

Summary: Alleged Timecard Fraud by NPS Employee

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Report Number: 22–0152

The OIG investigated an allegation that a National Park Service (NPS) supervisor who was serving in an acting position improperly approved a request from a subordinate to receive pay after the subordinate was indefinitely suspended without pay for alleged criminal misconduct.

We found that the NPS subordinate received notice that the NPS proposed his suspension without pay. Seven days later, and before the notice of indefinite suspension became effective, the subordinate submitted a Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) request to the NPS supervisor. The NPS supervisor approved this request, and the subordinate subsequently used approximately 8 weeks of FMLA leave while indefinitely suspended without pay. As FMLA leave ended, the subordinate submitted a request to use sick leave for “family and self-illness,” which the NPS supervisor also approved. The NPS subordinate used approximately 12 weeks of sick leave after the letter of indefinite suspension was issued. Because the NPS supervisor approved all of this leave, the subordinate was paid during this time.

The NPS supervisor said he was not aware that the NPS had proposed that the subordinate be suspended without pay when the FMLA leave was approved. The NPS supervisor further stated that he did not know the subordinate was indefinitely suspended without pay when he later approved the sick leave request. We found an email, however, showing that the NPS supervisor received information that the subordinate was in a non-pay status before approving the sick leave request.

We did not identify any rule, regulation, or policy prohibiting the subordinate’s FMLA leave while on an indefinite suspension without pay. In fact, we found that because leave was taken for an FMLA-covered reason, the leave was FMLA-protected during the 11 weeks the subordinate was on approved FMLA leave.

When the NPS supervisor left the acting role, the replacing supervisor learned about the subordinate’s indefinite suspension without pay and corrected the time and attendance records to reflect this. The subordinate remains indefinitely suspended without pay and is awaiting trial for the alleged criminal misconduct.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the National Park Service Director.

