OAKLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT Office of Inspector General



Mobile Data Terminal Review

December 4, 2013

CITY OF OAKLAND

Memorandum

To:

Chief Sean Whent

From:

Office of Inspector General

Date:

December 4, 2013

Subject:

Audit of Mobile Data Terminals

On November 4, 2013, the Office of Inspector General initiated its tenth annual audit of the Department's use of Mobile Data Terminals (MDT). The purpose was to examine the content of car-to-car message transmissions and ensure that user-generated messages do not violate Department policy, local and/or federal laws.

The auditor reviewed the content of MDT data logs and user generated messages.

Michelle Allison

Acting Lieutenant of Police Office of the Inspector General

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Audit and Inspections Unit



REVIEWERS

Officer Martin Burch Kristin Burgess-Medeiros

PURPOSE

On November 4, 2013 the Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiated its tenth annual audit of the Department's use of Mobile Data Terminals (MDT). The purpose was to examine the content of car-to-car message transmissions and ensure that user generated messages do not violate Department policy, local and/or federal laws.

BACKGROUND

The NSA requires the Department to conduct annual audits of MDT traffic, i.e., the in-car computers used for warrant checks, stolen vehicle inquiries and mobile messaging. The Department's policy on MDT usage is covered by Department General Order I-1, "Personal Computers and Electronic Messaging Devices" published July 1, 2009, Information Bulletin, "Use of Mobile Data Terminals" published on February 16, 2005 and Department General Order I-13, "Mobile Data Computer System," published on October 26, 2001. The Department also issued Special Order 8967 on December 3, 2008, directing the Information Technology Unit (ITU) to archive MDT transmissions for the duration of the Negotiated Settlement Agreement.

The Bureau of Field Operations assigned a sergeant in the administrative section as the Mobile Data System Manager (MDSM). The MDSM, with the assistance of ITU staff, is responsible for the monitoring and archiving of the MDT transmissions.

METHODOLOGY

The OIG reviewed all MDT transmissions between December 2012 and September 2013; a total of 304 days were reviewed.

All car-to-car messages were sent via the MDT system and each message contained the officer's name, the date and the time. There were 57 individual messages transmitted in the 304 days and all 57 messages were reviewed. Messages were reviewed for inappropriate language (i.e., discriminatory or inflammatory words/ statements and profanity) and lengthy conversations not related to work.

FINDINGS

There were 57 individual messages transmitted in the 304 days covered by this audit, with an average of one message every 5.33 days. This year the number of messages transmitted per day was 0.19; a decrease of 50% from last year. Last year there were 0.38 messages per day and in 2011 there were 0.27 transmissions per day. The reason for the dramatic drop in messaging this audit period was the removal of the messaging application from the Frontline (VisionTek) program. In April 2013, the ITU removed the messaging application as a trouble-shooting measure for system-wide failures. Because the use of the messaging application has declined significantly over the years and may have been the cause of system failures, it was removed. There were no messages sent in

April and only three in May. There have been no messages sent since May 2013. A few messages were sent in May, because certain terminals had a delay in the removal of the application due to the need for manual removal.

Of the 57 messages reviewed during the audit period, none were found to contain inappropriate language, wording that constitutes a policy violation, or lengthy conversations unrelated to work.

The MDSM continued the monthly reviews of the MDT transmissions and forwarded them to OIG. The ITU continued to retain the reports on the server.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the VisionTek messaging application has been removed, there is no need for the ITU to generate reports or for the MDSM to review reports with no data. Unless the application is reinstalled, OIG should no longer audit this area.