

DDOT Employee Misconduct and Lapses in Disciplinary Accountability

CASE NO: 25-0013-INV



DATE: Dec 22, 2025

**Kamau C. Marable, MA., CIG, CFE
Inspector General**



CITY OF DETROIT

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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FINAL REPORT 25-0013-INV

DATE **Dec 22, 2025**

I. Summary

On June 4, 2025, the City of Detroit Office of Inspector General (OIG) was copied on an anonymous email sent to multiple City of Detroit (City) agencies and officials. The anonymous complainant alleged misconduct by several Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) employees.

Specifically, the complaint¹ alleged that:

- On May 20, 2025, Senior Transportation Service Inspector (STSI) Andre Reece and Transportation Equipment Operator (TEO) Dayna Ruff were observed on video engaging in indecent activity on a City bus, and later abandoned the still running vehicle.
- The actions of STSI Reece and TEO Ruff led to service delays that impacted citizens.
- STSI Reece and TEO Ruff failed to disclose their romantic relationship as required by City of Detroit Executive Order 2012-1.
- STSI Reece and TEO Ruff were only given minor suspensions despite the violations being severe enough to require at least a 30-day suspension pending discharge.
- DDOT Superintendent Howard Bragg III and potentially other DDOT supervisors received the complaint concerning STSI Reece's and TEO Ruff's actions, but failed to properly investigate and escalate the matter for appropriate discipline.
- DDOT Superintendent Howard Bragg III and potentially other DDOT supervisors covered up the improper romantic relationship, possibly due to a longstanding friendship between Superintendent Bragg and STSI Reece.

The investigation revealed the following:

- STSI Reece and TEO Ruff engaged in an undisclosed romantic relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate, in violation of Executive Order 2012-1, which requires disclosing such romantic personal relationships between City employees.
- On May 6, 2025, STSI Reece and TEO Ruff reported an unsubstantiated mechanical defect on a revenue vehicle while engaging in a romantic interaction, resulting in a 115 minute disruption of services and a waste of City resources.
- On May 20, 2025, TEO Ruff and STSI Reece met multiple times on TEO Ruff's route to engage in romantic interactions, again resulting in a substantial disruption of services.²

¹ OIG Complaint No. 25-0177-COM received anonymously via email on June 4, 2025.

² DDOT Safety Department Video Review Report Document from Chief Safety Officer Corie Holmes to OIG Investigator Christina Hobson, RE: Request for File/Documentation, dated June 24, 2025.

- On May 20, 2025, DDOT’s Operation Division (Operations Division) received a complaint via a Customer Assistance Form (CAF) that alleged that 2 people, one female and one male, abandoned a bus while it was running. A review of video evidence showed that the employees who had abandoned the running vehicle were TEO Ruff and STSI Reece.
- On May 29, 2025, Superintendent Bragg classified STSI Reece and TEO Ruff’s actions as a Class IV offense, but chose to impose lenient discipline that was inconsistent with the Class IV offense level.
- On May 30, 2025, DDOT’s Safety Department (DDOT Safety) initiated an investigation regarding STSI Reece and TEO Ruff’s actions. The investigation found a combination of offenses that violated DDOT’s General Rules and Regulations. As a result, DDOT Safety recommended that the employees be issued a 30 day suspension with recommendation for discharge.
- Superintendent Bragg did not properly investigate the complaint the Operations Division received concerning STSI Reece and TEO Ruff, as he did not request or review any video evidence from DDOT Safety.
- Assistant Director Andre Mallet did not re-evaluate the lenient discipline issued even after learning that corroborating video evidence was available.
- On July 7, 2025, and July 16, 2025, STSI Reece and TEO Ruff continued to engage in inappropriate interactions during their regular work hours.
- Disciplinary practices employed by DDOT’s Operations Management Team are not compliant or consistent with the disciplinary policies mandated by the 2008 DDOT Employee Handbook (the “2008 Handbook” or the “Handbook”).

Based on a preponderance of the evidence reviewed and discussed in this report, the OIG finds that:

- STSI Reece and TEO Ruff abused their authority by reporting an unsubstantiated mechanical defect, resulting in a disruption of service and a waste of City resources.³
- Superintendent Bragg abused his authority in disciplining STSI Reece by classifying his offense as a Class IV offense but then imposing disciplinary action inconsistent with that offense level and in a manner inconsistent with the 2008 Handbook.
- Superintendent Bragg abused his authority in disciplining TEO Ruff by classifying her offense as a Class IV offense but then imposing disciplinary action inconsistent with that offense level and in a manner inconsistent with the 2008 Handbook.
- Superintendent Bragg abused his authority by failing to properly investigate the allegations made against STSI Reece and TEO Ruff.
- Assistant Director Andre Mallet abused his authority by not imposing appropriate discipline even after becoming aware of additional video evidence that substantiated the complaint made against STSI Reece and TEO Ruff and that warranted additional action.

