

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

BETH A. WOOD, CPA



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TABOR CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

TABOR CITY, NORTH CAROLINA

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

MAY 2019



NC  **OSA**
The Taxpayers' Watchdog

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The Office of the State Auditor received an allegation through its Hotline concerning Tabor Correctional Institution's (Institution) Administrator's misuse of state vehicles.

BACKGROUND

The overall mission of the Department of Public Safety (Department) is to improve the quality of life for North Carolinians by reducing crime and enhancing public safety.

The Institution in Tabor City houses close, medium, and minimum custody inmates for 1,752 adult males. The Institution employs custody, food service, medical, dental, administration, programs, maintenance, and psychological staff.¹

KEY FINDING

Administrator's violation of Department policy resulted in increased risk of undetected vehicle misuse.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department should require the Administrator to provide documentation for unaccounted miles or seek reimbursement from him, on behalf of the State, for taxpayers' funds related to the unaccounted mileage.

The Institution should enforce the Department's Policy Manual to ensure staff properly document the use of state-owned vehicles.

¹ www.ncdps.gov

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
Office of the State Auditor



Beth A. Wood, CPA
State Auditor

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AUDITOR'S TRANSMITTAL

The Honorable Roy Cooper, Governor
Members of the North Carolina General Assembly
Erik Hooks, Secretary, North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Pursuant to *North Carolina General Statute §147-64.6(c)(16)*, we have completed an investigation of an allegation concerning the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. The results of our investigation, along with recommendations for corrective action, are contained in this report.

Copies of this report have been provided to the Governor, the Attorney General, and other appropriate officials in accordance with *G.S. §147-64.6(c)(12)*. We appreciate the cooperation received from the management and employees of the Department of Public Safety during our investigation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth A. Wood".

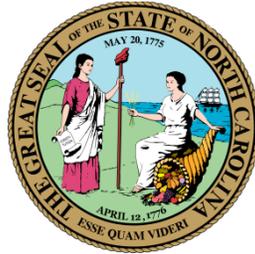
Beth A. Wood, CPA
State Auditor



Beth A. Wood, CPA
State Auditor

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BACKGROUND

The Office of the State Auditor initiated an investigation in response to a Hotline allegation that Tabor Correctional Institution's (Institution) Administrator misused state vehicles.

Our investigation of this allegation included the following procedures:

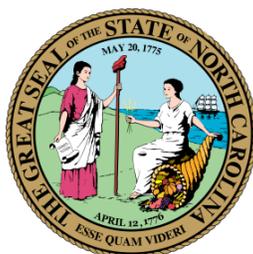
- Review of the Department of Public Safety's (Department) policy manual and travel policy, the Institution's memorandum regarding trip tickets, and Department of Administration's Motor Fleet Management Regulations
- Examination and analysis of available documentation related to the use of state vehicles
- Interviews with personnel from the Department and Institution

This report presents the results of the investigation. The investigation was conducted pursuant to *North Carolina General Statute § 147-64.6 (c) (16)*.

The overall mission of the Department is to improve the quality of life for North Carolinians by reducing crime and enhancing public safety.

The Institution in Tabor City houses close, medium, and minimum custody inmates for 1,752 adult males. The Institution employs custody, food service, medical, dental, administration, programs, maintenance, and psychological staff.²

² www.ncdps.gov



FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ADMINISTRATOR'S VIOLATION OF DEPARTMENT POLICY RESULTED IN INCREASED RISK OF UNDETECTED VEHICLE MISUSE

The Administrator at Tabor Correctional Institution (Institution) failed to comply with the Department of Public Safety's (Department) policy manual by not completing the required travel logs³ to document his use of state-owned vehicles. Although the Administrator was aware of the policy manual, he failed to accurately document his vehicle use. As a result, the risk of undetected vehicle misuse increased.

Vehicle Use Not Properly Documented

From January 2016 to December 2018, the Administrator failed to properly document his use of the state-owned vehicles by not completing required travel logs. The Administrator completed trip tickets⁴ to document his vehicle use in place of completing travel logs. However, a review of these trip tickets revealed numerous errors including overlapping mileage, missing trip tickets, undocumented mileage, and missing destination and/or purpose of trip.

For example:

- A trip ticket for travel from March 2, 2016, to March 16, 2016, had an explanation for a one-day meeting in Raeford, NC. The Administrator documented 875 miles driven. However, calculated mileage for a round trip to Raeford from the Institution totaled 151 miles. As a result, 724 miles are unaccounted for.
- A trip ticket for travel from September 20, 2017, to September 23, 2017, had an explanation for travel to the Confinement in Response to Violation Center (CRV Center) in Lumberton, NC. The Administrator does not indicate which day or days he drove to the CRV Center during this four-day timeframe. The Administrator documented 749 miles driven. However, calculated mileage for a round trip to the CRV Center from the Institution totaled 80 miles.
- A trip ticket for travel between October 30, 2017, and November 2, 2017, had an ending odometer reading of 4,117. The subsequent trip ticket had a beginning travel date of November 8, 2017, with an odometer reading of 4,701. The Administrator's trip tickets for the vehicle between November 3, 2017, and November 7, 2017, were missing. As a result, 584 miles are unaccounted for.
- A trip ticket for travel between June 1, 2018, and June 30, 2018, included an explanation for attending a superintendent meeting in Raleigh on June 20, 2018 (276 miles round trip), and a graduation at the Samarcand Training Academy in Brewer, NC, on June 22, 2018 (204 miles round trip). The trip ticket documented 2,009 miles driven. However, calculated mileage for trips to Raleigh and Brewer totaled 480 miles. As a result, 1,529 miles are unaccounted for.

