



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
Illinois State Toll Highway Authority

NOTICE OF POSTING
OIG Case # IG-19-006
Respondent: Taronn Guyton

Pursuant to 605 ILCS 10/8.5 (e)(3), the attached redacted summary report is being posted to the Illinois Toll Highway Authority's public website. As required by law, the Office of the Inspector General for the Illinois Toll Highway Authority (OIG) sent a copy of this report to the Respondent and gave her time to provide suggested redactions or a written response. Respondent provided no response.

The OIG issued a summary report on August 30, 2019 describing its investigation that provided reasonable cause to find that Seasonal Toll Collector Taronn Guyton retained unauthorized control over Tollway revenue. Toll audit provided Toll Collection Performance Reports that reflected cash shortages ranging from \$98 to more than \$170 on six different days in June and July 2019 for a total of more than \$871.00. When interviewed by OIG investigators, Guyton denied taking the money but could provide no plausible explanation for the shortage. Guyton acknowledged that the shortage looked bad and agreed to re-pay the money.

Following the interview, OIG informed Toll Operations of the circumstances. A Toll Operations Manager met with Guyton and offered her the opportunity to resign from her position in lieu of discharge and prosecution, and Guyton agreed. She signed an agreement allowing the Tollway to withhold her final paycheck in the amount of \$793.90 as restitution for the loss. Guyton resigned and has been coded do not re-hire.



**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
OIG Case #IG-19-006
August 30, 2019**

This report provides a summary of evidence set out in the attached investigative materials, and the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG's) analysis of that evidence. An index of these investigative materials is attached.

I. INTRODUCTION

On August 13, 2019, the OIG received information from Toll Audit indicating there were large cash shortages for several shifts of Seasonal Toll Collector Taronn Guyton, totaling \$871.34. Toll Audit provided documentation reflecting several variances but indicated that no video was available because it had been overwritten under current video capabilities.

When interviewed, Guyton denied taking the money but could not explain the shortages. Guyton also said that she would be willing to pay the money back to the Tollway. Following Guyton's interview, the Toll Operations Department offered Guyton the opportunity to resign, which she accepted and agreed to restitution in the amount of her last Tollway paycheck, \$793.90.

Had Guyton not resigned, OIG would have recommended her termination.

II. APPLICABLE RULES

The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Employee Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 7: Employee Conduct and Discipline provides in relevant part:

Section A: Employee Conduct

To ensure orderly operation and provide the best possible work environment, the Tollway expects employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interest and safety of both the employees and the organization. Violations of the rules of conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. The rules of conduct include but are not limited to:

- Incompetency or inefficiency in the performance of a duty
- Inattention or failure to perform a duty
- Neglect of duties
- Other conduct unbecoming a Tollway employee

Section L: Theft and Misappropriation

Any employee who commits theft or misappropriation of Tollway property, participates in the theft or misappropriation of property belonging to others while on duty or present on Tollway premises, or has knowledge of such a theft or misappropriation and fails to promptly report it, may be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

In making the determination to discipline a Tollway employee for theft or misappropriation, the following factors shall be considered:

- Whether the employee is in a position of trust and his/her integrity may reasonably be questioned.
- Whether the employee has responsibility for public funds and his/her honesty may reasonably be called in to question.
- Whether the employee has had unexplained cash shortages as evidenced by audit reports.

III. BACKGROUND

A. Subjects/Parties Involved

1. Seasonal Toll Collector Taronn Guyton

Tollway records reflect Taronn Guyton worked for Toll Operations as a Seasonal Toll Collector since May 2, 2019 and had previously worked in the same capacity in 2016. Guyton's home plaza was identified as Plaza 43. Guyton resigned effective August 14, 2019.

IV. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

A. Documents

1. Toll Service Notification Reports (TC-32)

The OIG received TC-32 reports for the following dates with large cash variances:

- a. June 15, 2019 showing the cash variance of \$152.76.
- b. June 17, 2019 showing the cash variance of \$171.12.
- c. June 19, 2019 showing the cash variance of \$136.68.
- d. June 20, 2019 showing the cash variance of \$168.90.
- e. July 5, 2019 showing the cash variance of \$98.58.
- f. July 7, 2019 showing the cash variance of \$143.30.

2. Immediate Resignation for Cause Memo

On August 14, 2019, Toll Operations presented Guyton with a memorandum indicating that it had determined that absent any other plausible explanation, the \$871.34 shortage attributable to her could only be the result of theft or gross negligence, which violated the Tollway's Employee Policy and Procedure Manual, Chapter 7. Guyton signed the memorandum agreeing that, in lieu of discharge and criminal prosecution, she would immediately resign and repay the Tollway from the proceeds of her final Tollway check, in the amount of \$793.90. Guyton further agreed not to seek future employment at the Tollway.