³ *Id.*

Based on the OIG's investigative findings, our recommendations are as follows:

- Discipline for STSI Reece and TEO Ruff for their violations of DDOT'S General Rules and Regulations including, but not limited to, dereliction of duty, insubordination, and unauthorized use of City vehicles, facilities, or equipment.
- Discipline for Superintendent Bragg for failing to conduct a proper investigation as part of his supervisory duties, and failing to impose appropriate discipline that is consistent with the 2008 Handbook.
- DDOT should consistently enforce fraternization policies and create new procedures to better prevent supervisor/subordinate interactions in the workplace while in a reported relationship.
- DDOT's Superintendents of Operations should conduct more thorough disciplinary investigations by utilizing all available means to acquire evidence before taking disciplinary action. If necessary, DDOT should include a checklist of all records that need to be reviewed prior to finalizing discipline.
- DDOT should create a system of procedures to allow more oversight over the review and issuing of discipline to ensure the discipline is proportionate to the offense and that all policies are followed. DDOT should provide additional training to leadership on the policy requirements and enforcement.
- Discipline for Assistant Director Andre Mallett for abusing his authority by not disciplining Superintendent Bragg for failing to conduct a proper investigation. After becoming aware that Superintendent Bragg failed to review all video evidence prior to issuing discipline to STSI Reece and TEO Ruff.

Howard Bragg and Andre Mallet's Written Responses to the OIG's Draft Report

On October 21, 2025, the OIG issued a draft report of findings to Superintendent Bragg and Assistant Director Mallett. Their deadline to request an administrative hearing or submit a written response in lieu of requesting a hearing was November 4, 2025. Both employees acknowledged receipt of the draft report and provided written responses to the OIG's findings by the deadline. Their written responses to the draft report are attached in their entirety. Because their responses are nearly identical and assert the same points, we will address them together below.

Superintendent Bragg and Assistant Director Mallet made several statements in their responses, including

- The 2008 DDOT Employee Handbook allows for management discretion and consideration of mitigating factors in disciplinary matters.
- Although 2 employees (STSI Reece and TEO Ruff) were initially cited for Class IV offenses, Human Resources (HR) "advised that while their behavior was inappropriate, it did not substantiate the full claims outlined in the [CAF] complaint. HR recommended disciplinary action could be anything excluding discharge,⁴" resulting in 5 day suspensions for both employees.
- Reissuing discipline is not feasible and would violate procedural fairness. The initial

⁴ Bragg, Howard. Written Response Regarding OIG Investigation 25-0013-INV. November 4, 2025.

discipline was appropriate given the evidence and HR guidance at the time.

- The initial decision was based on available evidence and video footage mentioned in the OIG report was not available to the Operations Division when Superintendent Bragg issued discipline.
- The responding mechanic acknowledged the issue was a "repeater," suggesting a legitimate concern with the coach, Superintendent Bragg acknowledged that the employee fraternization form should have been submitted at the onset of the romantic relationship, but that it was completed during the disciplinary process once the relationship was discovered.

For the reasons stated below, the OIG finds that the responses do not change our findings regarding Superintendent Bragg and Assistant Director Mallett's abuses of their authority. First, as discussed in this report, the 2008 Handbook requires a hearing for management (and any others) to consider extenuating and/or mitigating circumstances.⁵ The OIG found no evidence that STSI Reece or TEO Ruff requested a hearing or that any hearings regarding their offenses were held. Further, absent a hearing, the Handbook does not give deference to City HR or others within DDOT to change the mandated discipline for a Class IV offense.

Second, although Superintendent Bragg claims that video evidence from DDOT Safety was unavailable at the time of his investigation, evidence reviewed by the OIG shows his assertion is inaccurate. Surveillance videos that substantiated the relevant complaint were in fact available when Superintendent Bragg began his investigation. The issue, however, is that Superintendent Bragg did not seek out or request the video evidence from DDOT Safety. Therefore, he failed to conduct a thorough and proper investigation of the complaint before issuing discipline to STSI Reece and TEO Ruff.

Third, no evidence reviewed by the OIG suggests that STSI Reece verified TEO Ruff's claims of a mechanical defect, or that the responding DDOT mechanic made any acknowledgements as to the mechanical fitness of TEO Ruff's coach. Instead, audio and video evidence reviewed by the OIG shows that after a few minutes of flirting, TEO Ruff shouted "Breakdown time!" as STSI Reece approached her vehicle. Less than 20 seconds later, STSI Reece called in the alleged breakdown without confirming if any warning lights were present on the vehicle's dashboard. He then kissed TEO Ruff before exiting and abandoning the coach.

Although TEO Ruff claimed that her stop engine light was on, no evidence reviewed by the OIG supports that assertion. According to DDOT Safety, a stop engine light is a critical warning that is generally accompanied by a continuous audible tone until the engine is shut off. No stop engine alarm is heard on any audio or video evidence reviewed by the OIG. In addition, evidence confirms the coach was still running when the employees left the vehicle and that it continued to run until the responding mechanic shut it off approximately 40 minutes later. If the stop engine light defect were present, the alarm would have been audible, especially when the coach was empty and no other noise would have drowned it out.

In his written response, Superintendent Bragg stated that the responding mechanic acknowledged on video that the issue with TEO Ruff's coach was a repeater, and that the mechanical issue

⁵ Detroit Department of Transportation Employee Handbook, Effective October 2008.

would be documented. The OIG subsequently requested a copy of the video referenced in his response along with a copy of any documents regarding the issue and the subsequent fix.⁶ Superintendent Bragg did not provide any video or documentation to support his assertions.⁷ In addition, the video he reviewed and shared with HR when he initially issued discipline did not contain any statements or acknowledgments from the responding mechanic. Therefore, we find that Superintendent Bragg's statements regarding the mechanical failure lack factual support.