³ A travel log is a form issued by the Motor Fleet Management Division of the NC Department of Administration to document the daily use of state-owned vehicles. Travel logs include the trip date, destination, mileage, and purpose of trip.

⁴ A trip ticket is a form created and used by the Institution, in lieu of the Department's requirement, to document each use of its vehicles. Trip tickets include the trip date, destination, mileage, and purpose of trip.

Resulted in Increased Risk of Undetected Misuse

As a result of the Administrator's inaccurate documentation and recordkeeping of his use of state-owned vehicles, there was an increased risk that these vehicles could be misused without detection.

Caused by Lack of Monitoring and Accountability of Department Policy

The Administrator failed to comply with the Department's policy manual for completing travel logs. According to the Administrator, the Institution chose to use trip tickets to document vehicle use in place of the required travel logs because the trip tickets "could be monitored daily." However, the Institution failed to properly monitor trip tickets and the use of vehicles.

Although the Institution has used trip tickets as an alternative method to document vehicle use since 2008, this method was not sufficient. The Institution did not have any documented procedures to provide oversight and monitoring of vehicles. According to the Administrator, the Institution's Administrative Specialist and Accounting Technician are responsible for monitoring trip tickets. However, according to both the Administrative Specialist and Accounting Technician, the Institution's gatehouse staff is responsible for collecting and ensuring trip tickets are completed.

Department's Policy Required Proper Usage and Documentation

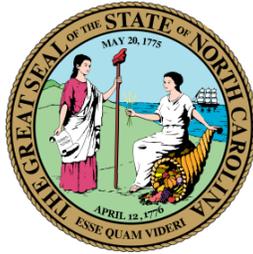
The Department's Policy Manual for Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice requires the following related to state vehicle usage and documentation:

- "Each driver will record daily mileage driven in a state-owned vehicle on the DOA FM-12e travel log, and the following will apply to completion of the log:
 - Beginning mileage for each day must match the ending mileage for the previous day the vehicle was driven, and mileage for each day will be recorded as it occurs."
- "Community Corrections will comply with all general statutes, administrative codes, regulations, and guidelines provided by Department of Administration (DOA), Division of Motor Fleet Management (MFM), and Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice fiscal policy and procedures pertaining to the use of state-owned vehicles."
- "Vehicle mileage reports must be fully completed, listing all travel designation locations."

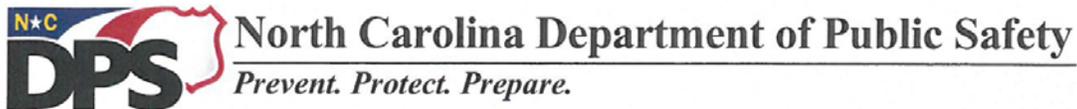
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department should require the Administrator to provide documentation for unaccounted miles or seek reimbursement from him, on behalf of the State, for taxpayers' funds related to the unaccounted mileage.

The Institution should enforce the Department's Policy Manual to ensure staff properly document the use of state-owned vehicles.



RESPONSE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



Roy Cooper, Governor

Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

April 26, 2019

The Honorable Beth A. Wood, CPA
State Auditor
North Carolina Office of the State Auditor
20601 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0600

Dear Auditor Wood:

I am in receipt of your April 11, 2019 letter with accompanying investigative report and recommendations regarding the misuse of state vehicles by the Warden at Tabor Correctional Institution (TCI). The Department accepts the findings by the Office of the State Auditor that the Warden for TCI violated departmental policy by failing to complete the required travel logs to document the use of state-owned vehicles. Although the Warden completed trip tickets to document state-owned vehicle use in place of completing travel logs, it appears the trip tickets were not complete and accurate. I agree with your conclusion that such inaccuracies can result in an increased risk of undetected vehicle misuse. The report provided several examples where the trip destination and miles driven information reported on a trip ticket did not correlate with the actual mileage usage on the state-owned vehicle during the date range stated on the trip ticket.

In accordance with your recommendation, the Department is currently conducting further investigation into this matter by requiring the Warden at TCI to review the travel documents and other information to account for the undocumented mileage. Upon review of this documentation, DPS will determine the appropriate action regarding your recommendation for reimbursement.

The Warden will also be required to immediately implement the proper use of mileage logs in compliance with DPS and State policy. Furthermore, we will provide the DPS policy to all Prison facilities as a reminder of the State policy regarding the use of mileage logs when driving state-owned vehicles.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this report, as well as the courtesy and professionalism with which your staff conducted this investigation. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Erik A. Hooks'.

Erik A. Hooks
Secretary

cc: Reuben Young, Interim Chief Deputy Secretary
Kenneth Lassiter, Director of Prisons

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For additional information contact:
Brad Young
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This investigation required 343.5 hours at an approximate cost of \$35,381.