



At a Glance

Why We Did This Audit

On August 27, 2013, Congress 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. In particular, Congress requested the OIG to determine EPA policies and processes that "facilitated" Beale's fraud. In connection with this request, we initiated an audit on the EPA's employee vetting process.

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

- *Embracing EPA as a high-performing organization.*

Send all inquiries to our public affairs office at (202) 566-2391 or visit www.epa.gov/oig.

The full report is at:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2015/20150803-15-P-0253.pdf

Improvements Needed by EPA to Reduce Risk in Employee Hiring Process

What We Found

The EPA has a multi-step hiring process and written procedures to ensure quality in the hiring process, and performs some verification of an applicant's assertions during the pre-employment hiring process. However, our audit found that during the pre-employment phase, the EPA does not confirm applicants' assertions of prior employment or awards/professional certifications, nor does it document any reference checks. The EPA does verify the academic credentials for jobs with a positive education requirement.

Without verification of prior employment or references, the potential exists that the EPA will not hire the best possible staff, or will hire an employee based on false statements.

We reviewed 25 new hire candidate files and found no documentation that the selecting official verified prior employment or references. The EPA advises selecting officials about the importance of reference checks in verifying an applicant's statements, as it can be helpful in authenticating information provided by the applicant. Without verification of employment, reference checks and awards/professional certifications, the EPA is at risk of hiring an applicant based on false information and may not hire the best-qualified candidate.

Recommendation and Planned Corrective Actions

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management review and revise EPA Human Resource Bulletin 08-007B, *Quality Assurance in the Hiring Process*, to enhance internal controls for vetting prior employment, verifying awards/professional certifications and contacting references. The agency concurred with the recommendation and provided acceptable corrective actions with a planned completion date.