



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) received a hotline complaint regarding misuse of mobile devices within the Office of Environmental Information (OEI). We reviewed the effectiveness of OEI's internal controls for mobile devices issued to OEI employees and contractors, focusing on issuance, disconnection, multiple devices, inappropriate use, and tracking and recovery.

Background

OEI provides technology services for EPA, including providing telecommunications and other technologies to support Agency activities. Executive Order 13589, issued on November 9, 2011, requires agencies to assess device usage and establish controls on unused or underutilized equipment or services, as well as limit the number of employee devices.

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/2012/20120425-12-P-0427.pdf

Office of Environmental Information Should Strengthen Controls Over Mobile Devices

What We Found

Although OEI is in the process of developing policies for domestic and international mobile device usage, OEI has no organization-wide standard operating procedures that explain responsibilities for OEI employees and contractors regarding mobile devices. OEI currently does not have effective controls for the five areas of concern noted in the hotline complaint: issuance, disconnection, multiple devices, inappropriate use, and tracking and recovery.

We found that supervisors approve employee/contractor requests for mobile devices without guidance on determining the need for a device, and there is no guidance on the frequency with which employees can upgrade a device after it has been issued. OEI has also not established controls to determine when to disconnect devices; over a 6-month period in 2011, 68 OEI employees had zero usage of their mobile devices, incurring costs of about \$29,360. Moreover, OEI managers tend not to be concerned about employees having multiple devices, and we found that eBusiness does not correctly reflect the number of devices issued to employees. Therefore, EPA may be paying for service on mobile devices that are not used. In addition, we found that one OEI employee and one OEI contractor made costly personal international phone calls. Finally, procedures and controls for tracking and recovering mobile devices are missing or ineffective.

What We Recommend

We recommend that OEI implement standard operating procedures for each step of the mobile device process to cover all aspects of issuance, disconnection, multiple devices, inappropriate use, and tracking and recovery. We also recommend that OEI follow up with OEI employees and contractors to determine business case justifications for users of multiple devices, and take appropriate action on unauthorized calls identified in the sample we reviewed. Lastly, we recommend that OEI finalize Agency-wide draft domestic and international mobile device procedures and develop other Agency-wide procedures as necessary. OEI concurred with the majority of our recommendations and described planned actions to address our recommendations. Our recommendations remain open pending OEI's corrective action plan with milestone dates, as well as additional specificity from OEI on monitoring inappropriate device usage.