

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL CITY OF BALTIMORE



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

Investigative Report Synopsis

OIG Case #25-0004-I

Issued: March 25, 2025



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
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March 25, 2025

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is to promote accountability, efficiency, and integrity in City government, as well as to investigate complaints of fraud, financial waste, and abuse. The following synopsis is a condensed version of the full report provided to City management officials and does not contain all investigative information.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) received a complaint on June 5, 2024, regarding a lack of sufficient water and ice for workers within the Department of Public Works' (DPW) Bureau of Solid Waste (BSW) division. The OIG was actively investigating BSW facilities, workplace conditions, and heat-related policies and processes when, on August 2, 2024, DPW Solid Waste Worker Ronald Silver II (Silver) passed away due to heat exhaustion.

This investigative report provides information on the days preceding and the events that transpired regarding Silver's death on August 2, 2024. The investigation identified numerous concerns regarding DPW's heat safety practices, emergency response and handling of safety incidents and accidents, and a lack of sufficient employee safety training.

BACKGROUND

On June 5, 2024, the OIG received a complaint alleging that the Department of Public Works' (DPW) work conditions were dangerous for employees due to the heat. The complaint reported a lack of water, ice, and working fans for DPW solid waste workers at the Western Sanitation Yard (Cherry Hill), 701 Reedbird Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21225. After visiting Cherry Hill and workers on a trash route, the OIG found evidence to support the complaint and sent a [referral](#) to DPW management on June 20, 2024. DPW [responded](#) on June 26, 2024, noting that DPW would use the main office trailer as a cooling station, install a temporary air-conditioning unit, supply Gatorade, and ordered moisture-wear t-shirts for extreme heat days.

After DPW's referral response, the OIG received additional complaints that prompted the OIG to do an early morning visit of Cherry Hill on July 10. That day, temperatures reached 95°F. When the OIG arrived, there was no evidence that ice or water bottles were delivered to the yard nor made available to the early shift employees. Employees reported the day prior that water bottles were delivered to the yard in a trash can full of ice, but nothing that day. There was a trash can with dirty water and floating, warm water bottles at 6 a.m. The air-conditioning in the main trailer that DPW had previously stated would be a cooling station had stopped working a few weeks before, and the thermostats read 83°F and 85°F before 7:00 a.m. The OIG issued an [emergency report](#) a couple of hours later due to the concerning conditions observed.

In July 2024, the Baltimore City Health Department issued multiple Code Red Extreme Heat Alerts. The OIG continued to receive additional complaints and became aware of DPW employees reporting heat-related illnesses. On July 16, the OIG visited nine (9) DPW facilities and released a [report](#) on July 23, 2024, detailing workplace conditions related to health and safety. The OIG investigation continued into

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

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This public synopsis is only a summary of a more comprehensive report of investigation submitted to the appropriate City management official

the work conditions at Bowley’s Lane and Cherry Hill. On March 5, 2025, the [OIG report regarding DPW’s overall workplace culture](#) was released. [DPW’s response](#) was included on the OIG website.

The OIG was actively investigating DPW’s safety and heat practices when DPW Solid Waste Worker Ronald Silver II (Silver) passed away on Friday, August 2, 2024. The medical examiner’s office determined the cause of death to be hyperthermia, also known as heat exhaustion.

DPW Laborers and Drivers

DPW employees complete physically demanding work essential to the City and its citizens. The Bureau of Solid Waste (BSW) maintains the cleanliness of the City through waste collection, cleaning, and disposal programs. Solid waste workers from Cherry Hill and the Eastern Sanitation Yard (Bowley’s Lane) work four (4) days a week with ten (10) hour shifts from Tuesday to Friday. They complete their assignments on a “task-work” basis. In the task-work model, employees are assigned one route per shift, and their shift is considered concluded once the route is completed, regardless of whether the route takes four (4) hours or ten (10) hours. Any additional routes assigned would be considered overtime. For example, if a route begins at 6:00 a.m. and ends at 10:00 a.m., but the worker decides to pick up another route that ends at 2:00 p.m., the worker will be paid for ten (10) hours of regular time and four (4) hours of overtime. The OIG learned that the task work system began under former City Mayor William Donald Schaefer to increase salaries for solid waste workers.

DPW’s Former Bureau Head and others noted that, while on their routes, drivers are responsible for their crews. The Former Bureau Head said they have responsibilities similar to a supervisor while out on a route when a supervisor is not present. According to the City’s job description for solid waste drivers, they are responsible for driving the trucks, operating the front-end loader, leading the packer crew, and notifying the central office or the ambulance if a member of the load packer crew is injured on route.

As of February 2025, a Workday review showed the average base pay for a solid waste worker was \$42,379, and \$52,948 for solid waste drivers.¹

METHODOLOGY

The OIG conducted site visits to the scenes of the incidents, various DPW facilities and interviewed numerous DPW employees, supervisors, and leadership regarding the events of August 2, 2024. The OIG also spoke with citizens who witnessed the events of August 2, 2024. The OIG reviewed supporting documents including, but not limited to, email correspondence, vehicle work orders, personnel files, trip reports, Workday records, Baltimore Police Department (BPD) interviews, phone records, and video footage. The OIG found the assigned BPD Detective’s assistance during the investigation valuable to uncovering the events that occurred that day.

OIG INVESTIGATION

Ronald Silver’s Employment Before August 2, 2024

Silver began his employment with DPW at Cherry Hill on October 30, 2023. Silver’s supervisor (Silver’s Supervisor) explained to the OIG that Silver was a ‘floater,’ which meant he did not have an assigned

¹ Salary information was compiled with information from Open Data Baltimore, <https://data.baltimorecity.gov/>.

crew and would be assigned to a crew based on need. Floating between crews needing an extra worker caused Silver to often work with different supervisors. Silver's Supervisor noted that they were responsible for Silver's timekeeping in Workday. No phone calls were found from Silver to his supervisor on August 2, 2024.

