



STATE OF OHIO

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

RANDALL J. MEYER, INSPECTOR GENERAL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tim Gorrell, Deputy Inspector General

FROM: Andrea Fausnaugh, Criminal Analyst

DATE: March 5, 2013

SUBJECT: Vehicle Usage Analysis re: Case 2012-CA00114

On December 05, 2012, DIG Gorrell requested Investigative Support compile an analysis of vehicle usage by former Ohio Department of Education (ODE) employee, Melanie Brown. This analysis was based on the compilation of information provided by ODE. Below is a summary of the different sources used and the information each source provided. The vehicle usage analysis was based on the following:

- a. ODE Motor Vehicle Logs – logs maintained in each vehicle which record trip information for a vehicle for the entire month. The logs include columns to capture, among other fields, the name of the employee who used the vehicle, date and time recording sign in and sign out, trip mileage information, and fuel purchases). Documentation supporting purchases made is to be attached to the vehicle log (i.e., fuel). ODE Motor Vehicle Logs reflecting Brown’s vehicle usage was provided from November 2012 through September 2012.
- b. Fleet Ohio Extract – FleetOhio is a fleet management information system designed to track and analyze the costs associated with owning and operating a fleet of vehicles. FleetOhio is maintained by the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, Office of Fleet Management. The Ohio Department of Education uses FleetOhio for employees to reserve pool vehicles. Additionally, the individual responsible for the ODE fleet uses FleetOhio to document the time a vehicle is signed out and time it is returned. The dataset for Brown’s vehicle usage covered February 2010 through November 2012.
- c. Licensing Visits List – List of sites Brown reported visiting from July 1, 2009 through November 1, 2012. This list including school district, building (site) name, date of visit, and district and building internal retrieval numbers (IRNs) – unique numerical identifiers.

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Initial Document Review and Limitations

An initial review of the ODE Motor Vehicle Logs identified that fields used to capture trip information were not always complete. Missing information varied from the date or time a vehicle was signed out or returned to lack of ending or starting mileage. Without this information, it was not possible to capture a complete picture of Brown's vehicle use. As it was important to solidify this information, ODE provided the Office of the Ohio Inspector General with an extract of Brown's vehicle usage from FleetOhio. This report, provided electronically, includes reservation information as entered by the employee requesting a vehicle as well as trip information entered by the fleet coordinator at the time a vehicle packet is picked up and returned.

Investigative Support compared the dates a vehicle was signed out and returned and the mileage reported at these two events as it was reported on the handwritten vehicle log with same fields on the FleetOhio extract. The information captured in both reports frequently matched. However, some instances were identified in which the reports differed. For instance, on one occasion, November 1, 2010, the starting mileage reported by Brown was 102,128. Fleet Ohio reported a slightly lower mileage of 102,126. In these situations, Investigative Support used the more conservative number (102,128). Similarly, when comparing these datasets, there were instances in which the day a vehicle was signed out or returned varied. Investigative Support used the more conservative day.

It should be noted that a review of Brown's vehicle logs identified that the time a vehicle was signed out or returned was frequently left blank. Additionally, according to the current ODE fleet manager, time and date included on FleetOhio is manually entered by the fleet coordinator and could have reflected a time later. For example, if a vehicle is returned on a Friday night, the date and time of return may not be entered in FleetOhio until Monday. Given the inconsistencies in records related to time – specifically hours and minutes – it was not considered in this analysis.

One trip was identified that was not captured in the FleetOhio system. This trip occurred in March 2012 and is related to vehicle 18-103. When discussing this trip with Tracy Konopka, an Inventory Control Specialist II who currently serves as the ODE fleet manager, Konopka stated that the vehicle was removed from the fleet and Brown was given a different vehicle to use. However, this does not explain why Brown's use of vehicle 18-103 was not included in FleetOhio.

