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Comptroller follow-up report finds Department of Children and Families improving management of its vehicle fleet since 2009 audit

The state's Department of Children and Families (DCF) is monitoring state-funded gasoline usage more effectively and has improved its ability to recoup costs for parking tickets and accidents that involve state vehicles, according to a follow-up report issued today by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC).

In a follow-up to its May 2009 audit, the OSC found DCF has strengthened oversight of its fleet of more than 2,600 vehicles. The initial audit found that poor recordkeeping at DCF had led to a series of costly consequences, rendering the state agency unable to identify or investigate drivers who engaged in suspect fueling transactions, received parking tickets or were involved in accidents when using state cars.

The follow-up report found that 16 of the 18 recommendations made by OSC in its initial audit have been fully or partially implemented.

The initial audit identified more than 1,300 same-day fueling transactions involving DCF vehicles that appeared unreasonable. Since the audit, lost fueling cards have been deactivated and the number of questionable fueling transactions has declined by more than 90 percent.

DCF's ability to recoup costs for parking tickets and accidents also has improved. The initial audit found DCF employees paid only 18 percent of parking tickets received, with the state responsible for the rest. During the later time period looked at in the follow-up engagement, DCF employees paid for 48 percent of the parking tickets issued.

Similarly, the number of instances in which DCF failed to submit paperwork necessary to obtain reimbursement from an at-fault party following a car accident decreased from 343 at the time of the initial audit to 93.

“We are pleased that the Department of Children of Families is doing a better job of overseeing its vehicle fleet and safeguarding taxpayer dollars,” State Comptroller Matthew Boxer said. “We will continue to monitor the agency to ensure that the remaining problems identified in our initial audit are addressed.” Boxer noted that the follow-up report found significant deficiencies at DCF that have yet to be completely fixed.

OSC initiated its 2009 audit of DCF shortly after six DCF employees were indicted on charges of stealing gas from state fueling stations. The six employees later pled guilty.

The OSC conducts follow-up reviews for each of its audits to ensure its recommendations are implemented.