

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

November 2010



Objective

To review the Social Security Administration's (SSA) process for reporting and responding to threats against its employees or property.

Background

SSA management is responsible for documenting all incidents that adversely impact the safety and security of SSA's personnel, visitors, and property. SSA uses the Automated Incident Reporting System to collect data about incidents that affect the safety and security of SSA's personnel, property, or operational capabilities.

As part of our review, we sent questionnaires to 2,500 randomly selected SSA employees to assess overall attitudes regarding workplace safety and the threat reporting process.

To view the full report, visit
http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO_BEPDF/A-06-10-20123.pdf

Threats Against Social Security Administration Employees or Property (A-06-10-20123)

Results of Review

SSA has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of threats against SSA employees or property. Reported threats increased by more than 50 percent in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 and by more than 60 percent in FY 2010.

We received input from 2,141 SSA employees regarding their general opinions on workplace safety as well as SSA's threat reporting process. A vast majority of the employees was familiar with SSA's threat reporting procedures and "always" or "usually" felt safe at work. About 13 percent of respondents indicated they had been threatened at work during the past 3 years. A high percentage of these employees reported the threat(s) to management and was satisfied with the Agency's response.

SSA implemented procedures intended to ensure prompt threat incident reporting. SSA requires completion of incident reports, fact sheets, and executive summaries describing incidents with different levels of detail, and disseminates these documents to various parties.

Agency Comments

SSA stated it had already recognized the disturbing trend in the number of employee threats and taken action to protect its employees and the public. For example, SSA has increased the presence of armed security guards. SSA is also considering additional security enhancements, such as installation of duress alarms and closed circuit surveillance. SSA indicated it could not adopt our suggestion to have all required incident reporting emanate from a single input, and implied that adoption of the suggestion would eliminate incident fact sheets. To clarify, we offered the suggestion to simplify the incident reporting process—not eliminate any of the required reports—and acknowledged that fact sheets are important tools used extensively by SSA executives and the Commissioner.