During the OIG investigation, employees reported that they were concerned with receiving "occasions" or write-ups for calling out sick and reporting an illness during the workday. The City's Attendance Standards Policy states that attendance records must be maintained accurately and completely. Regarding disciplinary action, the attendance standards support the supervisor verbally cautioning the employee of their attendance after three occasions and noting the conversation occurred. An occasion is defined as "any period of continuous unscheduled absence for the same reason" and "must be for at least half the workday/shift before it can be counted as an occasion." Four (4) occasions warrant a written reprimand and recommendation to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Five (5) occasions warrant a three-day suspension, and after seven (7) occasions, the supervisor will recommend the employee for termination.

The OIG found discrepancies between the BSW's daily personnel logs and Workday records for Silver's attendance. According to BSW's daily personnel spreadsheets reviewed, Silver had twenty-three (23) absences since April 2024. Seventeen (17) of the absences were considered 'no call, no shows', and one (1) was listed as leave without pay. However, according to Silver's Workday account, he had thirteen (13) absences since April 2024, four (4) of which were Leave Without Pay and four (4) were bereavement leave. The OIG did not find evidence that Silver received any formal write-ups during his employment with DPW.²

July 31, 2024

The standard workday is from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. Interviews with several DPW employees revealed it has been common for employees to start later and work longer than their scheduled hours due to a lack of available workers, trucks, or having long routes.

On Wednesday, July 31, 2024, the temperatures reached 95°F. Email correspondence indicates multiple trash routes were delayed on the morning of July 31, 2024. Silver's crew did not begin their route until 9:45 a.m. due to needing a laborer, and BSW's daily rundown report noted "the route was delayed due to personnel issues." Further, the rundown report stated Silver's route was not completed until 9:30 p.m. According to the route details for Silver's route that day, there were 1,453 stops as opposed to the industry standard of 950 stops for trash routes.³

A DPW Supervisor (Supervisor 1) said they called Silver early in the morning on Thursday, August 1, 2024, to see if he was coming to work. Phone records support them calling Silver that morning at 6:42 a.m. Silver told Supervisor 1 that he got off work the night prior around 8:36 p.m. and was not feeling well. According to Supervisor 1, Silver told them he was cramping but could get to Cherry Hill by 7 a.m. that day. Supervisor 1 said they told Silver to stay home and hydrate himself. Supervisor 1 said they

² The OIG reviewed a draft write-up for an absence on July 6, 2024, and a drafted disciplinary memo for July 30, 2024, but did not find any record of a write-up or memo in Silver's personnel file.

³ This information was obtained from a DPW vendor's 2022 report and noted in the OIG's overall report.

informed Silver that his absence on August 1 would be marked as a Safe and Sick day.⁴ Routine service breakdown reports support Silver’s use of Sick and Safe leave on August 1. Workday records mark Silver as working on August 1 from 6 am to 4pm.⁵ Supervisor 1 stated they did not see Silver on the morning of August 2. When they were notified of Silver’s emergency, Supervisor 1 stated they went to the hospital.

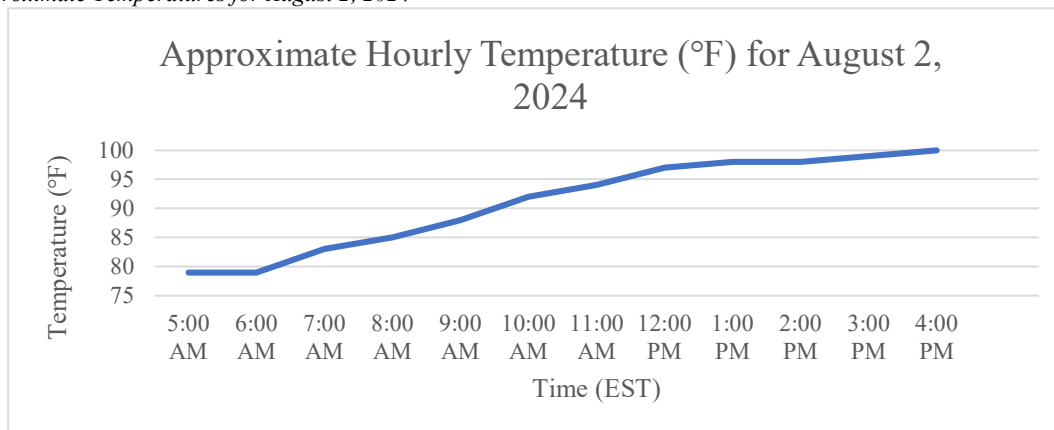
Weather for the week of July 28 to August 2, 2024

On August 2, the temperature reached 100 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). The OIG reviewed the temperatures for the week of August 2, 2024, which are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1 below.⁶

Table 1: Temperatures from July 28, 2024, to August 2, 2024

Date	Temperature
07/28/24	91 °F
07/29/24	94 °F
07/30/24	86 °F
07/31/24	95 °F
08/01/24	101 °F
08/02/24	100 °F

Figure 1: Approximate Temperatures for August 2, 2024



The City of Baltimore was under a code red heat advisory on August 2, 2024. Weather forecasts anticipated heat indexes reaching between 105°F to 109°F.⁷ A review of archival weather data for August 2, 2024, and utilizing a heat index calculator tool showed heat indexes in the afternoon reaching approximately 108°F. DPW records show two (2) other BSW employees also reported experiencing heat illnesses on August 2.

⁴ <https://labor.maryland.gov/paidleave/paidleaveposter.shtml>

⁵ Silver’s Supervisor stated they entered Silver’s time for him and marked him as working for August 1 because they were unsure if Silver had worked or used leave for August 1, 2024. Silver’s Supervisor noted they typically confirmed Silver’s time with Silver due to Silver having trouble with the Workday application.

⁶ Temperatures were found from the National Weather Service’s online weather data and Weather Underground (<https://www.weather.gov/wrh/Climate?wfo=lwx>) (<https://www.wunderground.com/history/weekly/us/md/glen-burnie/KBWI/date/2024-8-2>).