Finally, as it relates to re-issuing discipline for STSI Reece's and TEO Ruff's inappropriate intimate behavior in the workplace, the OIG recognizes, but does not necessarily agree with, the potential issues associated with re-issuing discipline to employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement. We note, however, that documentation completed during the disciplinary process references only STSI's Reece's violation of the fraternization policy and TEO Ruff's "willful performance." The OIG found no evidence that the employees were disciplined for calling in a performative and unsubstantiated mechanical defect. Further, no evidence shows they were disciplined for abandoning revenue vehicles on 2 separate dates⁸ without notifying dispatch or requesting relief as required.

Audio and video evidence available then and now substantiates not only the CAF complaint but also the findings contained in DDOT Safety's Video Review Report. Therefore, the OIG has amended its recommendation regarding discipline for STSI Reece and TEO Ruff and now recommends that they be appropriately disciplined for additional violations of DDOT's General Rules and Regulations, which extend beyond failing to disclose their romantic relationship and engaging in intimate behavior in the workplace.

Andre Reece and Dayna Ruff Did Not Submit Responses to OIG's Draft Report

On October 21, 2025, the OIG issued a draft report of findings to STSI Reece and TEO Ruff. Their deadline to request an administrative hearing or submit a written response instead of requesting a hearing was November 4, 2025. Both employees acknowledged receipt of the draft report. Neither employee requested an administrative hearing or submitted a written response. Therefore, the OIG finds that STSI Reece and TEO Ruff did not contest the findings detailed in the draft report.

Based on the foregoing and a preponderance of the evidence reviewed and discussed in this report, the OIG maintains its findings which are now final.

⁶ Email from OIG Investigator April Page to DDOT Superintendent Howard Bragg, RE: OIG Investigation No. 25-0013, dated December 2, 2025.

⁷ Per Administrative Hearing rules, Superintendent Bragg failed to meet the deadline for information submission.

⁸The relevant dates are May 6, 2025, and May 20, 2025.

II. Background

A. DDOT Operations Division

DDOT is the largest public transit provider in Michigan. It serves the City of Detroit, surrounding suburbs, and neighboring cities.⁹ To support DDOT's purported goals of providing safe, effective, and reliable public transit, the department maintains an Operations Division that is responsible for sustaining departmental function and addressing employee discipline matters.¹⁰

The Operations Division is led by Assistant Director Andre Mallet. His duties include overseeing the operational function of DDOT and guiding the implementation of the department's policies and procedures within the division.¹¹ Employee discipline falls under the purview of the Superintendents of Operations, which includes Howard Bragg.¹² Superintendent Bragg is tasked with ensuring DDOT employees follow policy and administering discipline for violations of DDOT policies.¹³

STSI are another supervisory position within the division. They are responsible for managing accidents, incidents, service calls, and down coaches within their assigned district area.¹⁴ Andre Reece, an STSI since 2006, described his role as "basically DDOT police without the badge."¹⁵ His duties also include monitoring Transportation Equipment Officers (TEOs) to ensure timely boarding and departure within his assigned district. Dayna Ruff, a TEO who joined the City in May 2024, is a coach operator who falls under STSI Reece's supervisory responsibility.

B. Allegations and Scope of OIG Investigation

As stated above, the OIG received an anonymous complaint on June 4, 2025, alleging misconduct on the part of several DDOT employees within the Operations Division. The complaint alleged that STSI Reece and TEO Ruff were observed engaging in inappropriate activity on a DDOT coach. The complaint further alleged the 2 abandoned the vehicle while it was still running.

The complainant further expressed concerns about the level of discipline levied on STSI Reece and TEO Ruff, who each received a 5 day suspension. Specifically, the anonymous complaint stated:

Howard Bragg III, Superintendent of Operations, was aware of the incident. He didn't review the video (or he did and ignore[d])

⁹ "Detroit Department of Transportation," City of Detroit Official Website, accessed August 12, 2025, <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/detroit-department-transportation>.

¹⁰ Detroit Department of Transportation Employee Handbook, Effective October 2008. pages 10-11.

¹¹ OIG Interview of DDOT Assistant Director of Operations Andre Mallett, August 7, 2025.

¹²Id.

¹³ OIG Interview of DDOT Superintendent of Operations Howard Bragg III, August 7, 2025.

¹⁴ Memorandum to Senior Transportation Service Inspectors from Howard Bragg, Superintendent of Operations, RE: STSI Operational Shift and OTP Restructuring, June 9, 2025.

¹⁵ OIG Interview of DDOT STSI Andre Reece, August 7, 2025.

what he watched?), didn't escalate the matter, and made sure the discipline stayed light. He protected Reece because they are great homies away from the job. That's not a failure, that's a cover-up. It's unclear how much others at his level knew. But Rachelle Oden, Larry Tiller, and Andre Mallett all share the same title. If they were aware and stayed quiet, then the failure goes beyond one person. The system was given evidence and refused to act. DDOT has fired people for far less. But this time, two people were caught on video engaging in sexual activity on duty, on a city bus, while abandoning city property and leadership closed ranks to protect their own.¹⁶

The complainant believed the offenses were Class IV violations that required more discipline. The complainant also questioned the lack of enforcement of the fraternization policy since STSI Reece was allowed to continue to supervise TEO Ruff even after the romantic relationship and sexual activity during City work hours were disclosed. The complainant alleged that the disproportionate discipline and favoritism were due to Superintendent Bragg's personal friendship with STSI Reece. The complainant further alleged that the supposed 'cover-up' may have gone above Superintendent Bragg.

