

STATE OF OHIO
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

RANDALL J. MEYER, INSPECTOR GENERAL

REPORT OF
INVESTIGATION



AGENCY: OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
FILE ID NO.: 2019-CA00005
DATE OF REPORT: SEPTEMBER 3, 2019

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General ... The State Watchdog

“Safeguarding integrity in state government”

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Randall J. Meyer
Ohio Inspector General



STATE OF OHIO
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

RANDALL J. MEYER, INSPECTOR GENERAL

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

FILE ID NUMBER: 2019-CA00005

SUBJECT NAME: Mohammad Asasi

POSITION: Environmental Specialist 2

AGENCY: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION: Complaint

ALLEGATIONS: Abuse of Position;
Misuse of State Equipment;
Misuse of Time;
Operating a Business on State Time.

INITIATED: February 15, 2019

DATE OF REPORT: September 3, 2019

INITIAL ALLEGATION AND COMPLAINT SUMMARY

On February 15, 2019, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General received a complaint from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) alleging that Division of Surface Water (DSW) Environmental Specialist 2 Mohammad Asasi had been conducting work related to his secondary employment while on state time using state equipment. The complaint further alleged that Asasi did not follow Ohio EPA policy when he failed to notify Ohio EPA of his secondary businesses.

DSW Manager Mari Mansfield received complaints from Asasi's co-workers alleging that Asasi was spending a considerable amount of time on his personal telephone during work hours and it appeared the calls were related to his private businesses. Ohio EPA Office of Investigations and Safety reviewed Asasi's email account, internet records, and state telephone records and found that Asasi was using state resources to conduct his private businesses.

BACKGROUND

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) is charged with protecting the state's environment and public health by ensuring compliance with environmental laws. The Ohio EPA has regulatory operations, each of which issues permits to regulate industries that pollute in a specific area; for example, air emissions or wastewater discharges to bodies of water. The Ohio EPA also has nonregulatory operations that provide financial assistance to businesses and communities, site cleanup and spill response, environmental education, pollution prevention assistance, laboratory analysis, and criminal environmental investigations.¹

The Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water is responsible for restoring and maintaining the quality of Ohio's rivers and streams. The goal of Ohio's surface water program – restoration and maintenance of Ohio's water resources – reflects the national water quality objective in the Federal Clean Water Act, which is "... to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters."²

¹ Source: Biennial budget documents.

² Source: www.epa.state.oh.us

Applicable policies and laws

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) §102.03(D) states:

No public official or employee shall use or authorize the use of the authority or influence of office or employment to secure anything of value or the promise or offer of anything of value that is of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the official or employee with respect to that person's duties.

The Ohio Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion 96-004 cites ORC §102.03(D), which prohibits a public official or employee who engages in private outside employment or business activity from:

- (a) Using public time, facilities, personnel, or resources in conducting a private business or while engaging in private outside employment ...

Ohio Department of Administrative Services policy *IT-11 Use of State Telephones* states, in part:

2.1.2 When using a state wired telephone service, the number, frequency and duration of personal calls shall be kept to a minimum and, whenever possible, made during lunch hours or authorized breaks ...

2.1.4 Personal business, which involves an activity undertaken for profit or gain of any kind, shall not be conducted using a state wired telephone service.

Ohio EPA *Wired and Wireless Telephone Policy* states, in part:

1. Limitations on Personal Calls. Personal calls made using state wired or wireless telephone services shall comply with the following requirements: ...

1.2 When using a state wired telephone service, the number, frequency and duration of personal calls shall be kept to a minimum and, whenever possible, made during lunch hours or authorized breaks ...

1.4 Personal business, which involves an activity undertaken for profit or gain of any kind, shall not be conducted using a state telephone service.

1.4.1 Employees are prohibited from circulating their state telephone number as a telephone number at which they can be reached for personal business. Personal

business cards and other such materials shall not have a state telephone number listed as a contact number.

Ohio EPA *Outside Employment Policy* states, in part:

... Outside employment is generally permissible if it does not adversely impact the employee's work or attendance, is in accordance with any applicable ethical requirements, does not create a conflict of interest with the business of the Ohio EPA, and occurs completely outside of the agency's core business hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday except paid holidays ...

