

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Office of the Inspector General

Inspector General



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONCERNING AN INVESTIGATION INTO MISCONDUCT VIOLATIONS BY AN EMPLOYEE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

2011-0571 (S)

INVESTIGATIVE SYNOPSIS

The District of Columbia Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has completed an investigation which revealed that a District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) employee improperly used a District of Columbia (D.C.) disability placard to obtain free parking in the vicinity of her D.C. work place.

During the investigation, OIG investigators conducted surveillances of the DCRA employee and her vehicle¹ and reviewed records obtained from the D.C. Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) regarding the D.C. registration tag assigned to the DCRA employee's vehicle and the D.C. disability placard. OIG investigators also interviewed the DCRA employee.

The investigation revealed that the D.C. disability placard had been issued by the DMV to the DCRA employee's sister. Between September 2011 and February 2012, OIG investigators conducted 10 surveillances during which OIG investigators observed the DCRA employee's vehicle parked in the vicinity of 1101 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C., at metered parking spaces, and a disability placard hanging from the rearview mirror. On one of those occasions, February 23, 2012, the DCRA employee was observed alone in the vehicle and the entire disability placard number was visible to OIG investigators. On the other surveillances, the disability placard was hung in a way to conceal the assigned number. On each of the 10 surveillances, OIG investigators observed the dashboard of the DCRA employee's vehicle and saw that the DCRA employee had no payment coupon for parking displayed.

In her OIG interview on April 5, 2012, the DCRA employee admitted that she obtained a D.C. disability placard belonging to her sister and also another disability placard from her

¹ The DCRA employee owns a vehicle, which bore a designated D.C. registration tag. The surveillances were conducted on September 19, 2011, October 5, 2011, November 2, 2011, December 1, 2011, January 9, 2012, January 12, 2012, February 21, 2012, February 22, 2012, and February 23, 2012 (two separate time periods).

mother to obtain free parking.² The DCRA employee admitted that she had used the D.C. disability placards in the manner described, every work day, for the past year to obtain free parking. She also acknowledged that her use of the D.C. disability placards was wrong and actually misuse of the disability placard. According to the DCRA employee, she discontinued use of the disability placards in March 2012 because she read a newspaper article that stated that tickets would be issued if meter payment was not made for parking, even while using disability placards.

CONCLUSIONS

The OIG investigation revealed that the DCRA employee improperly obtained free parking using a D.C. disability placard issued to someone else on at least 10 occasions between September 2011 and February 2012. In addition, the DCRA employee admitted to regular misuse of the disability placard in the vicinity of her place of work for approximately 1 year.

Accordingly, this investigation has **SUBSTANTIATED** that the DCRA employee violated DPM § 1803.1(a)(6) (Affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of government).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this investigation, the OIG recommends that DCRA:

- Address the DCRA employee's conduct with appropriate administrative action; and
- Ensure that all DCRA employees are trained appropriately regarding the District's standards of conduct.

Dated: February 14, 2013

² According to the DCRA employee, she retained each disability placard for periods of time.