

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

August 2009



Objective

To assess the effectiveness of Special Indicator codes on the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Numident file.

Background

SSA adds Special Indicator codes to Numident records to alert employees to special situations, identify Social Security numbers (SSN) that individuals obtained fraudulently, prevent unauthorized disclosure of information, block the issuance of replacement SSN cards and SSN verification printouts, and prevent verification of SSNs.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-08-09-19099.pdf>

Effectiveness of Special Indicator Codes on the Social Security Administration's Numident File (A-08-09-19099)

Our Findings

Although SSA policies and procedures instructed field office personnel to add/delete certain Special Indicator codes, employees did not always properly do so. We believe this occurred primarily because field office personnel were not aware of policies and procedures or clear about which Special Indicator codes they should add/delete. We believe that failure to comply with policies and procedures may increase the Agency's risk of exposure to inappropriate issuance of replacement SSN cards or unauthorized disclosure of information.

Our Recommendations

SSA needs to:

1. Assess its policies and procedures regarding Special Indicator codes and clarify as necessary.
2. Provide refresher training to field office personnel on policies and procedures regarding Special Indicator codes.
3. Implement system enhancements that would alert field office personnel to add/delete Special Indicator codes.
4. Consider implementing systems controls to prevent field office personnel from issuing replacement SSN cards before the appropriate Special Indicator code is deleted from the Numident.
5. Review all situations where field offices issued replacement SSN cards for SSNs with Special Indicator codes 2 or 5 on the Numident and determine whether the Agency should delete these codes.
6. Correct Numident records having Special Indicator code 3 with no cross-referred SSN(s).
7. Add alerts for Special Indicator codes 7, 8, and 9 to its Customer Service Query.

SSA agreed with the recommendations.