

**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
*City of Chicago*



***INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE ADVISORY  
CONCERNING THE TRAINING OF DEPARTMENT OF STREETS  
AND SANITATION DISPATCH PERSONNEL***

**JUNE 2013**

866-IG-TIPLINE (866-448-4754)  
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Joseph M. Ferguson  
Inspector General

## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL *City of Chicago*

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### **VIA EMAIL**

June 14, 2013

Charles L. Williams  
Commissioner  
Department of Streets and Sanitation  
121 N. LaSalle Street, Room 700  
Chicago IL 60602

Dear Commissioner Williams:

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (IGO) has concluded an investigation that found that several of the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) dispatch personnel operating out of the City Incident Center located at 1411 West Madison (the CIC) lack a basic proficiency in at least one of the four dispatch systems DSS uses. According to interviews the IGO conducted in 2012, the absence of such requisite skills creates inefficiencies in DSS' dispatching and produces disparate workloads for dispatchers, and thus could potentially cause unnecessary delays in the provision of important City services.

More specifically, one DSS equipment dispatcher admitted that he is not familiar with the Police Computer Aided Dispatch system (PCAD), which DSS uses to help coordinate the City's provision of tow trucks upon the receipt of police tow requests, and said that he has only been provided with minimal informal training on the system. A DSS equipment dispatcher in/charge (EDIC)<sup>1</sup> at the CIC confirmed that the above-described dispatcher cannot operate the PCAD system and conceded that the dispatcher also does not use the customer service request (CSR)/311 dispatch system, which helps coordinate the City's response to, among other issues, downed power lines, water main breaks, and pot holes, but rather relays the CSR/311-type information he receives over the phone to another dispatcher who then enters the information into the CSR/311 system—the EDIC explained that the dispatcher was “lost in the computer world.” The EDIC further related that two other DSS dispatchers do not use the PCAD system due to a lack of training and said that he was only minimally effective at operating the PCAD system himself. The EDIC agreed that a dispatcher's inability to properly operate all the DSS

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<sup>1</sup> According to the City's job description for the EDIC position, which was revised in October 2012, an EDIC is responsible for, among other tasks, “oversee[ing] Equipment Dispatchers engaged in monitoring, receiving and transmitting radio communications to facilitate the delivery of departmental services in support of city-wide operations, and to respond to extreme weather conditions and city-wide emergencies.”

dispatch systems creates inefficiencies and results in unequal dispatcher workloads, but suggested that employees with seniority should be given some slack.<sup>2</sup>

DSS' Chief Dispatcher stated that DSS dispatchers are expected to be proficient in all of the dispatch systems DSS uses. The Chief Dispatcher claimed, though, that all the equipment dispatchers received training on the PCAD system. According to the Chief Dispatcher, if certain dispatchers needed additional training, they should have asked for it. The EDIC, acknowledged, however, that DSS has been somewhat negligent in ensuring that its dispatchers are properly trained with respect to all the dispatch systems DSS uses.

Based on these findings, and given the risk of dispatching inefficiencies and unequal dispatcher workloads, DSS should consider taking action to ensure that all its dispatchers are sufficiently trained in the necessary dispatch systems, including, if appropriate, tracking the dates, subject matter, and recipients of such trainings.

The IGO invites DSS to respond in writing to the above before July 16, 2013. Any such response will be made public along with the IGO's advisory.

Respectfully,



Joseph M. Ferguson  
Inspector General  
City of Chicago

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<sup>2</sup> Another DSS equipment dispatcher concurred that the inability of certain DSS dispatchers to utilize all of the dispatch systems DSS uses creates inefficiencies in the Department's provision of dispatch services.

**CITY OF CHICAGO OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

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<b>To Suggest Ways to Improve City Government</b>	Visit our website: <a href="https://chicagoinspectorgeneral.org/get-involved/help-improve-city-government/">https://chicagoinspectorgeneral.org/get-involved/help-improve-city-government/</a>
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**MISSION**

The Chicago Inspector General's Office (IGO) is an independent, nonpartisan oversight agency whose mission is to promote economy, efficiency, and integrity in the administration of programs and operations of City government. The IGO achieves this mission through:

- Administrative and Criminal Investigations
- Audits of City programs and operations
- Reviews of City programs, operations and policies

From these activities, the IGO issues reports of findings, and disciplinary and policy recommendations to assure that City officials, employees and vendors are held accountable for the provision of efficient, cost-effective government operations and further to prevent, detect, identify, expose and eliminate waste, inefficiency, misconduct, fraud, corruption, and abuse of public authority and resources.

**AUTHORITY**

The authority to produce reports and recommendations on ways to improve City operations is established in the City of Chicago Municipal Code § 2-56-030(c), which confers upon the Inspector General the following power and duty:

*To promote economy, efficiency, effectiveness and integrity in the administration of the programs and operations of the city government by reviewing programs, identifying any inefficiencies, waste and potential for misconduct therein, and recommending to the mayor and the city council policies and methods for the elimination of inefficiencies and waste, and the prevention of misconduct.*