



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

On August 27, 2013, a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works requested that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Inspector General (OIG), initiate work in connection with a fraud committed by John C. Beale, a former Senior Policy Advisor with the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation. One area that was being audited was the agency's vetting process for new employees. We also audited the process for official passports. The audit has disclosed issues that impact the Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA) and require immediate attention.

This report addresses the following EPA theme:

- *Embracing EPA as a high performing organization*

For further information, contact our public affairs office at (202) 566-2391.

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2014/20140501-14-P-0243.pdf

Audit of EPA Passport Controls

What We Found

OITA is not in compliance with agency guidance over the control and security of sensitive personally identifiable information—specifically, official and diplomatic passports issued to agency employees. OITA lacks a formal written policy and procedure for issuing, monitoring and securing passports.

Limited reliance can be placed on OITA's Passport Expiration Notification System to track and identify the location of EPA issued passports.

EPA needs to strengthen controls for official passports to protect sensitive personally identifiable information.

Of the 417 passports purported to be in OITA's possession, 199 could not be located. OITA has not enforced its passport guidance of having staff return passports after travel. Lack of compliance with agency guidance may put the agency in the position where sensitive personally identifiable information is not being adequately protected.

Agency Corrective Actions and Noteworthy Achievements

We recommend that OITA include a plan to identify official passports issued to agency employees and ensure that passports not currently being used for travel are returned to OITA for proper storage or cancellation. We also recommend that OITA develop and implement an agencywide policy and procedure for the issuance, monitoring and control of official passports; a plan to review and update information in the Passport Expiration Notification System to ensure the information currently in that system is accurate and complete; and a policy to compare employee travel activity recorded in the official passport with the actual travel activity to ensure official passports are only used to carry out official duties.

OITA accepted all the recommendations and developed a corrective action plan to complete all recommendations. OITA estimates corrective actions will be completed by September 30, 2014.