

Offices of the Inspectors General
Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services,
Veterans Affairs, and the Army

Report No. D-2003-126
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August 27, 2003

**Interagency Summary Report on Security Controls Over
Biological Agents (U)**

Executive Summary (U)

(U) Who Should Read This Report and Why? Federal officials and members of congressional committees that are responsible for homeland defense and security of biological agents should read this report. The report provides interested parties a consolidated view of issues that have been or continue to be addressed regarding security controls over biological select agents.

(U) Background. After a series of *Bacillus anthracis** (anthrax) mailings following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the concern that terrorists or extremist groups might use nuclear, biological, or chemical agents as weapons of mass destruction against civilians within the United States made the need to protect those agents a high priority. Congress and various Federal agencies have undertaken numerous initiatives over the past year to improve the Nation's ability to combat terrorism and minimize the threat of weapons of mass destruction, specifically, biological agents.

(U) To address security controls over biological agents subsequent to the anthrax mailings, the Offices of the Inspectors General of the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs formed an interagency committee to ensure close coordination of audits, evaluations, and inspections. This report summarizes issues identified in 26 reports published by the 5 committee-member agencies and 1 report published by the Army Inspector General from February 2, 2001, through April 16, 2003.

(U) Biological agents are micro-organisms, or their toxins, that cause or may cause human disease. Select agents are biological agents specifically described as having the potential to pose a severe threat to public health and safety. Pathogens are high consequence biological agents that have the potential to pose a severe threat to human, animal, or plant health. Various Federal facilities maintain biological agents to support biological defense programs, medical research, and clinical diagnostic testing. As of March 2002, there were more than 275 such facilities registered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified 36 biological agents as select agents, and the Department of Agriculture has identified 33 additional biological agents as pathogens (see Appendix B).

(U) Review Results. From February 2, 2001, through April 16, 2003, the 6 agencies published 27 reports addressing security controls over biological agents. The Department of Agriculture issued 2 reports, the Department of Defense issued 4 reports, the

* (U) Spore-forming bacterium that causes anthrax.

(U) Department of Energy issued 1 report, the Department of Health and Human Services issued 18 reports, the Department of Veterans Affairs issued 1 report, and the Army Inspector General issued 1 report. In addition, as of June 30, 2003, eight reviews were in progress by three of the agencies (see Appendix F).

(U) Of the 27 reports, 26 addressed one of more of the following 9 systemic issues. (See Appendix D for a matrix of the systemic issues addressed in the reports.)

- (U) Physical Security (24 reports)
- (U) Personal Access Controls (25 reports)
- (U) Inventory Accountability and Controls (24 reports)
- (U) Emergency Disaster Plans (10 reports)
- (U) Registration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (6 reports)
- (U) Import and Export of Agents (3 reports)
- (U) Training (9 reports)
- (U) Management Oversight (15 reports)
- (U) Policies and Procedures (25 reports)

(U) In addition, the reports by the Department of Health and Human Services identified two issues unique to that Department. Specifically, five Department of Health and Human Services reports addressed computer security as it relates to biological agent data, and a separate report assessed whether the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had implemented an effective program to regulate the transfer of biological agents.

(U) The 27 reports identified problems related to a variety of issues regarding security controls over biological agents. Deficiencies in security controls have serious implications for the safety and security of biological agents, of civilian and military personnel who work with or around the biological agents, and of the general public, should the controls be breached. Senior officials at each agency have taken actions to improve security controls over biological agents in response to the published reports, but more needs to be done. Agencies need to diligently continue to address problem areas identified in this report.

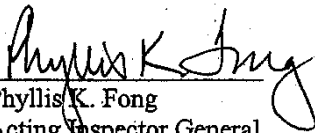
August 27, 2003


(U) PREFACE

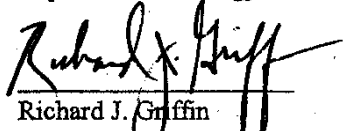
(U) We are providing this interagency report for information and use. The Offices of the Inspectors General of the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs and the Army Inspector General conducted this review as a cooperative effort. After the anthrax mailings following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Offices of the Inspectors General formed an interagency committee to ensure close coordination of audits, evaluations, and inspections related to security controls over biological select agents. The purpose of this report is to provide interested parties a consolidated view of issues that have been or continue to be addressed regarding the security over biological select agents. This report summarizes 27 reports issued from February 2, 2001, through April 16, 2003, by the participating agencies and identifies ongoing projects as of June 30, 2003. Specifically, this report identifies systemic issues regarding security controls over biological select agents that were addressed by more than one agency as well as significant issues unique to individual participating agencies.

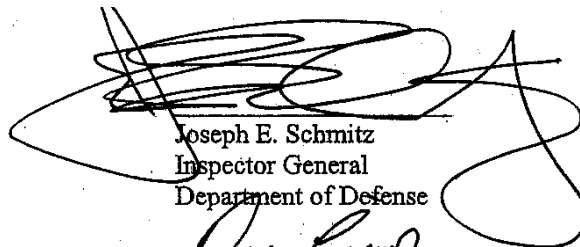
(U) We did not obtain agency comments for this interagency report. However, management comments on agency-specific draft report were requested from the appropriate officials in preparation of the individual reports and are discussed in this report to identify agencies' positions and corrective actions taken.

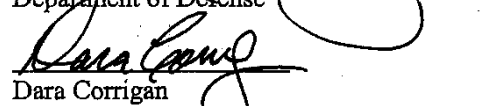
(U) We hope this interagency report will be useful to Congress, the Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, and other Federal agencies in continuing to ensure the security of biological agents.



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