

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS



ED QUATREVAUX
INSPECTOR GENERAL

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**MEDIA CONTACT:
Paula Pendarvis
(504) 717-7591**

SEWERAGE AND WATER BOARD LACKS OVERSIGHT OF TAKE-HOME VEHICLES

The New Orleans Office of Inspector General (OIG) today released a report titled “Sewerage and Water Board Take-Home Vehicles.” OIG investigators found a lack of oversight exposed the S&WB to potential fraud, waste, and abuse. Investigators also discovered several examples of the S&WB violating its policies for take-home vehicles. Take-home vehicles are assigned for the sole purpose of responding to emergencies after normal duty hours but almost half of the employees assigned vehicles lived outside of Orleans Parish. However, instead of putting controls in place to strengthen oversight, the S&WB did not enforce its policies or eliminated them altogether.

The decision to provide S&WB employees with take-home car privileges resulted in additional costs for fuel and maintenance. In 2014 the S&WB spent approximately \$394,000 for its 110 take-home cars, but OIG investigators found that the S&WB failed to take several basic steps to ensure that take-home vehicle privileges were necessary and cost effective. For example the S&WB:

- did not establish a response time requirement during emergency events;
- eliminated the requirement for employees to respond to at least four emergencies per month to qualify for take-home vehicle privileges;
- expanded the allowable commuting distance for employees with take-home vehicles; and
- eliminated the requirement that all take-home vehicle assignments be subject to review and written approval by the S&WB Vehicle Committee.

“This is the second report we’ve issued in the past few months that shows the Sewerage and Water Board has thrown out rules to prevent waste instead of enforcing them,” stated Inspector General Ed Quatrevaux. “The priority must be spending every dollar on improving S&WB service to citizens.”

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