Based on the complainant's statements, the OIG initiated an investigation on June 11, 2025 to determine whether:

- STSI Reece and TEO Ruff engaged in misconduct that violated DDOT's existing policies, including indecent activity on a coach as well as abandonment of a coach;
- The discipline issued to STSI Reece and TEO Ruff was consistent with DDOT's existing disciplinary action policies;
- STSI Reece's and TEO Ruff's actions led to a waste of City resources;
- Howard Bragg III and Andre Mallett abused their authority to give Andre Reece and Dayna Ruff unwarranted leniency, despite the behavior being in violation of multiple DDOT employee policies, the City of Detroit Universal Work Rules, and Executive Order 2012-1.

C. Disciplinary Action Policy and Procedure

DDOT's disciplinary process involves several steps. The process starts with an allegation of an employee violation through a complaint or another form of documentation.¹⁷ From there, an investigation is conducted. The investigation begins with statements from employees and other involved parties/witnesses as well as review of video footage or other physical evidence the department has at its disposal.¹⁸ Evidence acquired to investigate and validate employee infraction claims can include video extracted from department vehicles, employee statements, and other recovered documents. After the investigation is completed, a review of DDOT policies

¹⁶ Email from Anonymous Complainant to OIG and additional City Departments, RE: They Know and They're Covering It Up Sexual Misconduct at DDOT, June 4, 2025.

¹⁷ OIG Interview of DDOT Assistant Director of Operations Andre Mallett, August 7, 2025.

¹⁸ *Id.*

pertaining to the violation is done.¹⁹ The relevant parties are subsequently interviewed and appropriate discipline, according to the 2008 Handbook, is metered out.²⁰

A Superintendent of Operations, like Superintendent Bragg, is responsible for carrying out this process.²¹ All discipline approved by Superintendents of Operations must be reviewed by Assistant Director Mallett.²² At the end of the disciplinary process, a Corrective Action Form is created. The Corrective Action Form is a required document that includes a statement of facts, an explanation of the infraction, and lists the infraction's class offense.²³ Class offenses are correlated to the group offenses as described in the employee handbook.

DDOT utilizes varying versions of their employee handbook.²⁴ Despite the existence of revised handbooks, only the version officially ratified by the union and the entire division is applicable, as stipulated by their collective bargaining agreement.²⁵ The last handbook to meet those requirements was produced in 2008.

As it relates to disciplinary action, the 2008 Handbook provides in relevant part:

It is the intent that these guidelines are used to avoid complaints from employees and Unions and **ensure that disciplinary actions are handled in a consistent manner.** Offenses have been separated into four (4) classes or groups (Class I, II, III, IV) for assessing penalties.

Discipline Action for Offenses

The normal progression of disciplinary action for commission of Class I Offenses or a combination of those offenses, shall be a verbal reprimand for the first offense, a written reprimand for the second offense, three (3) day suspension for the third offense, five (5) day suspension for the fourth offense and thirty (30) day suspension, pending dismissal, for the fifth offense.

Class I Offenses are considered separate from other offenses and do not affect the severity of disciplinary action for any other offense. The normal progression of disciplinary action for commission of Class II Offenses or combination of those offenses, shall be a written reprimand for the first offense, three (3) day suspension for the second offense, five (5) day suspension for the third offense and thirty (30) day suspension, pending discharge, for the fourth offense.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ OIG Interview of DDOT Assistant Director of Operations Andre Mallett, August 7, 2025.

²⁴ OIG Interviews of Employee Services Manager Raguba Dismuke, August 7, 2025.

²⁵ OIG Interview of DDOT Assistant Director of Operations Andre Mallett, August 7, 2025.

The normal progression of disciplinary action for commission of Class III Offenses shall be a three (3) day suspension for the first offense, a five (5) day suspension for the second offense and thirty (30) day suspension, pending discharge, for the third offense.

When an employee has committed any combination of Class II and/or III Offense such that they have already received a five (5) day suspension, the next such offense will result in disciplinary action of thirty (30) day suspension, pending discharge.

The penalty for a Class IV Offense, shall, in absence of substantial mitigating circumstances, be a **thirty (30) day suspension**, pending discharge, without any prior progression.

Consideration of Extenuating or Mitigating Circumstances

Consideration may be given to extenuating or mitigating circumstances surrounding any infraction for which a penalty is assessed. Upon written request to the DDOT Personnel Office, a hearing will be held, prior to implementation of any penalty, except suspension, pending dismissal, at which an employee may give a full explanation of those mitigating or extenuating circumstances, such circumstances may include years of service and previous work record.²⁶

These policies outline DDOT's intended prescribed disciplinary actions.

III. Analysis and Findings

A. STSI Reece and TEO Dayna Ruff engaged in indecent activity on a City coach and subsequently abandoned the vehicle while it was still running after reporting an unsubstantiated mechanical failure.

On May 6, 2025, STSI Reece and TEO Ruff were observed fondling each other on TEO Ruff's revenue vehicle.²⁷ Shortly after, STSI Reece abused his authority by reporting an unsubstantiated mechanical defect on TEO Ruff's coach.²⁸ STSI Reece did not verify the issue before calling for a mechanic but instead removed the bus from commission and took TEO Ruff to a nearby fast-food restaurant.²⁹ Their actions resulted in approximately 115 minutes of service disruption and unnecessarily diverted technical resources.³⁰ On May 20, 2025, the employees met multiple times and again vacated their respective assignments to visit a fast-food restaurant without proper notification or request for relief.³¹

²⁶ Detroit Department of Transportation Employee Handbook, Effective October 2008, pages 10-11.

