

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

El Dorado County Fleet Maintenance Facility

Reason for the Report

The Grand Jury selected the County Fleet Maintenance facility for one of its sites to review.

Scope of the Investigation

The members of the Grand Jury:

- Visited the facility on February 25, 2003;
- Was briefed on the operations of the fuel dispensers, computerized fueling system (Gas Boy) and the vehicle repair facilities by the Fleet Maintenance Supervisor;
- Interviewed the Special Services Department Head Fleet Maintenance Manager;
- Interviewed the Fleet Maintenance Superintendent;
- Interviewed the Fleet Maintenance Accountant.

Background

The facility is located within the El Dorado County Transportation Department yard. The Grand Jury visited the facility to inspect the area for environmental issues. The Grand Jury saw no environmental violations with the possible exception that gasoline cans were stored on an open shelf in the sign shop without being placed in a metal cabinet. There are several environmental problems currently being added within the County Environmental Department which are associated with Gas Boy, gas pumps and the storage tanks.

The Grand Jury was informed that an accountability problem exists with Gas Boy. The system was out of service and had been for at least seven months. All aspects of Gas Boy including billing, calibration, monitoring usage, and dispensing have been out of order from time to time for two and one half years. The Gas Boy system is obsolete, since hardware and software are difficult to maintain. When Gas Boy is inoperative, fuel is dispensed on the honor system and lacks security. During the times that Gas Boy is down department billing was very difficult due to the fact that the collected fuel data covers only 40 percent of the fuel being dispensed by the County.

The County uses approximately 16,000 gallons of gasoline and 5,000 gallons of diesel fuel per week. The Committee observed that no one at the facility met the tanker truck upon its arrival and during the unloading of fuel. Some County vehicles using the fueling system are neither marked nor numbered making it difficult to identify them from private vehicles. The County maintains 600 plus vehicles including Sheriff's Department vehicles.

The front gates of the Fleet Management facility are open until midnight on weekdays, at which time Department of Transportation staff locks the gates using a combination lock. The gate is to remain closed on weekends. An electric gate is locked at the rear of the facility and is used by the Sheriff's Department after midnight and on weekends. The electric gate may be opened by remote gate control or key. Sheriff vehicles have remote gate openers which are permanently affixed to the visor. This gate is frequently left open by the Sheriff Officers, exposing all DOT equipment and fuel to vandalism and or theft.

Fleet maintenance of the County's 600 plus vehicles is performed in a two-bay garage that was part of DOT when built in the 1950's. Of the two hydraulic lifts, only one can be used on most of the fleet vehicles. The larger in-ground lift was designated for the larger DOT trucks. With only one designated lift, less repair work on fleet vehicles is possible. The second lift that is above ground is rated at only 7,000 pounds.

Currently, repair orders for County vehicle maintenance are manually written, making it time consuming to maintain a comprehensive maintenance record. A software program for computer maintenance records have been purchased and not used at this time.

There has been no personal performance evaluations given and no in-depth job descriptions are available. The new manager is working on personal evaluations and new job descriptions to improve work performance.

Findings

F1. Gasoline cans are stored on open shelves in the sign shop.

Response to F1: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F2. The fuel dispensing facility has inadequate security, is not always locked and accountability is often based on the honor system.

Response to F2: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F3. The Gas Boy system has been out of order from time to time for two and one-half years.

Response to F3: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F4. The Gas Boy hardware and software are out-dated and difficult to maintain.

Response to F4: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F5. Fleet maintenance staff did not meet with the tanker truck driver to verify fuel meter.

Response to F5: The respondent agrees with the finding.

- F6. The fuel dispensers have not been calibrated; therefore the readings are not accurate which makes cross-checking the usage and purchase of fuel impossible.

Response to F6: The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. The fuel dispensers are not able to be calibrated as they are outdated and need to be replaced. However, the usage and purchase of fuel is monitored and checked daily (manually). General Services measures each tank, which is tied to a specific pump, by using a “stick dip” method which provides a very accurate reading.

