



Illinois State Toll Highway Authority

Office of the Inspector General

SUMMARY ACTIVITY REPORT

March 1, 2025 through August 31, 2025

Theodor J. Hengesbach
Inspector General

Hotline: 866.786.5544
Fax: 630.795.7661
<https://www.illinoistollway.com/OIG>



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
Theodor J. Hengesbach – Inspector General

SUMMARY ACTIVITY REPORT

To: The Office of the Governor
The Board of Directors of the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority
The State of Illinois General Assembly

From: Theodor J. Hengesbach, Inspector General *TH*

Date: September 30, 2025

Re: Office of the Inspector General Summary Activity Report for the Period
Spanning March 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025.

INTRODUCTION

We submit this report pursuant to Section 8.5 of the Toll Highway Act (the Act).¹ The Act created the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to provide independent oversight of the Illinois Tollway. On July 11, 2025, Governor JB Pritzker appointed Theodor J. Hengesbach to a third five-year term, and that appointment is pending Senate approval.

MISSION/JURISDICTION

The OIG's mission is to foster effective and efficient Tollway administration and operations by promoting integrity and accountability of the Tollway board, Tollway employees, and Tollway contractors and vendors. In furtherance of its mission, the OIG provides independent oversight to detect, deter, and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, corruption, misconduct, and mismanagement.

¹ 605 ILCS 10/8.5(m) provides: The Toll Highway Inspector General shall provide to the Governor, the Board of the Authority and the General Assembly a summary of reports and investigations made under this Section no later than March 31 and September 30 of each year. The summaries shall detail the final disposition of the Inspector General's recommendations. The summaries shall not contain any confidential or identifying information concerning the subjects of the reports and investigations. The summaries shall also include detailed, recommended administrative actions and matters for consideration by the Governor, the Board of the Authority, and the General Assembly.

The OIG derives its authority and direction from the Illinois Toll Highway Act² and the Illinois Administrative Code.³

By statute, the OIG's jurisdiction extends to Tollway officials, Tollway employees, and Tollway contractors and vendors.⁴ As a general rule, the OIG does not become involved in cases involving private disputes, labor-management issues, or litigation. Matters investigated by the OIG may also fall within the jurisdiction of other agencies (e.g., federal, state, or local law enforcement, other inspectors general, etc.). In such cases, the Inspector General is authorized to refer matters or work jointly with these other agencies to investigate allegations of wrongdoing.

The OIG conducts administrative and criminal investigations of alleged violations of law, rule or regulation, and misconduct or mismanagement. In addition, the OIG reviews Tollway policies and procedures, and employment and hiring files, and serves as liaison to law enforcement entities.⁵

STAFF

The OIG is currently staffed by a Deputy Inspector General, a General Manager of Investigations, two Investigator IIs, one Investigator I, and an Executive Secretary. In June, OIG employed a student intern who is working on data analysis projects through December.

The Inspector General, Deputy Inspector General, General Manager of Investigations, two Investigator IIs and one Investigator I are certified by the national Association of Inspectors General. The Inspector General, General Manager of Investigations, and both Investigator IIs are Certified Fraud Examiners.

In addition, the Inspector General and the General Manager of Investigations continue as active members of the Board of Directors for the Illinois Chapter of the Association of Inspectors General. The Inspector General currently serves as Vice-President of that Board.

Two budgeted positions are currently vacant: Investigator I and Information Analyst.

² 605 ILCS 10/8.5 605 ILCS 10/8.5.

³ ILL. ADMIN. CODE title 2, sec. 3430 (2011).

⁴ See 605 ILCS 10/8.5(d).

⁵ See 605 ILCS 10/8.5(f).

INTAKES

The OIG receives complaints and reports of concerns and allegations of wrongdoing from the general public, Tollway officials and employees, vendors, bidders, and anonymous sources. The OIG can also self-initiate investigations and reviews. All matters are screened and assessed to determine the most appropriate action, which can include opening a Preliminary Investigation (PI),⁶ an Investigation (IG), a Review (R), or an Investigative Assistance case (IA).⁷ The OIG can also refer matters, as appropriate, to Tollway management, law enforcement or another entity, or decline to open a case.