²⁷ Extracted Video Footage from Revenue Vehicle 1716.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ DDOT Safety Department Video Review Report Document from Chief Safety Officer Corie Holmes to Investigator Christina Hobson, RE Request for File/Documentation, June 24, 2025.

³¹ *Id.*

During their interaction on the coach, TEO Ruff claimed the stop engine and low oil light were on and the bus was losing speed.³² TEO Ruff also stated the bus “cut off on me twice³³” to which STSI Reece replied “it ain’t cut off on you.³⁴” STSI Reece later stated to TEO Ruff “it’s alright...even if you were faking, you’re with me.³⁵” The video review report produced by DDOT Safety noted that a stop engine light is “generally accompanied by a continuous audible tone until the engine is shut off³⁶” and that no alarm was heard when the video was reviewed.³⁷

On August 18, 2025, the OIG received additional video footage that shows STSI Reece and TEO Ruff inappropriately interacting on July 7 and July 16, 2025.³⁸ The footage reveals that on July 7, 2025, after getting off her coach, TEO Ruff approached a white City vehicle, which the Safety Team later identified as being assigned to STSI Reece. She then returned to her bus, where she touched an object in the top left-hand corner of the windshield before exiting again. TEO Ruff then got into the back seat of STSI Reece’s vehicle. The car was positioned in a way that appeared to intentionally hide the driver’s identity. She remained in the vehicle’s back seat for 20 minutes. STSI Reece’s vehicle then drove off and returned 20 minutes later at which time TEO Ruff exited the back seat and walked back to her abandoned coach.³⁹

On July 16, 2025, video footage shows TEO Ruff talking on her cell phone while driving the bus,⁴⁰ which is a direct violation of the DDOT policy regarding cell phone use.⁴¹ She later left the bus unattended for 16 minutes. Upon returning to let passengers on board, she exited the bus again, stating she was going to get a drink, and left with her purse. Three minutes later, a passenger approached the coach and TEO Ruff walked past them in the direction of STSI Reece. She then walked back to the bus as STSI Reece was seen walking away from her. Once on the bus, TEO Ruff was heard saying, “You bad⁴²” and laughing as STSI Reece walked away.⁴³

Based on the information above, the OIG finds that STSI Reece and TEO Ruff engaged in romantic interactions on City property during their regular work hours on at least 2 occasions. In addition, we find that STSI Reece and TEO Ruff abused their authority by reporting an unsubstantiated mechanical defect that required a mechanic to be dispatched and removing the bus from service. Their actions led to significant disruptions in service and a waste of City resources.

³² *Id.*

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ DDOT Safety Department Video Review from Manager I, Safety Michael Enriquez to Investigator Christina Hobson, RE: Additional Videos, dated August 18, 2025.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ DDOT Safety Department Video Review from Manager I, Safety Michael Enriquez to Investigator Christina Hobson, RE: Additional Videos, minute 16:37:49 dated August 18, 2025.

⁴¹ Detroit Department of Transportation Employee Handbook, Revised July 2023.

⁴² DDOT Safety Department Video Review from Manager I, Safety Michael Enriquez to Investigator Christina Hobson, RE: Additional Videos, dated August 18, 2025.

⁴³ *Id.*

B. STSI Reece and TEO Ruff served minor suspensions for policy violations, including Class IV offenses, despite that the violations normally require a 30-day suspension pending discharge.

As it relates to employee disciplinary action, the application of DDOT policies are inconsistent and situationally subjective. Interviews with Assistant Director Mallett, Superintendent Bragg, Chief Safety Officer Corie Holmes, and Employee Services Manager Raquiba Dismuke revealed that DDOT considers its written disciplinary policies to be suggestive rather than instructive.⁴⁴ We note this view contradicts the language of the disciplinary policy, which mandates certain discipline depending on the level of a given offense, unless a hearing is held and the offending employee explains their perceived extenuating or mitigating circumstances.

Additionally, DDOT utilizes varying versions of its employee handbook.⁴⁵ The interviewees agreed that, despite the existence of revised handbooks, only the version officially ratified by the union and the entire department is applicable, as stipulated by their collective bargaining agreement.⁴⁶ The last handbook to meet those requirements was produced in 2008, which is the version the Operations Division uses for disciplinary purposes.

However, the discipline levied on STSI Reece and TEO Ruff was not consistent with the 2008 Handbook purportedly used. The 2008 Handbook states “[t]he penalty for a Class IV Offense, shall, in the absence of substantial mitigating circumstances, be a thirty (30) day suspension pending discharge, without any prior progression.” The 2008 Handbook also gives examples of what qualifies as a Class IV Offense including,

- Abandoning work assignment, security post or coach
- Fighting and other physically violent acts or committing immoral or indecent acts on Department property or in Department facilities or on the premises belonging to employees or others.
- Willful performance of faulty workmanship which might have a serious detrimental effect on the Department and/or public.⁴⁷

Accordingly, Superintendent Bragg classified the offenses of STSI Reece and TEO Ruff as Class IV Offenses on their Corrective Action Forms. However, he inexplicably reduced the penalties metered out for their Class IV offenses.

