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Police Overtime Update: Improvements made in reporting; policy changes in process

News Article



This is a one-year follow-up to our 2019 report, "Police Overtime: Management is lax despite high overtime use."

Published: December 3, 2020 9:00 am

Our 2019 audit of police overtime management found high overtime use in 2018: nearly 250,000 extra hours at a cost of \$15.7 million. But the costs of overtime were not just financial. Long hours lead to more accidents, more injuries, and burnout. Secondary employment, which is off-duty contract work, also taxed a system that relied on overtime to meet minimum staffing needs. The program had a low public profile and inconsistent procedures despite significant risks to the City. We recommended that the Bureau improve overtime data collection and reporting. We also recommended that the Bureau change the contract approval process for off-duty work and report publicly about customers, hours worked, and finances. The Bureau in the first year after the audit was making progress towards implementing the recommendations. Despite improved reporting, officer overtime spiked in

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the summer of 2020 because of protests related to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Improved data collection about officers but not sergeants who authorized overtime.

We recommended that the Bureau improve overtime data collection. It developed a new overtime dashboard with a publicly viewable version [online](#) and an internal version that supervisors could use to monitor individual officers' hours. It included the shifts during which overtime was worked, a new code for tracking overtime for street protests, and the sergeant approving overtime. The Bureau was still working to determine which trainings should be allowed to incur backfill overtime and how to reconfigure the time-keeping information system to track the sergeant authorizing overtime. The Bureau planned to develop a new standard operating procedure that would set expectations for supervisor use of the overtime dashboard.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Reports developed to identify outlier officers but not sergeants.

We recommended that the Bureau develop useful reports so that supervisors could identify officers who worked and sergeants who authorized extraordinary amounts of overtime. The new overtime dashboard included total hours worked by officers within relevant periods and the ability to break down hours by code to indicate when it was caused by report-writing and calls that came toward the end of the officers' shifts. The Bureau had not yet configured the time-keeping information system to allow for tracking of patrol sergeant overtime authorization.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Limits on overtime contingent on labor negotiations.

We recommended that the Bureau limit the number of overtime hours an officer could work. This recommendation should be addressed in upcoming contract negotiations with the Portland Police Association.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Secondary employment contracts now reviewed by Chief's Office. Change to Directive is pending.

We recommended that the Bureau revise and document the approval process for off-duty work so that the Chief's Office conducts the primary review of contracts instead of precinct commanders or the Portland Police Association. The change was intended to ensure consistency and that contracts meet Bureau standards. The Assistant Chief of Operations reviewed all secondary employment contracts starting in September 2019. The Bureau said the new procedure would be included in a pending update to the secondary employment directive.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Bureau working on an equity lens for approving secondary employment contracts.

We recommended that the Bureau consult with its equity manager and consider the equity effects involved in proposed secondary employment contracts. The Bureau's Equity and Inclusion Team was working on an equity lens to use for approving secondary employment contracts. The Assistant Chief of Operations needed to review and approve the lens before it could be implemented.

Recommendation Status: Implemented

Secondary employment contracts, hours, and dollar amounts now publicly reported.

We recommended that the Bureau report publicly on contracts approved, hours worked, and finances. The Bureau began posting information on secondary employment contracts on its website, but the report only included new contracts and will be incomplete until all previous contracts expire. The information can be viewed online.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Bureau tracking why off-duty contracts were not approved. Change to Directive is pending.

We recommended that the Bureau track contracts that were not approved and record the reason why. The Bureau said that the Assistant Chief of Services would track contracts and that the process would be updated in the secondary employment directive.

Recommendation Status: Implemented

Bureau monitoring secondary employment hours worked for compliance with labor agreements.

We recommended that the Bureau improve oversight of officers working secondary employment to ensure compliance with labor agreement requirements. The Bureau said that the Services Adjutant would review the internal overtime dashboard for compliance.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Bureau will propose new formula for overhead charges in next budget cycle.

We recommended that the Bureau create rationale for overhead charges that include the cost of payroll processing and billing. The Bureau was developing overhead charges for secondary employment to be included in the Police Bureau's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Bureau plans to generate tracking numbers for each contract.

We recommended that the Bureau track customer name or number in the system officers used to record secondary employment overtime for payroll to ensure that all hours worked could be traced back to a specific contract. The Bureau removed generic tracking numbers for secondary employment and committed to creating individual numbers for each contract. There have not been any new contracts since this new policy was implemented.

Visit our website to view the [original 2019 audit report](#).

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