⁷ <https://www.wbaltv.com/article/excessive-heat-warning-maryland-weather-friday-heat-index-triple-digits/61773193>

August 2, 2024 – Morning/Early Afternoon

The OIG interviewed the two crew members Silver worked with on August 2, 2024. According to DPW records, the route had 1,153 trash pickup stops, which is also above the industry standard of 950. DPW provided a screenshot of the trip record in the area between 25th Street and North Avenue from August 2, 2024, as shown in the map below (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Screenshot of the trip record for Silver's crew on August 2



DPW workers described the exhaust fumes making the temperature hotter behind the truck. Numerous employees interviewed by the OIG stated many DPW trucks had inadequate air-conditioning, and several trucks did not have air-conditioning installed. A review of work order reports indicates the last work order for Silver's truck was in June 2024, and repairs took approximately one month to be completed. Among the repairs were suspension, bumper, mirrors, and electrical repairs. The driver of Silver's truck (Solid Waste Driver) was not aware of any adverse conditions on their truck that day. The Solid Waste Driver stated the air-conditioning in the truck was functioning. The other worker on Silver's truck, DPW Solid Waste Worker Travis Christian (Christian), opined that the air-conditioning did not have a cooling effect. The Solid Waste Driver and Christian affirmed it was approximately 10° or 20° hotter behind the truck.

The Solid Waste Driver said they filled the water cooler with water, ice, and Gatorade before leaving the yard in the morning. Vehicle trip records indicate the Solid Waste Driver and Christian started their route around 6:39 a.m. Christian said they were working with the Solid Waste Driver for approximately 30 minutes before Silver met them along the route, and the Solid Waste Driver stated Silver met them at 8 a.m. Phone records support these statements as they show Silver contacting the Solid Waste Driver at 6:51 a.m. and 7:59 a.m. Christian has worked with Silver three or four times before. The Solid Waste Driver noted that Silver had also previously met them on the route. During the OIG's investigation, witnesses reported that many other workers had met their crew on the routes in the past.

Regarding Silver's condition during the morning and early afternoon of August 2, Christian and Solid Waste Driver had the following to say during interviews:

- **Christian**

When asked when Silver began feeling bad, Christian stated it was approximately 11 a.m. Christian explained that he encouraged Silver to rest in the truck because he was having trouble walking, but Silver expressed concern that the Solid Waste Driver would tell on him to management.

Further, Christian said during the day that he and Silver were exhausted and had blurred vision, and they discussed feeling as if they were going to die.

According to Christian, Silver told him he was on probation and feared he would lose his job or receive a write-up if he stopped working.⁸ Christian also said Silver shared that he had a family to support. During the OIG's investigation into the workplace culture, numerous employees expressed similar fears of being reprimanded by supervisors for not completing routes when feeling sick.

Christian stated Silver drank fluids throughout the day, but the water was warm. Christian did not observe Silver using drugs and was not aware of any prior health issues for Silver.

Christian stated a few alleys before the last stop, he collapsed due to heat exhaustion. Christian claimed to collapse face-up, landing on the back of his head. Christian remembers Silver shook him awake and told him that he was unconscious for about a minute. Christian said the Solid Waste Driver did not get out of the truck when he fell, and he and Silver did not inform the Solid Waste Driver of the fall. Additionally, Christian explained that following the incident, he was repeatedly nauseous and sick due to hitting his head and experiencing the heat conditions.

- **The Solid Waste Driver**

The Solid Waste Driver said that Silver drank more water throughout the day than all of them, estimating that Silver drank water every five minutes. The Solid Waste Driver stated that Christian and Silver expressed they would take their time collecting the trash because they were hot. According to the Solid Waste Driver, they told Silver and Christian that was fine.

The Solid Waste Driver stated they stopped for lunch at Wendy's, and Silver ate some food. The Solid Waste Driver said Silver had no issues until the second load. According to the Solid Waste Driver, Silver kept saying his right leg was cramping, and Silver sat in the truck for a portion of the second load. The Solid Waste Driver stated Silver completed approximately two hours of the second load. Additionally, the Solid Waste Driver told the OIG that they did not observe Silver use any drugs.

According to the rundown report, the Solid Waste Driver, Christian, and Silver, dumped the first load of trash at 11:28 a.m. at the City's Quarantine Road Landfill, Baltimore, MD 21206.

Last Stop - Alley behind 401 E. 25th Street

The OIG learned that some narrow alleys have obstructions that prevent the truck from entering, such as illegally dumped trash or overgrown trees. Employees have reported that these alleys require additional effort. Due to the truck being unable to enter the alley, solid waste workers must pull the trash cans up and down the alleys. Christian explained that the trash truck would remain at one end of the alley while the workers pulled half of the trash cans down towards the truck. The cans are then returned to the

⁸ At the time, Silver was employed for nine months and had passed his six-month City employment probationary period.

residences, and the truck moves to the other side of the alley, where the process is repeated to collect the remaining trash.

The last trash pickup that day occurred at a narrow alley with obstructions between Barclay Street and Brentwood Avenue, and behind 401 E. 25th Street (Figure 3). The OIG visited the alley on August 5, 2024 (Figures 4-5).

Figure 3: Streetview of alley behind 401 E. 25th Street

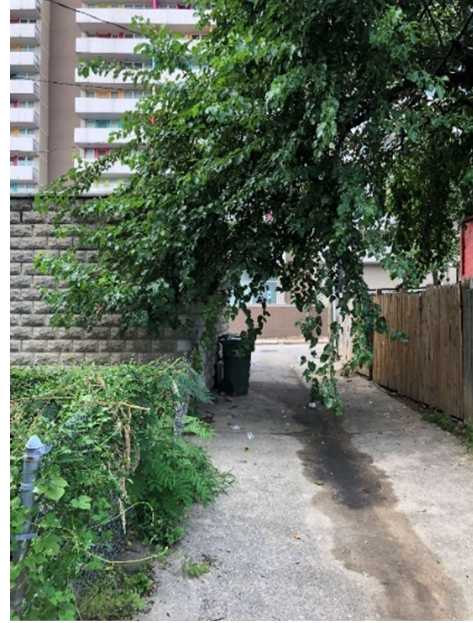


Figures 4 & 5: Alleyway behind 401 E. 25th Street



The OIG observed trees that reached into the alley, causing an obstruction (Figures 6&7).

