

In Figure 8 of the Alert, there is a reference to the need to prop the door open due to poor ventilation and a chemical smell. A work order for the exhaust fan was submitted for repairs on 6/29/26, and a temporary fan unit was installed in the area on 7/2/26 to address residual odors while the permanent fan repair is being completed (see Figure 9). Regarding the residue on the wall, on 7/2/2026, operators were instructed to spray down the walls to eliminate any residual drops; however, the staining is permanent and should not be construed as a danger. The staining is an inherent result of using iron (ferric). Neither our leadership nor our Safety team has a record of any complaints regarding odors in this area. Nevertheless, we will reiterate to staff the importance of promptly reporting any workplace health or safety concerns to management. In addition, we will engage our internal Industrial Hygienist to evaluate the employee concerns noted regarding air quality.



Figure 9. Temporary fan for RSPS exhaust

For the break room area, demolition of the sink and cabinet area will be completed by 7/9/2026 to prepare for replacement with a new stainless steel area. The replacement of the sink/cabinet area was in progress prior to the OIG visit, as the new sink area was already on site for installation. The installation itself was delayed due to limited carpentry staff out on medical leave. While the work is underway, the break room has been closed off, and staff have access to alternative lunch facilities in the nearby ENR building. Cleaning of the ceiling vents and, if necessary, replacement of ceiling tiles will also occur during this time. **See Figure 10 below** for details on restricted access to the break room.



Figure 10, RSPS 2 Break Room – Restricted Access

The leaking pump noted in Figure 14 was investigated by our mechanical staff on 7/6/26 and repaired. **See video in EXHIBIT A**

All items identified in the laboratory area, as shown in Figures 15–20 of the report, are part of a planned laboratory rehabilitation to be addressed in a future project phase. This laboratory is currently out of service and not utilized by staff. While staff have been informally notified, we will issue formal communication regarding the lab's closure and post signage at all entry points to prevent any further confusion. The permanent eyewash station will be installed and made operational in conjunction with the laboratory rehabilitation and the subsequent return of the space to active service.

We will repaint the ceiling referenced in Figure 19. The bathroom shown in Figure 20 is cleaned regularly and was clean during the OIG visit. The visible staining in the photograph is due to hard water rather than a cleanliness issue.

DPW remains fully committed to maintaining healthy and safe working conditions and will hold leaders accountable when these standards are not upheld.

We welcome the OIG to visit the Wastewater Treatment Plants with or without prior notice. It is important to note, however, that all personnel must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment while on site and must always be escorted due to the hazardous operating environment. Unannounced visits are not uncommon, as both the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Environmental Protection Agency conduct routine inspections and follow the same safety protocols, since safety requirements for facility access are paramount.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. If you have any further questions regarding this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact DPW's Chief of Staff, LaToya Curtis, at LaToya.Curtis@baltimorecity.gov or at 410-545-3501.

Best Regards,

Alan D. Robinson

For Matthew W. Garbark, Director

Alan D. Robinson

Deputy Director

OIG Referral #27-001-I EXHIBIT A



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Video of Repaired Pump