

Asleep On The Bridge

A recent NPR story about the Golden Gate Bridge and its painters said *“Only rain stops [Paint Superintendent] Rocky and his crew.”*¹ Apparently, the NPR reporter didn’t know about sleep.

Some of the Golden Gate Bridge painters have recently been caught sleeping on the job. In fact, there is a joke on the Bridge where other employees ask their supervisors to be transferred to painter jobs so they, too, can take a nap at work.

We all get tired at work, but most people aren’t allowed to take a nap on the clock. Can you imagine what would happen if you were caught sleeping on the job? You would probably, at a minimum, be written up. At most jobs you could even be fired. Not if you are a Golden Gate Bridge painter, apparently.

A head engineer and a superintendent reported the sleeping painters to Kary Witt, yet the painters who were caught sleeping are still working on the Bridge and apparently no disciplinary action has been taken. It is hard to imagine that Witt believes the painters need sleep during their (at times) five-hour workday. (That’s right! Five hours of actual work time within an eight-hour period!)

The painters’ work ethic and training has been called into question lately, including by GoldenGateWaste.org. But sleeping on the job is not where the problems end.

GoldenGateWaster.org also has evidence that a bridge painter attempted to physically intimidate another bridge employee while on the job. In fact, this alleged intimidation took place at some height on a catwalk that hangs below the bridge. Not only did the employee allegedly verbally and physically intimidate his co-worker, but at that precarious height, the intimidation was even more intense.

The Golden Gate Bridge Highway & Transportation District employee handbook clearly states, “The District takes a zero tolerance stance on behaviors in the workplace that constitute harassment of employees, customers, vendors, etc.

When harassment occurs, the District has a strong record of employee discipline including termination of employment on the first offense.”²

Like the sleeping, this alleged intimidation was also brought to the Bridge Manager's attention. Again, Witt has taken no disciplinary action. Making matters worse, the employee accused of intimidation was also one of those caught sleeping on the job.

It is time for Kary Witt to take responsibility for what happens on his Bridge. However, sleeping on the job and intimidation of co-workers is, unfortunately, not the end of Kary Witt's hands-off approach toward accountability with his painters.

While Witt is responsible for overseeing the painters on the Bridge, he also works directly with the Bridge Paint Superintendent, Rocky Dellarocca. Rocky has worked on the Bridge for "two decades,"¹ and helps Witt supervise the painters.

Rocky is said to "dream in international orange,"¹ the Bridge's paint color. Maybe Rocky should be dreaming of a better work ethic for his sleepy crew. On NPR recently Dellarocca joked, "Yeah, you start [painting] at one end, and when you get to the other end, you retire." Any efficient, certified, painting crew, working eight hours a day without naps, could paint a bridge in less than two decades. All these years under Kary Witt's watch, and even his Paint Superintendent has low expectations.

These painters earn a top income, one of the highest in the nation for industrial painters. However, they lack training, work ethic, professionalism, and even, as we have established in [earlier articles](#), concern for the environment. Kary Witt is responsible for ensuring your toll, bus and ferry dollars are not wasted, but Witt also seems to be asleep on the job.

The Bridge deserves better than ineffective leadership that refuses to do what's right. Kary Witt and the Golden Gate Bridge paint employees should have you seeing **RED**. The public needs to demand better and stop the [Golden Gate Waste](#).

Remember, each week there is a new article posted on this site that exposes waste on the Golden Gate Bridge.

Resources:

¹Stamberg, Susan. "The Golden Gate Bridge's Accidental Color." NPR. 26, April, 2011. 7, May, 2012. <<http://www.npr.org/2011/04/26/135150942/the-golden-gate-bridges-accidental-color>>

²Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District Employee Handbook