

**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
CITY OF JACKSONVILLE**



**REPORT OF
MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

**USE OF SUFFICIENT CONTROLS BY COJ
EMPLOYEES**

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"Enhancing Public Trust in Government Through Independent and Responsible Oversight"



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL CITY OF JACKSONVILLE

MANAGEMENT REVIEW CASE NUMBER: 2022-0006

Matthew J. Lascell
Inspector General

“Enhancing Public Trust in Government Through Independent and Responsible Oversight”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March of 2020, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) received information from Carlton Copeland, Traffic Signal Supervisor, Traffic Engineering Division (Traffic Engineering), Public Works Department (Public Works), and Christopher LeDew, Chief, Traffic Engineering, Public Works, that City of Jacksonville (COJ) Vehicle Number 8616 had been stolen from the Traffic Engineering parking lot on February 17, 2020. This vehicle was subsequently recovered on February 21, 2020 by the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office.

Based upon this information, the OIG initiated a management review to examine the circumstances pertaining to theft of COJ Vehicle Number 8616 and determine whether Traffic Engineering employees used sufficient controls to secure their COJ vehicles.

ISSUE AND FINDINGS

Issue:

Whether Traffic Engineering employees used sufficient controls to secure their City of Jacksonville vehicles.

Governing Directives:

Section 2.01, 2.08, and 2.13(a), Motor Vehicle Safety Policy, Executive Order 2018-02.

Finding:

The following issue and area of improvement was identified:

- Prior to the theft of City of Jacksonville (COJ) Vehicle Number 8616, the assigned driver had been previously observed by co-workers failing to take appropriate precautions to keep this vehicle secured.

Motor Vehicle Safety Policy, Executive Order 2018-02

Section 2.01, Proper Use of Vehicles

All Public Vehicles used by Public Drivers must at all times be utilized in a responsible and economical manner. Failure to do so shall subject the Public Employee to appropriate discipline or other administrative action as set forth herein.

Section 2.08, Unattended Motor Vehicles

No Public Driver shall allow any Public Vehicle to stand unattended without first stopping the engine, locking the ignition, and removing the key.

Section 2.13, Public Vehicle and Inspections

City departments and participating Members that have custody of Public Vehicles shall maintain, at a minimum, the procedural standards of accountability and inspections set forth below:

(a) Key Control: Ignition keys should be accounted for at all times. Spare keys should be under locked control.

COJ Vehicle Number 8616

COJ Vehicle Number 8616, a 2017 Ford Transit 350 Cargo Van, was acquired by the COJ Fleet Management Division (Fleet Management) on December 20, 2017 and assigned to the Traffic Engineering Division (Traffic Engineering). After COJ Vehicle Number 8616 was received by Traffic Engineering, it was subsequently assigned to Steven Lackey,¹ former Traffic Signal Technician, Traffic Engineering, Public Works Department.

Theft of COJ Vehicle Number 8616**Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Records**

According to Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) Incident Report Numbers 2020-0112638 and 2020-0112638-01, on February 18, 2020, Carlton Copeland, Traffic Signal Supervisor, Traffic Engineering, Public Works, reported to JSO that COJ Vehicle Number 8616 had been stolen. JSO subsequently located COJ Vehicle Number 8616 behind a local church on February 21, 2020. It was noted in JSO Incident Report Number 2020-0112638-01 that the "key was in the vehicle . . ."

Traffic Engineering Parking Lot Video Surveillance

The Traffic Engineering parking lot video surveillance cameras recorded the theft of COJ Vehicle Number 8616. On February 17, 2020 at 10:23 p.m., an unidentified individual was observed entering the Traffic Engineering parking lot. A minute later, at 10:24 p.m., this same individual opened the door to COJ Vehicle Number 8616, entered the vehicle and closed the vehicle's door. COJ Vehicle Number 8616's engine was started, and it was driven away from the Traffic Engineering parking lot at 10:26 p.m.

Lackey Statement

Lackey provided a typed, signed statement, dated March 3, 2020, which pertained to the theft of COJ Vehicle Number 8616. According to Lackey, on Friday, February 14, 2020, he locked COJ Vehicle Number 8616 before he left work. Lackey said that in addition to the two keys that came with COJ Vehicle Number 8616, he purchased an additional key, which was kept "covered in the console when parked. It appears the key was used once the thief broke into the van."

¹ As of February 28, 2022, Lackey was no longer employed with COJ. Lackey was not interviewed for this management review.

He said that maintaining a spare key was “something most of our repairers learned to do” throughout his approximately 20-year career for several reasons, such as vehicles being unavailable (due to the lack of vehicles or employees taking a vehicle’s keys home) or employees accidentally locking keys in their vehicles. In addition, Lackey said he was “frequently” out of COJ Vehicle Number 8616 working while the vehicle’s engine was running.

Lackey also mentioned previously the Traffic Engineering parking lot gates were kept locked but “We have gotten complacent.”

TESTIMONY

Statement of Carlton Copeland, Traffic Signal Supervisor, Traffic Engineering

Copeland explained Traffic Engineering employees were only assigned one key to their assigned COJ vehicle with spare keys retained by their supervisor and Fleet Management. Copeland said if Lackey needed an additional key made it would require the approval of either Copeland or Fleet Management. Lackey never told Copeland he needed an additional key, which Lackey obtained without anyone else’s knowledge.

