

In Their Own Words

EPA Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Agents answer the following question
“What are the most important things that need to change inside CID and why?”

More Resources/ Support

Need more agents. There are far too few of us. Many environmental crimes go uninvestigated for lack of agents.

We don't have the equipment, funding or support in place to make the impact that we could make. On the one hand, we're told to use travel funding judiciously, on the other, we are sent to mandatory sensitivity training - for a week!

I am sick and tired of the lack of infrastructure and technical support being developed or made available to CID. All agents with no support doesn't work.

Congress needs to guarantee that the EPA enforcement budget for criminal cases will be funded 100%.

Give agents the resources they need to pursue the high impact cases.

High Impact Cases - now called "Tier 1," can't be adequately supported by the Agency. Absolutely zero litigation support provided to agents - especially in large document cases; Lack of intel staff and analysts to support agents. Agents are required to do EVERY remedial admin task in an investigation; sampling and forensic computer support is too backlogged to be effective; Rapanos decision has shut down Clean Water Act cases, both civil and criminal. Not enough staff (qualified) to make waters of the US determinations as required by prosecutors and courts.

It's insane that we have to use a headquarters component to retrieve investigative data.

Return Focus to Environmental Crimes

The bottom line is ineffective management coupled with a tremendously large bureaucratic structure that itself does not place a high emphasis on environmental crimes prosecutions.

Headquarters management is will-intentioned, but is failing the mission of environmental crimes enforcement in two major areas. First, too few 1811's are engaged in actual street-level environmental crimes investigations. The agency continues to be preoccupied with having 1811 special agents engaged in "special projects," middle-management, and are a re-named Homeland Security Division. Second, senior HQ management continues to place poorly qualified 1811s in management (or management-track) positions. Many of CID's current desk officer and assistant special agent-in-charge 1811s have limited investigative experience and/or few successfully prosecuted cases in their professional history.

Stop the Homeland Security Division insanity! The Administrator of the EPA has stated that we will disinvest from that line of work. For some reason, HSD did not get that message. They continue to promote their people and are unwilling to do anything useful in the organization.

We need to focus on investigations and results not processes... Doing legal memos and RPA's [Requests for Prosecutorial Assistance] for every case is like wearing a rain coat just in case it might rain!

Go back to doing what we do best - investigating environmental crime.

Management focuses on making things more difficult for agents, rather than helping them successfully investigate cases.

At this time, the managerial hierarchy is too concerned with their own self promotion. I am insulted that they wrap this in a blanket of pronouncement that all their own efforts are for protecting human health and the environment. I don't know how they can live with themselves.

Strong law enforcement mentality needs to be the priority to improve case prosecution and investigations

Improve Top Leadership

Remove current CID Director and Deputy. They are a major source of the problem. Decisions are not made and issues are not addressed by them.

CID needs a whole new set of managers (upper) with integrity to do the job the public is paying them to do. Stop running off good agents because they won't side with management and have integrity.

OCEFT [Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics and Training] upper management to include CID HQ. The need to just clean house and find effective managers that are able to make and most importantly implement quality decisions in a timely manner is key to the success of any law enforcement function. CID/OCEFT does not have this.

It's like the old failure saying that "recognizing the problem is 50% of the solution." In actuality, it's not true because recognizing a problem and then not making positive change to address the issue can actually be more harmful from the standpoint of institutional morale. OCEFT/CID HQ recognize lots of problem areas; they just don't seem able to implement quality decisions in a timely manner to address the issues. As a result, problems fester and grow so that if the issue is eventually addressed, the damage done by the residual effect of the festering is far worse than the original issue.

Remove all senior OCEFT/CID managers.

Hypocrisy doesn't even do justice to describing what is going on. Bad managers continue to retain their positions, and good people are leaving in droves. They don't care one bit. They rationalize this by saying "go leave. there are many people standing in line waiting to take your job." GET THE BAD MANAGERS OUT!

OCEFT/CID mgt must be replaced! Several SACs [Special Agents-in-Charge] must be removed. Focus back on basic L.E. training.

Another example of is the re-write of the Agent's Manual. Despite working on this for as many years as I can remember, CID HQ management rolled out the incomplete manual seven months ago. The only section missing then and still missing as of this survey is the "Investigative Techniques" section. The symbolism for PEER should not be missed, after all this is only the most important and largest section of policy knowledge that affects agents in the field. No estimates as to when this chapter may be completed. Although CID continues to operate, this is just another example of the trend of incomplete management tasks for which no one appears to be held accountable. HQ management repeatedly demonstrates their inability to prioritize and complete tasks in a timely manner. Imagine the ramifications if this were a field agent presenting an incomplete case to a prosecutor at the time of trial. Less HQ management time focused on getting agents and more effort to complete their individual management tasks on time would greatly enhance CID operations, agent morale, and ultimately environmental protection.

This is not a management style issue but more along the lines of no one appears to hold management accountable for the basic routine elements of their individual jobs that they fail to complete in on time, in the same way management strives to hold agents accountable.

The McWane case is a perfect example of a situation where the division management could use the hard work, yet negative experience of those case agents to make real positive advances in the environmental law enforcement field for others. Instead they speak of the lessons learned but provide no real guidance how to avoid the pitfalls of those past experiences. "Lessons learned" without direct positive change aren't really lessons learned in any other part of the professional community but they are under this CID management.

End Micromanagement

Resolve problems in the field quickly. The field managers are not empowered to make basic/fundamental decisions about the operation of their own office. The management does that and they DO NOT do it well.

Headquarters is afraid to hold SAC's accountable or give them direction.

Let agents investigate stop doing internals because you do not like agents personally. Remove all burdensome administrative duties and stop using CCRS as a "got you" time card machine. Management needs to treat employees with respect and not humiliate or threaten to kill employees.

Other Comments

Strong liaison is needed among EPA & state agencies to improve communications.

Hiring process needs to be improved; communication between HR and Senior Management is needed to higher quality candidates. More emphasis needs to be placed on keeping good agents in the Division; promotions based on merit, morale increased, more engagement from management on a personal level in order to trust their agents, equal division of work load amongst all individuals, best technology equipment to be purchased and used to be able to conduct proper investigations. Overall however, I truly believe in EPA's mission and CID's goals to save/protect the environment.

PEER was fed misleading information by disgruntled ex/current employees and conducted shoddy research into cases investigated/prosecuted.

The few agents that are unhappy need to stop complaining to anyone who will listen. The agents that are producing good cases are not the agents complaining about management. HQ is finally addressing the conduct and performance issues within CID that has caused the numbers to drop.

I would also like to see EPA travel items centrally billed. Items like air fare, hotel rooms, and rental cars should be billed directly to a corporate account. I spend way too much time and energy moving funds for the government.

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