

Summary of the Physical Security of the Social Security Administration's Contractor Owned and Operated Off-site Storage Facility

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Objective

To determine whether the physical security at the Social Security Administration's (SSA) contractor owned and operated off-site storage facility for the Second Support Center (SSC) complied with Federal laws, regulations, and contract requirements.

Background

SSA contracted for off-site storage services to help protect its data for contingency processing and disaster recovery purposes. The total cost of the contract was approximately \$3.5 million. The contractor provides transportation and media vault storage services for the SSC as part of the Agency's Disaster Recovery Program. Under this contract, SSA stores current copies of all procedures, computer programs, operating instructions, and critical data at secure, remote vault facilities maintained by the contractor. SSA also acquired storage services for a Secondary off-site storage facility as a backup for the SSC Primary off-site storage facility.

Our Findings

Based on our audit results, we determined the physical security at the contractor's off-site storage locations generally complied with Federal laws; regulations; and some, but not all, of the contract requirements. We believe the issues discussed below could have been prevented with improved contract oversight performed by SSA.

During our review, we noted areas where the contractor needed to improve its physical security at its off-site locations to comply with contract requirements. Specifically, we found that the contractor should improve

- access controls to SSA's media;
- environmental controls; and
- fire protection for its Secondary off-site facility's storage vault.

Our Recommendations

Therefore, we recommend SSA:

1. Ensure the contractor stores the Agency's media in individually locked cabinets that can only be accessed by contractor employees who received proper adjudication by SSA.
2. Ensure the contractor maintains the proper temperature and humidity levels as specified in the contract at all times while the Agency's media is in transit and storage.
3. Ensure the contractor's Secondary storage facility provides the Agency with the required report documentation for delivery truck temperature and humidity readings as specified by the contract.
4. Ensure the contractor's storage facility vaults meet the contract requirements for protection from electronic/radiation threats.
5. Ensure the contractor's Secondary storage facility vault doors meet the contract requirements for fire protection.
6. Improve its oversight of this contract and timely resolve any contract deficiencies with the contractor.

SSA agreed with our recommendations.