



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) sought to determine whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) effectively implemented corrective actions to address findings and recommendations in our previous report, *EPA Needs to Better Implement Plan for Protecting Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Used to Respond to Terrorist Attacks and Disasters*, issued in April 2006.

Background

Homeland Security Presidential Directive No. 7, issued in 2003, requires Federal agencies to identify, prioritize, and protect Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources from terrorist attacks. In 2004, EPA issued its Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Protection Plan (CIPP).

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional, Public Affairs and Management at (202) 566-2391.

EPA Plans for Managing Counter Terrorism/ Emergency Response Equipment and Protecting Critical Assets Not Fully Implemented

What We Found

EPA has progressed in implementing the counter terrorism/emergency response (CT/ER) initiatives, but is behind schedule in implementing the Radiation Ambient Monitoring (RadNet) System. EPA encountered delays and problems with the administration of the contract. Further delays may occur as EPA may need to modify installed monitors after testing is completed. As a result, the Agency may have less information about the levels of radiation should a national radiological or nuclear emergency occur.

EPA has not fully implemented a national equipment tracking system. While some delays were due to technical issues, according to staff responsible for the CT/ER system, unrealistic milestones for completing the project and limited resources also contributed to the nearly 2-year delay in implementing a national CT/ER equipment tracking system. Not having a functional national system to track and manage equipment may impair EPA's ability to protect public health and the environment in the event of another terrorist attack or other nationally significant incident.

For almost 2 years, EPA did not track corrective actions in the Management Audit Tracking System for the April 2006 audit report and did not notify the OIG when it made changes to the corrective action plan. When the Agency started tracking corrective action, the information was not accurate. Not properly tracking corrective actions may adversely affect the completeness and accuracy of the Agency's annual reporting process and reports to Congress.

Our full audit report contains specific details on the areas where improvements are needed. However, because specific information on the initiatives is sensitive homeland security information, the full report is not available to the public.

What We Recommend

We recommend that EPA monitor the RadNet contract and develop a schedule for addressing concerns of the Science Advisory Board; identify milestones, accountability, and resources for implementing the national CT/ER equipment tracking system; and accurately track the corrective actions in response to our 2006 report.

The Agency generally agreed with the proposed recommendations and provided corrective action plans, but disagreed with some of the report language. Concerning the CT/ER equipment tracking system, EPA stated that it planned to have a pilot of the system completed by December 2007, and not the full system identified in the response to the 2006 report.