Some factors that impact this decision may include: the reliability and accuracy of information based on the OIG's knowledge of the subject matter; the nature of the conduct alleged and the ability to independently verify the allegations; the age of the conduct complained of; the likely impact on Tollway operations; and the availability of investigative resources.

Most often, matters are opened as Preliminary Investigations, which are limited scope inquiries to develop and evaluate available information to determine the most appropriate next action.

The OIG also receives a number of complaints and calls relating to I-PASS concerns or toll violations and fines that we refer to the Tollway Operations Customer Service section.

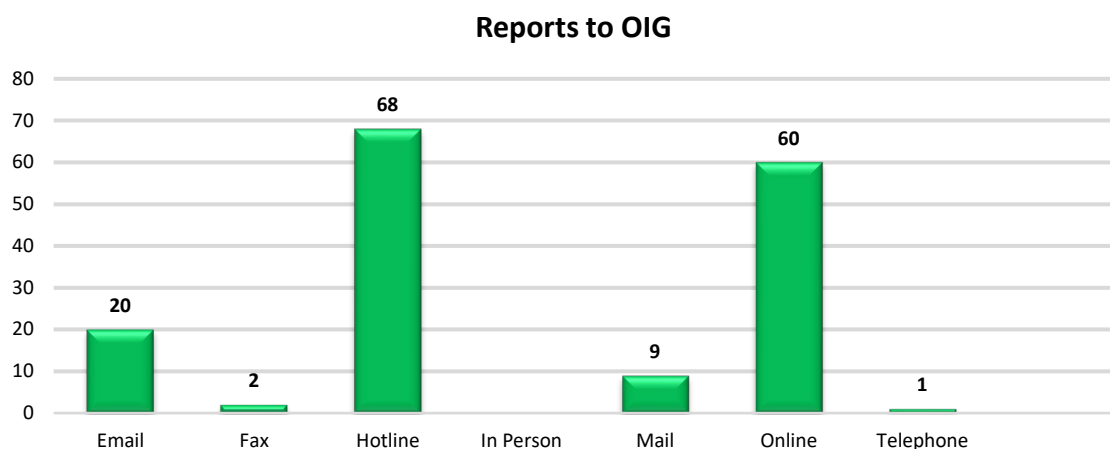
By law, the identity of any individual providing information or reporting possible or alleged misconduct to the OIG may not be disclosed without consent of that individual or as otherwise required by law.⁸ Furthermore, state and federal Whistleblower laws prohibit retaliation against individuals who provide information to or cooperate with the OIG.

⁶ A Preliminary Investigation is initiated to conduct limited-scope inquiries to determine the next appropriate action. Generally, these inquiries are open for 30 days, although 30-day extensions may be approved by the Inspector General.

⁷ Investigative Assistance matters include tracking of employee arrests and requests for information or subpoenas from law enforcement, regulatory agencies, or other Inspectors General.

⁸ See 605 ILCS 10/8.S(k)(l).

The OIG receives reports of alleged wrongdoing in many ways: in person, by telephone, facsimile, and US and Electronic mail.



As shown above, the Tollway OIG Hotline (866-786-5544) is one of the two primary means used most frequently to report concerns. There were 68 incoming Hotline calls during this reporting period.

The second most commonly used method is OIG's online electronic form, which allows individuals to provide information in a secure, confidential manner. This form can be accessed through the OIG webpage; it is encrypted upon submission and delivered directly to a secure OIG email account. During this reporting period, the OIG received 60 online submissions.

From March 1, 2025, through August 31, 2025, the OIG took action in 161 matters:

Preliminary Investigations	19 opened 16 closed 8 converted (2 IGs, 4 Referrals, 2 Reviews)
Investigative Assistance ⁹	3 opened 3 closed
Investigations	3 opened 6 closed 2 converted (2 Referrals)
Reviews	4 opened 3 closed
Referrals	113 matters referred 100 to Toll Ops - Customer Service 10 to various Tollway departments 0 to other State Agencies 3 to Law Enforcement
Declined	19 matters

As of August 31, 2025, the following matters were pending¹⁰:

Preliminary Investigations	7
Investigative Assistance	0
Investigations	5
Reviews	8

⁹ On October 1, 2017, the I-Pass Privacy Policy was revised, and responsibility for responding to law enforcement subpoena requests for Tollway records transitioned from the OIG to the Legal Department.

