



Joseph M. Ferguson
Inspector General

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL *City of Chicago*

740 N. Sedgwick Street, Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60654
Telephone: (773) 478-7799
Fax: (773) 478-3949

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CONTACT: (773) 478-0534
Rachel Leven

OIG Releases Advisory on Suspensions Issued for Historical Shakman Violations

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) has issued an advisory highlighting inconsistencies in the implementation of employee discipline meted out by the City. This advisory comes after an OIG review of disciplinary actions found critical variations in the way sanctions were carried out across and within City departments. The lack of a clear central policy resulted in some employees escaping the full professional and financial consequences of disciplinary sanction and rendered payroll records inaccurate.

The OIG examined disciplinary actions arising from *Shakman* Monitor Office investigations. The review looked at time-keeping records, finding that suspensions served by employees were inconsistent with the City's stated disciplinary sanctions. The OIG also found incorrect coding including the entry of "excused absence" on a suspension day, personnel files that were missing notices of suspension, and variability in how and when suspensions were served.

In the advisory, the OIG recommends that the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Department of Finance (DOF) establish a City-wide policy for the assessment, coding, and enforcement of unpaid suspensions and other disciplinary sanctions. The departments agree with the OIG and, in their response, note that they have already begun drafting a new policy.

Inspector General Joseph Ferguson says, "This advisory is part of a continuing effort to assure robust compliance tracking for *Shakman* oversight as well as consistent practices and equitable outcomes in City employment administration generally. Variations in coding and suspension implementation are historical phenomena that reach across City departments and span multiple administrations. DHR and DOF have fully embraced the OIG's recommendations. They have committed to specific actions that I am hopeful will swiftly bring uniformity and equity to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions."

The full advisory, and City's response, can be found online at the OIG website: www.chicagoinpectorgeneral.org.

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