

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL CITY OF BALTIMORE



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

Investigative Report Synopsis

OIG Case #25-0011-I

Issued: October 23, 2024



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
City Hall, Suite 635
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202



October 23, 2024

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.

On August 30, 2024, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) received a complaint regarding unsafe and unsanitary work conditions at a Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP) office site located at 2100 Washington Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21230.

Background

The BCRP building is located on the Carroll Park Golf Course. According to Workday, the majority of workers assigned to the facility are laborers or other maintenance employees. These employees stated their job duties involve primarily completing landscaping and other maintenance work. About 15 employees work out of the office location and are often in and out of the building; however, one employee works in the office for the entire duration of their shift.

Site Visit Carroll Park BCRP

The OIG conducted a site visit to the BCRP facility on September 11, 2024 (Figures 1&2).

Figures 1&2: Outside of 2100 Washington Blvd.



The OIG learned from employees that the facility has had an ongoing rodent infestation. The employees stated they do their best to clean the office and often sweep up rat droppings. The employee stated that the rodent issue was reported to the Department of General Services (DGS). The OIG obtained various photos of rodents previously captured by BCRP employees (Figures 3-6). The OIG reviewed metadata from the photos that appear to show when the pictures were taken.

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Figure 3: Deceased Rodent (Metadata May 28, 2024)



Figure 4: Deceased rodent (Metadata June 3, 2024)



Figure 5: Deceased rodent (Metadata June 10, 2024)



Figure 6: Deceased rodent (Metadata September 9, 2024)



Facility Interior

The OIG observed missing floor tiles at the facility's entryway (Figures 7&8).

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Figures 7&8: Missing floor tiles at the entrance of the office building



An employee reported that roof leaks have occurred, possibly causing the water stains in the printer room's ceiling tiles (Figure 9). Further, an employee mentioned instances of falling ceiling tiles and a possible bee nest in the ceiling. The OIG observed dead bees or another type of insect in the light fixture (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Missing ceiling tiles and water stains

Figure 10: Deceased bees in light fixture



In the same printer room, the door to the staff break area was damaged (Figure 11). A windowpane appeared to be broken and repaired with black electrical tape (Figure 12).

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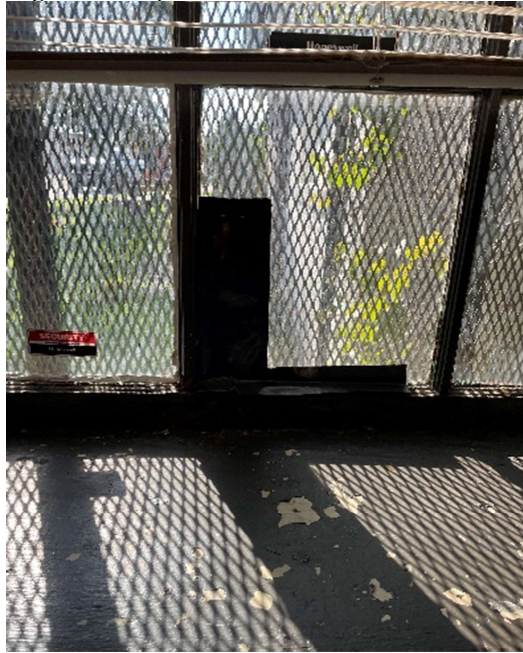
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Figure 11: Broken employee breakroom door panel



Figure 12: Taped broken window



In an office area, the OIG noted partially exposed wiring where an air-conditioner was plugged in. An employee stated that the rats run through this area and chew the wiring (Figures 13-14). There were visible rodent droppings among the wires.

Figures 13&14: Exposed electrical wiring in the employee office



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A wall panel outside an office door also had exposed wires (Figure 15).

Figures 15: Wall panel with exposed wires



Exposed ceiling insulation was seen in the employee break area (Figures 16-18).

Figures 16-18: Exposed ceiling insulation in break room area



A Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) Certificate of Inspection was on a wall in the employee break area with an inspection date of August 27, 2015, and an expiration date of August 27, 2017 (Figure 19). A Maryland Department of Agriculture Pesticide Public Agency Permit displayed also expired on June 30, 2017 (Figure 20).