¹⁰ These numbers include carry-over from the previous reporting period.

REPORTS OF FINDINGS

Summary Reports of Investigation detailing sustained findings and/or recommendations for corrective action are submitted to the Board Chair, the Executive Director, the Board of Directors, and appropriate department managers. Summary reports resulting in discipline of more than 3 days are publicly released in redacted form on the OIG website after the discipline has been finalized.

The OIG also issues Management Advisory Reports to the Board Chair, the Executive Director, the Board of Directors, and appropriate department managers, which describe operational concerns observed by the OIG in the course of its activities.

There were no recommended administrative actions or matters submitted for consideration to the Governor or the General Assembly during this period.

The following are summaries of four Summary Reports of Investigations with recommendations issued during this period, and responses to those recommendations.

SUMMARY REPORTS OF INVESTIGATION

IG-22-006

An OIG investigation established reasonable cause to find that Tollway and contractor personnel collectively failed to ensure that PA systems installed during construction of two Tollway maintenance facilities (M sites) were fully operational, and failed to facilitate a meaningful knowledge transfer or training on those systems for appropriate Tollway personnel.

OIG's investigation determined that, despite nearly identical contract specifications, the systems installed at each M site are very different, and both systems suffered problems either due to equipment issues or operational deficiencies, such that neither system could be used to their full capacity.

OIG recommended that the Tollway review its contract management protocols for vertical construction projects, and further recommended that the Tollway establish a closeout process for such projects to document that buildings and assets meet contract specifications and are in working order. OIG also recommended meaningful training for appropriate Tollway maintenance personnel so that the Tollway can adjust, operate, and maintain all of the essential components, including the PA systems.

Response

The response was expected on June 24, 2025, and received June 23, 2025.

The Tollway agreed with the findings and identified several actions being taken to further enhance the oversight of facility improvement projects and reinforce the vertical construction process, including:

1. The Tollway Construction Manager's (CM) Manual will update staffing requirements to include a Vertical/Building Site Representative role with associated minimum qualifications to ensure that the CM has expertise that aligns with the project scope.
2. The CM Manual will include a Vertical/Building Checklist to ensure that work is coordinated with appropriate staff from other Tollway departments and that procedures clearly specified for testing, training and acceptance.
3. Tollway Engineering will add key vertical project topics to its annual workshops to provide training for industry and Construction Managers.
4. PA System Specifications on future projects will update the acceptable manufacturers list, and include more explicit requirements for final system acceptance, user training deliverables, and speech intelligibility performance.

IG-24-006

OIG initiated an investigation after learning that an employee had been suspended in August 2024 for actions that violated Tollway policies including driving their Illinois Toll Highway Authority (Tollway)-issued vehicle without permission to an off-duty retirement party, consuming alcohol at the party, and then driving that Tollway vehicle to their residence after the party. The investigation established reasonable cause to find that the disciplinary decision was based on incomplete information, because it failed to account for the employee's prior instances of unapproved off-duty vehicle use that they also did not record on the Vehicle Use Log, and other policy violations.

OIG recommended that the Tollway review the additional evidence discovered during this investigation to determine if other disciplinary or administrative action was appropriate.

In addition, OIG recommended that the Tollway remind employees and supervisors of the duty to promptly report misconduct to OIG, especially where interviews and

detailed evaluation of records is necessary for a complete understanding of the incident and a meaningful disciplinary assessment.

Response

The response was expected and received on June 20, 2025.

The Tollway reported that, after a thorough review of the information provided by the OIG, the recommendation was made to terminate the employee. The Tollway subsequently provided documentation that the termination was effective June 27, 2025.

