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## Three transit workers cheated city, lose jobs

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Three transit employees are no longer working for the city after it was found they were working second jobs while on the clock.

In the case of a man who has since quit, he sent private business-related e-mails during office hours and continued to operate the business while on disability from the city.

"This is unacceptable behaviour, running a business at taxpayers' expense," said Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart.

The wrongdoing was uncovered by a city audit, triggered by complaints made to its confidential whistle-blower program. The annual report detailing that program will go to the audit committee Thursday.

Colley-Urquhart said she will still have questions at Thursday's meeting, including whether the employee who quit should be making restitution for the money received while collecting disability and operating another business.

The report going to the audit committee outlines investigations into seven transit employees after complaints were filed.

Mike Mahar, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union, said to his knowledge, all but one of the employees disciplined were managers.

"The vast majority of our members wouldn't have the ability," he said, referring to mechanics and those driving buses and C-Trains. "It's more likely to happen with managers."

Auditors began looking at the man on disability last November and discovered the manager used the city e-mail system to conduct his private business -- which included working with companies the city also deals with.

A man and woman who have now retired were involved in a real estate venture and sent e-mails

using city resources. Mahar said the woman was a union member.

Two other transit employees were suspended without pay for sending e-mails related to a private business using city resources.

The employee suspended for one day also visited Internet gaming sites on company time, while a shift supervisor suspended for three days was using city technology to conduct another business during work hours.

A sixth worker received a "letter of counselling" after it was found "the employee received and replied to a few e-mails related to non-city business . . . and was using city technology to visit websites not related to City of Calgary work on company time."

A transit manager was also counselled by the Calgary Transit director after the auditors determined he "turned a blind eye to one of the employees conducting business at work."

All complaints came through the whistle-blower program in 2008 and 2009.

Ron Collins, spokesman for Calgary Transit, said the transgressions are a concern.

"It's a concern any time, even just one action by an employee not adhering to the code of conduct," he said, adding because it's a personnel matter, he can't comment further. "We've taken action to address the inappropriate behaviour."

Colley-Urquhart said she had received a tip about the two employees who have since retired, referring it to the whistle-blower hotline.

"It's one reason I wanted the whistle-blower legislation to be put in, so these kinds of complaints would come forward," she said.

The whistleblower program, which was approved in 2007, received 52 complaints in 2009. Of those, plus nine that weren't dealt with in 2008, 24 required no action, one was referred to an outside agency, another was referred to the police, 14 went to management and 20 were investigated. One has yet to be assessed.

Some complaints are suggestions for process improvement, not allegations of wrongdoing, the report says.

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