Figures 6&7: Alley obstruction on route from North and South views of alley



Video evidence and statements from Christian and the Solid Waste Driver detail the events that occurred in the alley.

- **Video**

The OIG reviewed Ring camera footage obtained by BPD that shows the crew reaching the alley at approximately 3:52 p.m. (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Silver's crew entering the alleyway behind 401 E. 25th Street



- **Christian**

Christian said the obstruction prevented the truck from entering the alley, and the laborers had to pull the trash cans to the alley ends for the pickup. At the alleyway behind 401 E. 25th Street, Christian said he heard Silver begin to scream and yell from the opposite side of the truck. Christian described coming around the side and finding Silver lying face down on the ground with scrapes on his hands and elbows. Then, Christian turned him over, and Silver seemed to be going in and out of consciousness. Christian reported that after two or three attempts, he was able to hold Silver upright. Christian described being exhausted but finding the strength to lift Silver back into the truck. Christian described the weight of Silver's body as 'limp' and 'lifeless' as he lifted him into the truck.

Christian said Silver kept asking for someone to massage his legs and that his legs had knots in them. Christian added that he told Silver he was unable to because he was feeling the same way as Silver. After Silver was back in the truck, Christian said Silver nodded to him and he believed that meant Silver would be okay. Christian said his and Silver's gloves were left in the alley after he picked Silver up.

After picking Silver up and placing Silver into the truck, Christian told the Solid Waste Driver that he was "done." Christian said he felt he could not complete the rest of the route. Christian explained to the Solid Waste Driver that he would walk home from the route. Christian felt light-headed and dizzy. Christian explained that he was terrified because he did not know what was going on with his body and had never experienced feeling that way before. Christian went on to say he was so delirious that he began walking in the wrong direction. This was verified by the reviewing video footage. Christian told the OIG he remembers stumbling and collapsing before entering his house. Once he was able to get inside, he collapsed and experienced nosebleeds and vomiting over the next couple of days.

- **The Solid Waste Driver**

The Solid Waste Driver confirmed they could not back down the alley, and the cans had to be pulled down the alley. When entering the alleyway behind 401 E. 25th Street, the Solid Waste Driver said Silver was in the truck and was complaining about his leg cramping. The Solid Waste Driver went on to say that Silver got out of the truck to get some more water and fell to the ground. The Solid Waste Driver said they heard Silver say “man help me get up, I done fell down.”

The Solid Waste Driver said that Silver was helped back into the truck and was trying to stretch his legs. The Solid Waste Driver explained that they then told Silver they would take Silver to his car. Christian told the Solid Waste Driver he was going to leave from there and walk home from the alley because they lived nearby. The Solid Waste Driver’s phone records do not show any calls being made while the truck was at the alley.

- **Video**

The video supports Christian’s and the Solid Waste Driver’s statements that Silver fell. The Solid Waste Driver and Christian can be observed responding to the truck’s passenger side. In the video footage, Christian is observed walking in the middle of the street and turning in the wrong direction to their house (Figure 9). The truck is then seen exiting the alley at 4:01 p.m. (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Christian walking

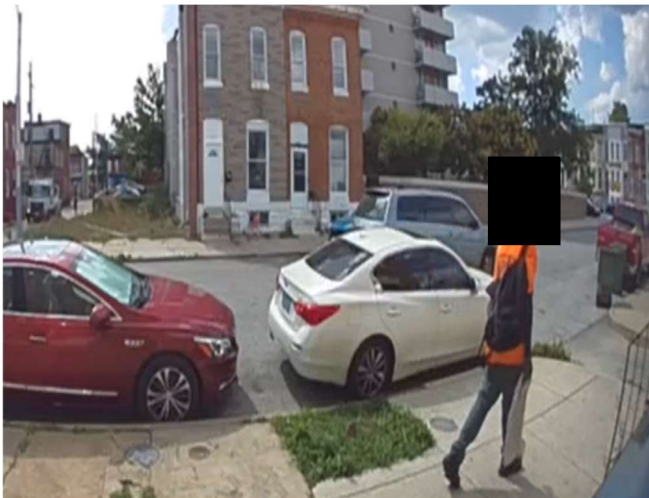


Figure 10: Silver and Solid Waste Driver leaving the alleyway



- **OIG Site Visit**

During the August 5 site visit, the OIG observed Christian’s and Silver’s gloves still present at the scene (Figures 11-14). The gloves were in the same area where Silver fell on the passenger side of the truck.

Figures 11 & 12: Single Glove of Christian left in Alley



Figures 13 & 14: Silver's gloves left in Brentwood Alley



August 2, 2024, 4:06 p.m. – Guilford Avenue

The events that occurred at the 2000 block of Guilford Avenue were ascertained from video footage, citizen statements, the Solid Waste Driver and other DPW worker statements, and phone records. The OIG visited the location on August 5, 2024 (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Guilford Ave. – Location of where Silver asked Citizen



- **Video**

Silver is seen in a Ring camera video and appears to sway while he pulls himself up the stairs and knocks on a citizen’s door (Citizen) at 4:06 p.m. Silver was visibly experiencing a medical emergency, appearing disoriented and distressed. The Citizen is observed at 4:08 p.m. on the front porch re-entering their house. The Solid Waste Driver is observed on the phone by the trash truck in front of the Citizen’s house.

- **The Citizen**

The Citizen explained that when they saw Silver on their doorstep and heard him call out “wait”, they realized he needed help. The Citizen said they assumed Silver was overheating, so they went inside to get him water. The Citizen stated Silver was lying on their steps, and by the time they came back outside with the water, he had fallen to the ground. Silver’s voice was raspy, and Silver requested for the Citizen to pour the water onto him. They estimated that they poured two (2) to three (3) cups of water on him.

