

# Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

July 2010



## Objective

To determine the effectiveness of controls over the Social Security Administration's (SSA) administrative leave use and the appropriateness of administrative leave granted to Agency employees.

## Background

Administrative leave refers to an excused absence from duty authorized with pay and without a charge against the employee's leave balances.

Generally, Federal employees may not be placed on administrative leave with pay for extended periods. During an investigation of an employee for wrongdoing, when it is in the best interest of the Government to have the employee off the job, the employee may be relieved from duty and continued in a pay status without charge to leave for the short time necessary to process a suspension.

To view the full report, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/oig/ADO/BEPDF/A-06-09-29133.pdf>

## Administrative Leave Use (A-06-09-29133)

### Our Findings

SSA's oversight of short periods of administrative leave was generally effective. Review of documentation in components with the highest administrative leave use or supporting specific days where the highest amount of administrative leave was granted indicated the leave was properly authorized and appropriate.

However, SSA did not establish policies governing leave use in the small number of instances where it granted employees administrative leave for extended periods. SSA did not require that timekeepers or certifiers retain documentation justifying or excusing the absences. Instead, SSA granted extended periods of administrative leave based on a manager or supervisor's verbal approval. SSA did not require any legal or administrative review of extended periods of administrative leave. Further, once the leave was approved, SSA did not develop a process to monitor extended leave use. Lack of effective controls over extended administrative leave use could result in unwarranted payment of salary and benefits to employees who should otherwise be suspended without pay. Properly documenting leave use helps maintain the integrity and accuracy of SSA's payroll system.

### Our Recommendations

We recommend SSA:

1. Develop and implement policies governing authorization, review, and approval of extended periods of administrative leave.
2. Establish procedures to monitor extended administrative leave use.

SSA agreed with our findings and recommendations.