



Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy

Whistleblower Investigation Report

Department of Corrections

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September 18, 2025

Tim Lang, Secretary
Department of Corrections

Report on Whistleblower Investigation

Attached is the official report on Whistleblower Case No. 25-006 at the Department of Corrections.

The State Auditor's Office received an assertion of improper governmental activity at the Department. This assertion was submitted to us under the provisions of Chapter 42.40 of the Revised Code of Washington, the Whistleblower Act. We have investigated the assertion independently and objectively through interviews and by reviewing relevant documents. This report contains the results of our investigation.

If you are a member of the media and have questions about this report, please contact Assistant Director of Communications Adam Wilson at (564) 999-0799. Otherwise, please contact Assistant Director for State Audit and Special Investigations Jim Brownell at (564) 999-0782.

Sincerely,

Pat McCarthy, State Auditor

Olympia, WA

cc: Governor Bob Ferguson

Juline Martin, Audit Director/Ethics Administrator

Kate Reynolds, Executive Director, Executive Ethics Board

Brittany Wallace, Investigator

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WHISTLEBLOWER INVESTIGATION REPORT

Assertion(s) and Results

Our Office received a whistleblower complaint asserting a Community Corrections Officer 2 (Subject) is taking time off work and improperly reporting it on his time sheet. Additionally, the complaint asserted the Subject is accumulating flex time he did not earn.

We found no reasonable cause to believe an improper governmental action occurred.

Background

The Department of Corrections consists of the Offices of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, which oversees five divisions led by assistant secretaries: Prisons, Community Corrections, Administrative Operations, Reentry & Correctional Industries, and Health Services. The Department has about 9,000 employees who work in a variety of specialties and programs to administer a comprehensive system of corrections for people convicted of violating the law, including about 12,000 people housed in 10 prisons and 8 reentry center facilities in Washington. The Department also supervises more than 14,000 people across the state.

The Subject currently works as a Community Corrections Officer 2 (CCO2) at the Yakima Community Justice Center. During the period of December 2023 to December 2024, the Subject worked as a CCO2 at the Ahtanum View Reentry Center. During this time, the Subject had the following work schedules:

- December 2023 through July 15, 2024: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- July 16, 2024, through October 27, 2024: Tuesday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- October 28, 2024, through December 2024: Monday through Thursday, 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

About the Investigation

We received a whistleblower complaint asserting the Subject used state resources for private gain by falsifying his time sheets and improperly accumulated flex time.

To determine whether an improper governmental action occurred, we obtained the following documentation from the Department for the period of December 2023 through December 2024:

- Position description
- Time and leave summaries
- Official work schedule
- Facility sign-in and sign-out sheets
- Email communications related to time off

We identified seven days where, according to emails, the Subject either asked to arrive early or leave early. He told his supervisor he would use the accrued flex time to cover the hours he did not work. For these seven days, we noted he recorded full workdays on his time sheets. During our interviews with the Subject and their supervisor, the Subject said he did not receive any training on how to record flex time on time sheets during the investigative period. The Subject did receive training by his new supervisor in early 2025. We also found the Department did not have a written policy that describes how employees accrue and document flex time, or how a supervisor is meant to oversee and approve the use of flex time.

We compared sign-in sheets from the Ahtanum View Reentry Center to the Subject's time sheets and identified variances. For example, the Subject recorded eight hours of work for one day on his time sheet, but other records show he signed out of the facility at 12 p.m. when his shift ended at 5 p.m.

The Subject's supervisor said most of the Subject's daily duties take place out in the field, rather than in the office. Therefore, it was reasonable that the Subject would sign out from the facility before his shift was over because he was working in the field.

Based in our analysis of the Subject's time and attendance, we determined there was no reasonable cause to believe an improper governmental action occurred. However, we identified internal control deficiencies related to recording and monitoring of flex time on time sheets, and a lack of written policies and procedures.

Recommendation

We recommend the Department strengthen its internal controls by ensuring staff receive adequate training on the use of flex time, supervisors effectively monitor its use, and that the Department implement written policies and procedures.

State Auditor's Office Concluding Remarks

We thank Department officials and personnel for their assistance and cooperation during the investigation.

WHISTLEBLOWER INVESTIGATION CRITERIA

We came to our determination in this investigation by evaluating the facts against the criteria below:

RCW 42.52.160 Use of persons, money, or property for private gain - (1) No state officer or state employee may employ or use any person, money, or property under the officer's or employee's official control or direction, or in his or her official custody, for the private benefit or gain of the officer, employee, or another.

WAC 292-110-010(1) and (3) – Use of state resources - (1) Statement of principles. All state employees and officers are responsible for the proper use of state resources, including funds, facilities, tools, property, and their time. This section does not restrict the use of state resources as described in subsections (2) and (3) of this section