

Unmanned Storeroom Access Procedure is Outdated

Office of the Inspector General



Investigation Results

The Unmanned Storeroom procedure is over three decades old. The District issued the procedure in 1984 to provide guidance for accessing the Storeroom when unattended by a Storekeeper. Since that time, the District has added the Expeditor and Expeditor/Clerk positions and implemented Maximo asset management software. This information is not sufficiently reflected in the Unmanned Storeroom procedure, which is formally titled *Issues – During Unattended Stores Hours*. There is no mention of the two expeditor positions and only a brief addendum reflecting the use of Maximo. The Unmanned Storeroom procedure allows a “requester” to obtain access to the Storeroom. This could be interpreted to include the Expeditor or Expeditor/Clerk positions because both have a role in expediting parts and materials. However, that is not historical practice. Though severely outdated, the Unmanned Storeroom procedure demonstrates that the District requires inventory controls to safeguard parts and materials. However, when procedures do not reflect the current work environment and too many people have access to the Storeroom, it becomes challenging to maintain required control over inventory and identify who accessed the area and what materials they took. This makes the District vulnerable to theft and loss.

1

Recommendation

Update the *Issues – During Unattended Stores Hours* procedure to align with current practices, positions, and automated systems.

2

Recommendation

Provide employees with the updated *Issues – During Unattended Stores Hours* procedure and enforce its use. Follow appropriate performance evaluation actions when employees fail to follow the procedure.



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Providing independent oversight of the District's use of revenue.

Background and Investigation



Rolling Stock and Shops maintenance and repair personnel work 24/7 to keep the District's trains in operation and move capital projects forward. As such, they need parts and materials from Storerooms at all times of the day and night. Storekeepers are responsible for issuing parts and materials from Storerooms and maintaining accurate inventory transaction records. However, there are times when the District is unable to staff a Storeroom due to Storekeeper absences. In 1984, the District developed the *Issues – During Unattended Stores Hours* procedure to ensure maintenance personnel could still obtain parts and materials from Storerooms when unattended by a Storekeeper. The procedure is commonly referred to as the Unmanned Storeroom procedure. Per the Unmanned Storeroom procedure, "designated Maintenance Shop supervisory personnel will be responsible for access to locked Storerooms" when a Storekeeper is not in attendance. The procedure gives a "requester" the ability to "Secure authorization of Supervisor to make withdrawals from unattended Stores" and "Unlock Storeroom." The procedure requires the requester to record the retrieval of parts and materials using a paper-based process. The procedure does not define "requester," leaving it open to any position responsible for the movement of parts and materials. Since the issuance of the Unmanned Storeroom procedure in 1984, the District has implemented Maximo inventory management software to replace its paper-based inventory control process, including those described in the Unmanned Storeroom procedure.



The Office of the Inspector General received a complaint alleging a number of improprieties with Storeroom activity. When we parsed the complaint, we recognized there was an overarching issue concerning inventory control. We determined we could best address several of the complainant's concerns through a future audit. That would allow us to take a deep dive into the inventory processes and controls the complainant called into question. Other portions of the complaint were outside of our purview and one component alleged nepotism. We did not pursue the latter because, as we reported on [October 29, 2020](#), there is no violation of the District's Employment and Assignment of Relatives policy when the employees are SEIU members. Their collective bargaining agreement prevails over the District's policy and the agreement does not prohibit the employment of close relatives. We launched this investigation based on the portion of the complaint that showed evidence of a potential procedural violation that made the District vulnerable to theft and loss of critical inventory.

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Key Findings



The Unmanned Storeroom procedure does not align with current practices, new positions, and the use of automated systems. Though outdated, the procedure does make it clear that the District requires inventory controls to safeguard parts and materials. However, employee roles and responsibilities, and management expectations become unclear when procedures and protocols are not updated to reflect changes to the work environment:

- The District established the Expeditor position in 1997 and the Expeditor/Clerk position in 2001. Both have a role in the movement of Storeroom inventory. The Unmanned Storeroom procedure, created in 1984, uses the term "requester" to describe the person who may be granted access to an unattended Storeroom. That suggests that Expeditors and Expeditor/Clerks may request access to an unmanned storeroom, even though doing so would be inconsistent with the historical practice of a Foreworker accessing the unattended Storeroom to obtain parts and materials. This creates the appearance that procedures are being violated for those accustomed to past common practice. This issue has become more pronounced as the number of Expeditor and Expeditor/Clerk positions has increased.
- Only a brief addendum was added to the Unmanned Storeroom procedure to describe the use of Maximo. The information is inconsistent with the paper-based process described in the original procedure. This creates confusion as to management's expectations. While brief, the procedure does restrict Maximo access to a Foreworker.

BART OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER RESPONSE TO OIG FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Title: Unmanned Storeroom Access Procedure is Outdated

Management Comments: Agree with findings and recommendations.

1	Recommendation:	Update the <i>Issues – During Unattended Stores Hours</i> procedure to align with current practices, positions, and automated systems.
	Responsible Department:	Procurement
	Implementation Date:	01/25/2021
	Corrective Action Plan:	Update the Unmanned Storeroom Procedure to include current practices, positions and automated systems. The update will take place with all stakeholders involved.
2	Recommendation:	Provide employees with the updated <i>Issues – During Unattended Stores Hours</i> procedure and enforce its use. Follow appropriate performance evaluation actions when employees fail to follow the procedure.
	Responsible Department:	Procurement
	Implementation Date:	01/25/2021
	Corrective Action Plan:	Update the Unmanned Storeroom Procedure and circulate among all stakeholders. Once implemented we will ensure enforcement. If an employee fails to follow the procedure, we will take the necessary actions.