



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

April 08, 2014

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Project Notification:  
Evaluation of Laboratory Equipment Utilization  
Project No. OPE-FY14-0024

**FROM:** Patrick Gilbride, Director /s/  
Science, Research, and Management Integrity Evaluations

**TO:** Lek Kadeli, Acting Assistant Administrator  
Office of Research and Development

The Office of Inspector General plans to begin preliminary research on equipment utilization within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Research and Development (ORD). This project is included in our fiscal year 2014 annual plan. The preliminary research objective is to determine whether ORD has adequate controls over research equipment—including safeguarding, maintenance, calibration and utilization—to ensure that equipment may be relied upon for EPA decision-making and reporting. This preliminary objective is subject to change if we move into the fieldwork phase of the evaluation.

During the preliminary research phase, we plan to review documents, analyze data, and interview relevant managers and staff within ORD. We plan to visit three laboratories in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, as our preliminary research sample, and will interview laboratory directors and other key staff on controls over laboratory equipment and equipment utilization. We will update agreed-upon contacts from your offices on a regular basis on the status of our evaluation.

We will work with your audit liaison to arrange a mutually agreeable time for a kickoff meeting to discuss our assignment objective, scope, methodology and planned time frames. We will also answer any questions you or your staff may have about the evaluation process, and we welcome your input on laboratories to sample in our preliminary research.

Prior to or at our kickoff meeting, we request that you provide us with information on how ORD safeguards, maintains and utilizes ORD equipment, including:

1. Results of physical inventories performed in 2013 for the National Exposure Research Laboratory (NERL), National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory (NHEERL) and National Risk Management Research Laboratory (NRMRL).
2. Quality assurance manuals for NERL, NHEERL and NRMRL laboratories.
3. Standard operating procedures for NERL, NHEERL and NRMRL laboratories on:
  - a. Equipment calibration.
  - b. Equipment maintenance.

4. List of inventory systems used by Research Triangle Park laboratories.
5. List of ORD employees responsible for property functions at Research Triangle Park laboratories.

If you or your staff has any questions, please contact me at (303) 312-6969 or [gilbride.patrick@epa.gov](mailto:gilbride.patrick@epa.gov); or Erin Barnes-Weaver, Project Manager, at (303) 312-6871 or [barnes-weaver.erin@epa.gov](mailto:barnes-weaver.erin@epa.gov).

cc: Dr. Robert Kavlock, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science, ORD  
Ramona Trovato, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for Management, ORD  
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