



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
Illinois State Toll Highway Authority

NOTICE OF POSTING
OIG Case # IG-2016-010
Respondent: Richard Sramek

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 sent a copy of this report to the Respondent and gave him fifteen days, until January 24, 2017, to provide suggested redactions or a written response. Respondent submitted a response, but requested it not be made public.

OIG issued a summary report on October 28, 2016 recommending discipline for Respondent for violating Tollway policy by comingling personal and Tollway funds. Specifically, toll booth video from July 30, 2016 shows Respondent removing currency from his cash drawer and placing it into his pants pocket. Respondent admitted to the OIG that it was him in the video and claimed he did not remember doing it, but said he did not steal any money, although he could not explain his actions. Following review of the OIG report, the department placed Respondent on suspension pending investigation, and he was given a chance to respond. Following a review of his response, the Tollway discharged Respondent on January 9, 2017.



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

OIG Case #: IG-2016-010

October 28, 2016

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

I. INTRODUCTION

On August 24, 2016, [REDACTED], Toll Audit Manager, reported to OIG that Senior Toll Collector, Richard Sramek, had a cash shortage on July 30, 2016, of \$239.15. [REDACTED] provided a video recording of Sramek's assigned tollbooth that showed Sramek remove currency from his cash drawer and place it into his pants pocket. When interviewed, Sramek denied taking any money from the Tollway, but could not explain his actions. The investigation established reasonable cause to find that Sramek violated Tollway policy by comingling personal and Tollway funds. OIG recommends that the Tollway impose discipline commensurate with these findings and consistent with Tollway policy.

II. APPLICABLE RULES

A. Toll Collectors Introduction Booklet; Cash Handling Section, Page 7

Provides in relevant part:

"Secure money at all times. Do not mix your money and the Tollway issued bank or the collected tolls. Do not place money inside pockets, coats. Do not leave money unattended for any reason."

B. Illinois Tollway Policy and Procedure Manual Chapter VIII. Employee Demeanor; Section I. THEFT AND MISAPPROPRIATION

Provides in relevant part:

Any employee who commits theft or misappropriation of Tollway property will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

III. BACKGROUND

A. Richard Sramek

Richard Sramek is a Senior Toll Collector assigned to Plaza 39. Sramek has worked for the Tollway for 24 years and 11 months, and started on October 15, 1991.

Sramek's disciplinary history is limited to an incident on March 2, 2004 involving unsecured funds. He has no other documented disciplinary history and his Employee Evaluations are satisfactory. Sramek has no history of significant cash shortages.

IV. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

A. Documents

1. Toll Services Notification Report dated August 23, 2016 with attachments.

█ provided a Toll Services Report that documents the -\$239.15 cash variance on July 30, 2016, identifies other Unusual Occurrences, and provides relevant Toll Collector history for Sramek.

2. Personnel File of Richard Sramek.

OIG reviewed relevant documents from Sramek's personnel file including: Sramek's employment application, performance evaluations, and disciplinary history.

B. Interviews

1. Richard Sramek

On September 8, 2016, Richard Sramek was interviewed by OIG Investigators after informing him of his Administrative Advisements for Union Employees and providing oral and written acknowledgement of understanding those advisements. He chose to proceed with the interview without union representation. He provided written consent to have the interview audio-recorded.

In summary Sramek stated the following: He has been a Toll Collector with the Tollway for almost 25 years, and acknowledged that he is familiar with the Tollway rules and regulations concerning currency handling. Sramek viewed the video and admitted that on July 30, 2016, he placed currency into his pants pocket from his cash drawer but he insisted that he did not steal the \$239.15 that his bank was short that day. He has never had a problem with cash shortages in his nearly 25 years with the Tollway.

V. ANALYSIS

Tollway records clearly establish that Sramek's drawer was short \$239.15 on July 30, 2016; the same day video evidence clearly shows Sramek remove an undetermined amount of currency from his cash drawer and place in his pants pocket.

When Sramek was interviewed by the OIG about the incident, he was cooperative and candid, and he asserted that he was uncertain as to the cause of the \$239.15 cash shortage. Sramek emphatically denied taking the money, although he acknowledged that the video showed him placing currency from the cash drawer into his pants pocket. He admitted that the Tollway Cash Handling rules and regulations prohibit this practice.

Sramek's personnel file reflects a lengthy tenure with the Tollway. He has been a Toll Collector for nearly 25 years and shows that he has been disciplined one time for failure to secure Tollway funds. Other Tollway records corroborate Sramek's statement that he has no history of notable cash shortages.

There is insufficient evidence to establish that the currency Sramek placed into his pants pocket was the \$239.15 that his bank was short, but his actions are highly suspicious, especially since Sramek cannot explain why he did it.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

The investigation provides reasonable cause to find that Sramek violated Tollway policy by placing currency from his Tollway issued bank into his pants pocket. OIG recommends that the Tollway impose discipline commensurate with these findings and consistent with Tollway policy.

VII. RULE VIOLATIONS

A. Toll Collectors Introduction Booklet; Cash Handling Section Page 7

Provides in relevant part:

“Secure money at all times. Do not mix your money and the Tollway issued bank or the collected tolls. Do not place money inside pockets, coats. Do not leave money unattended for any reason.”