

Department of Justice

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

INVESTIGATION I2007-0958 (REPORT I2008-1), APRIL 2008

Department of Justice's response as of September 2008

We asked the Department of Justice (Justice) to assist us with the investigation. We substantiated that a manager and four subordinates at one of Justice's regional offices failed to properly report their absences on their time sheets for several months, in accordance with state regulations and Justice policy. In addition, Justice management failed to ensure the accuracy of their employees' time sheets.

Finding #1: A manager and four subordinates at Justice failed to properly report their absences for several months.

A manager and four subordinates at one of Justice's regional offices failed to properly report their absences for the nine-month period from April through December 2006. Because the employees did not use time sheets to track all their actual time worked, Justice was unable to determine precisely the amount of leave they took. Nevertheless, based on review of other documentation, we estimated that the manager and four subordinates did not account for 727 hours of leave for the nine-month period. As a result, the potential unearned income received by the manager and four subordinates totaled \$17,974.

We found that the manager improperly allowed the four subordinates to take informal time off as compensation for unreported overtime they worked either at home or at the office, and failed to ensure that the four subordinates accurately reported their time worked and leave taken. Although the scope of our investigation was limited to the nine-month period in 2006 for which we received documentation about unreported absences, Justice learned that the manager and four subordinates continued to inaccurately report their time worked and absences taken in 2007. Justice began to investigate the 2007 time reporting improprieties before we completed our investigation.

Justice's Action: Corrective action taken.

Justice initially distributed a memorandum in January 2008 to its division chiefs reminding them of their time reporting obligations and policies. In addition, Justice reported in March 2008 that it did not intend to seek adverse actions against the four subordinates. Instead, it decided to counsel the manager and the four subordinate employees about the importance of following Justice's policies regarding proper time reporting requirements and leave use. In July 2008 Justice completed its investigation of the five employees' time reporting and found that the manager and four subordinates continued to inaccurately report their absences in 2007. Although it concluded that as in 2006, the employees failed to follow proper state policy and state regulations, Justice did not quantify the extent of the employees' unreported absences because it had already proceeded to take corrective action for the employees' failure to

Investigative Highlight . . .

A manager and four subordinate employees at the Department of Justice failed to properly report on their time sheets an estimated 727 hours of leave over a nine-month period in 2006, amounting to almost \$18,000 in compensation that was potentially unearned. In addition, the manager failed to adequately monitor his subordinates' absences or time worked.

observe the proper time-reporting requirements. In concluding its corrective action, Justice provided in August 2008 the subordinate employees with training specifically covering Justice's policies and procedures about leave use and time reporting.

Finding #2: Justice's management failed to ensure the accuracy of their employees' time sheets.

Our investigation determined that the manager never verified the accuracy of his four subordinates' time and did not adequately monitor his subordinates' absences or time worked. In addition, the manager failed to adequately monitor and maintain complete records for the informal leave taken and overtime his subordinates worked to ensure there was conformity between the amount of informal leave they took and the extra time they claimed to have worked. Most important, he ignored the provisions of state regulations that require him to keep complete and accurate time and attendance records for each employee.

The manager's supervisor, who works at Justice's headquarters, did not sufficiently ensure the accuracy of the manager's time sheets. She also neglected her responsibility under Justice policy to provide meaningful oversight of his time reporting and to ensure that the manager properly monitored the time reporting by his subordinates.

Justice's Action: Corrective action taken.

In February 2008 Justice reported that it instructed the manager that he could not grant informal time off to any staff member. Justice also reported that it instructed the manager and his supervisor to ensure that all leave, overtime, and alternate workweek schedules are documented appropriately and they comply with state and Justice policies and procedures. Justice further counseled the manager's supervisor in April 2008 about the need to provide more diligent oversight of her employees. Moreover, Justice documented in the manager's probation report and in a counseling memorandum the manager's failure to follow Justice's policies and procedures for time reporting and leave use. Following this disciplinary action, the manager left Justice in July 2008. Justice subsequently promoted one of the four subordinates to replace him, and in August 2008 it provided the former manager's supervisor and the management's replacement with training specifically covering Justice's policies and procedures about leave use and time reporting.