



Inspector General

2024-0016-INVI-P — Misuse of Government Fuel Cards

Suspected violations of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) “Fleet Management” policy, waste and theft. **Substantiated**

The AOC Office of Inspector General (OIG) received an allegation that a U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Wright Express, Inc. (WEX) card intended for diesel fuel purchases for a short-term box truck rental had instead been used to purchase 15.71 gallons of unleaded regular fuel (\$67.55) at a Shell Service Station located in Washington DC, on December 5, 2023. Additionally, a GSA fuel card, intended for the purchase of unleaded fuel for a GSA leased Ford Transit Van assigned to the same AOC jurisdiction, was used to purchase 8.01 gallons of diesel fuel (\$32.03) on February 8, 2024, at a Wawa located in Dunkirk, MD.

The AOC OIG initiated an investigation into multiple violations of AOC policy as well as potential violations of criminal law.

Due to the time lapse in reporting and lack of available cameras at the fuel stations, all attempts made by the AOC OIG to obtain closed captioned video footage of the transactions were not successful.

The investigation revealed that the jurisdiction utilized a short-term rental program to have a box truck available as needed. The box trucks were fueled with GSA WEX cards intended to solely purchase diesel fuel. Additionally, the jurisdiction also leased a 2016 Ford transit van through the GSA, which was fueled with a GSA fuel card.

Interviews revealed that although access to two key boxes was needed to obtain vehicle keys, neither box was kept locked, and employees were not required to sign out vehicles. The key boxes utilized did not keep an electronic log of employees that accessed either box or checked out keys. At the time of the incidents, both the GSA and GSA WEX fuel cards were consistently kept together on top of the key box, which provided open access to anyone who had access to the office. A review of documentation provided displayed inconsistent and partially completed mileage logs. The fleet manager advised the OIG that they had previously (and repeatedly) requested a lock box with the capability of tracking users as well as requesting additional staffing to assist with oversight of the jurisdiction’s fleet.

Further review of fuel records obtained by the OIG indicated that on December 5, 2023, the 2016 Ford transit van was fueled with unleaded gasoline using the correct assigned GSA credit card at 11:08 am at a Sheetz in Westminster, MD, while at the same time, the GSA WEX card was used to purchase unleaded gasoline at 10:55 am at the Shell service station located in Washington, DC. The OIG confirmed that the Shell service station does not sell diesel fuel, and the rental box truck utilized by the AOC could not run had it been filled with unleaded fuel. The OIG determined that because the GSA credit card was being used properly over 60 miles away at the time of the incident, there was no appropriate reason to utilize the WEX card for unleaded fuel at the Shell service station.



None of the employees interviewed recalled witnessing credit card misuse or admitted to utilizing the GSA WEX card improperly.

Follow up with the GSA revealed the possibility of transaction errors when fuel was coded and submitted for invoice; however, because the Shell station does not sell diesel fuel, there could be no transactional error for this incident, which appeared to be intentional misuse of the WEX card in the amount of \$67.55. Due to multiple extenuating factors (lack of cameras, poor controls in place for oversight and tracking of the vehicles and fuel cards, and no admittance of guilt), the OIG was unable to substantiate the offense of theft.

OIG review of the incident that took place on February 8, 2024 (8.01 gallons of diesel fuel purchased amounting to \$32.03) at a Wawa in Dunkirk, MD, with the GSA fuel card assigned to the Ford transit van revealed that the incident was not intentional or theft, but a new employee who mixed up the credit cards due to the lack of card identification. The employee had since requested the cards be identified separately in wallets and attached to the separate vehicle keys.

As of the completion of this investigation, the GSA fuel card and the GSA WEX card were kept locked and must be obtained directly from the fleet manager; however, employees were still not required to check out vehicles nor was an electronic tracking method in place.

It should be noted that in 2021, the AOC OIG conducted an Evaluation of the AOC's Fleet Management Program¹ which identified multiple gaps in the AOC's fleet management as a whole. Although multiple identified deficiencies have since been corrected, ensuring adherence to policy falls within each specific AOC jurisdiction and remains inconsistent across the Agency.

The OIG's investigation identified \$67.55 as theft and waste as a result of the lack of oversight and procedural policies in place to track and monitor vehicle usage. Additionally, the lack of controls in place and overall management of the jurisdiction's vehicle fleet caused violations of Order 34-2, Fleet Management, and left the AOC vulnerable to additional instances of waste and abuse.

Final Management Action: The OIG substantiated that the jurisdiction violated AOC policy and the administrative violation was submitted to the Architect of the Capitol for action deemed appropriate, if any. Because the OIG was unable to substantiate the offense of theft against a single subject, the case was not presented to the United States Attorney's Office for prosecutorial consideration. On September 19, 2024, the AOC notified the OIG that all vehicle operators have been retrained on AOC policy and vehicle standard operating procedures. The vehicle key and unleaded fuel card for the GSA passenger van, and the vehicle key and diesel fuel card for the box truck are now kept together and maintained in the electronic key tracking system, KeyTrak. This will ensure keys and cards are secure and vehicle operator usage is electronically tracked, therefore reducing the possibility of additional waste and abuse.

¹ <https://www.oversight.gov/sites/default/files/oig-reports/AOC/53-2-Evaluation-AOCs-Fleet-Management-Program-2021-0001-IE-P.pdf>