



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We sought to determine how well the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implemented initiatives in its Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Protection Plan for protecting assets used to respond to terrorist attacks and other nationally significant incidents. We also examined progress EPA has made in addressing recommendations from a 2004 audit on managing Counter Terrorism/Emergency Response equipment.

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 on how it plans to do so. The plan involves protecting equipment and implementing enhancements to the Agency's response capability.

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

EPA Needs to Better Implement Plan for Protecting Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Used to Respond to Terrorist Attacks and Disasters

What We Found

While EPA made progress in implementing the initiatives in the Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Protection Plan, assignment of formal authority and more accountability is required to ensure the initiatives are accomplished in a timely manner. In some cases, EPA did not obtain adequate assets or sufficiently protect assets. Milestones for initiatives were missed or not established, and some managers responsible for implementing the initiatives were not aware of the protection plan. Better accountability and coordination would have improved EPA's ability to receive products that the Agency paid for, when needed.

EPA also needs to improve its management of Counter Terrorism/Emergency Response equipment so that the Agency can efficiently determine what equipment is available and where it is located.

As a result of the conditions noted, the ability of EPA to protect public health and the environment from future terrorist attacks or other nationally significant incidents may be impaired.

Our full audit report contains specific details on the initiatives and 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 the EPA Deputy Administrator establish overall accountability for Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources Protection Plan management as well as program office accountability for implementing initiatives listed within the plan. We also recommend that the Deputy Administrator require better controls over Counter Terrorism/Emergency Response equipment. EPA generally agreed with all but one of the recommendations and indicated that corrective actions were planned and underway. Where appropriate, we have included additional information and clarifying language requested by the Agency.