

From: Message from the Administrator

Sent: Wednesday, August 08, 2018 8:44 AM

To: Message from the Administrator <messagefromtheadministrator@epa.gov>

Subject: Cooperating with the Office of Inspector General to Ensure the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is Fulfilling the Public's Trust



As a former career employee at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, I recognize the important role that the Office of Inspector General serves in preventing and identifying fraud, waste and abuse in EPA programs and operations. Working at the EPA and advancing our shared mission of protecting human health and the environment is a public trust. One of the ways we ensure accountability deserving of the public's trust is through the review and oversight carried out by the OIG. This important work enables us all to be more effective in achieving the agency's mission with the resources and authorities provided by Congress. The purpose of this memorandum is to explain how I expect agency personnel to work with the OIG and how the OIG conducts its mission.

The OIG is an independent office within the EPA and, to meet its statutory mandate under the Inspector General Act, the OIG requires information and assistance from EPA managers and staff on a regular basis. It is imperative and expected that agency personnel provide the OIG with access to personnel, facilities and records or other information or material that is needed by the OIG to accomplish its mission.

For audits and evaluations, the OIG adheres to standards established by the Comptroller General of the United States, which include many steps to ensure transparency and opportunities for comment on draft findings. To ensure that reports, audits, evaluations or other reviews are fairly prepared and presented, OIG staff will endeavor to provide EPA management with significant opportunities for interaction consistent with the Inspector General Act. At any time during the course of an audit, evaluation or report, EPA management should meet with the OIG to discuss the audit, provide information to clarify management assertions and discuss the status of the OIG's reviews and any questions or OIG recommendations. This interaction will help avoid misunderstandings, increase transparency and result in accurate and helpful ways for the agency to accomplish its mission. EPA management and staff are also expected to respond accordingly and fulfill agreed-upon commitments in response to OIG reports and recommendations.

For investigations of potential violations of the law, the OIG follows generally accepted protocols for questioning employees and gathering evidence.

I continue to expect all employees to report fraud, waste and abuse to the OIG. The types of conduct that should be reported include theft of EPA funds, misuse of contract or grant funds, misuse of EPA equipment or assets for personal gain, falsification of EPA reports or records, serious employee misconduct or participation in EPA program fraud. Each employee taking the responsibility to report activity to the OIG which appears wasteful or illegal is one of the most important and successful means the OIG has for identifying and stopping wrongdoing. I encourage all EPA employees to report information to the OIG by contacting the OIG at OIG_Hotline@epa.gov or 1 (888) 546-8740. You may always request anonymity.

EPA employees are not required to obtain permission from or inform managers before they report issues to the OIG. Similarly, EPA employees are not required to obtain permission from or inform managers before they speak with OIG representative during audits, evaluations, investigations or other OIG reviews. Staff may, at their own discretion, contact their manager with any questions regarding their responsibility to cooperate with the OIG or their scheduling of meetings with the OIG unless, in the context of an investigation, they are requested not to do so by the OIG. Please be aware that retaliation against any person who makes reports to the OIG, or who participates in an OIG investigation, is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Through this cooperation with the OIG and work toward our shared mission, we have the opportunity to improve our operations and performance to benefit every person in the United States. I thank you for your cooperation and commitment to upholding the public's trust in the important work we perform every day on behalf of the American people.