Mapping and Mileage Review

Investigative Support compiled a spreadsheet documenting all trip information related to vehicle use by Brown for the period November 2009 through September 2012. This included a comparison of miles driven in the state vehicle, as reported on the ODE motor vehicle log or

Fleet Ohio Extract, compared to the actual mileage to complete the site visits as captured in the licensing visit list. The methodology used to compile the actual mileage is explained in subsequent paragraphs.

As the licensing visit list provided by ODE did not include addresses, Investigative Support used the Ohio Educational Directory System (OEDS) reports to locate addresses for most schools. This source provided a majority of the addresses needed. However, for the few locations that could not be identified, open sources were used or a request was made to the ODE Office of Early Learning and School Readiness to identify the remaining addresses.

In determining actual mileage, it was assumed that each trip started and ended at Brown's residence. Additionally, round-trip mileage from the lot at which the ODE vehicles are stored to her house was factored into this analysis as it was added on to the actual mileage of each trip. The distance from the lot location to Brown's residence and back was 24 miles round trip. This was added to the actual mileage for each period of time for which Brown had a vehicle.

The list of licensing visits included the dates of each trip. Either Microsoft MapPoint or open source maps were used to calculate the mileage required to make all of the visits. At times, the list of licensing visits included multiple entries for visits to the same schools on the same days. This analysis only counted one visit to each location each day. As previously stated, it was assumed that each trip started and ended at Brown's residence. From November 2009 through September 2012, Brown reserved and used a vehicle 35 times. During this period of time, Brown utilized state vehicles to drive a total of 43,193 miles. However, based on the actual mileage required to make all of the visits included on the list provided by ODE, Brown would have only had to drive 30,036 miles – a net difference of 12,437 miles.

Trip Mileage (Miles driven in State Vehicle)	Actual Mileage (Actual mileage to make all visits)	Difference
43,193	30,756	12,437

The net difference identified above includes four trips in 2012 in which the mileage required to travel to all of the schools identified on Brown's licensing visit list exceeded the mileage she drove in the state vehicle (also identified as trip mileage). The table on the following page highlights this discrepancy.

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Vehicle		Mileage		
Sign Out	Return	Trip	Actual	Difference
2/06/2012	3/05/2012	1,911	2,485	(574)
3/27/2012	4/02/2012	302	814	(512)
4/02/2012	5/04/2012	977	1,728	(751)
5/08/2012	6/04/2012	247	1,299	(1,052)
Total				(2,889)

As the above table shows, to complete visits to all schools identified on her visit list, Brown would have driven an additional 2,889 miles.

Vehicle Utilization

A review of vehicle usage identified Brown routinely kept vehicles out for an extended period of time and during periods of time in which few visits were scheduled. For instance, a vehicle was reserved in Brown's name from Tuesday, January 4, 2011 until Sunday, January 30, 2011. On January 4 and 5, Brown used sick leave. During this period of time, there were 18 working days and three weekends. However, according to the licensing visits list, Brown only made visits to sites on two days, January 26 and 28, 2011.

Additionally, it was identified that Brown reserved and used a pool vehicle during periods of time in which no site visits were scheduled. Vehicles were in Brown's possession – and no visits were scheduled – from June 13, 2011 through August 19, 2011. During this period, one car was assigned to Brown from July 5, 2011 through August 1, 2011, during which time she accumulated 1,142 miles. Similarly, Brown reserved and used pool vehicles on June 25-26, 2012 and September 5-September 28, 2012 accumulating 248 and 1,011 miles on the vehicles during these respective trips, but no visits were scheduled.

Additionally, it was identified that Brown had vehicles assigned to her when she used sick, vacation, or unpaid leave, on paid holidays, and over weekends. From November 2009 through September 2012, Brown had a state vehicle in her possession for 89 weekends. Of these, there were only six instances in which Brown's licensing visit list included a site visit on a Friday and the following Monday. Likewise, of the 89 weekends for which Brown had a vehicle, licensing visits were scheduled on either a Friday or the following Monday 27 times.

Brown's licensing visit list documents one visit made on a weekend. According to the licensing visit list, Brown visited Hilltop Elementary in West Unity, Ohio on Sunday, December 4, 2011.