The Tollway also agreed with OIG recommendations and now requires supervisors and managers to consult with Administration to determine if suspected misconduct is complex and should be referred to the OIG.

Finally, the Tollway committed to remind all staff to safely operate Tollway vehicles and follow all Tollway vehicle use procedures.

IG-24-007

OIG initiated an investigation to determine if provisions of the Tollway's Report of Arrest or Indictment policy (Arrest Reporting policy) had been satisfied following the conclusion of a criminal case involving an Equipment Operator Laborer (EOL). The Arrest Reporting policy requires employees not only to report certain arrests within three days but also to report the outcome of the criminal matter and provide documentation, within three days. As noted in previous OIG reports, this policy is essential because it promotes the safety of Tollway employees and the public and allows the Tollway to conduct an individualized assessment to determine the continued suitability of their employment. In order to complete a meaningful assessment, the Tollway needs complete and accurate information in a timely manner.

In this case, the employee timely reported their October 2022 off duty arrest for Driving under the Influence of Alcohol (DUI) to Tollway Administration. But the Tollway never received timely or complete information about the outcome of the case in March 2024. This investigation also found that the Tollway did not have a reliable mechanism to ensure that criminal case outcomes are fully and timely reported.

OIG recommended that the Tollway ensure that all involved departments understand their role in the reporting process and encourage collaboration and communication. One step would be to establish a point of contact for questions about court proceedings so that departments can track court dates and follow up with employees as needed.

Next, OIG recommended that the Tollway develop a separate electronic form for employees to report outcomes of criminal proceedings, including any sentencing information.

Finally, OIG recommended that the Tollway assign responsibility to specific individuals to follow up on arrests and final court outcomes.

Response

The response was expected on July 16, 2025, and received on July 15, 2025.

The Tollway agreed with the findings and reported that it will take the following steps to improve the Arrest reporting process.

1. Tollway Administration will work with department chiefs to establish points of contact in each department for court documentation tracking and follow up.
2. Tollway Administration has created a new electronic form to allow employees to report the outcomes of criminal proceedings, and upload all court documentation including their final court disposition paperwork.
3. Tollway Administration has established the Deputy Chief of HR Administration as the point person to follow up all arrest and court documentation including final case disposition documentation.

IG-25-006

An OIG investigation established reasonable cause to find that a Customer Service Representative falsified their Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave request and fraudulently requested, accepted, and used FMLA leave, in violation of Tollway policy. Specifically, in January and March 2025, the employee requested and received approval for intermittent FMLA leave from January through July 2025, to care for a family member, who they verbally told the Tollway's third-party FMLA administrator was their spouse. The Tollway suspected misuse based a variety of factors, placed the employee on suspension pending investigation, and reported the concerns to the OIG.

OIG found no records showing that person requiring assistance was the employee's spouse or an immediate family member. In an OIG interview, the employee claimed they considered themselves married to the person, but acknowledged that they were not legally married, nor did they live together. Further, the employee did not know what that person did for a living. In addition, the employee could not describe the care provided, and could "not recall" if they left the country on days for which they sought FMLA leave.

OIG's investigation found that the employee was untruthful and abused the Tollway's Leave policy in multiple ways: (1) they requested and used intermittent FMLA leave to care for an individual who is not a family member, as defined by FMLA, (2) they did not use their FMLA leave for its certified and intended purpose – regularly requesting to use their FMLA leave on Fridays, to extend their weekends, while informing people in their department they were taking their child to the doctor, and (3) they attempted to use FMLA leave to vacation outside the country, providing no advance notice to their department of their trip.

In addition to violating Tollway policies, the employee's improper actions created staffing issues, undermined morale of other staff, and adversely impacted the Tollway's ability to provide customer service.

OIG recommended that the Tollway issue discipline up to and including termination. OIG also recommended that, in accordance with U.S. Department of Labor guidance, the Tollway consider requiring that employees provide written certification or documentation of a family relationship when seeking FMLA approval.

Response

The response was expected and received on August 29, 2025.