The inclusion of “shall” in the 2008 Handbook when describing penalties means the disciplinary actions are not suggestive or open to interpretation by DDOT employees. Instead, the penalties are required actions that can only be changed if there are substantial mitigating circumstances. As shown above, the Handbook requires a hearing in order to consider extenuating or mitigating circumstances when issuing discipline. Further, the Handbook requires the disciplined employee to submit a written request for a hearing to provide an explanation of the mitigating

⁴⁴ OIG Interviews of Assistant Director Mallett, Superintendent Bragg, and Employee Services Manager Raquiba Dismuke on August 7, 2025.

⁴⁵ OIG Interviews of Employee Services Manager Raquiba Dismuke, August 7, 2025.

⁴⁶ OIG Interview of DDOT Assistant Director of Operations Andre Mallett, August 7, 2025.

⁴⁷ Detroit Department of Transportation Employee Handbook, Effective October 2008. Pages 10-12.

circumstances.⁴⁸ No evidence shows that either employee requested a hearing or that any hearings took place. Therefore, the deviation from the prescribed discipline for a Class IV Offense was not based on substantial mitigating circumstances.

As such, the OIG concludes that Superintendent Bragg failed to adhere to the disciplinary policy and did not provide a valid reason for deviation. The Corrective Action Forms prepared by Superintendent Bragg acknowledged that STSI Reece's and TEO Ruff's actions were Class IV offenses. The 2008 Handbook requires a 30 day suspension pending discharge for Class IV offenses. Consistent with the Handbook, DDOT Safety recommended that both STSI Reece and TEO Ruff be suspended for 30 days with a recommendation for discharge following its review of the available video evidence.⁴⁹ Based on this information, the OIG finds that Superintendent Bragg abused his authority by failing to impose appropriate discipline on STSI Reece and TEO Ruff.

C. Superintendent Bragg failed to properly investigate the allegations against STSI Reece and TEO Ruff.

Superintendent Howard Bragg was notified of the misconduct of STSI Reece and TEO Ruff on May 20, 2025 via a Customer Assistance Form (CAF).⁵⁰ The CAF reported as follows

The same two people from earlier the female abandoned the bus and the bus is still running; she got in the vehicle with the man from earlier and they pulled off down the road and have not been back. 2025 White ford explorer 083094 - plate 715 number on vehicle. Black female with glasses and smokes. I have photos and videos I would like to send for this complaint and the previous one.⁵¹

Superintendent Bragg stated in an interview that when he learned of the report, he initiated an investigation by requesting the video from Radresse Wailer, a DDOT customer service representative.⁵² He stated that once he received the video from customer service, he issued discipline based solely on it.

Superintendent Bragg stated that he did not review the DDOT Safety's Division's extracted bus video at any point before issuing discipline. According to Assistant Director Mallet, failing to request and review all available video evidence before issuing discipline is against DDOT's disciplinary procedure. In Assistant Director Mallet's interview, he asserted that "when video footage is available it is always considered before issuing discipline." Assistant Director Mallet additionally stated that extracted video from TEO Ruff's coach was available and reviewed after discipline was issued but that changing the discipline was not considered so as to not further

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ DDOT Safety Department Video Review Report Document from Chief Safety Officer Corie Holmes to Investigator Christina Hobson, RE: Request for File/Documentation, Dated June 24, 2025.

⁵⁰ OIG Interview of DDOT Superintendent of Operations Howard Bragg III, August 7, 2025.

⁵¹ Customer Assistance Form No. 14249 from CSR LaTonya Copeland, May 20, 2025.

⁵² OIG Interview of DDOT Superintendent of Operations Howard Bragg III, August 7, 2025.

“financially impact” STSI Reece and TEO Ruff. We note, however, that the perceived financial impact to offending employees is not a sufficient reason to forgo required discipline.

Therefore, the OIG finds that Superintendent Bragg abused his authority by not properly investigating the complaint against STSI Reece and TEO Ruff before imposing discipline, in violation of DDOT’s disciplinary policies and procedures. Superintendent Bragg failed to request available video evidence from the DDOT Safety Division. This was a necessary step to thoroughly investigate the actions of STSI Reece and TEO Ruff prior to imposing disciplinary action. Additionally, the OIG finds that Assistant Director Mallett abused his authority by failing to impose proportionate discipline once he was made aware of additional evidence that substantiated the complaint and warranted additional action. Finally, the OIG finds that disciplinary practices implemented by DDOT’s Operations Management Teams are inconsistent with DDOT’s established policies and procedures.

D. STSI Reece and TEO Ruff failed to disclose their relationship as required.

An analysis of DDOT’s Fraternization Form shows the department adhered to some aspects of the City of Detroit Executive Order 2012-1: Fraternization and Nepotism Policy with the creation of their department’s relationship disclosure form. As mandated in Section C: Disclosure Requirements for Supervisory Employees and their Subordinates,

Any City executive, appointee, manager, supervisor or employee who directly or indirectly supervises, or reports to another employee, with whom he or she has a family relationship, domestic partnership, or personal relationship is required to disclose the relationship to the Human Resources Department, in writing, on a form that is created by the Law Department and that is made available at the Human Resources Department.⁵³

As part of STSI Reece and TEO Ruff’s discipline, they were required to complete a Fraternization form. It should be noted that the form should have been completed at the initiation of their relationship.

However, even though STSI Reece was required to complete the form, the action was incomplete. At the bottom of the form, there is a section for HR Use. This section is to identify who in HR reviewed the form to determine if a conflict exists and if any action is required.⁵⁴ However, this section is blank on the form included with STSI Reece’s corrective action.

