U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Inspector General

At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

PeoplePlus Security Controls Need Improvement

What We Found

Our review identified three significant issues in the security administration of PeoplePlus (PPL). First, the Agency had not followed prescribed procedures for managing user access privileges, monitoring changes in employee responsibilities, and processing system access requests. Second, EPA did not verify or conduct the required National Agency Check with Inquiries and Credit background screenings for 45 percent (10 of 22) of contractor personnel with PPL access. Third, EPA implemented PPL without adequately implementing security controls for two key processes. Specifically, OCFO had not properly secured default user IDs and did not adequately separate incompatible duties performed by the Security Administrator.

What We Recommend

We recommend the Directors of EPA's Office of Financial Services (OFS) and Office of Human Resources (OHR) take 13 actions to improve PPL security controls. These recommendations address areas where EPA could improve user access management and contractor background screening procedures. These recommendations include: (1) reinforcing the requirements to follow prescribed policies and procedures; (2) providing a training program to increase awareness and ability to perform security duties; (3) evaluating the need for system development contractors to have access to the production environment; and (4) establishing a milestone date to complete contractor background screening. We recommend that EPA evaluate all default user IDs to secure them, and assign Security Administrators' responsibilities in a manner that provides adequate separation of incompatible duties. EPA concurred with all of our recommendations and provided a plan of action to address concerns.