The Tollway agreed with the findings and reported that, following its review of the OIG report, it determined that there were sufficient grounds to terminate the employee. The Tollway mailed a Loudermill letter to the employee advising that their termination was under consideration for policy violations that were set forth. The employee was given seven business days to respond. The employee responded with an email notice of resignation. Administration processed the termination as a resignation effective August 20, 2025, and added the employee to the Do Not Rehire list because of their egregious behavior.

The Tollway also reported that the third-party FMLA administrator is developing a new certification form.

MANAGEMENT REFERRALS

RF-25-084

OIG sent a management referral following an investigation into the outside employment for an EOL who had inconsistently reported a family farm as outside employment. OIG confirmed that the farm is still operating and has been registered as an LLC since 2019.

The employee told OIG that they did not think that they needed to report the farm as outside employment and said that their current manager agreed. The employee was shown the October 2024 Ethics Newsletter regarding outside employment that was sent to all staff via email, which clearly states that LLCs should be reported as outside employment. The employee claimed they had never seen this newsletter and that their work does not require them to use a computer.

OIG advised the employee to contact the Ethics Officer and complete the Outside Employment form, which they did.

OIG recommended that the Tollway ensure that all employees know how to sign into their Tollway accounts, and that supervisors set aside time for them to check their Tollway email on a regular basis to ensure that they have access to valuable information.

OIG also recommended that maintenance site managers and supervisors include Ethics Newsletter information in their monthly meetings with subordinates, and encourage them to contact the Tollway Ethics Officer if they have questions.

Response

The response was expected on July 1, 2025, and received on June 25, 2025.

The Tollway agreed with the OIG recommendations and committed to taking the following steps:

1. Roadway Maintenance managers will ensure that all staff are provided time to login to their Tollway email accounts. Due to the nature of the EOL role, this is not always feasible on a daily basis, but time will be allocated.
2. The Tollway Ethics Officer currently works with the Roadway Maintenance managers to get the monthly Ethics Newsletters posted at the M-sites. The Tollway Ethics Officer will copy the Administration Department on these monthly newsletter emails.

3. Roadway Maintenance managers will include Ethics Newsletters into their regular monthly meetings. They will also include any recent Tollway updated information that was shared via email to ensure M-site staff is updated appropriately.
4. The October 2025 monthly Ethics Newsletter will focus on the annual outside employment reporting requirement. All Tollway employees must complete the outside employment reporting task in NeoGov, which will be available starting November 1, 2025. This task provides all employees with the definition of outside employment and requires them to acknowledge whether they have outside employment.

RF-25-134

On May 14, 2025, OIG received an anonymous complaint that an EOL assigned to an M site was missing afternoon shift radio traffic from Tollway dispatch, because they were going to the parking lot after clocking in to see their friend, who worked the day shift. OIG reviewed camera footage from the facility and identified four (4) instances out of six (6) consecutive workdays where the EOL left the building after clocking in to conduct personal business and then returned to the building. OIG referred the matter to Engineering for their review and action as appropriate.

Response

The response was expected on July 8, 2025, and received on July 3, 2025.

The Tollway reported that no radio traffic from dispatch was missed during these periods, and the EOL was issued a verbal warning and advised to refrain from conducting personal business while on the clock.

RF-25-121

OIG sent a referral to the Engineering department about concerns that some maintenance managers and supervisors were operating Tollway take home vehicles in an unsafe manner. In the course of investigating a patron complaint about a vehicle operated by a now-retired manager, OIG obtained Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) records for a three month period in 2025 for supervisory staff with assigned vehicles. This data showed that this manager and other supervisory staff drove their assigned vehicles in excess of 85 miles per hour on numerous occasions.

OIG noted that these employees sometimes need to respond quickly to emergency incidents, but they also need to drive safely, and many of the incidents identified seemed to occur during commuting.

OIG recommended that the Tollway remind employees that during commutes or non-emergency situations, they should obey the speed limit (especially in construction zones), drive courteously, and treat Tollway patrons with respect. When responding to emergency events, drivers should ensure that they activate their emergency lights and operate the vehicle safely as conditions require.

