

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



ITEM: 2.4
(ID # 18353)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, March 08, 2022

FROM : AUDITOR CONTROLLER:

SUBJECT: AUDITOR-CONTROLLER: Internal Audit Report 2022-012: Riverside County Department of Waste Resources Audit [District: All]; [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and file Internal Audit Report 2022-012: Riverside County Department of Waste Resources Audit

ACTION:Consent

Tanya Harris
Tanya Harris, Assistant Auditor Controller 2/16/2022

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0
SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A			Budget Adjustment:	No
			For Fiscal Year:	n/a

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve.

BACKGROUND:

Summary

In accordance with Board of Supervisors Resolution 83-338, we audited the Department of Waste Resources to provide management and the Board of Supervisors with an independent assessment of internal controls over landfill payment collection process and purchasing process.

Our conclusion and details of our audit are documented in the body of this audit report.

Please audit report for the results.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

Provide an assessment of internal controls over the audited areas.

Additional Fiscal Information

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS:

A: Riverside County Auditor-Controller's Office - Internal Audit Report 2022-012: Riverside County Department of Waste Resources Audit

Internal Audit Report 2022-012

**Riverside County
Department of Waste Resources Audit**

Report Date: March 1, 2022



**Office of Paul Angulo, CPA, MA
Riverside County Auditor-Controller
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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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**Paul Angulo, CPA, MA
Riverside County Auditor-Controller**

**Tanya S. Harris, DPA, CPA
Assistant Auditor-Controller**

March 1, 2022

Hans Kernkamp
General Manager-Chief Engineer
Riverside County Department of Waste Resources
14310 Frederick Street
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

**Subject: Internal Audit Report 2022-012: Riverside County Department of Waste
Resources Audit**

Dear Mr. Kernkamp:

In accordance with Board of Supervisors Resolution 83-338, we audited the Department of Waste Resources to provide management and the Board of Supervisors with an independent assessment of internal controls over landfill payment collection process and purchasing process.

We conducted our audit in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, reliable, relevant and useful information to provide reasonable assurance that our objective as described above is achieved. An internal audit includes the systematic analysis of information to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of internal controls. We believe this audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusion.

Internal controls are processes designed to provide management reasonable assurance of achieving efficiency of operations, compliance with laws and regulations, and reliability of financial and non-financial information. Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining adequate internal controls. Our responsibility is to evaluate the internal controls.

Our conclusion and details of our audit are documented in the body of this audit report.

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Audit**

As requested, in accordance with paragraph III.C of the Board of Supervisors Resolution 83-338, management responded to each reported condition and recommendation contained in our report. Management's responses are included in the report. We will follow-up to verify that management implemented the corrective actions.

Paul Angulo, CPA, MA
Riverside County Auditor-Controller



By: René Casillas, CPA, CRMA
Chief Internal Auditor

cc: Board of Supervisors
Jeff A. Van Wagenen, Jr., County Executive Officer
Grand Jury

**Internal Audit Report 2022-012: Riverside County Department of Waste Resources
Audit**

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Executive Summary

Overview

The Riverside County Department of Waste Resources (Waste Resources) is tasked with the protection of the general public's health and welfare by landfilling non-hazardous waste. The department manages five landfills and has a contract agreement for an additional private landfill. In addition to landfill management, the department provides different services that include recycling, illegal dumping clean up, hazardous waste collection, and graffiti abatement.

Waste Resources has a recommended budget of \$136.7 million for FY 2021-22 and 291 authorized positions. *County of Riverside, Fiscal Year 2021-22 Adopted Budget Volume 1, 337.*

Audit Objective

Our objective is to provide management and the Board of Supervisors with an independent assessment about the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls over landfill payment collection process and purchasing process. Internal controls are processes designed to provide management reasonable assurance of achieving efficiency of operations, compliance with laws and regulations, and reliability of financial and non-financial information. Reasonable assurance recognizes internal controls have inherent limitations, including cost, mistakes, and intentional efforts to bypass internal controls.

Audit Scope and Methodology

We conducted the audit from August 25, 2021, through October 27, 2021, for operations from July 1, 2019, through October 27, 2021. Following a risk-based approach, our scope initially included the following:

- Department Loans Process
- Hauler Agreements
- Landfill Payment Collection Process
- Purchasing Process
- Write offs/Bad Debts Process

Through inquiry, observations, and limited examination of relevant documentation, it was determined through a risk assessment of department loans process, hauler agreements, and write offs of the bad debts process, that the risk exposure to Waste Resources associated with these business processes are well mitigated with internal

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controls and are functioning as designed. Therefore, we focused our audit scope to internal controls over landfill payment collection processes and purchasing processes.