An EPA employee shall notify the agency and request pre-approval for engaging in outside employment when the hours of performing the outside employment conflict with the core business hours of the agency (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday except paid holidays) through the following procedure:

1. Complete the "Request for Approval of Outside Employment" form and submit it to the Chief of Employment Services within 14 days prior to engaging in outside employment during core business hours. An employee currently engaged in outside employment that is occurring during the agency's core business hours shall complete and submit the form within 14 calendar days of this policy's effective date³ ...

Standards for All Outside Employment

When employees are participating in any type of outside employment, they are to strictly adhere to the following requirements:

1. Employees are prohibited from engaging in activities in the pursuit of personal profit while on state time or state property.
2. Outside employment shall not involve the use of state time, facilities, personnel, copiers, computers or internet and telephone communication resources, vehicles, equipment, supplies or any other state resource ...

³ The Ohio EPA *Outside Employment Policy* became effective June 2011.

3. Outside employment shall not involve such time demands as would render performance of the employee's Ohio EPA duties less efficient or take precedence in any way over those duties ...

Ohio EPA *Time Accounting System (TAS) Policy* states, in part:

4. Employees responsibilities:
 - a. Accurately sign in and out in chronological order at the start and end of their work day, at lunch and at any time they leave the facility.
 - b. Document on TAS Notes Option or on the sign-in/sign-out logs all exceptions to required signing in and out.
 - c. Verify that work hours are accurately entered in TAS.
 - d. Pinning their time cards,⁴ which establishes employee accountability for the accuracy of their timecard, by 5:00 p.m. on payday Friday, or the last day worked of the pay period, unless otherwise instructed.
 - e. Document on TAS Notes Option the reason why Overtime/Compensatory time was claimed.
5. Supervisor (or Exempt designees) responsibilities:
 - a. Verify that employees are accurately pinning their time card as recorded on the sign-in/sign-out logs. Supervisors shall conduct audits to verify that work hours on the sign-in/sign-out logs are accurately entered into TAS. The audit shall be conducted, at a minimum, for each direct report for one full pay period each quarter. More frequent audits must be conducted if warranted. Audits shall be submitted to, reviewed by, and maintained by the division, district or office Chief ...

⁴ In the upper right corner of the TAS timecard there are three blocks. These blocks indicate the timecard has been submitted by the employee (the employee checked the box). Once the employee checks the box and submits it to the supervisor, the supervisor then checks the box and approves the timecard. The timecard goes to Fiscal where a fiscal officer checks the box to approve the timecard. With each approval, there is an electronic verification of who is actually "pinning" the timecard.

INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General received the following records from Ohio EPA:

- Asasi's timesheets from 2014 to present⁵
- The sign-in/sign-out sheets for DSW from 2014 to present
- Asasi's personnel file, including any discipline
- Ohio EPA *Outside Employment Policy, Appropriate Use of IT Resources Policy, Time Accounting Policy, Telephone Use Policy and Work Hours Policy*
- Asasi's state-issued desk phone records for the period from December 29, 2017, to January 28, 2019⁶
- Asasi's weekly itineraries for the period from December 28, 2015, to March 11, 2019
- Actual hours worked timesheets for the period from April 17, 2016, to March 2, 2019
- Field sign-in/sign-out logs for the period from March 17, 2015, to December 18, 2018
- GFO (Groveport Field Office) sign-in/sign-out logs for the period from January 9, 2016, to April 13, 2019