In addition, in Copeland’s experience, it also uncommon for Traffic Engineering employees to keep spare keys since the COJ vehicles now use chipped² keys. COJ Vehicle 8616 had been assigned only to Lackey and no one else drove it. Copeland said Lackey’s explanations in his written statement for obtaining a spare key “has nothing to do with the vehicles we have today.”

Copeland said Christopher LeDew, Chief, Traffic Engineering, Public Works, directed the Traffic Engineering parking lot gates be locked when LeDew began serving in this position. However, Copeland confirmed over time this directive was not regularly followed.

Statement of Traffic Engineering Employees,³ Traffic Engineering

All the Traffic Engineering employees interviewed by the OIG said they secured their COJ vehicle by ensuring it was locked and, if it was a COJ vehicle that needed to be shared with others, placing the relevant COJ vehicle keys on the designated key hooks located within the Traffic Engineering office. In addition, all of the Traffic Engineering employees said the process they used to secure their COJ vehicle came from either “common sense” and life experience or on-the-job training.

None of the Traffic Engineering employees said it was common for someone to have a spare key to their COJ vehicle. Only one of the Traffic Engineering employees interviewed had more than one key to their COJ vehicle. However, this Traffic Engineering employee said one of his keys could only be used on his vehicle’s locks. He was unsure where this key came from as it had been provided him to when he was assigned his current COJ vehicle.

² As a security feature, in recent years, automobile manufacturers began installing a radio frequency chip in their vehicle keys which, once programmed to the vehicle, sent a signal to the vehicle, and allowed for the engine to be started. If an unchipped or unprogrammed key was used, then the vehicle’s engine would not start.

³ Eight Traffic Engineering employees, all of whom worked in Traffic Signals, the same sub-unit of Traffic Engineering as Lackey, were interviewed for this management review.

The only individual identified as having purchased a key for a COJ vehicle was Lackey, although, only two Traffic Engineering employees identified him as having purchased it.

Some Traffic Engineering employees had also previously observed Lackey fail to take appropriate precautions to secure his COJ vehicle. One Traffic Engineering employee mentioned he had observed Lackey had left COJ Vehicle Number 8616 unattended in the Traffic Engineering parking lot on “numerous” occasions with the engine running but the vehicle locked.

Another Traffic Engineering employee said prior to the theft of COJ Vehicle Number 8616, Lackey told him he had purchased a spare key for COJ Vehicle Number 8616. Lackey advised him this key was kept in the vehicle’s cupholder, as Lackey was afraid of locking himself out of COJ Vehicle Number 8616.

In addition, some Traffic Engineering employees reported a re-emphasis on the required security protocols after the theft of COJ Vehicle Number 8616 occurred. One Traffic Engineering employee advised there had been a renewed emphasis to ensure the Traffic Engineering parking lot gates were locked in the evening hours. According to another Traffic Engineering employee, approximately within six months after the theft of COJ Vehicle Number 8616, an e-mail was sent to “everyone” which reiterated the required security protocols, such as ensuring the Traffic Engineering parking lot gates were closed and COJ vehicles were secured.⁴

Statement of David Hylazewski, Equipment Control Administrator, Fleet Management

As an Equipment Control Administrator, he was responsible for procuring vehicles for COJ, as well as maintaining each COJ vehicle’s paperwork (e.g., vehicle title) and keys.

When COJ obtained a new vehicle, it came with five keys, one which was kept by Fleet Management and the remaining four keys were kept by the using agency. According to Hylazewski, when a COJ employee needed to obtain a key for their COJ vehicle, they would make a request through their vehicle coordinator, who would then make the verbal request to Hylazewski.

Hylazewski advised that COJ employees were not allowed to purchase keys for their COJ vehicles, but he did not know if there was a written policy which addressed this matter.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During this management review, the following additional information was obtained by the OIG:

Initially, the OIG was led to believe that COJ Vehicle Number 8616 had a security feature which required a chipped key, programmed to the vehicle, be used in the ignition for its engine to be started.

⁴ LeDew confirmed that, after the theft of COJ Vehicle Number 8616, Traffic Engineering employees were reminded of the required security protocols (e.g., ensuring the Traffic Engineering parking lot gate was locked, securing their COJ vehicles, etc.). However, he said this directive may have been given verbally as he was unable to locate the aforementioned e-mail.

In Lackey's March 3, 2020 signed statement, Lackey advised he had obtained an additional key, which was unprogrammed, from a local store when he was initially assigned COJ Vehicle Number 8616 for the vehicle's door locks. However, Lackey said even though it was an unprogrammed key it could start COJ Vehicle Number 8616's engine.

Hylazewski subsequently confirmed for the OIG this security feature was optional and not installed in COJ Vehicle Number 8616.

RECOMMENDED CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

The OIG recommends the Traffic Engineering Division:

- Ensure all keys for the COJ vehicles assigned to the Traffic Engineering Division are inventoried and accounted for, as well as documenting which employee have these keys.
- Remind employees about the collective responsibility of securing COJ vehicles or other assets. If employees observe co-workers failing to take appropriate precautions to secure COJ vehicles or assets, it needs to be reported to the appropriate authority to be addressed.
- Take any additional corrective action deemed appropriate.

INSPECTOR GENERAL STANDARDS

This Management Review has been conducted in accordance with the ASSOCIATION OF INSPECTORS GENERAL Principles & Quality Standards for Investigations.