3. Restitution Agreement

The Restitution Agreement signed by Guyton on August 14, 2019 indicated her authorization for the Tollway to withhold her final paycheck in the gross amount of \$793.90.

B. Interviews

On August 14, 2019, OIG investigators interviewed Taronn Guyton providing her Voluntary Advisements¹, orally and in writing, which she acknowledged understanding. Guyton consented to have the interview audio-recorded.

In summary, Guyton stated the following:

Guyton has been a Seasonal Toll Collector since May 1, 2019. Guyton also held this position in approximately 2016. Guyton's home plaza is plaza 43 off of I-80 and Dixie Highway but she also works at other plazas as assigned, approximately once per week. Guyton collects the tolls for different classifications of axles. Approximately once per month she will work "relief" during her shift, which means she will give all of the other collectors their breaks.

When asked about the shortages of her drawers on June 15, 17, 19, and 20, 2019 and July 5, and 7, 2019 she could provide no explanation. Guyton said that there had been an incident approximately one month ago in which she and the relief worker inadvertently switched transport bags. The other employee, [REDACTED], was serving as the Collector in Charge on that shift and they addressed the issue as soon as [REDACTED] brought it to her attention. She does not believe [REDACTED] wrote anything up documenting this issue because she would have received a copy if [REDACTED] had.

There are always issues with the equipment, but an example of those issues is the gates not going down; Guyton said such events would not make her drawer off. Additionally, she claimed to classify vehicles correctly. Guyton said that she does not leave her money unattended.

The only other incident she can think of happened on Wednesday, August 7, 2019. She was working 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. and was relieving [REDACTED]. From 10:04 p.m.-10:18 p.m., she was working while logged in under [REDACTED] number. She wrote this incident up in detail and gave [REDACTED] a copy. She believes this would be recorded on August 8 documents since she had worked the overnight shift.

Guyton does not have any explanation for the total cash variance of \$871.34. Guyton acknowledged that it looks bad but there is no way that her drawer should be that short.

¹ In cases such as this that might involve criminal activity, the OIG generally provides voluntary advisements. In such cases, subjects who have been advised that the interview is voluntary may refuse to answer questions on the basis of their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Refusal based on the Fifth Amendment right cannot be used by the OIG as the basis for a recommendation for administrative sanction or disciplinary action. Any statement or information provided may be used in a subsequent criminal prosecution or as the basis for administrative or disciplinary action against the subject.

Guyton has never taken money out of the drawer for herself. However, twice Guyton has made change out of a \$5 bill to have quarters for laundry. Both times she has done this, it has been in the counting room with her co-workers present. Once was at Plaza 35 or 36 and the other time was at Plaza 43.

Guyton would be willing to pay the \$871.34 back to the Tollway. Guyton said that she is sure it looks like she took the money and without having an explanation for where the money is, she is not making herself look better. Guyton said that she always needs extra money, but this is not how she gets it.

Guyton asked if she was the only one with a drawer short and said that maybe someone else's drawers were over. She said it was possible she was working off of someone else's number.

Guyton has no explanation for the shortage and agreed that it looks like she took the money, but she said she did not take the money.

C. Post-Interview

Following Guyton's interview on August 14, 2019, OIG informed Toll Operations of the circumstances. A Toll Operations manager met with Guyton and offered her the opportunity to resign from her employment in lieu of discharge and prosecution, and Guyton agreed. Guyton then signed both the above-mentioned memo regarding her immediate resignation for cause and the restitution agreement agreeing to withhold her final paycheck in the estimated gross amount of \$793.90 as restitution for her theft or gross negligence of \$871.31.

V. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation established reasonable cause to find that Guyton committed theft or gross negligence over the course of several days in June and July 2019 which resulted in shortage of \$871.34 in her cash receipts, in violation of Tollway policy. Records reflect that there were significant cash shortages of Guyton's cash drawer on June 15, 17, 19, and 20, 2019 and July 5, and 7, 2019.

Although Guyton claimed she never took Tollway money, she could not offer a plausible explanation for the shortages. Her explanations did not address the specific dates in question and did not address the specific documented cash variances.

On August 14, 2019, Guyton agreed to resign and authorized the Tollway to keep her last paycheck in the amount of \$793.90 as restitution. Had Guyton not resigned, OIG would have recommended her termination.

Toll Audit informed the OIG that the current video system is limited to saving video between 30 and 45 days, depending on the plaza. We understand that Procurement is working with Information Technology to increase the video archive capability to 60 days. Video recordings

provide valuable safety and other protections and we strongly recommend that the Tollway continue these efforts.

VI. PERSONNEL RULE VIOLATIONS

This investigation has established that Guyton violated the following Tollway policies:

The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Employee Policies and Procedures Manual,
Chapter 7: Employee Conduct and Discipline

Section A: Employee Conduct

Section L: Theft and Misappropriation