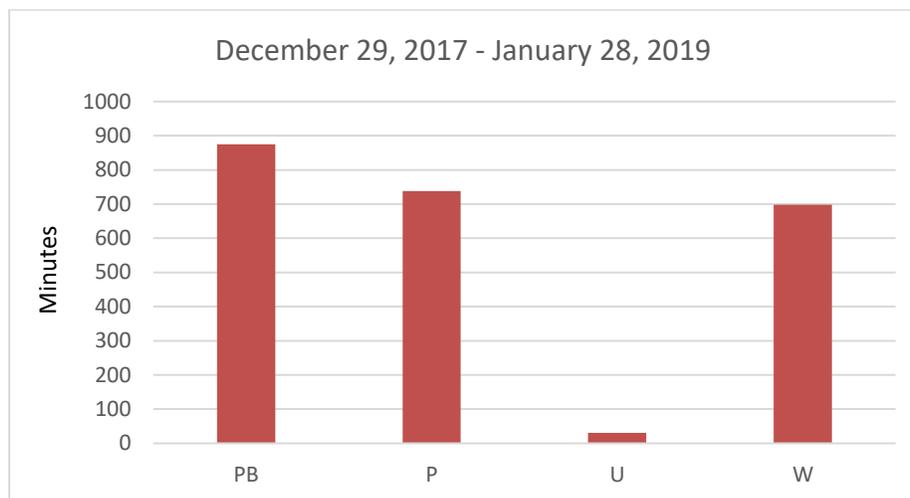
Asasi's State-Issued Desk Phone

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General conducted a review of Asasi's available state desk phone records for the period from December 29, 2017, through January 28, 2019 (missing September 29, 2018, through October 30, 2018). The review determined that Asasi made or received 157 personal telephone calls. The accumulative duration of these 157 telephone calls totaled 738 minutes, or 12 hours 18 minutes. Moreover, investigators determined Asasi made or received an additional 123 telephone calls that were personal and/or business related. The accumulative duration of these 123 telephone calls totaled 875 minutes, or 14 hours 35 minutes. The review also showed Asasi made or received 249 calls related to his work at the Ohio EPA, totaling 698 minutes, or 11 hours 38 minutes, and 22 calls of unknown origin totaling 31 minutes.

⁵ Ohio EPA uses Time Accounting System (TAS), which is their internal timekeeping database. TAS only records total number of hours worked and total number and type of leave taken. It does not record the daily in/out times.

⁶ Asasi's desk telephone records from September 29, 2018, to October 30, 2018, were missing and not recoverable due to a glitch in the system.

Duration of Calls from Asasi's Ohio EPA Desk Phone



PB – Personal and/or Business P – Personal U – Unknown W – Work Related

On May 23, 2019, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General interviewed Environmental Specialist 2 Mohammad Asasi. Asasi told investigators that Ohio EPA employees are not required to sign or acknowledge they have read and understand the policies of the agency. Asasi noted Ohio EPA has an internal webpage that contains the policies. Asasi also stated he was aware of the secondary employment policy and knew that employees were not permitted to conduct private business on state time or using state facilities. When investigators asked Asasi if he had completed a secondary employment form, Asasi replied he had not. Asasi said one of the reasons he had not submitted the form was because he did not believe his private businesses would interfere with his work at Ohio EPA. Asasi confirmed that he was familiar with the Ohio Ethics Laws and stated that he completes yearly online ethics training.

Asasi initially told investigators that he was a “silent” partner in an eyebrow salon and has “... set up the things for the tax and stuff.” However, Asasi later admitted to investigators that he had not always been a “silent” partner in the eyebrow salon. Asasi explained that the person who operates the eyebrow business is not proficient in English, “... their writing is not good, if they want to write anything ... I do grammical [sic] correction for them ...” Asasi stated his other business involved rental properties, which have been leased for years and, “I have no interaction.”

Investigators asked Asasi if he conducted his private businesses on state time. Asasi admitted, “there are times I got phone calls for a minute or two minutes ...”

