



At a Glance

Why We Did This Audit

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit in response to a congressional request to determine whether EPA Region 5 managers appropriately handled sexual harassment allegations. The objective of the audit was to determine whether EPA Region 5's policies and practices for addressing sexual harassment complaints made through the human resources complaint process and the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process adhere to established agency policies and meet federal requirements.

This report addresses the following EPA goal or cross-agency strategy:

- *Embracing EPA as a high-performing organization*

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EPA Region 5 Has Adequate Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Harassment Allegations

What We Found

EPA Region 5's policies and practices for addressing sexual harassment allegations adhere to EPA policies and procedures and meet federal requirements in 29 CFR §§ 1604.11 and 1614, as well as U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidance.

Region 5 addressed complaints in accordance with agency policies and procedures. No recommendations are being made.

EPA's sexual harassment complaints may be filed through the human resources process, EEO complaint process, or both. Region 5 identified 12 sexual harassment complaints processed between fiscal years 2012 and 2016—six processed by the region's Human Resources Branch and six by the region's Office of Civil Rights. Our review of the case files for the 12 complaints, and interviews with the EPA officials involved in resolving these complaints, confirmed that Region 5 addressed the complaints in accordance with agency policies and procedures.

Agency Response

No recommendations are being made because pertinent policies and procedures were in place and being followed. We issued a discussion document on June 20, 2017, for the agency's review. The agency response suggested only minor edits. The OIG considered the agency's suggestions and modified the report accordingly.

Noteworthy Achievements

During the audit, we learned that, starting March 2016, the Region 5 human resources office began tracking all sexual harassment fact-finding investigations in the agency's national tracking database—Labor and Employee Relations Information System (LERIS)—regardless of whether disciplinary action was involved. Agency policy only requires the tracking of cases involving disciplinary actions. The additional tracking in LERIS could enhance the region's ability to determine the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and address it accordingly. The additional tracking also allows for information sharing with other regions, which could promote consistency in corrective actions agencywide.