



Smithsonian Institution

Office of the Inspector General

Date March 19, 2019

To Jeanne O'Toole, Director, Office of Protection Services

Cc Mike McCarthy, Deputy Under Secretary, Office of Under Secretary
for Finance & Administration
Brenda Malone, Director, Office of Human Resources

From  Cathy Helm, Inspector General

Subject Management Advisory Regarding Violation of Smithsonian Time and Attendance Policy
(OIG-M-19-01)

This advisory alerts Smithsonian Institution (Smithsonian) management about a violation of Smithsonian time and attendance policy and weaknesses in the implementation of this policy. On December 17, 2018, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) briefed you on this matter.

The *Smithsonian Time and Attendance Handbook* (dated May 2013) identifies webTA as the Smithsonian's system of electronic timekeeping. In most cases, Smithsonian employees record their work time and leave requests directly into webTA. Some units elect to have the timekeeper enter records in webTA on behalf of the employees assigned to them. In these cases, the handbook states:

If the employee does not enter/validate his or her own [time and attendance] record, the employee must complete and sign a paper timesheet. The timekeeper will enter the employee's time into webTA based on the paper timesheet. Signed paper leave requests also will be required from employees not entering their time or leave requests directly in webTA.

Similarly, Smithsonian Directive 311, *Time and Attendance Reporting and Record Keeping* (October 2017) states:

Employees are responsible for recording their time accurately by completing and validating the [time and attendance] record, either in webTA or in a paper copy.

During a recent investigation, OIG learned that the time and attendance process in one division in the Office of Protection Services (OPS) did not comply with Smithsonian policies. Specifically, employees in the Personnel and Security Services Division (PSSD) did not complete and sign their own timesheets, electronically or on paper, as required. Instead, a timekeeper enters and validates regular hours worked in webTA for nearly all PSSD employees unless a manager sends an email to the timekeeper stating the employee is absent. This practice unfairly puts the burden of entering the correct time and attendance on the timekeeper rather than the responsible employees. As a result, we found errors in the time and attendance record for at least one employee.

Specifically, on multiple dates in 2018, a manager sent an email to the timekeeper for each date he would be absent, but the timekeeper told OIG she mistakenly recorded these days as working hours.

This practice inhibits the ability of OIG and Smithsonian management to conduct an investigation when an employee engages in time and attendance abuse, and make it difficult to hold employees accountable. An employee's signature on the electronic or paper timesheet certifies that the employee worked all reported hours according to law and regulation. Therefore, having the timekeeper enter and validate the employee's hours worked in webTA without employee certification removes the employee from accountability.

Please notify us within 60 days of what actions you plan to take or have taken to address this issue.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Epin Christensen, Counsel to the Inspector General, at (202) 633-7050.