



Memorandum



Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General
A State of Florida Commission on Law Enforcement Accredited Agency
601 NW 1st Court ♦ South Tower, 22nd Floor ♦ Miami, Florida 33136
Phone: (305) 375-1946 ♦ Fax: (305) 579-2656
Visit our website at: www.miamidadeig.org

To: The Honorable Daniella Levine Cava, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
The Honorable Anthony Rodriguez, Chairman
and Members, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County

From: Felix Jimenez, Inspector General 

Date: September 22, 2025

Subject: Three Water and Sewer Department (WASD) Employees Arrested in Schemes to Steal WASD Scrap Metal, Ref. IG22-0017-I

A joint investigation by the Miami-Dade County Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office (MDSO), and the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, culminated today in the arrest of two pipefitters and a pipefitter supervisor, all three current WASD employees. The employees, Joel Saud, Juan Carlos de los Santos, and Richard Tamarez, were arrested for the theft of scrap metal generated on the job. Instead of turning the scrap into the County's scrap metal recycling program, the employees sold it to private recycling companies by falsely claiming to be the rightful owners. Legitimate WASD scrap metal sales managed through the County's People and Internal Operations Department has generated over \$260,000 over the last four years. The thefts by the three employees took place from various WASD jobsites over the course of years. The investigation found no evidence that they were working together in their individual schemes.

The recycling of certain scrap metals is closely regulated in the State of Florida, and recycling companies are required to keep detailed records of recycling transactions. These records include photos of the metal offered for recycling, photos of the customer conducting the transaction, retention of the customer's identifying information, etc. After receiving a tip that a county employee was illegally recycling county scrap, the OIG—with the assistance of WASD administration and MDSO—ran the names of over 50 WASD employees with similar access to scrap metal. Based on the results of that search further investigation was conducted resulting in the arrests today.

The investigation found the following about each WASD employee's transactions:

- Joel Saud, a Pipefitter Supervisor, conducted 101 illegal recycling transactions while working as a Senior Meter Technician from 2019 through 2023 and netted over \$17,000.
- Juan Carlos De Los Santos, a Pipefitter, conducted 15 illegal recycling transactions from 2020 through 2022 and netted over \$2,000.
- Richard Tamarez, a Pipefitter, conducted 8 illegal recycling transactions from 2018 through 2022 and netted over \$4,000.

The charges against the employees include second- and third-degree felony crimes: Organized Scheme to Defraud, Dealing in Stolen Property, and Violations of Florida's Secondary Metals Recyclers Act. Based upon the degree of crime, each crime carries a statutory maximum sentence of 5 or 15 years in prison.

The OIG appreciates the assistance of WASD and the OIG's law enforcement partners, the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office and State Attorney's Office.

cc: Honorable Katherine Fernandez Rundle, State Attorney
Rosie Cordero-Stutz, Sheriff
Roy Coley, Chief Utilities & Regulatory Services Officer, Office of the Mayor
Jay Fink, Director, Water and Sewer Department
Raymond Hall, Director, People and Internal Operations, Department
Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney
Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney, County Attorney's Office
Jess M. McCarty, Executive Assistant, County Attorney's Office
Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor, Office of Commission Auditor
Ofelia Tamayo, Director, Internal Compliance Department
Ignacio J. Vazquez, Jr., Executive Director, Commission on Ethics and Public Trust
Basia Pruna, Director, Clerk of the Board