

Report Summary

Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General

May 2012



Objective

Our objective was to determine the status of corrective actions the Social Security Administration (SSA) took to address recommendations in our September 2008 report, *Risks Posed by Digital Photocopiers Used in Social Security Administration Offices*.

Background

Our 2008 audit found that SSA had not effectively mitigated the risks posed by the potential exposure of sensitive information. Specifically, SSA did not sanitize or destroy photocopier hard drives upon disposal. Also, SSA's inventory tracking system did not distinguish between stand-alone photocopiers with no hard drives and photocopiers with hard drives or account for purchases in a timely manner. SSA agreed with our recommendations for corrective action.

To view the full report, visit <http://oig.ssa.gov/audits-and-investigations/audit-reports/A-06-11-11155>.

Risks Posed by Digital Photocopiers Used in Social Security Administration Offices (A-06-11-11155)

Our Findings

SSA took action to address our 2008 recommendations. SSA established procedures for sanitizing or destroying photocopier hard drives and established a requirement that contractors certify they sanitized, removed, or destroyed hard drives before removing photocopiers from SSA premises. SSA incorporated hard drive sanitization policies into photocopier Blanket Purchase Agreements and incorporated additional security provisions in photocopier maintenance agreements. SSA implemented a new automated system that tracks whether photocopiers have hard drives and improves the timeliness of recording photocopier purchases in its inventory records.

However, while SSA required that contractors certify photocopier hard drives were sanitized, removed, or destroyed prior to removal from SSA premises, we found that SSA rarely obtained the required certifications. Also, the automated inventory system SSA used to track photocopiers did not accurately identify the number of photocopiers in service at the time of the audit.

We are not aware of any incidents where personally identifiable information breaches occurred as a result of loss of information stored on photocopier disk drives. However, as long as this vulnerability exists, SSA should continue proactively reducing the risk of exposing sensitive information to unauthorized individuals.

Our Recommendation

We recommended that SSA enforce its requirement that photocopier vendors certify in writing that photocopier hard drives are erased or destroyed before removal from SSA premises. SSA agreed with our recommendation.