Fuel Purchases

Fuel purchases made by Brown were reviewed for the period November 2009 through September 2012. This review identified Brown fueled the state vehicles 118 times during the

aforementioned period and purchased slightly more than 1,382 gallons of fuel. Assuming her state vehicle averaged 25 to 30 miles per gallon, this would account for between 34,500 and 41,500 miles. Given that other people also fueled state vehicles, it appears that Brown's fuel consumption was relative when compared to her vehicle usage. Anomalies identified in fuel purchases were as follows:

- Brown purchased fuel on a weekend (Saturday or Sunday) 16 times
- On one occasion, Sunday, December 18, 2011, Brown purchased fuel in Lancaster, PA. Mapping software identifies the distance from Brown's residence to Lancaster, PA as being 392 miles (one way).
- Of the 118 time Brown fueled a state vehicle, a majority of purchases were made within 20 miles of her residence. Brown fueled her car farther than 20 miles from her home 35 times. Considering all 118 fuel purchases, the average distance from her residence to purchase fuel was slightly less than 30 miles.

Agency-wide Costs and Opportunities for Efficiencies

ODE policy 207.0 addresses "Fleet/Use of State Vehicles for Travel" outlines the unauthorized use of state vehicles and, among others, lists "any use for personal purpose, other than commuting, which has been authorized as specified above," and "extending the length of time the vehicle is in an employee's possession beyond that which is required to complete the official purpose of the trip."

During the course of this investigation, the Office of the Ohio Inspector General questioned whether ODE tracked information related to instances in which an employee requested a pool vehicle for official use, but was prevented from reserving one because it was unavailable. According to the current ODE fleet manager, the FleetOhio system does not allow an individual to query the system and identify instances in which a vehicle was "refused." Additionally, ODE does not require individuals who are refused vehicles to maintain documentation of the system refusal. Therefore, it was not possible to quantify the cost incurred by the state when other ODE employees were refused the use of a state pool car and instead used their personal vehicles for official business and then received mileage reimbursement.

According to ODE, education consultants, including Brown, are responsible for setting up appointments and making their own schedules. A review of the licensing visit list identified several opportunities to improve the efficiencies of visits made.

For instance, Brown scheduled one appointment each day, on back-to-back days in Lima, Ohio (October 7 and 8, 2010). According to mapping software, the buildings Brown visited were located approximately 1.5 miles from each other. Assuming Brown could have scheduled two visits on one day and would have started and ended her day at home, she would have driven a total of 201 miles round trip. Instead, by scheduling these visits on separate days, Brown drove a

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total of 400 miles to visit both schools and increased the amount of time spent driving from to more than seven hours.

Similarly, in February 2011, Brown visits schools in Monroeville, Ohio on two separate days (February 9 and February 16). The distance between these locations was less than 0.5 miles. Assuming Brown could have scheduled two visits on one day and would have started and ended her day at home, she would have driven a total of 226 miles round trip. Instead, by scheduling these visits on separate days, Brown drove a total of 442 miles to visit both schools and increased the amount of time spent driving from just over four hours to more than eight and a half hours.

On March 3, 2011 and March 7, 2011, Brown made stops at an elementary school in Sidney Ohio. Both stops were to the same location – but for programs operated by different entities. According to the licensing visit data, programs at Fairlawn Elementary were operated by both Fairlawn Local School District and Shelby Educational Service Center. Assuming Brown could have visited both programs on the same day, she would have traveled a total of 157 miles round trip, which would have taken slightly more than three hours in drive time. Instead, Brown made this trip on two separate occasions.

A scan of documentation related to site visits made in 2012 did not identify as many trips to the same city on back-to-back days. However, it was identified that multiple trips were made to the same geographic area is possible that by scheduling visits to locations in close proximity to each other on the same day would have allowed for cost savings. Although the distance between Sidney, Ohio and Saint Henry, Ohio is approximately 30 miles, scheduling visits to sites in both of these locations on the same day would have reduced the total number of miles required to visit sites on different days and would have reduced the total time Brown spent driving to these sites.