- F7. Billing for fuel usage by fleet management depends on entries made on the clipboard sheets kept at each fuel dispenser and best guesses by office employees. County departments are charged for fuel they did not use because of inaccurate accountability.

Response to F7: The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. When the automated fueling system (Gasboy) is off-line, manual entries are made by County employees. It is true that if the manual entry is not legible, Fleet office personnel must follow-up with the department to obtain accurate information.

- F8. Not all County vehicles are marked making it difficult to differentiate between County and private vehicles at the pumps.

Response to F8: The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. It is true that not all County vehicles are clearly marked as County vehicles; however, those that are unmarked have California exempt license plates identifying them as a County vehicle. Those vehicles that do not have California exempt plates are Sheriff undercover or narcotics detective vehicles. Most vehicles without the California exempt license plates can be visually identified by vehicle make, model, and color as there is generally a specification standard for the type of fleet vehicles that are purchased.

- F9. The gate nearest the fuel dispensers is not locked until midnight when DOT swing shift leaves at which time a combination lock is used. The combination is known by the Sheriff Deputies past and present.

Response to F9: The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. The gate nearest the fuel dispensers (or the gate located furthest to the East of the dispensers) is locked at 8:00 pm in the evening by Department of Transportation staff. The combination is known by Sheriff Deputies past and present. The gate located west of the fuel dispensers is not a combination lock, but rather a key locked gate that access is limited to Fleet and Department of Transportation personnel.

- F10. An electric gate located in the rear of the yard is used after midnight and on weekends by the Sheriff Deputies. Their vehicles have remote gate openers which are permanently affixed to the visor of the patrol cars. However, to close the gate the drivers must get out of the car and use their key. This gate is frequently left open, including on weekends, exposing all DOT equipment to potential vandalism and theft.

Response to F10: The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. There is an electric gate located in the rear of the yard that is used after normal business hours and on weekends for the purpose of allowing Sheriff Deputies that are on patrol during those hours to gain access for fueling vehicles. Their patrol vehicles do have remote openers. The remote openers will close the gate as well as open the gate. In the event a Deputy has misplaced his/her remote opener, there is a Knox box on the gate that can be used to gain entry to the fuel yard, and must be manually closed. General Services notes that there have been occasions that the a Deputy fails to close the gate. In that event, General Services notifies the Sheriff's Department so that another occurrence is minimized.

- F11. Fleet maintenance of County vehicles is performed in a two-bay garage, one bay of which is a hydraulic lift that cannot be used for many of the county vehicles, limiting the amount of repair work capable of being performed.

Response to F11: The respondent agrees with the finding.

- F12. Repair orders for County vehicle maintenance are manually written making it time-consuming to maintain a comprehensive maintenance record for all 600 plus County maintained vehicles.

Response to F12: The respondent agrees with the finding.

- F13. Management of the facility does not always conduct annual performance evaluations of all personnel.

Response to F13: The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. All performance evaluations were suspended based upon the respective negotiated Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) between the County and most of the bargaining units. This suspension of performance evaluations applied to the three bargaining units represented by the El Dorado County Employees Association (EDCEA) Local #1---the general bargaining unit, the professional bargaining unit, and the supervisory bargaining unit. The suspension of annual performance evaluations was also negotiated for two of the three bargaining units represented by Operating Engineers Local #3---the Trades and Crafts bargaining unit and the Probation bargaining unit. The suspension of annual performance evaluations also applied to the unrepresented employees covered by the Salary and Benefits Resolution.

In response to the prior Grand Jury recommendation to re-institute annual performance evaluations, Human Resources met with the respective bargaining units to negotiate and implement the annual performance evaluation for employees. The negotiation process generated a new form for the employees in the three bargaining units covered under the EDCEA, Local #1 MOU. This new form is also used for employees in the confidential unit. The new form may also be used in lieu of the old management evaluation form for administrative management employees. This new electronic format for annual performance evaluations was distributed to all county Department Heads in October 2002.