The Citizen stated they were trying to call 911 but the line was busy. They saw the Solid Waste Driver sitting in the truck on their phone and assumed it was with 911, so the Citizen hung up the phone. The Citizen said that the Solid Waste Driver exited the vehicle and said they were on the phone with their supervisor, which phone records corroborated. According to the Citizen, the Solid Waste Driver stated they were trying to drop Silver off at his car because it was the end of their shift. Video evidence shows the Solid Waste Driver on the phone at 4:08 p.m. and pulling a beverage out of the truck's water cooler (Figure 16).

Figure 16: The Solid Waste Driver on the phone and grabbing a beverage from the truck's cooler



The Citizen stated they then called 911 again at 4:10 p.m. According to the Citizen, Silver asked them to help sit him up and the Solid Waste Driver said, “Man, [they’re] half the size of you, [they] can’t help you sit up.” The Citizen explained that the Solid Waste Driver did not help him sit up but somehow Silver was able to sit on their porch stoop. The Citizen stated that a neighbor noticed he was not breathing, so the Citizen called 911 for a third time and was able to reach an operator. The 911 operator instructed the Citizen to move Silver to flat ground to begin Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The Citizen said the Solid Waste Driver did not help them move Silver from the stoop, but two female neighbors did.

The Citizen began performing chest compressions on Silver at the 911 operator’s instructions, which the 911 call corroborates. Silver then began vomiting, and the 911 operator instructed them to move Silver to his side. Video footage and the Citizen’s statements support the paramedics arriving at 4:21 p.m. While the paramedics were attending to Silver, the Citizen said that the Solid Waste Driver was on the phone attempting to get Silver’s name and date of birth as the Solid Waste Driver appeared to only know him by his nickname.

The paramedics then moved him to the ambulance to transport him to a local hospital. The Citizen stated someone who they assumed to be a DPW supervisor arrived at 4:40 p.m. The Citizen stated they left without Silver’s full date of birth and any medical history.

The Citizen explained that the Solid Waste Driver talked to them and the neighbors while the paramedics arrived and attended to Silver. The Citizen said that the Solid Waste Driver told them that Silver had been complaining through most of the day of leg pain, cramping, and chest pain. The Solid Waste Driver also told them that Silver asked for a leg massage and help to flatten his cramped hands. The Solid Waste Driver claimed to the Citizen that they helped flatten his hands but would not help with his legs. During the incident and after the ambulance left, the Citizen stated the Solid Waste Driver told them and their neighbor that they wanted to go home and believed Silver was being lazy and Silver did not want to finish his shift. The Citizen said the Solid Waste Driver went on to say that Silver did not eat, was drinking warm waters, and smoking blunts throughout the day.

- **Citizen's Neighbor**

The Citizen's Neighbor (Neighbor) stated that they saw Silver initially leaning on a car. The Neighbor said they went and put their bike in their house. Shortly afterward, the Neighbor said they saw Silver on the ground in front of the Citizen's home and witnessed the Citizen perform chest compressions.

When Silver was vomiting, the Neighbor said that the Solid Waste Driver kind of helped to roll Silver over but acted like they did not want to touch Silver. The Neighbor explained that the Solid Waste Driver was saying the workers are stupid and they drink and smoke on the job. The Neighbor stated the Solid Waste Driver told them that Silver was complaining about leg pain, but the Solid Waste Driver believed Silver was joking and thought Silver did not want to finish the route.

- **The Solid Waste Driver**

The Solid Waste Driver stated that after the last stop, they took Silver to his vehicle and told Silver they would not leave until Silver got into his vehicle. The Solid Waste Driver said that Silver knocked on a citizen's (Citizen) door. The Solid Waste Driver explained that the Citizen came up and Silver stated his legs were cramping up. The Citizen brought water out and poured it on him. The Solid Waste Driver went on to say that they did not know what to do regarding Silver's leg cramping. The Solid Waste Driver claimed they then asked the Citizen to call an ambulance.

The Solid Waste Driver said they called their DPW supervisor (Supervisor 2) to tell them Silver's leg was cramping up and they did not know what to do about it. Phone records show that the Solid Waste Driver called and spoke with Supervisor 2 at 4:05 p.m. for 4 minutes and 56 seconds. Supervisor 2 then called the Solid Waste Driver back and spoke for 16 seconds at 4:10 p.m. When asked if the Solid Waste Driver called Supervisor 2 earlier to inform them of Silver not doing well, the Solid Waste Driver said the only time they called Supervisor 2 was after arriving at the Citizen's street. The Solid Waste Driver added that Supervisor 2 told them to call the Cherry Hill yard, which phone records corroborate. The Solid Waste Driver spoke with the Cherry Hill yard at 4:11 p.m. for 2 minutes and 36 seconds.

The Solid Waste Driver said they saw a Baltimore City Schools police officer or security guard down the street and waved for them to come up the street. The video footage shows an individual

in uniform at the scene before the paramedics arrive. The Solid Waste Driver stated when they returned from waving the uniformed individual, Silver was laying back and they thought Silver was trying to stretch and get himself together. According to the Solid Waste Driver, they were talking to the Cherry Hill yard when someone noticed Silver was not breathing.

The Solid Waste Driver claimed that they and the Citizen laid Silver on the ground. The Solid Waste Driver reported that the Citizen began performing chest compressions as the Solid Waste Driver did not know how to do CPR. The Solid Waste Driver claimed that the Citizen was a nurse, but the OIG learned that they were not. The Solid Waste Driver stated two minutes after the Citizen began chest compressions, the paramedics arrived.

The Solid Waste Driver was on the phone with a DPW Office Assistant (Office Assistant) from the Cherry Hill yard when the paramedics were attending to Silver. At 4:25 p.m., the Office Assistant emailed Supervisor 2 and other DPW supervisors alerting them that a worker at Guilford Avenue required medical attention and that the Solid Waste Driver said they let the worker off at his car and the worker was sick to the stomach, cramping, and could not walk.