Audit Highlights

Summary of Existing Conditions

- Voided transactions are not approved in real time by designated personnel and segregation of duties were not present for transactions. By having appropriate review and approval for voided transactions it reduces the risk for misappropriation, loss of revenue, and protects the employee from scrutiny.

Summary of Improvement Opportunities

- Ensure voided transactions are reviewed and approved by designated personnel.
- Update the Gate Fee Program Guide for processing voids to including supervisory approval of all voided transactions.

Audit Conclusion

Based upon the results of our audit, we identified opportunities for improvement of internal controls relating to landfill payment collection process. However, we determined Waste Recourses' internal controls over purchasing process provide reasonable assurance that its objectives relating to these areas will be achieved. Reasonable assurance recognizes internal controls have inherent limitations, including costs, mistakes, and intentional efforts to bypass internal controls.

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Landfill Payment Collection Process

Background

Waste Resources operates five landfills throughout Riverside County with an additional private landfill operated through an agreement with a private company. The department generates revenue for operations through gate fees for dumping waste in the landfills.

Gate fees are collected by the Gate Services Assistants (GSA) as customers enter the landfills. Gate fees are collected in four of the landfills and are assessed in accordance with the County of Riverside Board approved rates. Scale tickets are issued to each customer which captures the charge per ton, the type of refuse and location where the refuse originated. The GSAs collect cash, process credit/debit card transactions or customer account number information for deferred accounts. The Oasis Landfill is on a Permit Card system. Customers must complete an application for purchase of a Residential or Commercial Permit Card to use the landfill.

Each transaction processed by the GSAs are verified by office staff daily. Additionally, the office staff reconciles the daily bank deposits and sales cash collected. Reports are issued to capture the revenue collected, tonnage by site, refuse type, number of tickets, and type of customers.

Objective

To determine the existence and adequacy of internal controls over landfill dumping payment collection process.

Audit Methodology

To accomplish these objectives, we:

- Obtained an understanding of county ordinances and applicable standards.
- Conducted interviews and performed walk-throughs with Waste Resources personnel.
- Conducted on-site visits and observations for three landfills.

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- Selected a sample of voided transactions for two landfills.
- Reviewed appropriate levels of management reviews and approvals for voided transactions.

Finding 1: Review and Approval of Voided Transactions

One hundred percent (82 out of 82) of the voided transactions sampled, were not approved in real time by designated personnel and segregation of duties were not in place for voided transactions. Standard Practice Manual 1001, Internal Controls, states, "Authorization and approval: Transactions are authorized by a person assigned approval authority." It further states, "Segregation of duties: Duties are divided or segregated so that no one person has complete control over a key function or authority." Waste Resources relies on employee knowledge and judgement to void transactions. Waste Resources, *Gate Fee Program Guide* does not state procedures for voided transactions to be approved and reviewed by authorized personnel. Gate Services Assistants initiating a transaction should not be able to void its own transaction. If one individual has responsibility for more than one of these duties it weakens the internal controls meant to prevent and monitor against cash misappropriation and loss of revenue.

Recommendation 1.1

Ensure voided transactions are reviewed and approved by designated personnel.

Management's Response

"Partially Concur. Every landfill transaction, including voided transactions, are reviewed and reconciled by Department accounting staff. Every day's landfill tickets are delivered to Gate Fee accounting staff who review every transaction for accuracy and adherence to procedure.

If the Gate Services Assistant (GSA) finds an error on a transaction while the customer is still at the window, they are allowed to void the transaction and rerun it to correct the mistake by performing the following steps:

- Run a replacement ticket, if applicable.

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- Void the ticket in TIDES (Tonnage Information Data Entry System), which is where all transactions are processed, noting the reason and replacement ticket number, if applicable.
- Refund or collect additional monies due from the customer as applicable.
- Give the customer the Customer Copy of the voided transaction confirmation.
- Document the reason for the void and the replacement ticket number on the original ticket.
- Staple the Department Copy of the voided transaction confirmation to the original voided ticket.
- Write the voided transaction number on the Fee Collection Daily Report.
- Place any voided transactions on top of the ticket packet so that they are immediately visible to office staff.
- If the customer has already left the pay window, or for any reason the GSA does not have all three triplicate copies of the original voided ticket, the GSA must contact the on-call Sr. GSA, Gate Fee Program Supervisor, or Program Coordinator for approval prior to voiding the ticket. If unable to reach the aforementioned staff, the GSA must leave a voice mail or email explaining the reason why a void, replacement, or refund was necessary and why the GSA does not have all three copies (customer lost it, blew away, etc.)