Asasi’s Personal Cell Phone

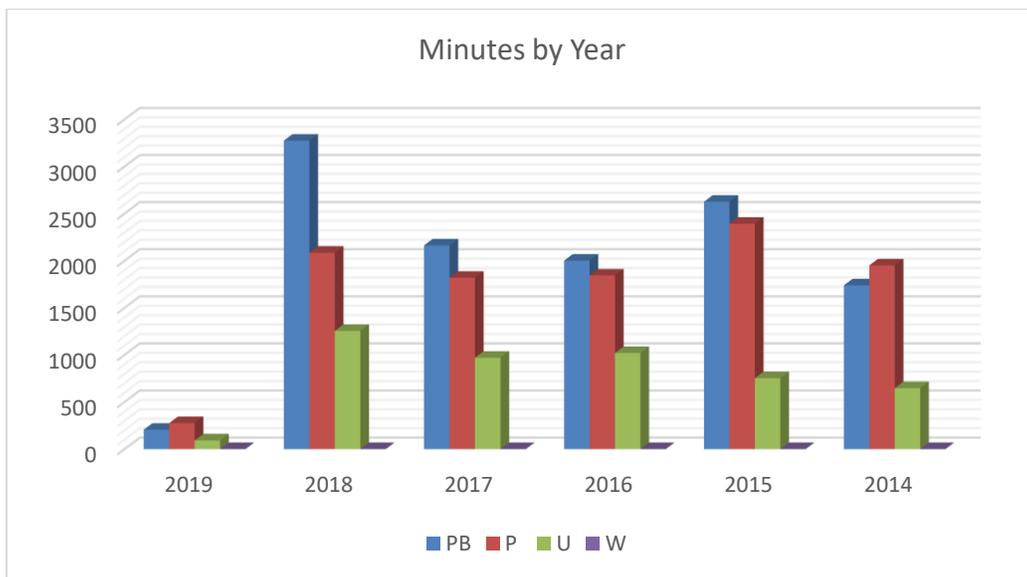
On February 19, 2019, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General issued a subpoena for Asasi’s personal cell phone records from February 19, 2014, to February 19, 2019. On March 5, 2019, investigators received the subpoenaed cell phone records and conducted a review to assess if and how frequently Asasi made calls that were personal, business, or possibly both during the hours he reported working for Ohio EPA. Investigators determined there were no Ohio EPA work-related calls made on Asasi’s personal cell phone.

The personal cell phone review found that for the period from February 25, 2014, to February 19, 2019, Asasi made or received 1,746 personal and/or business calls during hours he reported working for Ohio EPA. The accumulative duration of these 1,746 telephone calls totaled 12,007 minutes, or approximately 200.1 hours.

The review also found that for the period from February 19, 2014, and February 19, 2019, Asasi made or received an additional 1,713 personal calls during hours he reported working for Ohio EPA. The accumulative duration of these 1,713 telephone calls totaled 10,366 minutes, or approximately 172.8 hours.

Additionally, for the period from February 19, 2014, to February 19, 2019, Asasi made or received 1,519 unknown calls during hours he reported working for Ohio EPA. The accumulative duration of these 1,519 telephone calls totaled 4,736 minutes, or approximately 78.9 hours.

Duration of Calls from Asasi's Personal Cell Phone



PB – Personal and/or Business P – Personal U – Unknown W – Work Related

Time Reporting

Investigators reviewed and compared Asasi's DSW "sign-in/sign-out logs" (in/out logs) to Asasi's "actual hours worked timesheets" (timesheets) for the period from April 19, 2016, through March 1, 2019, and identified numerous discrepancies. Some of the discrepancies benefited Asasi, while others benefited the State of Ohio. For example, Asasi over-reported his work time for Ohio EPA by 485 minutes on his timesheets compared to what was identified on the daily in/out logs, which resulted in a personal benefit to Asasi. By contrast, Asasi also under-reported his work time for Ohio EPA by 1,489 minutes on his timesheets compared to what he identified on the in/out logs, which resulted in a benefit to the State of Ohio. Ultimately, the State of Ohio benefited by 1,004 minutes, or 16.7 hours during the period reviewed.

On the days reviewed, investigators discovered discrepancies between Asasi's timesheets and the in/out logs. Though investigators determined the total number of hours Asasi reported to have worked on his timesheets matched the total number of hours Asasi reported to have worked on the in/out logs, the in/out times reported on Asasi's timesheets did not match the in/out times reported on the in/out logs, or the in/out logs were incomplete (i.e., Asasi did not sign back in from lunch or sign out for the day).

On April 11, 2019, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General interviewed Keith Orr, environmental supervisor, DSW Modeling Section. Orr stated he had been Asasi's supervisor for approximately five years and had worked with Asasi for more than 20 years. Orr admitted that he is ultimately responsible for ensuring that his employees are completing the daily in/out logs. Orr explained that on the final Friday of each pay period, he electronically scans all the daily in/out logs for that pay period, so they are available to his employees. The employee is then responsible for entering the information from the daily in/out logs onto the electronic timesheet, which totals how many hours the employee has worked each day and each week of the pay period. Once the employee completes the electronic timesheet, the employee submits the timesheet to Orr. Orr told investigators he then reviews the in/out logs and confirms that the hours reported match the timesheets and TAS. Orr stated, "that is where I would pick up any discrepancies." Orr said it is not possible for him to know if an employee is not being accurate on the in/out logs. Orr stated, "... so what I do is ensure that their sign-in sheet matches their time accounting system for their payroll." Investigators confirmed with Orr that he also ensures that the daily in/out logs match the timesheets.

