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MTA INSPECTOR GENERAL PROVIDES UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION OF BIOMETRIC CLOCK VANDALISM

MTA OIG Calls on MTA to Install Cameras Next to Biometric Clocks

3 Clocks Damaged Last Week Alone

MTA Inspector General Carolyn Pokorny today released an update on the ongoing investigation of biometric clock vandalism after three more MTA biometric clocks were found damaged. Office of the MTA Inspector General (OIG) called on the MTA to install cameras next to all incident sites, as well as strategically place additional cameras to act as deterrents for future criminal behavior. The MTA agreed to OIG's recommendations, and will work with the OIG to secure the equipment.

“The ongoing destruction of these valuable pieces of MTA property is absolutely unacceptable, and an affront to riders, taxpayers, and innocent employees,” said **MTA Inspector General Carolyn Pokorny**. “My Office will not stop investigating each incident until we find those responsible, hold them accountable, and put internal controls in place to mitigate the likelihood of this happening again.”

The update, including select photos, is in full below:

On October 24, 2019, OIG announced it had launched an investigation after several MTA biometric timekeeping clocks were found damaged in separate acts of apparent vandalism. In several instances, OIG's investigators discovered front display screens that appeared to have been purposefully smashed, instances of the device's wires being cut, and other acts of apparent vandalism. The apparent acts of apparent vandalism have continued. The MTA now needs to consider ways to address this persistent and costly problem.

As background, on May 1, 2019, Chairman Patrick J. Foye asked the OIG to review MTA agencies' overtime payments to ensure that: (1) these payments were appropriately planned for, scheduled, and signed off upon, and (2) the claimed hours were in fact worked. As noted in OIG's October 18, 2019 audit report, [MTA's Deficient Overtime Verification – Final \(MTA/OIG #2019-19\)](#), OIG discovered that multiple departments within the MTA have limited

or no measures in place to verify claimed overtime for high earners. In that report, OIG noted that the MTA is under a mandate to install and use biometric timekeeping clocks to capture employees' work hours across the entire agency. OIG recommended that MTA integrate the new clocks into the timekeeping/payroll system so that it not only captures employees' start/end times and overtime authorization, but also electronically generates payroll data and minimizes manual adjustments to the payable time.

There have now been 9 apparent acts of vandalism, with an additional incident under review, against biometric timekeeping clocks in 7 months, including 3 in the last week alone. To be clear: vandalizing these expensive pieces of equipment—which cost thousands of dollars apiece—is a crime. (*See* Article 145.10 - NY Penal Law.) It costs the MTA time, money, and manpower to repair. It requires responses from law enforcement and the OIG. And, as our investigators have heard from many employees over the course of these investigations, these acts of vandalism outrage hardworking and dedicated workers at these locations.

In response, OIG and MTA have developed a protocol for jointly responding to the vandalized locations and OIG appreciates that MTA management and employees are quickly alerting us to new incidents. OIG also applauds New York City Transit's decision to install cameras at the location where clocks have been vandalized on two separate occasions.

However, the persistence and frequency of these acts suggests a problem that will continue unless it is addressed. Accordingly, the OIG recommends that cameras be installed strategically throughout the system to protect the equipment and deter future acts of vandalism. Recognizing fiscal constraints, OIG recommends that the MTA consider a risk-based approach as to selecting which locations will have cameras. For example, cameras should be installed facing the replaced biometric timekeeping clock at the site of each incident detailed below, as well as at any future incident site and any site identified as at-risk for vandalism, such as locations with clocks in low-trafficked areas. Publicizing that cameras will be installed at incident sites and elsewhere may, in and of itself, have deterrence value. If these incidents continue, MTA will have to consider a system-wide implementation of cameras monitoring all biometric timekeeping clocks.

These acts of apparent vandalism are the subject of an ongoing investigation by OIG. Brief details of each incident are given below to encourage MTA workers, management, and members of the public to come forward with any information by contacting the MTA Inspector General: Online (<http://mtaig.state.ny.us/ComplaintForm.aspx>), Phone (1-800-MTA-IG4U or 1-800-682-4448) or Email (Complaints@mtaig.org).

VANDALISM INCIDENTS

In the past 7 months OIG investigators have discovered the following 9 incidents of vandalism against biometric timekeeping clocks. It should be noted that there are several

incidents of broken biometric timekeeping clocks that OIG investigators did not deem as acts of vandalism, and one incident that is still under review.