The employees covered under the Trades and Crafts bargaining unit MOU will be evaluated pursuant to the original paper performance evaluation format.

All county Department Heads were notified by memorandum from the Director of Human Resources on or about October 17, 2002, with five training dates scheduled in November 2002. The annual evaluation process has again been implemented.

Recommendations

- R1. Gasoline cans should be stored in closed metal cabinets.

Response to R1: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Department of Transportation will begin storing all gasoline cans in metal storage cabinets by September 30, 2003.

- R2. The facility should be secure at all times. Place a video camera in the yard to video-tape the area day and night.

Response to R2: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Most of the Fleet yard is owned and operated by the Department of Transportation. Fleet Management is currently working with the Procurement and Contracts staff to determine the most appropriate placement of security cameras for Fleet purposes and to determine what equipment should be purchased to best suit Fleet's needs. The purchase and installation of a security camera will take place shortly after adoption of the 2003/2004 budget. Placement of any cameras outside of the area generally occupied by Fleet Management would be at the discretion of the Department of Transportation. The recommendations will be completed by January 31, 2004.

- R3. Replace fuel dispensers and Gas Boy so the monitoring of fuel is computer maintained and can be audited.

Response to R3: The recommendation requires further analysis. The Department of General Services is currently working with the Department of Environmental Management to determine the feasibility of remaining in the fuel business. Current and future environmental requirements will make it extremely cost prohibitive. We concur that the fuel dispensers and Gasboy system are outdated and need to be replaced. However, we do not want to make the capital investment if we will make a determination that it is more economical and feasible to contract out off-site fueling services. This determination will be made by October 31, 2003.

- R4. Replace software for Gas Boy and repair order maintenance records with updated computer programs.

Response to R4: The recommendation requires further analysis. The Department of General Services is currently working with the Department of Environmental Management to determine the feasibility of remaining in the fuel business. Current and future environmental requirements will make it extremely cost prohibitive. We concur that the fuel dispensers and Gasboy system are outdated and need to be replaced. However, we do not want to make the capital investment if we will make a determination that it is more economical and feasible to contract out off-site fueling services. This determination will be made by October 31, 2003.

R5. Monitor the amount of fuel placed in the storage tanks during delivery.

Response to R5: The recommendation has been implemented. Fleet personnel monitor the amount of fuel placed in the storage tanks during delivery in order to avoid spillage, as well as monitoring the fuel usage on a daily basis.

R6. The repair order process should be computerized

Response to R6: The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Fleet personnel are currently testing a repair order/vehicle maintenance data base for implementation. If the current database will not function, another software product may need to be purchased. The implementation of an automated repair order process will be implemented by October 31, 2003.

R7. All County vehicles should be marked with clearly visible I.D. numbers, except for those used in undercover law enforcement.

Response to R7: The recommendation has been implemented. All County vehicles are marked with visible identification numbers, except for those used in undercover law enforcement.

R8. Recode all currently used remotes and change gate pad locks.

Response to R8: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. In order to ensure better security, General Services will work with the Sheriff's department to re-code all currently used remotes which are permanently affixed to the visors in all Sheriff's vehicles. In addition, the easterly gate pad locks will be changed. This recommendation will be implemented by December 31, 2003.

In order to ensure better security, especially after hours, General Services will look into the need of changing the combination or recoding remotes at such times that an employee is separated from County service

R9. Replace or modify the electric gate so it will automatically close after it has been opened.

Response to R9: The recommendation has been implemented. The electric gate does automatically close when opened by a remote opener.

R10. Replace larger DOT hydraulic lift with the appropriate lift for maintaining the fleet vehicles.

Response to R10: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is unreasonable. While we concur that the larger hydraulic lift is not functional for Fleet Management's needs, funding is not currently available and given the current fiscal outlook, it is unreasonable to replace this equipment at this time. Should funding become available in the future this recommendation will be included as part of the Fleet budget request.

R11. Annual performance evaluations should be completed.