Orr stated he had never seen an occasion where one of his employees failed to complete the in/out log (i.e., not signing back in from lunch, not signing out for the day). Orr further stated there was never a time he required an employee to take leave for failing to record their in/out times on the daily in/out logs. Orr explained that typically when an employee failed to either sign back in from lunch or sign out for the day, the employee would realize the mistake and correct the log the following day. Investigators asked Orr if he ever conducted audits to verify that the work hours reported by the employees on the in/out logs were accurately entered into TAS as per the *Time Accounting System Policy*. Orr stated,

Well, so approximately a year and a half ago ... it used to be you would sign-in and then at the end of ... the pay period you would do your TAS, your Time Accounting System report. And the audit would be making sure that the sign-in sheets match that and some time ago, two years ago, a year and a half ago, we came up with the middle report, which is ... a requirement that ... well it's a spreadsheet that the division developed to make sure that your sign-in sheet gets inputted into this electronic version so we have it electronically and then when I look at someone's time accounting system report, I match

to that, which is matched to the sign-in sheet. So, that is basically the audit. And I do that every week for every person ... now ... That was made before this ... new system for auditing, so ... I don't know how else you would audit. There's nothing more you can do than that ...

Investigators asked Orr if a report or documentation was provided to the division chief regarding the audit. Orr said one of the chief's assistants occasionally performs overall division audits, and reports the results to the whole division in their division wide meetings.

Later in the interview, Orr again confirmed to investigators that he actually compares and verifies that the times reported by employees on the daily in/out logs match the times reported on their timesheets. Investigators then shared with Orr a spreadsheet that identified the numerous discrepancies between Asasi's in/out logs and his timesheets. Orr explained that in order for him to "pin" the TAS report, he compared it to the timesheet. Even though earlier in the interview Orr stated he compared the employees' in/out logs to their timesheets, Orr later admitted to investigators that he had not been comparing the in/out logs to the timesheets or TAS report. Orr continued, stating that he scanned the in/out logs for the employees to complete their timesheets. Orr admitted that his audit should include comparing the in/out logs to the timesheets, but that was something he had not been doing. Orr said, "I would have never dreamed that there would be that many inaccuracies." Orr stated the timesheets should mirror the daily in/out logs. Orr told investigators that it would be difficult for the employees to complete the timesheet daily and would be a poor use of their time. Orr stated that the daily in/out logs would be the more accurate timekeeping report, but it was difficult to compare the in/out logs to the TAS system report, which is why the DSW Modeling Section began using the timesheets.

During his interview conducted on May 23, 2019, investigators asked Asasi to explain the discrepancies between his reported times on the daily in/out logs and his reported times on his timesheets. Asasi stated,

It's possible, the only thing ... I can think of like sometimes, maybe ... I don't know maybe I misread that's the only thing I can tell ... but if you probably notice there is some stuff doesn't match and those are the times ... I try to reduce my hours to match

because it was above 40 hours and you are supposed to get paid if you are above 40 hours but that's something I cooperate with my supervisor, I like him ... I reduce my hours and that's the time most likely when you see that doesn't match is I am basically reducing my hours on computer spreadsheet, which basically that's the basis for the payment for my salary

Asasi told investigators that employees are required to enter the exact time they sign in and the exact time they sign out on the daily in/out logs. Asasi noted that he frequently did not work a full eight hours on Fridays because he often worked over 32 hours between Monday and Thursday. Therefore, on Fridays, he worked whatever hours he needed to total 40 hours for the work week to avoid overtime pay or earning compensatory time. Asasi said his pay was based on what times he reported on his timesheets.

Ohio EPA Chief of Investigations and Safety Kathleen Bourke confirmed with Ohio EPA Human Resources that the agency's official timekeeping records are the in/out logs.

Although the State of Ohio benefited by 1,004 minutes by Asasi underreporting his work time during the period reviewed, the investigation found he spent nearly 24,000 minutes on either his state desk phone or personal cell phone on calls determined to be personal or business in nature.