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Figure 19: Expired DLLR Certificate of Inspection with close-up

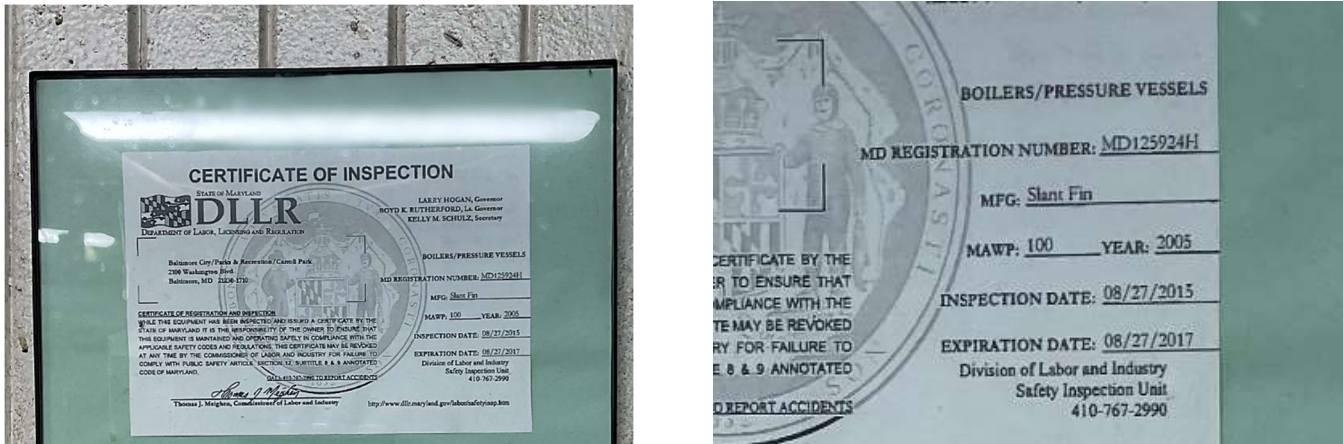
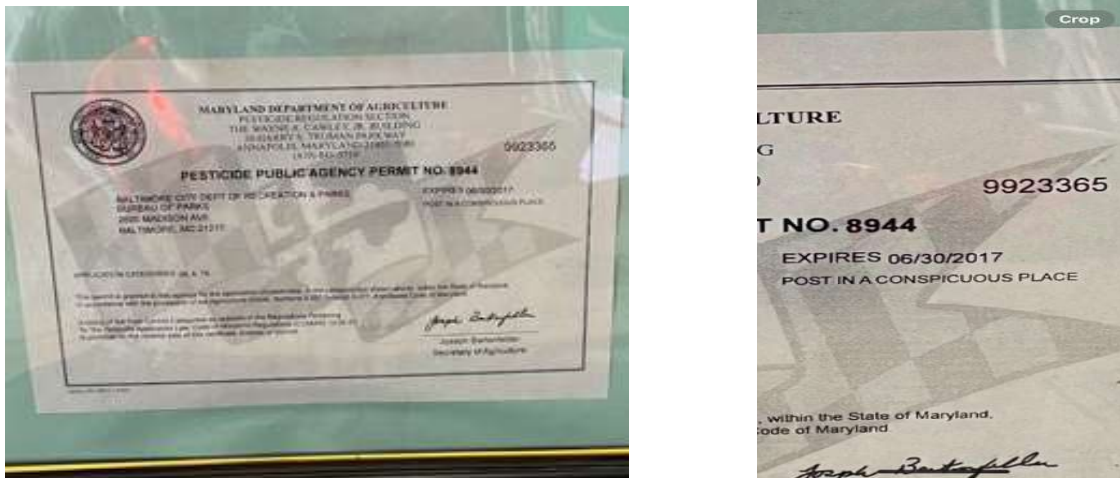
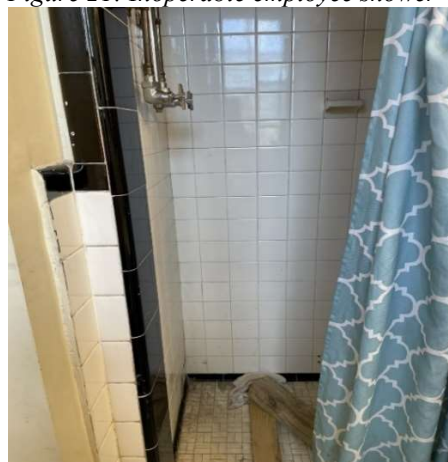


Figure 20: Expired MDAP Agency Permit with close-up



A BCRP employee informed the OIG that the shower is inoperable (Figure 21).¹

Figure 21: Inoperable employee shower



¹ This is a concern as the employee stated they plan to start using pesticides. A shower may be needed to comply with Environmental Protection Agency regulations regarding pesticide use. (<http://www.pesticideresources.org/wps/htc/htcmanual.pdf>)

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The exit door in the employee breakroom was blocked (Figure 22). The OIG also observed an exit door with a padlock on the exterior and a handle missing on the interior (Figures 23-24).

