



# NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General  
**Catherine Leahy Scott**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 26, 2013  
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## **NEW YORK STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT REVEALS LACK OF SUPERVISION AT STATE-OPERATED POWER PLANT**

*Investigation Found Drinking on the Job, Staff Watching TV,  
And Unauthorized Break Rooms*

New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott released a [report](#) today of an investigation which found inappropriate behavior and abuse of state resources by employees of the Office of General Services (OGS) at an Albany-based steam plant. The report concluded that lax supervision and a culture of permissiveness led to on-the-job drinking; the use of unauthorized staff "break rooms," one of which featured a television; the display of inappropriate pictures on facility walls; bedrolls and beer cans in the plant; and a plant engineer watching hours of the television show, *Dancing with the Stars* while on work time.

This conduct occurred despite a [2009 Inspector General report](#), which described a hidden lounge in the Empire State Plaza East Garage, Albany. This prior unauthorized break room, which had couches, a television and scales to weigh marijuana, was created and occupied by two OGS employees who were ultimately convicted of defrauding the government. The Inspector General attributed this unauthorized facility to the lack of supervision and inspections, and made significant recommendations to OGS to greatly improve oversight of staff and operations. Today's Inspector General report similarly found deficient management responsible for both the improper work environment and staff misconduct.

"Only a few years after my office uncovered a significant dereliction of management responsibility leading to grossly improper behavior at OGS, blatant waste, abuse and potentially hazardous conduct continued; management fell far short of what New Yorkers rightfully expect of their government," said Inspector General Scott. "During the course of my investigation, I disclosed these management failures to the current OGS administration so that immediate corrective action could be taken. OGS has implemented important steps to fortify management oversight and will continue to take measures to do so."

The Sheridan Avenue Steam Plant, operated by OGS, produces steam for heating and cooling of the Empire State Plaza. It includes natural gas boilers and gasoline powered backup generators, and is the largest consumer of natural gas in the northeastern United States. The facility operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Inspector General's investigation confirmed a continued, rampant lack of supervision:

- In 2011, Plant Utilities Engineer 1 Daniel Jackson worked at the plant while under the influence of alcohol. Because his responsibilities included maintaining gas-powered boilers, he exposed thousands to potential catastrophe by working while intoxicated.
- Two of Jackson's supervisors were aware of his condition but took no corrective action.
- Plant Utilities Engineer 4 Anthony Isgro, who was plant manager in 2010, admitted to the Inspector General that he was aware of the presence of bedrolls and beer cans at the plant. Isgro testified that he had informal discussions with Jackson's supervisors, Michael Pranchak and

Terrence Potter, but otherwise did not follow up to see if anything was done about the conditions at the plant.

- An Inspector General's unscheduled plant tour found several unauthorized break rooms, cigarette butts inside the facility, and inappropriate photographs and depictions of women.
- Notwithstanding the 2009 Inspector General recommendations that periodic inspections be conducted, neither Director of Albany Utilities Division Robert Lobdell nor his supervisor Director of Facilities Management and Operations Martin Gilroy – who was directly involved in the mismanagement that occurred in 2009 – conducted the required bimonthly tours on a regular basis. In addition, almost none of the management tours were conducted before or after business hours, as promised following the 2009 Inspector General report.
- Management was aware of and ignored significant and habitual time abuse by an employee who brought into work a television, a 15-foot tall antenna, a chair and portable power generator so he could watch his favorite show, *Dancing with the Stars*, for significant periods of his shift. Boyd Bonner, a Plant Utilities Engineer 1, constructed this entertainment center in an enclosed parking deck at the plant after fellow employees locked him out of another unauthorized break room at the plant that had a television. Security cameras confirmed that Bonner watched an entire two-hour show on May 17, 2011.
- Plant Utilities Engineer 2 and Shift Supervisor William Tatro can be seen on video tape walking past Bonner, but taking no action. Tatro told the Inspector General's office that he did not take steps to discipline Bonner or inform Bonner's regular supervisor of the behavior because he was not Bonner's regular supervisor. Potter also told the Inspector General that he had in the past complained of Bonner's behavior to Lobdell and Gilroy; nothing was done by these managers about his complaints.

As a result of the Inspector General's investigation, OGS has commenced the process of implementing the following recommendations by the Inspector General:

- OGS management will conduct tours of its facilities statewide, consistent with the Inspector General's recommendations, and subsequent OGS management directives.
- Bi-monthly tours will be conducted during every shift. Detailed reports will include every area inspected with both positive and negative findings.
- Tour reports will be forwarded to supervisors and executive management, as well as to human resources.
- All tour reports will be provided to the Inspector General for oversight and monitoring.
- All supervisory personnel will undergo supervisory training.

After a referral from the Inspector General, OGS commenced discipline against seven of the employees named in the report resulting in the following actions: Lobdell was fined \$13,212 – equivalent to 30 days' pay; Mannarino was fined \$8,100 – equivalent to 25 days' pay; Potter was fined \$3,944 – equivalent to 14 days' pay; Pranchak was fined \$2,240 – equivalent to 10 days' pay; Tatro was fined \$228 – equivalent to one day's pay; and Jackson was fined \$3,160 and placed on a two-year probationary period, with required random drug and alcohol testing. Any further misconduct by Jackson or failure to pass a blood test will result in immediate termination. Both Bonner and Gilroy retired in April 2012 in the face of discipline.

A copy of the Inspector General's report can be found [here](#).

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