

News Release

County Employee Arrested

A Miami-Dade County employee who worked for the Department of Solid Waste Management was arrested today as a result of an investigation conducted by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Miami-Dade County State Attorney's Office. He is charged with twenty-three counts of Official Misconduct and one count of Grand Theft. Vaughn K Cooper, age 43, a Miami-Dade County resident, is a Waste Truck Driver. He has been a county employee for over twenty-years.

According to an affidavit filed by a Special Agent of the Office of Inspector General, from January 1, 2003 through April 27, 2003, Cooper falsified twenty-three payroll timesheets to reflect that he worked 230 hours of overtime, when, in fact, he did not work any overtime. Based upon the twenty-three timesheets he submitted, Miami-Dade County paid Cooper \$5,950.20 in unearned overtime income. Cooper's fraudulent activities came to light when a supervisor grew suspicious of his overtime claims. These concerns were referred to the OIG by the Solid Waste Management Department.

Inspector General Christopher Mazzella stressed that payroll fraud at any level must be prosecuted because it has a terrible demoralizing impact on honest public employees. Mr. Mazzella also commended the Solid Waste Management Department for its scrutiny of overtime claims and for promptly referring this case to the OIG.

His bond is recommended at \$10,000.

Copies of the arrest warrant and supporting affidavit are available at the Inspector General's Office, Suite 220, 19 West Flagler Street, telephone number (305) 375-1946 or at the State Attorney's Office, c/o Ed Griffith, 1350 N.W. 12th Avenue, Miami, Florida, telephone (305) 547-0535.