

REDACTED

Federal Housing Finance Agency
Office of Inspector General



Management Advisory: Use of an Agency Vehicle

This report contains redactions of information that is protected under the Privacy Act of 1974 (Pub.L. 93-579, 88 Stat. 1896, enacted December 31, 1974, 5 U.S.C. § 552a).

Management Advisory • OIG-2018-002 • September 5, 2018



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Federal Housing Finance Agency

400 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20219

September 5, 2018

TO: Melvin L. Watt, Director, Federal Housing Finance Agency

FROM: Richard Parker, Deputy Inspector General for Investigations (Acting)

Angela Choy, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations

Handwritten signatures in blue ink. One signature is a large, stylized scribble, and the other is a more legible signature, possibly "Angela".

SUBJECT: Management Advisory—Use of an Agency Vehicle

The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA or Agency) Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an administrative inquiry of an anonymous hotline complaint alleging: (1) FHFA employees inaccurately reported their time and attendance by failing to take leave to attend the funeral of an FHFA employee; and (2) a senior FHFA employee authorized staff to use an FHFA vehicle to drive to that funeral.¹

FHFA's Absence and Leave Policy defines "annual leave" as "paid absence that an employee may use, subject to supervisory approval, for vacations, rest and relaxation, personal business or emergencies."

FHFA's Official Use of FHFA Vehicles Policy, adopted March 29, 2017, permits employees and contractor personnel to use vehicles owned or leased by FHFA to conduct official Agency business. The policy defines "official Agency business," "official purposes," and "official business" to mean the use of Agency vehicles "in furtherance of FHFA business and not for the personal use, comfort, or convenience of the employee." FHFA employees and contractor personnel are required to complete the vehicle use log when they use an Agency vehicle.

Information obtained during our administrative inquiry shows that an FHFA employee drove an Agency van for 17 miles to transport 13 current FHFA employees to and from the funeral of the spouse of an FHFA employee. The time and attendance records show that the FHFA employees took several hours of annual leave on the date of the funeral. The spouse of the deceased took sick leave that day.

¹ The senior FHFA employee was identified as [REDACTED], and the date of the funeral was [REDACTED].

We did not find evidence that FHFA employees inaccurately reported their time and attendance on the day of the funeral. Therefore, we could not substantiate the allegation in the hotline complaint that these employees inaccurately reported their time and attendance on that day.

We found that the employees took annual leave to attend the funeral, although they used the FHFA van to travel to and from it. By definition, employees who are on leave are not conducting official business. Use of any Agency vehicle, including the Agency van, is authorized under FHFA's Official Use of FHFA Vehicles Policy only "in furtherance of FHFA business and not for the personal use, comfort, or convenience of the employee." We found no exception in this policy to authorize employee use of an Agency vehicle for unofficial business. Employees' use of an Agency vehicle (here, the FHFA van) while on leave appears to run afoul of this policy.²

We reviewed the vehicle log for this Agency van for a six-month period, including the date on which the van was used to transport employees to and from the funeral. Our review found three other entries in this log for use of this Agency van during this period. Two of those three entries show that the van was taken in for maintenance. The third entry did not identify a specific destination. The FHFA employee who drove the van explained that he took the van out to drive around the Washington, D.C. area because a vehicle should not remain unused for long periods without running the engine.

Because we found only one instance where an FHFA vehicle was used outside of FHFA's Official Use of FHFA Vehicles Policy and because that one instance was of limited duration, we make no formal recommendations. Prudence counsels that FHFA consider training its employees on its Official Use of FHFA Vehicles Policy to avoid similar issues in the future. Given that the vehicle log for this Agency van records four uses during a six-month period, three of which were for the purpose of vehicle maintenance or upkeep, review of additional logs for this vehicle to determine whether FHFA has a continuing need for it would be advisable.

² If the employees had been in a duty status, the question presented would have been whether using the van to travel to and from the funeral of the spouse of an employee constitutes "official business" under the Agency's vehicle use policy.


FHFA's Response to OIG's Advisory



Federal Housing Finance Agency

MEMORANDUM

TO: Richard Parker, Deputy Inspector General for Investigations (Acting)
Angela Choy, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations

FROM: Alfred Pollard, General Counsel 

SUBJECT: Draft *Management Advisory: Use of Agency Vehicle*

DATE: August 28, 2018

This Memorandum transmits the management response of the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) to the FHFA Office of Inspector General's on the draft *Management Advisory: Use of Agency Vehicle* referenced above.

FHFA has reviewed the Management Advisory and will issue a reminder to employees to read and comply with FHFA's Official Use of Vehicles Policy and particularly note the procedures and limitations for use of Agency vehicles. In addition, FHFA will review whether FHFA has a continuing need for the vehicle in question.

cc: John Major, Internal Controls and Audit Follow-up Manager
Larry Stauffer, Acting Chief Operating Officer