CONCLUSION

On February 15, 2019, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General received a complaint from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) alleging that Division of Surface Water (DSW) Environmental Specialist 2 Mohammad Asasi had been conducting work related to his secondary employment while on state time using state equipment. The complaint further alleged that Asasi did not follow Ohio EPA policy when he failed to notify Ohio EPA of his secondary businesses. A DSW manager reported that she had received complaints from Asasi's co-workers alleging that Asasi was spending a considerable amount of time on his personal telephone during work hours and it appeared the calls were related to his private businesses. Ohio EPA Office of Investigations and Safety reviewed Asasi's email account, internet records, and state telephone records and found that Asasi was using state resources to conduct his private businesses.

Asasi's State-Issued Desk Phone

Investigators reviewed Asasi's desk phone records for the period from December 29, 2017, through January 28, 2019. The investigation found that Asasi was using his state-issued desk phone for calls that were personal, business, or possibly both. Investigators determined that Asasi made or received 157 personal telephone calls. The accumulative duration of these 157 telephone calls totaled 738 minutes, or 12 hours 18 minutes. Moreover, investigators determined Asasi made or received an additional 123 telephone calls that were personal and/or business related. The accumulative duration of these 123 telephone calls totaled 875 minutes, or 14 hours 35 minutes. The review also showed Asasi made or received 249 calls related to his work at the Ohio EPA, totaling 698 minutes, or 11 hours 38 minutes, and 22 calls of unknown origin totaling 31 minutes. Investigators concluded Asasi used his state-issued desk phone more for his secondary employment and personal calls than he did for his Ohio EPA work-related duties.

Ohio EPA *Wired and Wireless Telephone Policy* states, in pertinent part:

1. Limitations on Personal Calls. Personal calls made using state wired or wireless telephone services shall comply with the following requirements: ...
 - 1.2 When using a state wired telephone service, the number, frequency and duration of personal calls shall be kept to a minimum and, whenever possible, made during lunch hours or authorized breaks ...
 - 1.4 Personal business, which involves an activity undertaken for profit or gain of any kind, shall not be conducted using a state telephone service.
 - 1.4.1 Employees are prohibited from circulating their state telephone number as a telephone number at which they can be reached for personal business ...

Accordingly, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General finds reasonable cause to believe that a wrongful act or omission occurred in this instance.

Asasi Personal Cell Phone

Investigators reviewed Asasi's personal cell phone records for the period from February 19, 2014, to February 19, 2019, to assess if and how often Asasi made calls that were personal, business, or possibly both during hours he reported working for Ohio EPA. The review found

Asasi was spending a significant amount of time on his personal cell phone during hours he was reportedly working for Ohio EPA.

The personal cell phone review found that for the period from February 25, 2014, to February 19, 2019, Asasi made or received 1,746 personal and/or business calls during hours he reported working for Ohio EPA. The accumulative duration of these 1,746 telephone calls totaled 12,007 minutes, or approximately 200.1 hours. The review also found that for the period from February 19, 2014, and February 19, 2019, Asasi made or received an additional 1,713 personal calls during hours he reported working for Ohio EPA. The accumulative duration of these 1,713 telephone calls totaled 10,366 minutes, or approximately 172.8 hours. Additionally, for the period under review, Asasi made or received 1,519 unknown calls during hours he reported working for Ohio EPA. The accumulative duration of these 1,519 telephone calls totaled 4,736 minutes, or approximately 78.9 hours. The investigation did not find any Ohio EPA work-related calls made or received on Asasi's personal cell phone.

Accordingly, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General finds reasonable cause to believe that a wrongful act or omission occurred in this instance.

Time Reporting

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General evaluated and compared the reported times on Asasi's daily in/out logs to the reported times on his timesheets for the period from April 19, 2016, through March 1, 2019. Investigators discovered numerous discrepancies between what Asasi reported on the in/out logs and what he reported on his timesheets. Some of the discrepancies benefited Asasi, while others benefited the State of Ohio. Specifically, investigators discovered Asasi had over-reported his work time for the Ohio EPA by 485 minutes on his timesheets as compared to what was reported on the in/out logs, which resulted in a personal benefit to Asasi. However, investigators also discovered Asasi had under-reported his work time for the Ohio EPA by 1,489 minutes on his timesheets as compared to what was reported on the in/out logs, which resulted in a benefit to the State of Ohio. Ultimately, investigators concluded Asasi had under-reported his work time for the Ohio EPA by 1,004 minutes, or 16.7 hours during the period reviewed which subsequently benefitted the State of Ohio.