Once the daily tickets are received in the office, all tickets, including cash, credit/ debit card, and deferred accounts are reconciled by transaction number, dollar amount, and quantity. Each GSA's cash deposits are verified to their safe deposit receipts and their total cash transactions as shown on their Transaction Detail Report. Credit/debit transactions are compared to the merchant reports and must match the total in the Gate Fee database. Department accounts must match the GSA's account transaction totals in Gate Fee. Because all tickets are sequentially numbered, during the audit of the day's tickets, accounting staff are able to determine if there are any missing tickets. The audit process also includes review of each voided transaction to confirm voided tickets were validated (reason for void noted on ticket and in the system), replaced by another transaction, or resulted in a credit. Upon completion, the audit/reconciliation process is

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Audit**

reviewed by program management and/or supervisory staff before finalizing in the Gate Fee System.

Although the Department of Waste Resources acknowledges that voided transactions are not approved in real time by supervisory personnel, voided transactions/ ticket errors are investigated for cause and responsible staff are held accountable and subject to discipline if the void/ error is due to negligence and/ or results in financial loss exceeding monthly tolerances or performance measures for that employee defined as follows:

- GSA shall have an average error ratio not greater than 0.1% (\$1.00 in \$1,000.00) per month.
- GSA shall process all customer transactions with an average ticket error ratio not greater than 0.2% (two tickets in 1,000) per month."

Actual/estimated Date of Corrective Action: N/A

Recommendation 1.2

Update *Gate Fee Program Guide* for processing voids to including supervisory approval of all voided transactions.

Management's Response

"**Concur**, The Gate Fee Program Guide was updated on January 5, 2022 to document the process step that was inadvertently omitted in the current version that includes Program Management/Supervisory staff review of voided transactions that occurs when daily tickets are reviewed."

Actual/estimated Date of Corrective Action: January 5, 2022

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Purchasing Process

Background

Riverside County Purchasing and Fleet Services Department is responsible for implementing policies and procedures set forth in the Riverside County *Purchasing Policy Manual* (September 1, 2016). The Director of Purchasing is the Purchasing Agent for Riverside County and can delegate his/her authority to Riverside County staff with limitations that vary depending on the level of authority granted. See Table A for a summary of delegation of purchasing authority.

Table A: Summary of Delegation of Purchasing Authority

Position	Purchase Order Authority	PO's Against PeopleSoft Contracts
Low Value Purchase Authority (LVPA)	\$5,000 per day per vendor	\$25,000 per day per vendor
Buyer I	\$25,000 per day per vendor	\$100,000 per day per vendor
Buyer II	\$50,000 per day per vendor	\$100,000 per day per vendor

Purchasing authority limitations will vary depending on whether purchases are made against county contracted vendors and non-county contracted vendors. "County staff may be granted low value purchase authority upon successful completion of required training. Low value purchase authority allows departmental staff the ability to issue purchase orders up to the amount of \$5,000 per day per vendor and issues purchase orders up the dollar value of \$25,000 against existing PeopleSoft contracts" (*Purchasing Manual, September 2016*).

Expenditures of \$5,000 or greater, require county departments to obtain a minimum of three written quotes from potential vendors to ensure the best use of taxpayer dollars. The *Purchasing Policy Manual* describes the splitting of purchase orders as follows, "Deliberate attempts to split orders, where the purpose is keeping total cost of each order down below bid limits, and failure to combine orders when practical for the best interest of the county in order to circumvent the limitations, is prohibited and may result in disciplinary actions reduced or suspended purchasing authority.

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Objective

To verify the existence and adequacy of controls over department expenditures.

Audit Methodology

To accomplish these objectives, we:

- Obtained an understanding of county procurements policies and procedures.
- Interviewed key personnel regarding procurement expenditure processes.
- Obtained a listing of all expenditures for Waste Resources during the review period of the audit to analyze and identify split purchase orders.
- Obtained a listing of all Waste Resources staff with delegated purchasing authority.
- Analyzed department expenditure data for the audit period to identify instances of split purchase orders at the \$5,000 and \$25,000 limitations.

Finding: None Noted

Based upon the results of our audit, we determined internal controls over purchasing processes provide reasonable assurance that its objective related to this area will be achieved.