

September 8, 2025

Caryl Brzymialkiewicz
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 4428
Washington, DC 20240

Re: National Park Service is Violating Its Own Property Regulations

Dear Acting Inspector General Brzymialkiewicz:

I am writing to request that your office review multiple instances of the National Park Service (NPS) violating its own regulations during its sweeps of homeless encampments in the Washington DC metro area last month. Specifically, NPS appears to have violated the requirements found at 36 CFR § 2.22 which govern the impoundment, disposition, and disposal of property left by visitors and others in national park units during these operations.

News reports (see e.g., *In Trump's DC Crackdown, the National Park Service Leads Homeless Sweeps*, Bloomberg News, August 22, 2025) and eyewitness accounts have reported that encampment clearings in mid-August were conducted solely by the NPS without any social service coordination. NPS just scooped up all belongings of unattended encampments and tossed them in the garbage trucks. No inventory and safeguarding of belongings took place. Valuable documents were tossed also. We understand a total of 85 encampments were recently removed by the NPS.

In August 2025, NPS employees and US Park Police (USPP) officers were directed by senior management officials to remove a large number of encampments of homeless persons in national park units in Washington DC. Although this work was carried out as part of a broader effort by the Trump administration to “beautify” the city, it is nonetheless governed by NPS regulations found at 36 CFR 2.22 and General Services Administration regulations found at Title 41 Code of Federal Regulations.

The NPS regulations permit the NPS to remove immediately unattended property that threatens health, safety, and visitor enjoyment. This complaint addresses the illegal actions taken by the NPS upon removing the property found at the encampments and immediately disposing of the property in garbage trucks and dumpsters, specifically:

The NPS Violated 36 CFR § 2.22 (b)

The NPS should have impounded the property as required by the regulations and inventoried it. Further, the property should have been safeguarded and efforts made to identify the owners. The NPS failed to do so.

The NPS Violated 36 CFR § 2.22 (c)

The NPS should have held the property for 60 days as required by the regulations so that the owner could claim important items. This is especially important for homeless persons who often keep important papers in their shelter. The NPS failed to do so.

The NPS Violated GSA Regulations Found at Title 41 of the CFR

The NPS failed to dispose of the property legally. After the 60-day-time period, the property is considered to be abandoned. 36 CFR 2.22 (c) requires the NPS to dispose of the abandoned property in accordance with Title 41 of the CFR. The NPS failed to do so.

By this letter, I am requesting that your office review this matter to determine:

1. Which official(s) ordered the manner in which the seized property was handled and whether that person(s) were aware of the legal requirements for impounding and inventorying seized property.
2. Precisely what arrangements were made for disposal of the seized property who made these arrangements and was that person(s) authorized to do so.
3. What steps should the NPS and USPP take to ensure legal compliance in similar future operations,

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Timothy Whitehouse
Executive Director