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**Short days for some inspectors;
RISKY RIDE / A SPECIAL REPORT Reporters David Armstrong and Shelley
Murphy and photographer John C. Tlumacki contributed to this article.**

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At the same time that thousands of elevators and escalators in Massachusetts are going uninspected and thousands of others are not repaired, some of the state employees responsible for those jobs are working half days or less.

Some spend a few hours checking elevators or doing paperwork in the office, then head for home around noon, according to a Globe surveillance of several inspectors. Others run errands or putter around the house during work hours.

Many inspectors perform their work diligently, but state records show a wide variance among inspectors. Some complete as many as 700 inspections a year, while others do half that number.

However, Globe observations made during the past three months and interviews with inspectors and their bosses show that work schedules are loose and supervision is lax.

In fact, no one in the state Department of Public Safety ever knows if the 31 people responsible for inspecting elevators and escalators are on the job.

Yet one of their bosses says the inspectors are "way overworked."

Public Safety Commissioner Larry F. Giordano, who resigned unexpectedly on Friday, has been pressing the Weld administration and the Legislature for more inspectors. He said he was angry to be told that some current inspectors, who make about \$ 40,000 a year, do not always put in full workdays.

"I don't know how I'm going to explain that I need money for more inspectors if the ones I do have aren't working full days," Giordano said. "I'll have to look closely at this."

Giordano says it is impossible to develop a system that would keep track of every hour the inspectors work. "We can't be watching everyone," he said.

However, the system now in place actually reduces oversight of their work.

The inspectors' schedule is determined by inspection requests from companies that maintain elevators. Although the state is required to inspect elevators annually, if the maintenance company doesn't ask for an examination, the job never gets done.

An inspection can take less than an hour, and if a company - as it often does - schedules just one or two examinations a day, the inspector can be done with his work well before lunch.

Giordano and Charles Murphy, the department's No. 2 inspector, said all inspectors are required to work eight hours

a day. If they finish their work before 5 p.m., Murphy said, they have been instructed to check elevators that they had previously cited for violations to make sure that the ordered changes were made.

Yet none of the department's four satellite offices, where the bulk of the inspectors are stationed, are staffed with supervisors. The only check on the inspectors' work is a report each must file every 15 days listing the addresses and types of elevators they have examined daily. However, the form does not require the inspector to disclose what time he began his work or what time he ended for the day.

In an earlier interview, Murphy defended the inspectors' performance. "I'd say they're way overworked," he said. Like Giordano, Murphy maintained there are too few inspectors. Giordano insists that under no circumstances should inspectors work less than eight hours a day. "There should be no reason for any of these men to be spending any time at their homes during the workday," he said.

Yet in an interview last week, inspector George K. Dahlquist estimated he spends at least 20 percent of his workday at his Billerica home because of scheduling gaps.

Dahlquist spent several workday hours at home on a Tuesday in late October when his activities were observed by the Globe. In his work diary, Dahlquist wrote that he inspected two elevators at 40 Broad St. in downtown Boston that day. Dahlquist was unable to say what time he did the inspections, but admitted that the job would have taken him "a couple of hours max."

Dahlquist was seen leaving his house shortly after noon and driving a motorcycle to the state office building at One Ashburton Place where the inspection section is located. Around 2:30 p.m., Dahlquist got back on his motorcycle and headed home.

Three other inspectors observed by the Globe spent much of their workdays at home. They included:

Richard J. Eckler - Assigned to inspect elevators in southeastern Massachusetts, Eckler works out of the Taunton office and is supposed to work behind the desk there every Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to take calls from the public and do paperwork, according to Murphy. However, the secretary at the Taunton office told callers looking for Eckler on several occasions recently that his Friday hours were 8 a.m. to noon.

In fact, those turned out to be about the hours that Eckler stayed at the Taunton office on three Fridays in October and November. After lunch on all three days, Eckler drove to his Canton home, where he remained most of the afternoon. On several occasions, Eckler left the house to shop at local stores.

Eckler declined to comment.