The Solid Waste Driver called the Cherry Hill yard again at 4:27 p.m. The Solid Waste Driver stated the paramedics were asking for Silver's name, but they only knew him by Silver's nickname, which was "Byrd."⁹ The Solid Waste Driver said the Office Assistant was able to provide them with Silver's name. However, the paramedics asked for Silver's date of birth, and the Solid Waste Driver said they were unable to provide because the Office Assistant informed them that Silver's information was locked in an office. The video footage shows the Solid Waste Driver discussing the date of birth with paramedics while on the phone (Figure 17).

Figure 17: The Solid Waste Driver discussing Silver's date of birth with the paramedics at the scene



⁹ During the investigation, numerous employees reported only knowing other employees by their nicknames and not full names.

Video showed at 4:38 p.m., Silver was placed on a gurney and into the ambulance. The Solid Waste Driver said Supervisor 2 arrived and followed the ambulance to the hospital.

At Supervisor 2's direction, the Solid Waste Driver said they left the area to go dump the truck's load and then returned to Cherry Hill. The August 2 rundown report shows the Solid Waste Driver dumped the second load of trash at 5:36 p.m.

- **Supervisor 2**

Supervisor 2's phone records noted earlier phone calls to the Solid Waste Driver, including calls at 9:08 a.m. (1 minute 36 seconds), 9:29 a.m. (1 minute 97 seconds), 11:39 a.m. (53 seconds), and 3:06 p.m. (1 minute). Supervisor 2 stated they were checking on the route during those calls and the Solid Waste Driver did not report any issues. Supervisor 2 also noted that they had visited the route earlier in the day, but no one informed them of any heat issues.

Supervisor 2 and phone records confirmed that the Solid Waste Driver called Supervisor 2's personal cellphone, which phone records show occurred at 4:05 p.m. Supervisor 2 stated that the Solid Waste Driver called them shortly before the ambulance arrived and told them that Silver was cramping. When asked if the Solid Waste Driver's description on the phone matched up with the events that were transpiring, Supervisor 2 stated, "No, [they] just said he [Silver] was cramping." Supervisor 2 said they instructed the Solid Waste Driver to stay with Silver and call the Cherry Hill yard. Supervisor 2 then began traveling to the location and called DPW's Control One to report the incident.¹⁰ Phone records confirmed Supervisor 2 contacted Control One at 4:38 p.m. and 4:47 p.m. The OIG called this number and verified that this is DPW Control One.

Supervisor 2 stated when they arrived, the paramedics had transferred Silver to the ambulance. The ambulance left to transport Silver to Union Memorial Hospital, and Supervisor 2 followed behind. Supervisor 2 went on to say they then followed the ambulance to the hospital and stayed there until Silver's family arrived. Supervisor 2's phone records indicate that they contacted Silver's family at 4:58 p.m.

The investigation learned that after the ambulance transported Silver to the hospital, he was pronounced deceased at 5:05 p.m.

The OIG spoke to a long-tenured supervisor who stated a driver should immediately call a supervisor if a worker is injured. They explained that the supervisor then is responsible for obtaining the location of the incident; notifying DPW's emergency dispatch line (Control One) of the needs for the police, an ambulance, and safety; and heading to the site.

August 2, 2024 – DPW Response to Incident

Statements from personnel at the Office of Safety Training and Professional Development (OSTPD), and the Office of Environmental Regulatory Compliance and Safety (ERCS) indicates there was a lack of

¹⁰ DPW's Control One conversation with 911 dispatch supports that Supervisor 2 contacted Control One.

communication between the departments regarding emergency response and handling of safety incidents and accidents. The OSTPD is responsible for responding to accidents and incidents involving vehicles. The ERCS responds to work and medical-related incidents not involving a vehicle.

A Safety Enforcement Officer (SEO 1) explained that the on-call schedule for OSTPD is scheduled monthly by another Safety Enforcement Officer (SEO 2) who makes a calendar indicating when employees are scheduled. The OIG interviewed SEO 1 and SEO 2 who described the process of handling safety accidents and incidents as follows:

1. The accident or incident is reported to Control One – DPW’s emergency dispatch phone line;
2. Control One will call the OSTPD Safety Enforcement Officers (SEOs) to relay the information;
3. OSTPD identifies which department should handle the matter; and
4. The appropriate department responds and evaluates the accident/incident and completes an incident report.

A review of multiple incidents, correspondence, and witness statements revealed confusion and tension regarding OSTPD’s and ERCS’s roles, responsibilities, and processes. DPW’s ERCS Chief (ERCS Chief) hired in June 2022, and the OSTPD Chief was hired in October 2022. At the time of August 2, 2024, ERCS handled incidents involving DPW employee injuries and environmental issues, while OSTPD handled vehicle accidents. The ERCS Chief stated that ERCS responds to reported emergencies on a “case by case” basis. When asked what kinds of incidents would require ERCS to respond in person, the ERCS Chief said safety officers would dispatch for injuries involving a chemical exposure, equipment malfunction, loss of limb, death, or a 24-hour hospitalization.

The OIG learned there is an ERCS office number that should be called first during an emergency because it automatically rings each City cell phone assigned to ERCS. It operates 24/7. SEOs interviewed by the OIG expressed no knowledge of the ERCS number prior to August 2. SEO 1 told the OIG they assume an on-call list for ERCS exists but stated the SEOs were not provided it. They are instructed to always call the ERCS Chief’s City cell phone and then the backup employees. SEO 1 stated that ERCS runs separately and opined that it would be beneficial for SEOs to be given the ERCS on-call list.

The OIG reviewed email correspondence indicating there was a DPW emergency contact list for the week of August 2. The list was distributed on July 30, 2024. The ERCS Chief’s City cell phone and the ERCS phone number was listed as the emergency contact for ERCS. The emergency contact list was distributed to numerous DPW personnel, including a DPW Safety Training Manager, DPW Operations Officer (Operations Officer), and the ERCS Chief. However, SEO 1 and SEO 2 were not included on the email and the OIG did not find correspondence indicating they received the email or the emergency contact list. The ERCS number was not utilized by ERCS or OSTPD on August 2.

