

WSDOT uncovers at least \$67,000 in unearned overtime

Local News

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OLYMPIA - The Washington State Department of Transportation this week announced that an internal payroll audit uncovered at least \$67,000 in unearned overtime and compensation time charges by an employee over the past two years. WSDOT continues its audit and has referred the case to the Washington State Patrol and Pierce County Prosecutors Office to investigate potential criminal charges.

"We work hard to be highly accountable in our use of taxpayer's dollars. We are disappointed in our employee's actions and have taken steps to ensure this kind of abuse won't happen again," said Steve Reinmuth, WSDOT's Chief of Staff.

The unearned overtime was flagged by WSDOT management during a routine review of overtime accrual reports. An internal WSDOT review, involving the agency's independent internal audit division, was launched immediately. The employee later admitted that over the last two years she adjusted her work time in the system for hours which she never worked, collecting more than \$67,000 in unearned state pay. The actual amount of loss to the state will be determined by the ongoing investigation. The employee resigned in lieu of termination from state employment.

In March, the State Auditor's Office issued WSDOT's annual fiscal audit, which included a "management letter item" indicating concern over unauthorized access to WSDOT's Labor Distribution System. The State Auditor found that 71 people with no timekeeping responsibilities had access to enter and update hours in this system.

In response, WSDOT instituted procedures for regularly reviewing access permissions to the timekeeping system as a regular business practice. In addition, computer programmers are in the process of updating the system so that no person can enter or adjust payroll time for themselves in the payroll system.