



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

We conducted this review in response to an anonymous Hotline complaint. The complaint alleged that the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inappropriately granted full-time work-at-home status to an employee so that employee could move outside of the Washington, DC, area.

Background

EPA's Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM) provides national leadership, policy, and management for support functions such as human resources management. The Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance's National Enforcement Training Institute (NETI) is responsible for training personnel in the enforcement and compliance of the nation's environmental laws, and is the office where the subject of the complaint was employed.

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/2010/20091007-10-P-0002.pdf

Review of Hotline Complaint on Employee Granted Full-Time Work-at-Home Privilege

What We Found

We found an unauthorized, full-time work-at-home arrangement that has existed for 9 years and allows a NETI employee to work from home in Ohio instead of an office in Washington, DC. The employee and position were originally located in the Washington area and the employee later moved as the result of a spouse transfer. In our opinion, NETI's actions are for the benefit of a single employee as opposed to being primarily in the interest of the government, and this action was not equitably provided within NETI. EPA has no established or consistent policy, procedure, or criteria for granting full-time work-at-home privilege. Full-time work-at-home opportunity appears to be preferentially available to only a few employees. Neither OARM nor NETI has any written documentation showing the government interest in or appropriateness of making this arrangement, or that senior OARM officials approved this action.

Office of Human Resources personnel (the Associate Deputy Director of Program Management & Communications, and the Agency Telework Coordinator) stated that EPA became aware of similar arrangements due to research it performed for an unrelated court case. OARM raised concerns about equity in such arrangements, and believes this must be brought under control. To date, OARM has not corrected this situation.

What We Recommend

We recommend that the Deputy Administrator assign responsibility for authorizing all non-OARM duty station changes to the Assistant Administrator for OARM. We further recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management establish and implement Agency policy for all EPA employees that clearly articulates the process and procedures for changing an employee's duty station to a location geographically separate from the position of record. We also recommend that the Agency quickly bring into compliance with the new policy all existing full-time work at a duty station separate from the position of record. The Agency generally agreed with these recommendations and estimated all of the recommendations will be implemented by July 2010.