



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We sought to assess the quality of key data elements reported through the Enforcement Compliance and History Online (ECHO) Website. KPMG, LLP, performed the review.

Background

ECHO provides a single source of detailed compliance history of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-regulated facilities. EPA developed ECHO to provide the public compliance and inspection data under its environmental programs, as well as demographic data of the surrounding areas. This report focuses on the quality of data elements entered into ECHO source systems.

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

To view the full report, click on the following link:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2010/20100922-10-P-0230.pdf

ECHO Data Quality Audit - Phase 2 Results: EPA Could Achieve Data Quality Rate With Additional Improvements

What KPMG Found

EPA mandates that data elements reported to the public through the ECHO Website have a 95 percent accuracy rate. KPMG found a 91.5 percent data accuracy rate for key data elements entered into two primary ECHO source systems: the legacy Permit Compliance System (PCS) and the newer Integrated Compliance Information System – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (ICIS-NPDES). Although the 91.5 percent data quality rate is close to EPA's goal, EPA and the State environmental offices could take additional steps to increase the quality of data reported through the ECHO Website.

What KPMG Recommends

KPMG made several recommendations to the Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. These included:

- Establishing an internal control structure to help manage the conversion of PCS to ICIS-NPDES.
- Including language in the National Program Manager Guidance requiring the use of the Environmental Information Exchange Network for reporting data to EPA.
- Developing a plan to share data quality best practices implemented at State environmental offices with all States.
- Completing new rules requiring reporting ECHO data for minor facilities and notifying ECHO Website users that the site does not contain data on minor facilities.
- Reviewing procedures used to test ICIS-NPDES programming code before it is placed into production.

The Agency generally agreed with the report findings. EPA felt it has extensive, documented procedures in place to test ICIS-NPDES programming code before it is placed into production. Tests disclosed that programming errors directly resulted in incomplete data on the ECHO Website and, as such, management should review these processes to prevent future occurrences. The Agency's response is included in Appendix A.