



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

July 7, 2014

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS, CORRECTIONS SERVICES

Twelve weapons and 39 bulletproof vests assigned to personnel at the state's probation and parole office and five prisons cannot be found, according to a report on the Department of Public Safety and Corrections released Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera.

The report on the department's Corrections Services said that all 12 weapons and 16 of the 39 vests were listed as "unlocated" by the probation and parole office between 2010 and 2013. The other 23 vests could not be located at five of the state prisons.

Nine vests were listed as "unlocated" at Dixon Correctional Institute near Jackson between 2011 and 2014; five each were listed as "unlocated" at the state Correctional Institute for Women at St. Gabriel and at Wade Correctional Center in Homer; three could not be found at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola; and one could not be located at Hunt Correctional Center in St. Gabriel.

"Weapons and bulletproof vests should be adequately monitored to safeguard against loss or theft, and an emphasis should be placed on locating these items reported as "unlocated" to prevent improper use," the report said. "Management should devote additional efforts to locating weapons and bulletproof vests reported as unlocated."

Corrections Department Secretary Jimmy LeBlanc said in his response to the state auditor's report that of a total inventory of 5,261 "sensitive items" assigned to his agency, the report "represents 51 reported instances of unlocated items over a four-year period or 0.24 percent."

LeBlanc said 28 of the 51 items were reported to local officials "and in instances where the items stolen are weapons," the corrections department used a national crime database to provide law enforcement "identifying information on the weapons." He said many of the stolen items were taken from unmarked vehicles driven by Probation and Parole agents while parked in "some of the higher-crime areas of our communities."

LeBlanc said his agency is researching the possibility of installing gun lock boxes in Probation and Parole agents' vehicles to better secure the weapons. He also said the department has revised the property control procedures to do quarterly audits of "all sensitive items."



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The state auditor also said that corrections services does not “have a procedure in place to notify the legislative auditor and the district attorney of misappropriations” as state law requires. The report pointed out that auditors found three separate police reports filed with local law enforcement agencies between November 2012 and February 2013 “involving three firearms, a bulletproof vest, miscellaneous equipment, and bullets.”

The firearms and vest were valued at \$1,400, according to the report. None of the thefts was reported to the auditor.

In the department’s response, officials said the thefts were not “an intentional act of misuse” by an agency employee and, therefore, “does not believe the assets to have been misappropriated.” The auditor did not agree with this interpretation of the law.

For more information, contact:

Daryl G. Purpera, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor
225-339-3800

On Twitter: Twelve weapons, 39 bulletproof vests can’t be located at state’s probation and parole office, prisons.