



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 (HSPD-12) and subsequent requirements state that inconsistent approaches to physical access are inefficient and costly, and increase risk to the federal government. We conducted this audit to determine whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) upgraded physical access control systems consistent with the goals of HSPD-12 and subsequent requirements. We also evaluated whether EPA acquired and deployed smartcard technology in an efficient and effective manner.

This report addresses the following EPA Goal or Cross-Cutting Strategy:

- *Strengthening EPA's workforce and capabilities.*

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

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2013/20130327-13-P-0200.pdf

Improvements Needed in EPA's Smartcard Program to Ensure Consistent Physical Access Procedures and Cost Reasonableness

What We Found

Contrary to its plans, EPA upgraded some less critical facilities prior to its most important facilities (including EPA headquarters). EPA stated it was more efficient to upgrade facilities based on geographic location rather than importance, but provided no quantitative data to support that position. In addition, EPA indicated it did not want to make mistakes upgrading headquarters buildings so it upgraded others first. As a result, some lower valued facilities required a higher level of authentication for access than EPA headquarters facilities.

The processes used to gain access are inconsistent and not yet inter-operable (can be used by all federal employees including those outside EPA) or intra-operable (can be used by any EPA employee). This occurred because EPA had not developed national physical access procedures to foster consistency. As a result, EPA is not realizing potential benefits associated with a standardized process.

EPA did not document assurance of cost reasonableness for some of the physical access control system contracts. EPA had spent over \$12.8 million upgrading physical access control systems and could not assure that \$3.8 million of that amount (30 percent) was spent in the most efficient and effective manner. EPA planned to award an additional \$10.6 million to upgrade its systems.

Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that EPA re-prioritize the remaining facility upgrades by security level, from highest to lowest, and develop national policies and procedures that foster consistent inter-operable physical access. We also recommend that EPA establish an entity for overseeing EPA's smartcard program, conduct cost analysis of smartcard upgrades, and enforce guidelines for independent government cost estimates. EPA agreed with two of our five recommendations. For the other three recommendations, EPA proposed alternative corrective actions that we believe address our findings.