

MILWAUKEE COUNTY AUDIT SERVICES DIVISION

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County IDs: Progress is Being Made, but Work Remains to Strengthen Security

December 2025



MILWAUKEE COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

Liz Sumner, Comptroller

Why We Did This Audit



Concerns were raised during the presentation of our audit report on keycards that similar issues may exist with the County's photo IDs.

The County was in the process of implementing a new ID system during our audit.

Our goal is to help management identify issues that can be addressed during implementation.

The scope of our audit is on the Courthouse Complex and the ID cards which allow for the bypassing of the screening stations.

Public Safety Officers & Screening Stations Recommendations

The Sheriff's Office's Public Safety Officers staff screening stations. We performed onsite testing on three separate dates at the 9th and 10th Street Courthouse entrances. Auditors used methods such as covering the face of their own photo on their ID and using other staff's IDs including IDs of those with different physical attributes such as gender, race, and age.

ASD staff were not stopped by security at any of the screening stations on all three testing dates.

There are policies and procedures for staff, but they do not include guidance on checking if physical attributes match the ID holder. Annual refresher training on screening stations is not currently provided.

Rec. #1 - The Sheriff's Office should include additional direction in its policies or training materials for the screening stations to alert PSO's to review physical attributes of the person presenting the ID to match the ID. Mandatory refresher training should be held for PSO's to align with best practices.

Rec. #2 - The Sheriff's Office should establish a policy and procedures for conducting periodic unannounced testing of the PSO screening stations.

PSOs Top Three Responsibilities



New Pedestal System Recommendation

Facilities plans on implementing a pedestal screening system using funding from the American Rescue Plan Act which would align with the 2021 security assessment recommendations.

The proposed installation of a pedestal system would mitigate several ongoing concerns with the County employee ID system including:

- The difficulty in assessing a small photo on an employee ID.
- The use of an expired ID by a former employee or unauthorized user.
- The use of an ID card to bypass screening at the Courthouse by an ID holder not authorized to do so, such as a vendor who works solely at the Zoo.



Rec. #3 - When the new pedestal system is installed, Facilities and the Sheriff's Office should update relevant policies and procedures within six months of installation.

Phase Two System Data Updates

In 2025, the County began the implementation of its new photo ID system, however, policies and procedures are still under development. Upgrades in the new system include, under Phase One, a daily data export from Dayforce including employee names, clock numbers, department name and job title which eliminates many data issues found in the old ID system.

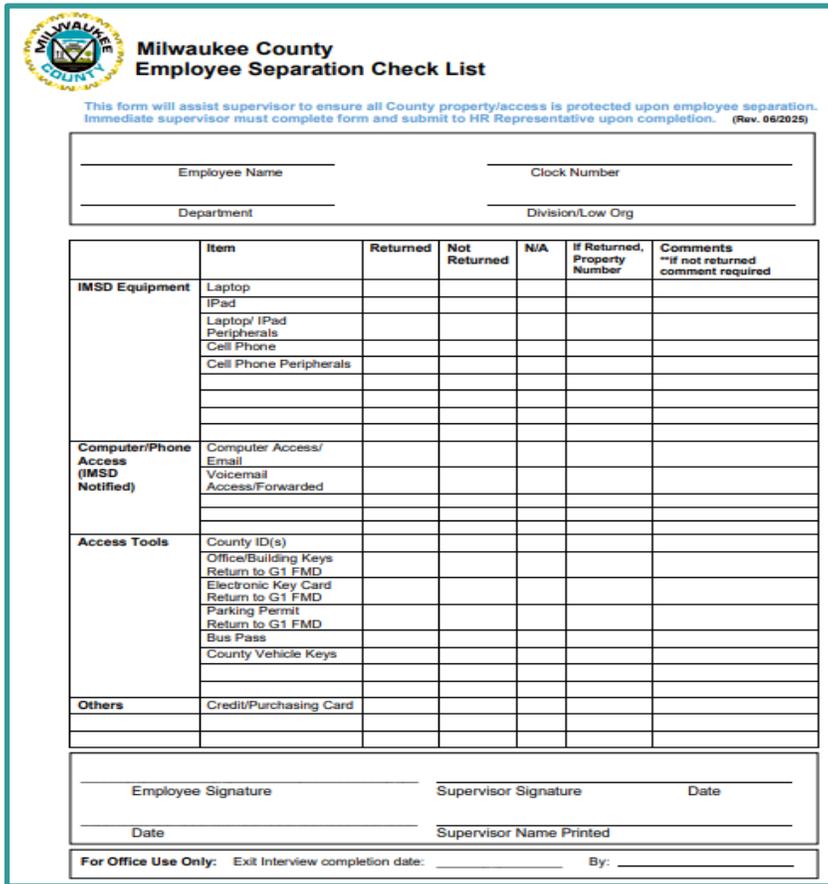
Phase Two, when implemented, will include transfers and separated employees. The deactivation of employees who separate is a crucial step in the ID process and due to the timing of Phase Two we were unable to test this functionality.

Rec. #4 - Upon the final implementation of Phase Two, Facilities should provide the Audit Services Division with documentation that the automatic deactivation of separated employees and updating of transferred employees is occurring as planned.

Rec. #5 - Facilities should develop and document a process to periodically verify that the County's human resources information system data updates are being captured in the new system.

Human Resources Separation Check List Update

Human Resources' policy for separation of employees notes that employee IDs are to be returned to their managers but does not state what departments should do with the collected IDs.