On August 2, SEO 1 was on-call starting at 4 p.m. and was responsible for taking calls from Control One, which is a part of DPW. According to SEO 1, they received a call from Control One at 4:44 p.m., which phone records appear to support.¹¹ They stated Control One informed them that an employee passed out

¹¹ SEO 1 stated the phone number that appears when receiving a call from Control One is 410-396-2220.

on the ground and provided them with the location. SEO 1 stated they attempted to contact the ERCS Chief and the Operations Officer but was unsuccessful.

SEO 1 called SEO 2, and SEO 2 then called and spoke with the ERCS Chief. City phone records show the ERCS Chief called SEO 1 for the first time at 4:52 p.m. The ERCS Chief then contacted Supervisor 2 at 4:54 p.m. From 5 p.m. to approximately 7 p.m., SEO 1 continued to communicate with Supervisor 2 and the ERCS Chief. A health and safety incident intake form was completed by the ERCS Chief at 5:30 p.m.

The OIG reviewed email correspondence discussing the communication issues between SEO 1 and ERCS Chief that occurred on August 2. The ERCS Chief claimed they received one call on their personal phone from SEO 2 and that they do not answer their personal phone during work hours. The ERCS Chief informed the OIG that they were teleworking that day.

The ERCS Chief stated that Supervisor 2 and the Chief of Cherry Hill went to the hospital. The ERCS Chief notified Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) and then went to Cherry Hill. Phone records show the last call between the ERCS Chief and Supervisor 2 being at 7:03 p.m. According to the ERCS Chief's completed OSHA incident investigation form, they arrived at Cherry Hill at 7:46 p.m. The ERCS Chief spoke with Supervisor 2 and the Solid Waste Driver, but not with Christian. Witnesses gave various answers to what would be appropriate safety response times and acknowledged a lack of formal guidelines.

Training

The Solid Waste Driver informed the OIG that they had personal knowledge of staying hydrated in the heat but received no formal training from DPW. Christian echoed similar sentiments to the OIG. Subsequent interviews revealed employees were not informed of mandatory breaks. Additionally, the task-oriented culture of DPW incentivizes employees to complete their work as quickly as possible, so they can leave work early and still be paid for the entirety of their shift.

DPW did not conduct heat illness training in 2023. DPW held select supervisor training sessions on July 11, 12, 19, 30, and August 1 in 2024. These training sessions were conducted on Microsoft Teams, and the supervisors were not required to turn their cameras on during the meeting. The records show that Silver's Supervisor, Supervisor 1, and Supervisor 2 did not attend a training. Furthermore, the sign-in sheets showed only two (2) out of the 10 supervisors from Cherry Hill attended.

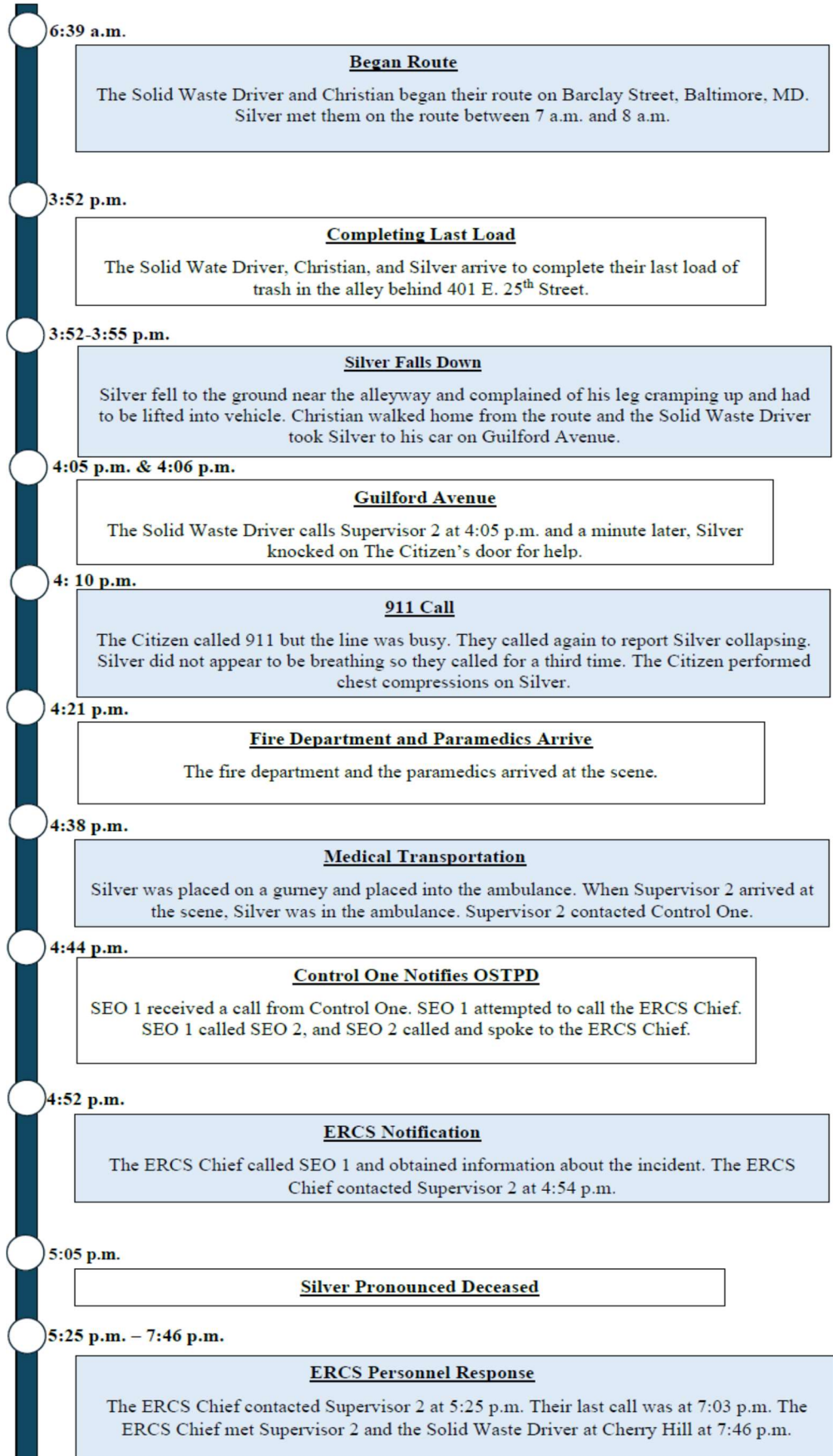
Numerous witnesses did not remember DPW conducting heat training for solid waste workers and drivers prior to Silver's death. During their interviews, numerous supervisors stated they had not received heat training until after Silver's death. On Tuesday, August 6, 2024, DPW provided grief services and heat training at the Middle Branch Wellness Center in response to Silver's death. Cherry Hill and Bowley's Lane workers attended. As noted in the [OIG's overall workplace culture report](#), numerous witnesses felt the heat-related information was too technical and was not specific to their jobs.