Eckler also put in a shortened workday on a Tuesday in late September. He inspected two elevators in a Brockton apartment complex for about two hours in the morning. Shortly after 10 a.m., he left the complex and spent the next hour shopping at Cirelli Foods in Brockton and Costco Warehouse in Avon. He got home at 11:25 a.m. and stayed there for several hours. His work diary shows he did no other inspections that day.

Thomas Condon - On Monday, Nov. 14, Condon was picked up at his Dorchester apartment at 7:30 a.m. by a supervisor for Otis Elevator Co. and spent the next several hours inspecting an elevator, according to Condon's work reports, at a Kenmore Square office building. But shortly after 11 a.m., the Otis supervisor dropped off Condon at his apartment, apparently ending his work for the day.

Around noon, Condon left his apartment and drove to South Boston. He dropped into a convenience store at O Street and Broadway, then drove toward Castle Island and parked along the access road.

Nearly an hour later, Condon returned to his apartment, stopping first at Edwards Food Warehouse on Morrissey Boulevard in Dorchester, where he spent more than half an hour shopping. By 2 p.m., he was back at his apartment.

In an interview last week, Condon said he could not recall any details of Nov. 14. Asked about the Globe's observation of his workday, Condon said: "I'd disagree with you because that's not my nature to work less than eight hours a day. But my memory isn't the best to begin with, so I don't know."

Joseph Steen - In early October, Steen left his Wilmington home shortly after 9 a.m. and arrived for an inspection of elevators at Wellesley Manor Nursing home in Wellesley. He left the nursing home a half hour later and visited two

buildings in Natick for about 90 minutes. From Natick, he returned to Wilmington, arriving home at noon. Steen remained home for the rest of the afternoon, leaving only for brief jaunts to the Winchester Hospital's family medical center in Wilmington.

A month earlier, on Sept. 12, Steen apparently put in another shortened workday. He started the day by inspecting elevators at Regis College in Weston, a job that took 65 minutes. By 11 a.m., Steen was back home, where he remained the rest of the workday.

Last week Steen said he works "eight hours every day on inspections, construction projects or paperwork."

Asked why he was observed spending little more than an hour at the Regis inspection site and the rest of the time at home, Steen said: "I don't know what happened yesterday. How am I supposed to remember Sept. 12?"

Here's how one state elevator inspector, Richard J. Eckler, spent his day on Sept. 27. He was paid for working eight hours.

8:15 a.m. - Arrives at Brockton's Trinity Village apartment complex, where he joins two maintenance workers from Advanced Elevator Technologies to inspect the elevator at 297 Grove St.

9 a.m. - Leaves apartment building and drives to nearby Dunkin' Donuts, where he joins the two workers for coffee and donuts.

9:50 a.m. - Leaves Dunkin' Donuts and drives to second apartment building in Trinity Village complex. With two maintenance workers, he inspects an elevator at 50 Summer St.

10:15 a.m. - Leaves Summer Street building.

10:26 a.m. - Arrives at Cirelli Foods supermarket in Brockton.

10:35 a.m. - Leaves Cirelli.

10:43 a.m. - Arrives at Costco Warehouse in Avon.

11:10 a.m. - Leaves Costco pushing shopping cart loaded with boxes.

11:25 a.m. - Arrives home in Canton.

2:10 p.m. - Leaves house.

2:20 p.m. - Drives toward Stoughton. Work report shows no more inspections that day.

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GRAPHIC: PHOTO, 1. THOMAS CONDON walks out of Edwards Food Warehouse in Dorchester in the early afternoon of a workday. His work diary shows he inspected one elevator that day. 2. JOSEPH STEEN stands in a natick industrial park where he visted two buildings. Steen returned to his home in Wilmington at noon apparently ending his work for the day. 3. RICHARD ECKLER leaves the Holiday Inn in Taunton after lunch. Eckler then drove to his home in Canton, where he remained most of the afternoon. 4. George Dahlquist, a state elevator inspector, heads for Boston at 12:12 p.m. GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/JOHN TLUMACKI

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