

January 24, 2025

Recent actions by our supervisor, Ignacio, have created a disturbing, fearful, and what one employee referred to as a “caustic” work environment. There were three incidents that I observed directly that contributed to this unusual workplace environment.

Spilled Coffee Incident

On or about January 8, 2025, Ignacio greeted the morning shift in an explosive manner at about 7:00 AM. He was irate and in a forceful and disturbing manner ranted that someone had spilled coffee on the front passenger compartment during the night shift. He was visibly irate for at least 10 minutes and threatened anyone who is caught with their bag of personal belongings in the front passenger seat would be sent home immediately. It has been customary to keep our bags of personal belongings (extra pens, Chapstick, inhalers, Kleenex, sunglasses, notebooks, etc.) in the front passenger seat for years. We had previously been admonished not to keep any open food or drink in the vehicle. Ignacio’s forceful ranting was disturbing and instilled fear by being threatened to be sent home if caught with our bag of personal belongings in the front passenger seat. It is worth noting that keeping the bag of personal belongings in the back seat is impractical and causes drivers to lose control of the vehicle while reaching for something in the back or making many frequent stops. In addition, the bag in the front passenger seat provided a means of securing the laptop and driver pouch from sliding or spilling off the seat during sudden stops or other maneuvers (drivers would pin these items between their bag and the passenger seat back or secure everything with the passenger seat belt). It was never clear how the bag of personal belongings caused coffee to spill in the front compartment since one usually does not carry coffee in that bag and we were already admonished not to carry any open food or drinks in the vehicle. One employee openly defied Ignacio’s threat and said they kept their personal bag in the front seat out of necessity.

Stuck Charge Plug Incident

On January 15, 2025, I received a phone call from Joye (another 1st shift worker) that he was stuck at a charging station in Ventura, and the charge plug would not release from the 2024 production model ID4 vehicle #599. Joey had contacted our Lead Driver, but he was at lunch and couldn’t help him. The Lead Driver suggested that Joey call me. I responded by driving to Joye’s location and assessed the problem. Joye had been trying various procedures to release the charge plug without success for about 90 minutes. I was unable to remove the charge plug from the vehicle and proceeded to pull the emergency release. This procedure had been done previously in front of the Lead Driver, and it is common knowledge to do so on production model ID4’s.

A terse text was immediately sent from Ignacio to some of the drivers (excluding Joey and one other driver) NEVER to pull the emergency release again. I was not aware of any prior mention of this verbally or in writing.

“I need to make it clear that under no circumstances, are you to use the emergency release cable for the charge plug. We said it in the past, and now I am saying to everybody don’t use it” cc Craig, Eric, Israel, Juan, Peter.

In addition, at the end of the shift and again the following morning, Ignacio in a forceful and disturbing verbal manner emphasized NEVER to pull the emergency release again. Ignacio’s terse and demanding text and verbal outbursts were disturbing and created a sense of fear to do anything unless authorization was obtained from Ignacio. No clear explanation was given why not to pull the emergency release considering it is a publicly available procedure and had been done previously in front of the Lead Driver.

Lost CC Pouch Incident

On January 23, 2025, I noticed at the end of the shift that the pouch containing Electric Vehicle charge cards was missing from my driver pouch. I reported it to my Lead driver who said I should report it to Ignacio. I was not 100% sure if the CC pouch was within the driver pouch at the start of the shift that morning. Ignacio was preoccupied with packaging some equipment when I reported, in good faith, the problem to him about the missing CC pouch and anticipated some helpful suggestions. Instead, Ignacio was visibly annoyed and said I should have reported it in the morning. Now he didn’t know who to blame. I offered to return to the vehicle and search for the CC pouch, but the search was fruitless. When I returned to Ignacio, he was still packaging things and said “Peter, I don’t have time for this, I have more important things to do” and sent me back to the driver’s room. I felt discouraged, deflated, embarrassed, and guilty for losing the CC pouch or falsely accusing the previous night driver of not returning the CC pouch and me not noticing it in the morning. Later that day, Ignacio stormed into the driver’s room and ranted about our responsibility to keep track of things like the CC pouch. The prior night driver and I both felt embarrassed. Later that evening, I received a text from my Lead Driver that the CC pouch was found stuck between the passenger seat and the center console. The next morning, a fresh note on the white board in the driver room was for everyone to be reminded of our “contractual responsibilities” to know what we sign out and what we return. That morning, Ignacio again forcefully and in an intimidating manner admonished everyone about keeping track of things we signed out and check back in. Instead of getting some help with reporting a lost CC pouch, I felt embarrassed, guilty, incompetent, and unimportant. I suggested that perhaps keeping the bag of personal items in the front seat would help avoid spilling and losing items but was rebuffed by Ignacio threatening again that anyone caught with their bag in the front would be sent home. One of the drivers openly defied Ignacio’s threat and said to him they kept their personal bag in the front seat out of necessity.

In summary, the recent actions by our supervisor, Ignacio, have created a disturbing and fearful work environment. Three incidents that I observed directly contributed to this atmosphere. These incidents involved Ignacio's forceful and disturbing verbal outbursts, terse and demanding texts, and threats to send employees home for minor infractions. Additionally, Ignacio's lack of clear explanations and helpful suggestions further exacerbated the situation, leaving employees feeling discouraged, deflated, and fearful.