Silver's Supervisor and Supervisor 2 informed the OIG that the training conducted by DPW on August 6, 2024, was the first heat training they received. Supervisor 2 had been a supervisor for approximately three (3) months during this time, and Silver's Supervisor for 12 to 15 years.

One day after Silver's death, the ERCS Chief wrote in a message that, "If we can demonstrate that we have provided the resources and the training, it's the employees lack of working with management. My beloved Algebra II teacher used to shake her head and say you can lead a horse to water; but, you can't make them drink." During their interview, the ERCS Chief stated they do not have the power to make personnel go to training and repeated that you can lead a horse to water but can't make them drink. The lack of documented training made these comments more concerning.

The OIG reviewed DPW drafts of their heat illness prevention plan and overall safety and health plan. Both drafts outline training, prevention measures, and incident reporting and handling procedures among other steps for prevention. As of [DPW's March 4 management response](#) to the OIG's workplace culture report, the heat illness prevention plan was still in draft mode subject to approval. According to DPW's response for this report, the plan has since been internally finalized and is now subject to collective bargaining with the labor unions.

August 2, 2024 Timeline



INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

The investigation revealed that Silver began experiencing heat-related symptoms after working on July 31, 2024. These symptoms led to his absence on August 1, 2024. DPW should work to ensure through their prevention plan training that DPW management follows necessary incident procedures when they become first aware of heat illness symptoms resulting from DPW work, including completing an employee incident report and alerting the City's worker's compensation vendor.

The investigation found evidence supporting that Silver's heat exhaustion symptoms continued throughout the route on August 2, 2024. Additionally, the OIG learned Silver expressed concerns about being disciplined or terminated if he was unable to complete the route, which numerous witnesses also expressed.

Silver's symptoms worsened throughout the day, and the Solid Waste Driver stated they did not inform Supervisor 2 of Silver's cramping until they arrived at the Citizen's street. The position description for solid waste drivers states they are to inform supervisors of problems that occur on the route and notify the central office or call an ambulance if a crew member is injured on the route. The OIG found that a citizen called 911 for an ambulance when Silver approached their door requesting assistance with the medical emergency he was experiencing.

According to witness statements and evidence reviewed, Silver fell out of the truck at approximately 3:55 p.m. in the Brentwood alley. The Solid Waste Driver did not notify their supervisor or call either 911 or Control One after Silver had to be lifted back into the truck. The Solid Waste Driver then drove Silver to his car without notifying a supervisor of Silver's condition. Only after Silver began attempting to receive help did the Solid Waste Driver contact a supervisor. Mandatory and re-occurring training should be required of any supervisory employee, including drivers, to be fully aware of heat illness symptoms. Moreover, heat illnesses can result in death, as occurred with Silver.

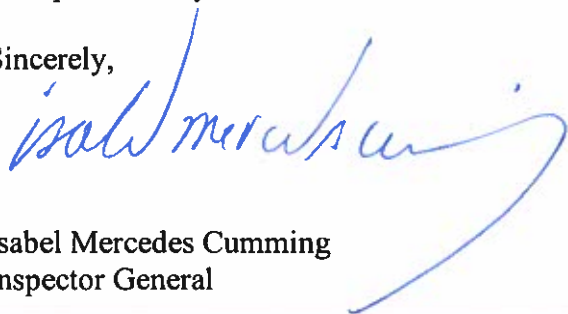
The confusion that ensued between OSTPD and ERCS for the response to the incident was concerning and delayed DPW's safety team's response. Ultimately, the ERCS Chief did not respond to Cherry Hill to obtain statements until approximately three (3) hours after the incident. According to DPW's March 4 response to the OIG workplace culture report, DPW has consolidated all safety personnel under a single division to streamline communications. Moreover, employees cited radios for safety management as an effective resource and DPW stated in their March 4 response that they plan to implement radios in Summer 2025.

The OIG found that DPW failed to provide heat training in 2023 and only provided virtual training to supervisors in 2024 after the OIG investigation began in June 2024. Only two (2) supervisors from Cherry Hill attended the virtual training and were not required to turn their cameras on. The lack of heat training for solid waste workers and drivers meant that DPW never provided Silver, the Solid Waste Driver, or Christian with heat-related training. The importance of solid waste workers and drivers receiving training for the job environment is paramount for worker safety and compliance with State and Federal regulations. Further, injuries and deaths sustained in the workplace can have devastating impacts on not just workers but their families as well.

According to DPW's March 4 response, the heat illness prevention plan was still in draft status and waiting for final approval eight (8) months after Silver's death. The OIG recommended the approval of this plan be prioritized so that the necessary training can occur, and processes can be implemented within the next two months before the summer temperatures begin. According to DPW's response to this report, the heat

illness prevention plan has been internally finalized. DPW could also explore partnering with other City agencies that provide cooling centers during code red heat days.¹² Moreover, accountability must be maintained for heat safety with refresher training, mandatory breaks, and supervisory check-ins with crews to improve safety.

Sincerely,



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

CC: Hon. Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City
Hon. Zeke Cohen, Baltimore City Council President
Hon. Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council
Hon. Ebony Thompson, Baltimore City Solicitor

¹² <https://health.baltimorecity.gov/coderedinfo>