Figures 22-24: Blocked (left), padlocked (center and right) exit doors



Facility Exterior

Outside the back of the facility were dozens of used tires and empty water containers (Figure 25-27).

Figures 25-27: Stacked tires and empty water containers on the exterior of the office building



The exterior employee restroom in the garage area was inoperable, and the OIG observed a hose with water continuously running (Figures 28-30).

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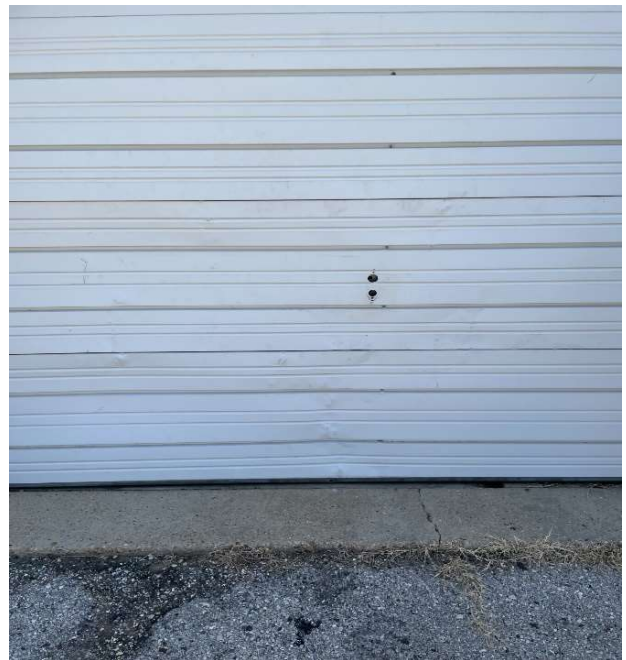
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Figures 28-30: Employee external restroom & leaking hose



Equipment was stored in one garage that did not lock, potentially exposing it to theft (Figures 31-32).

Figures 31-32: Equipment inside of garage area (left), same garage area door without a lock (right)



In another garage, ceiling damage and mildew odor was present (Figure 33). Snowplow materials were also stored in the open parking lot (Figure 34).

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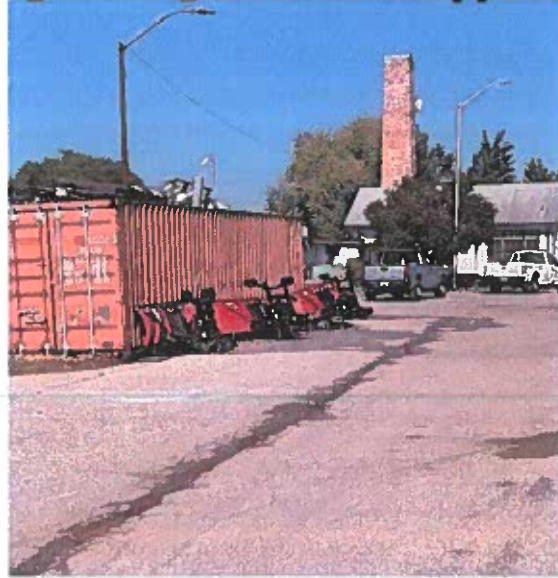
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Figure 33: Garage with broken ceiling tiles



Figure 34: Parking lot with unsecured snow equipment



MOU and Regulations

These health and safety concerns potentially violate Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) regulations and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that the City of Baltimore (City) has with its labor unions. OSHA provides regulations for general environment control, including vermin control. According to the City's MOU with the City Union of Baltimore (CUB) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 44 (AFSCME Local 44), unsafe or unhealthy work situations that are not handled satisfactorily by the City could become the subject of a grievance.

Conclusion

While on-site, the OIG observed rodent droppings, missing floor and ceiling tiles, exposed electrical wires, insects, blocked exit doors, an expired Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation inspection certificate, and other maintenance concerns. Additionally, multiple BCRP employees informed the OIG of a rodent infestation. The OIG's observations raise concerns for the health and safety of the BCRP employees assigned to that office location.

Sincerely,

Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

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

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