DDOT and HR both misstepped in applying the executive order by failing to review the fraternization form to determine if a conflict existed. If necessary, they should have reassigned STSI Reece or TEO Ruff to a different area to maintain a professional level of separation. Furthermore, DDOT and HR should have disciplined STSI Reece and TEO Ruff for failing to disclose their relationship.

⁵³ City of Detroit Executive Order 2012-1.

⁵⁴ DDOT Fraternization Disclosure Form.

IV. Conclusion

Based on a preponderance of the evidence, the OIG finds that:

- Between May 6, 2025 and May 20, 2025, STSI Reece and TEO Ruff met regularly on TEO Ruff's route to engage in romantic interactions.⁵⁵
- STSI Reece and TEO Ruff abused their authority when reporting an unsubstantiated mechanical defect, resulting in a disruption of service and a waste of City resources.⁵⁶
- Superintendent Bragg abused his authority in disciplining STSI Reece by classifying his offense as a Class IV offense but then imposing disciplinary action inconsistent with that offense level.
- Superintendent Bragg abused his authority in disciplining TEO Ruff by classifying her offense as a Class IV offense but then imposing disciplinary action inconsistent with that offense level.
- Superintendent Bragg abused his authority by failing to properly investigate the allegations made against STSI Reece and TEO Ruff.
- Assistant Director Mallet abused his authority by not imposing appropriate discipline when he became aware of additional video evidence of STSI Reece and TEO Ruff that warranted additional action.
- DDOT's Operations Management Team's disciplinary practices are not compliant with the policy for Class IV Offenses.
- STSI Reece and TEO did not disclose their personal relationship as required by the Executive Order.
- TEO Ruff and STSI Reece abused their authority by spending 40 minutes together during TEO Ruff's service route, causing a disruption of service and wasting City resources.⁵⁷
- TEO Ruff violated the DDOT policy regarding cell phone usage while operating any DDOT vehicle.⁵⁸

V. Recommendation(s)

Based on the OIG's investigative findings, our recommendations are as follows:

- Discipline for STSI Reece and TEO Ruff for their violations of DDOT'S General Rules and Regulations including, but not limited to, dereliction of duty, insubordination, and unauthorized use of City vehicles, facilities, or equipment.
- Discipline for Superintendent Bragg for failing to conduct a proper investigation as part of his supervisory duties, and failing to impose appropriate discipline that is consistent with the 2008 Handbook.

⁵⁵ DDOT Safety Department Video Review Report Document from Chief Safety Officer Corie Holmes to Investigator Christina Hobson, RE Request for File/Documentation, Dated June 24, 2025.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ DDOT Safety Department Video Review from Manager I, Safety Michael Enriquez to Investigator Christina Hobson, RE Additional Videos, Dated August 18, 2025.

⁵⁸ *Id.*

- DDOT should consistently enforce fraternization policies and create new procedures to better prevent supervisor/subordinate interactions in the workplace while in a reported relationship.
- DDOT's Superintendents of Operations should conduct more thorough disciplinary investigations by utilizing all available means to acquire evidence before taking disciplinary action. If necessary, DDOT should include a checklist of all records that need to be reviewed prior to finalizing discipline.
- DDOT should create a system of procedures to allow more oversight over the review and issuing of discipline to ensure the discipline is proportionate to the offense and that all policies are followed. DDOT should provide additional training to leadership on the policy requirements and enforcement.
- Discipline for Assistant Director Andre Mallett for abusing his authority by not disciplining Superintendent Bragg for failing to conduct a proper investigation. After becoming aware that Superintendent Bragg failed to review all video evidence prior to issuing discipline to STSI Reece and TEO Ruff.

VI. Evidence Reviewed

a. Interviews

Corie Holmes on July 14, 2025
 Raquiba Dismuke on August 7, 2025
 Dayna Ruff on August 7, 2025
 Andre Reece on August 7, 2025
 Howard Bragg on August 7, 2025
 Andre Mallet on August 7, 2025

b. Documents

Executive Order 2012-1 on June 16, 2025
 Andre Reece's Personnel File dated June 18, 2025
 DDOT Safety Department Video Review Report dated June 24, 2025
 DDOT Employee Handbook dated June 25, 2025
 City of Detroit Universal Work Rules dated June 25, 2025
 Memo from DDOT Executive Director Robert Cramer to Council Member Latisha Johnson dated July 9, 2025
 DDOT Preventable Review Committee and Accident Review Board Charters dated July 14, 2025
 Proposed Administrative Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Revenue Vehicle Accident and Investigation Procedures dated July 14, 2025
 Email RE: Compliance with Executive Order No. 2012-1 dated July 28, 2025
 Email RE: Request for File/Documentation dated July 28, 2025
 DDOT 2008 Employee Handbook dated July 28, 2025
 Email RE: HR's Role in DDOT dated July 28, 2025
 Email RE: Dayna Ruff's Corrective Action Form dated July 28, 2025
 Email RE: STSI Operational Shift and OTP Restructuring dated July 28, 2025
 Email RE: HR's Role in DDOT dated July 28, 2025



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Statement from Andre Mallett, Assistant Director of Operations

City of Detroit Department of Transportation

Regarding OIG Memorandum – File #25-0013-INV

As Assistant Director of Operations, I want to address the concerns raised in the Office of Inspector General's memorandum dated October 16, 2025. The events involving STSI Andre Reece and TEO Dayna Ruff were taken seriously, and the disciplinary process was handled with diligence, transparency, and in accordance with departmental policy.