On the days reviewed, investigators discovered discrepancies between Asasi's timesheets and the in/out logs. Though investigators determined the total number of hours Asasi reported to have worked for Ohio EPA on his timesheets matched the total number of hours Asasi reported to have worked on the in/out logs, the in/out times reported on Asasi's timesheets did not match the in/out times reported on the in/out logs, or the in/out logs were incomplete (i.e., Asasi did not sign back in from lunch or sign out for the day).

During a May 23, 2019, interview with investigators, Asasi stated that he was required to enter the exact time he signs in and the exact time he signs out on the daily in/out logs. Asasi claimed, however, that often when he was entering his actual time worked on his timesheet, using the in/out logs, he would reduce the hours worked to avoid being in excess of 40 hours in a week, thus avoiding overtime pay or compensatory time.

Ohio EPA *Time Accounting System Policy* states, in pertinent part:

... 4. Employee Responsibilities:

- a. Accurately sign in and out in chronological order at the start and end of their work day, at lunch and at any time they leave the facility.
- b. Document on TAS Notes Option or on the sign-in/sign-out logs all exceptions to required signing in and out.
- c. Verify that work hours are accurately entered in TAS ...

Although the State of Ohio benefited by 1,004 minutes by Asasi underreporting his work time during the period reviewed, the investigation found he spent nearly 24,000 minutes on either his state desk phone or personal cell phone on calls determined to be personal or business in nature.

During an interview with Asasi's supervisor, Keith Orr, on April 11, 2019, Orr stated he used the employees' timesheets to evaluate and compare the employees' times reported in Ohio EPA's Time Accounting System. Orr said he did not compare the employees' timesheets to the employees' in/out logs, and was surprised to learn of the numerous discrepancies between Asasi's in/out logs and his timesheets. Investigators identified a number of days where Asasi had not completed the in/out logs, either by failing to sign back in from lunch or failing to sign

out for the day. Orr claimed he was not aware of any instance when one of his employees failed to complete the in/out logs.

Ohio EPA *Time Accounting System Policy* states, in pertinent part:

- ... 5. Supervisor (or Exempt designees) responsibilities:
 - a. Verify that employees are accurately pinning their time card as recorded on the sign-in/sign-out logs. Supervisors shall conduct audits to verify that work hours on the sign-in/sign-out logs are accurately entered into TAS. The audit shall be conducted, at a minimum, for each direct report for one full pay period each quarter. More frequent audits must be conducted if warranted. Audits shall be submitted to, reviewed by, and maintained by the division, district or office Chief.

Accordingly, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General finds reasonable cause to believe that a wrongful act or omission occurred in this instance.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General makes the following recommendations and asks the director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to respond within 60 days with a plan detailing how the recommendations will be implemented. The Office of the Ohio Inspector General's Office previously made recommendations in Report of Investigation 2018-CA00002, released on October 18, 2018, regarding the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency time accountability issues. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency should:

1. Review the conduct of Ohio EPA employees and consider whether administrative action is warranted.
2. Review Ohio EPA secondary employment policy and consider revising the policy to require all employees to report all outside employment regardless of whether it conflicts with the core business hours of the agency.
3. Require all Ohio EPA employees to complete a timesheet, either paper or electronic, that identifies starting time, ending time and lunch in and out times. The Office of the Ohio

Inspector General had previously recommended in Report of Investigation 2018-CA00002, that Ohio EPA consider using a more advanced time accountability tracking service such as KRONOS.

4. Require employees to complete and sign an acknowledgement on all agency policies and policy updates.
5. Provide employees with a review of the policies on ethics, time and attendance, secondary employment, and use of the telephone.

REFERRALS

This report of investigation will be provided to the City of Columbus Prosecuting Attorney, and the Ohio Ethics Commission for consideration.



STATE OF OHIO
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

RANDALL J. MEYER, INSPECTOR GENERAL

NAME OF REPORT: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

FILE ID #: 2019-CA00005

KEEPER OF RECORDS CERTIFICATION

This is a true and correct copy of the report which is required to be prepared by the Office of the Ohio Inspector General pursuant to Section 121.42 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Jill Jones
KEEPER OF RECORDS

CERTIFIED
September 3, 2019

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