In addition, OIG recommended additional training for managers and employees on the AVL and Synovia tracking systems, and require regular AVL record checks to ensure safe operation of Tollway vehicles.

Response

The response was expected on July 10, 2025, and received on July 8, 2025.

Engineering reported that supervisors spoke with those identified to highlight the safety concerns driving at these speeds pose and remind them that, though their roles involve traveling to an accident scene, and to restore the lanes to safe driving conditions, it is to be done with extreme caution, and travelling at excessively high speeds is counterproductive, and unacceptable. Staff were cautioned that their vehicle logs and AVL will be reviewed at shorter intervals, and any other violation of this nature will be met with discipline.

Engineering also reported that it had requested that the Fleet Department provide a monthly speed report for review by the Chief of Maintenance & Traffic. In addition, all staff with a personally assigned vehicle - take home, operational, or otherwise - received an email reminding them of the importance of safe vehicle operation and following the Tollway Vehicle Policy Manual. Finally, Engineering will provide additional training for staff on the AVL and the Synovia monitoring systems.

RF-25-168

OIG received a patron complaint about a Tollway vehicle that made an unexpected U-turn in front of their vehicle almost causing an accident. OIG identified the driver assigned to the vehicle and obtained AVL records, which showed the vehicle made a "hard deceleration" and used a cross-over to change direction of travel. OIG referred the matter to Engineering for their review and action as appropriate.

Response

The response was expected and received on August 29, 2025.

Engineering noted that Tollway policy provides that drivers should exercise extreme caution when using crossovers, and noted that it could find no documentation of an emergency at that time and location. The driver acknowledged using the cross over on the highway but could not recall why they did so. The driver was given a written warning for violating Tollway policy. In addition, Engineering reported that the appropriate use of Crossovers and Turnarounds will be included in the 2025 Snow & Ice meetings to be held at all garage locations.

RF-25-180

OIG received a complaint about a Tollway vehicle failing to allow a patron to merge onto the Tollway. The patron provided the vehicle number and photographs. OIG identified the assigned driver as a custodial worker and obtained AVL records showing the vehicle was in the area at the time. OIG referred the matter to Fleet and Facilities for their review and action as appropriate.

Response

The response was expected and received on September 10, 2025.

The Tollway reported that the employee was questioned, but said they had no recollection of the event. The employee also stated they typically drive in the far-right lane which is normally the slower lane of traffic. AVL records indicate the employee was driving below the speed limit around the time and location of the incident.

Management reminded the employee about safe driving practices and their responsibility as a Tollway employee to always follow the rules of the road and be courteous. Management also instructed the employee that they should call immediately if any abnormal incidents happen while driving.

UPDATES ON PRIOR MATTERS

RF-24-103

In the last Semi-Annual Report, OIG reported that the Tollway had terminated an employee after reviewing materials provided by the OIG relating to that employee's indictment for various felonies including Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) fraud. That indictment arose from an OIG referral to the Illinois Attorney General.

On September 10, 2025, the employee plead guilty to a Class 1 felony charge of theft of government property, and was sentenced to 24 months of second chance probation, and ordered to pay nearly \$50,000 in restitution.

SUMMARY OF OTHER ACTIVITY

In addition to the activities described above, the Inspector General and OIG staff have engaged in other related projects, including:

- Published one Summary Report of Investigation on the Inspector General page of the Illinois Tollway website.
- OIG staff participated in 12 on-boarding sessions for new Tollway employees to introduce and describe the OIG's role and to emphasize the Tollway's expectation of, and commitment to integrity for all employees, officials, and vendors.
- OIG staff virtually attended the 2025 Association of Certified Fraud Examiners *Government Anti-Fraud Summit* and attended other professional training provided by the local and national chapters of the Association of Inspectors General.
- OIG staff participated in the Contracting with Government event in May.
- OIG staff completed all nine mandatory State and Tollway trainings prior to the June 30 deadline.
- Regular engagement with Tollway stakeholders, including the Board Chair, Executive, Ethics, and Internal Audit staff to promote integrity and ethics initiatives.