At the time of the incident, our division was operating under the 2008 DDOT Employee Handbook, which remains the ratified standard for disciplinary procedures. This handbook outlines a classification system for offenses and allows management discretion to consider mitigating factors such as tenure, work history, and context. These are not loopholes—they are safeguards to ensure fairness and proportionality.

The offenses were classified as Class IV and documented accordingly. However, after reviewing the available evidence—including video footage, still images, and the initial complaint—Human Resources advised that while the conduct was inappropriate, it did not meet the threshold for discharge. The resulting suspensions were issued based on HR's guidance and in consultation with the executive team. These decisions were not made in isolation.

The investigation began promptly upon receipt of the complaint on May 20, 2025, and disciplinary action was finalized by May 29, 2025. At that time, we had access to a video, still images, and a Customer Service complaint. The additional footage and report that was forwarded to Christina Hobson and referenced in the OIG report was not available during the disciplinary process. Coach Video was requested through Customer Service, and all decisions were made collaboratively with HR and senior leadership.

An independent investigation was conducted by the Chief Safety Officer Corie Holmes and the Safety Division without Operations knowledge. As of the date of the corrective action, the department had not received any additional video footage or report in connection with the incident.

I must emphasize that once discipline has been served, it cannot be reissued. Reopening disciplinary action would violate principles of procedural fairness and expose the department to legal and ethical concerns.



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We stand by the policies and work rules that govern our department. The disciplinary process followed in this case was consistent with those standards and executed with integrity. We remain committed to continuous improvement and welcome constructive dialogue with the OIG to strengthen our practices and uphold public trust.

—

Andre' Mallett

Assistant Director of Operations

City of Detroit Department of Transportation

100 Mack Detroit Michigan 48207

Cell 313.421.6062



City of Detroit Department of Transportation
Operations Division
Response to OIG Memorandum – File #25-0013-INV

Date: October 31, 2025

To:

Christina Hobson, File Manager
Kamau C. Marable, Inspector General

This letter serves as the formal response from Superintendent of Operations Howard Bragg III of the Department of Transportation Operations Division to the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) memorandum dated October 16, 2025, regarding disciplinary actions taken against STSI Andre Reece and TEO Dayna Ruff.

I. Context and Policy Framework

At the time of the incident, the Operations Division was operating under the 2008 DDOT Employee Handbook. This handbook outlines disciplinary guidelines through a classification system (Class I–IV) and explicitly allows management discretion to consider mitigating factors such as employee work record, seniority, and extenuating circumstances. These guidelines are intended to promote consistency and fairness, not to serve as rigid mandates.

II. Disciplinary Action and Classification

Both STSI Reece and TEO Ruff issued Class IV offenses, which are documented in their personnel files. However, following consultation with the Human Resources Department and a review of the available evidence provided to the Department from Customer Service—including video footage and still images—HR advised that while the behavior was inappropriate, it did not substantiate the full claims outlined in the complaint. HR recommended disciplinary action could be anything excluding discharge, and the resulting suspensions (five days for both STSI Reece and TEO Ruff) were issued accordingly.



III. Investigation Process

The Department was first made aware of the incident on May 20, 2025, and disciplinary action was issued on May 29, 2025. The investigation was initiated based on the evidence available at that time, which included a Customer Assistance Form, still images, and two video recordings dated May 20, 2025.

Additional footage referenced in the OIG report was not available to the Operations Division during the disciplinary process. Video footage was requested from Customer Service, and all decisions were made in consultation with Human Resources, Assistant Director Andre Mallett, and the executive leadership team. The investigation and disciplinary process were conducted collaboratively and transparently.

IV. Mechanical Defect Allegation

The OIG report characterizes the mechanical defect reported by STSI Reece as unsubstantiated. However, the responding mechanic acknowledged in video that the issue with this coach was a repeater and indicated it would be documented, suggesting the coach did have a legitimate concern. This context is important in evaluating the intent and appropriateness of the report.

V. Fraternization Disclosure

While a fraternization form was completed as part of the disciplinary process, it should have been submitted at the onset of the relationship. The HR review section of the form was left incomplete, which is acknowledged as procedural oversight. Nonetheless, the relationship was documented once known, and appropriate steps were taken to address it.

VI. Double Jeopardy and Finality of Discipline

The recommendation to reissue discipline is not feasible. Once disciplinary action has been served, reissuing it would constitute double jeopardy and violate procedural fairness. The Department maintains that the discipline issued was appropriate given the evidence and HR guidance at the time.



VII. Oversight and Procedure

The Department followed its established procedures, including documentation, supervisory review, and HR consultation. The Corrective Action Forms were signed by the issuing supervisor, reviewed by HR, and acknowledged by executive leadership. The process was conducted with full transparency and accountability.

VIII. Conclusion

The Department of Transportation Operations Division stands firmly behind the policies and work rules outlined in the 2008 DDOT Employee Handbook, which guided our actions throughout this disciplinary process. We maintain that the decisions made were consistent with established procedures, supported by the available evidence, and aligned with Human Resources guidance. While we recognize opportunities for procedural refinement, we affirm that all actions taken were within the scope of departmental authority and policy. We remain committed to upholding the integrity of our disciplinary framework and welcome continued engagement with the Office of Inspector General for oversight and to reinforce public confidence.

Sincerely,

Howard Bragg III

Superintendent of Operations

City of Detroit Department of Transportation

Operations Division