1. Westchester Train Yard

On December 5, 2019, a Senior Director notified the Security Operations Center (SOC) that the Kronos Timekeeping Clock located at the old Tower was vandalized.

2. Concourse Rail Yard

On December 4, 2019, a shattered time clock was discovered. The clock is located in the Concourse Shop directly outside a supervisor's office. This incident marks the second time it was vandalized.

3. 53rd & 5th Station

On November 20, 2019, at the facility room at the Subway Station at 53rd St and 5th Avenue (E/M line), a worker in the MTA IT department discovered that the fingerprint scanner of a biometric timekeeping clock had been pried open and dislodged from the machine and wires were pulled out to disconnect the device from the internet.

4. 130 Livingston Street

On October 24, 2019, on the 9th floor of 130 Livingston Street, a NYCT employee discovered that the screen of a biometric timekeeping clock was shattered. The biometric timekeeping clock is located in an area not open to the public.

5. M.J. Quill Bus Depot

On October 23, 2019, an adhesive substance was placed on the fingerprint reader of a biometric timekeeping clock, making the machine unusable.

6. 14th Street Station (between 7th Avenue and 8th Avenue passageway)

On July 12, 2019, a biometric timekeeping clock in the Third Rail Operations facility was installed but not yet operable. On July 15, when the electrician returned to the facility to complete the final installation and testing of the biometric timekeeping clock, he discovered that cables in the ceiling connected to the biometric timekeeping clock had been cut and the wires within the clock were also cut.

7. Concourse Rail Yard

On July 3, 2019, a biometric clock located directly outside a supervisor's office was shattered.

8. 38th Street Train Yard, Brooklyn

On June 7, 2019, the display screen of a biometric timekeeping clock at Joe Murphy Master Signal Tower appeared shattered, although the mechanism appeared to be operational. This clock is located in an area open to NYC Transit employees on the second floor of the facility next to the Yard Dispatcher's office.

9. LIRR Jamaica Station

On June 4, 2019, at the Eastbound Usher's Booth on the platform, a severed wire was discovered by a service technician preparing to install a biometric timekeeping clock. There was a sign left – apparently by another LIRR employee – urging colleagues to stop this behavior.

INCIDENT UNDER REVIEW

OIG's investigation on the case below is still in the preliminary stages, and cannot yet be deemed whether or not it was an act of vandalism.

1. LIRR Forest Hills Station

On December 10, 2019, a worker in the MTA IT department discovered that the screen of a Kronos Timekeeping Clock was smashed at LIRR's Forest Hills Station.

SELECT PHOTO FROM INCIDENT UNDER REVIEW



LIRR Forest Hills Station

On December 10, 2019, a worker in the MTA IT department discovered that the screen of a Kronos Timekeeping Clock was smashed at LIRR's Forest Hills Station. This incident is still under OIG review

SELECT PHOTOS FROM VANDALISM LOCATIONS



Concourse Rail Yard

On December 4, 2019, a shattered time clock was discovered. The clock is located directly outside a supervisor's office. This incident marks the second time it was vandalized.



130 Livingston Street

On October 24, 2019, on the 9th floor of 130 Livingston Street, a NYCT employee discovered that the screen of a biometric clock was shattered. The biometric clock is located in an area not open to the public.



14th Street Station (between 7th Avenue and 8th Avenue passageway)

On July 12, 2019, a biometric clock was installed but not yet operable. On July 15, when the electrician returned to the facility to complete the final installation and testing of the biometric clock, he discovered that cables in the ceiling connected to the biometric clock had been cut and the wires within the clock were also cut.



Concourse Rail Yard

On July 3, 2019, a biometric clock located directly outside a supervisor's office was shattered.



38th Street Yard, Brooklyn

On June 7, 2019, the display screen of a biometric clock appeared shattered, although the mechanism appeared to be operational. This clock is located in an open area on the second floor of the facility outside the supervisor's office.

The MTA Inspector General encourages all members of the public to reach out with complaints, tips, or to report fraud via the Office's confidential tip reporting portals: Online (<http://mtaig.state.ny.us/ComplaintForm.aspx>), Phone (1-800-MTA-IG4U or 1-800-682-4448) or Email (Complaints@mtaig.org).

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