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OIG FINDS PROBLEMATIC TRENDS IN NOPD'S TIMEKEEPING AND OVERTIME PRACTICES, RECOMMENDS IMMEDIATE CORRECTIVE ACTION

The New Orleans Office of Inspector General (OIG) today (April 29) released a public letter recommending that the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) address recurring issues in the NOPD's timekeeping and overtime practices. These issues violate City and/or NOPD policy and increase the risk of payroll fraud, as well as other types of fraud, waste, and abuse.

The OIG released this letter amid investigations into NOPD's timekeeping and overtime practices. Through these ongoing investigations, the OIG observed several problematic trends, including:

- **NOPD supervisors approved overtime hours that exceeded the limits as defined in the NOPD's Operations Manual.**

The NOPD launched a pilot program in November 2022 that temporarily raised the weekly overtime cap from 24 to 56 hours to increase officer presence and meet demand for paid details. Although intended as a short-term measure, City-funded overtime spiked and remained elevated. Overall, the NOPD's annual overtime costs more than doubled from \$13.1 million in 2022 to \$26.8 million in 2025, creating an additional financial burden for the City. The OIG also found that the NOPD never updated its Operations Manual to reflect this major policy change, instead extending it through special orders. The significant increase in the weekly overtime cap raises concerns about officer safety and well-being, and about the adequacy of overtime oversight.

- **NOPD officers entered overtime in block amounts rather than actual time worked.**

The NOPD's Operations Manual states: "Case overtime must be entered to the exact minute and will be paid to the exact minute." However, OIG investigators observed that officers frequently reported overtime in standardized blocks of time, often in four-hour increments, rather than documenting the actual hours worked as required by NOPD policy.

- **NOPD supervisors shared their timesheet login credentials with subordinates.**

Though NOPD policy required officers to record their own time, OIG investigators found that officers often relied on supervisors to log in to the time-keeping system and enter their time. This practice not only violated NOPD policy but also placed an undue administrative burden on supervisors. In many instances, supervisors shared their login information with subordinates, allowing officers to enter their own time (but under their supervisors' logins instead of their own), and approve their own time, both in violation of NOPD policy. These practices compromise the integrity of the timekeeping process, eliminate meaningful supervisory review, and increase the risk that employees will enter inflated overtime amounts.

- **NOPD supervisors authorized remote work for officers in violation of City Policy and Departmental Directive.**

OIG investigators determined that NOPD supervisors were allowing some officers to work from home without completing the Remote Work Agreements required by City policy. Permitting remote work outside of the proper channels weakened the NOPD's systems of transparency and accountability and could impair its ability to maintain public safety and uphold the law.

- **NOPD officers did not remain within their assigned districts while on active duty.**

OIG investigators identified multiple instances in which NOPD officers were physically outside of their assigned districts during hours they reported as on duty, in violation of NOPD policy. In some cases, OIG investigators determined NOPD officers were not even in Louisiana while reporting to be on duty.

As a result of these findings, the OIG made multiple recommendations, including:

- The NOPD should conduct a formal review of its overtime policy to determine a weekly overtime limit that is both operationally necessary and sustainable, without impacting officer safety and/or well-being. The NOPD should then formally update its operations manual to authorize and document the overtime policy.
- The NOPD should enforce its policy that requires case-related overtime entries to reflect the exact start and end times worked. This requirement should be extended to all categories of NOPD overtime.
- The NOPD should take immediate action to ensure compliance with the City's written time and attendance reporting policy. NOPD should immediately correct the practice of supervisors sharing their time-keeping login information with subordinates.
- The NOPD should ensure that its work-from-home policy aligns with the City's Remote Work/Telecommute Policy and formally document this alignment.
- All NOPD personnel should be reminded of the requirements for duty location and time reporting, as well as the accountability measures for violations of NOPD policy. NOPD supervisors should be required to promptly address any deviations from the policy.

Inspector General Ed Michel stated:

“Strengthening the NOPD's oversight and management of its timekeeping and overtime is essential to ensuring the Department uses its resources responsibly and in support of public safety. By updating its overtime policy based on actual operational need, and implementing stronger monitoring systems, the NOPD can significantly reduce the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse. As the City contends with a budget shortfall, to the degree of furloughing City workers, it is imperative that the NOPD use public resources more efficiently and effectively.”

To view the OIG's letter, visit NolaOIG.gov.

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