Milwaukee County Employee Separation Check List

This form will assist supervisor to ensure all County property/access is protected upon employee separation. Immediate supervisor must complete form and submit to HR Representative upon completion. (Rev. 08/2025)

Employee Name: _____ Clock Number: _____
 Department: _____ Division/Low Org: _____

	Item	Returned	Not Returned	N/A	If Returned, Property Number	Comments **if not returned comment required
IMSD Equipment	Laptop					
	iPad					
	Laptop/ iPad Peripherals					
	Cell Phone					
	Cell Phone Peripherals					
Computer/Phone Access (IMSD Notified)	Computer Access/Email					
	Voicemail Access/Forwarded					
Access Tools	County ID(s)					
	Office/Building Keys Return to G1 FMD					
	Electronic Key Card Return to G1 FMD					
	Parking Permit Return to G1 FMD					
	Bus Pass					
	County Vehicle Keys					
Others	Credit/Purchasing Card					

Employee Signature: _____ Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Date: _____ Supervisor Name Printed: _____

For Office Use Only: Exit Interview completion date: _____ By: _____

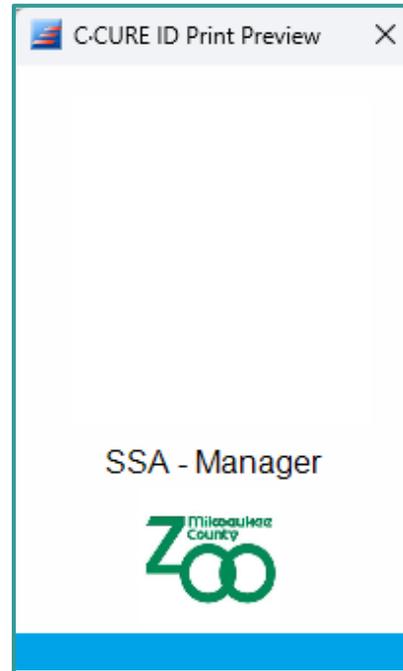
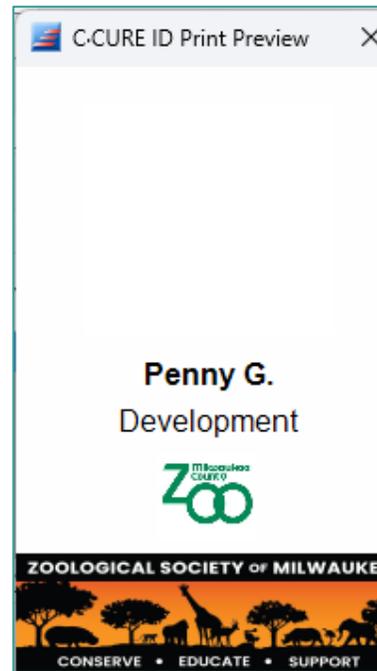
The best practices from the National Center for State Courts recommend that when an employee is terminated that their electronic access is deactivated, and their keys are turned in on the last day. These actions should occur before issuance of the last paycheck.



Rec. #6 - Facilities should work with the Department of Human Resources to update the form contained in AMOP 02.03.07 to instruct departments to return to Facilities the collected County IDs from separating employees.

Facilities Role in ID Program Oversight

In our fieldwork, we had to consult multiple areas of the County to receive answers to our questions and in interviews with ID issuing departments they were asking for direction and policies and procedures. We believe there is a need for one entity to be the ultimate authority regarding IDs. Not all issued IDs should grant access to bypass security.



Facilities Role in ID Program Oversight Continued

Rec. #7 - Facilities should serve as the County's authority over the new system and apply its policies and procedures at other card issuing locations.

Rec. #9 - Facilities should evaluate if the policies and procedures should be developed into an AMOP.

Rec. #8 - Facilities should develop general policies and procedures for Employee ID issuance that align with best practices and distribute to all relevant department personnel within six months of full implementation of the new system at the Courthouse Complex. In addition, a set schedule for periodic review of potential updates should be established.

Non-County Employee IDs

Photo IDs are issued to non-County employees including State employees, private attorneys, and contractors. These are problematic due to a lack of auto population from Dayforce and a reliance on manual deactivation based upon notification from entities outside of Milwaukee County. The old system had free entry for departmental names which has been solved with a new drop-down menu for departments. Currently, the processes for issuing and terminating these IDs are still being developed.

Department:	
Job Title	Corporation Counsel County Board County Clerk
Start Date	County Executive
Company	DAS - Facilities Management DAS - IMSD DAS - Risk Management Department of Administrative Services Dept Health and Human Services



Milwaukee County Courthouse Pass
Photo Identification Request Form
FOR ATTORNEYS

Last Name

First Name & Middle Initial

Rec. #10 - Six months after the process to issue non-County employee IDs is finalized, Facilities should issue policies and procedures that address the concern for accuracy of data entered into the new system, the ability to deactivate IDs in a timely manner, and providing for additional parameters for contractors, as necessary.

Background Checks

Background checks are recommended best practices prior to issuing a key or electronic access to any persons and include both employees and contractors. This check should be conducted prior to execution of a contract. Cleaning crews and any vendors granted after-hours access should have a background check conducted annually. According to Facilities, the Courthouse has cleaning crews who work after hours. Currently, the Sheriff's Office conducts a one-time background check prior to the issuance of IDs for contractors at the request of Facilities.



Rec. #11 - Facilities should develop policies and procedures for background checks for contractor IDs prior to issuance of IDs. In addition, a policy to ensure the background checks are conducted annually for any contractors with after-hours access should be created. These should be completed within six months of the full implementation of the new system at the Courthouse Complex.

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