U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Inspector General (OIG)

OIG Office of Audit & Evaluation Update

Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies

2019 Fall Business Meeting
OIG Organization

Immediate Office of the Inspector General
Inspector General
Deputy Inspector General

Office of Audit & Evaluation
Office of Investigations
Office of Counsel and Congressional and Public Affairs
Office of Management
More Effective EPA Oversight Is Needed for Particulate Matter Emissions Compliance Testing; July 30, 2019

- Our audit of 30 stack test reports from state and local agencies in Washington state found numerous examples of nonadherence to EPA test methods and inadequate supporting documentation to assess data quality.

- We recommended that EPA headquarters develop and implement a plan for improving the consistency of stack test reviews across EPA regions and delegated agencies, as well as to provide additional training and tools to improve stack test report reviews.

- We recommended that EPA Region 10 communicate the EPA’s requirements and guidance for stack testing oversight to delegated agencies and develop internal controls to verify that delegated agencies are performing effective oversight of stack testing and reporting.
Recent Reports

EPA Effectively Screens Air Emissions Data from Continuous Monitoring Systems but Could Enhance Verification of System Performance; June 27, 2019

- The EPA’s automated screening of facility-reported CEMS data worked as intended and was effective in verifying the quality of the reported data.

- EPA and state agencies conducted a limited number of on-site field audits to verify that CEMS monitoring requirements were met. Out of over 1,000 facilities subject to ARP and/or CSAPR requirements, the EPA conducted field audits at only 16 facilities between 2016 and the end of June 2018. In addition, nine of the 10 state agencies contacted did not conduct field audits.
The EPA’s internal controls for its heavy duty vehicle compliance program provide reasonable assurance that the EPA can detect and prevent noncompliance. Past instances of noncompliance have resulted in excess emissions of pollutants, which have significant and quantifiable negative impacts on human health and the environment.

We identified areas where existing controls could be strengthened, such as developing performance measures for the compliance program, conducting risk assessments and developing more standardized procedures for coordinating with EPA’s enforcement office.
Ongoing Air work

- Air Monitoring Response to Hurricane Harvey
- Indian Country New Source Review Program
- Landfill Emissions
- Actions to Address Elevated Cancer Risks from Air Toxics Emissions from Point Sources
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OIG Management Alert: Certain Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) Data Disclosed to the Public Are Inaccurate

• Objective: Reviewing impact of late reported data on EPA’s Annual TRI National Analysis
• Public not receiving complete and timely information about environmental conditions
TRI Chemicals Cause:

- Cancer or other chronic human health effects.
- Significant adverse acute human health effects.
- Significant adverse environmental effects.
TRI Data is Important

- Supports informed decision-making by public and private sectors
- Used worldwide
- Used for research by governments, academics and human health researchers
Reporting Requirements

• By July 1 each year, U.S. facilities report on releases
• By October 10, EPA takes snapshot of the data and uses for TRI National Analysis, which shows trends in releases waste management practices, and pollution prevention activities.
• For our report, “late reported” if facilities report after October 10.
What We Found

We identified

• discrepancies between total pounds of chemicals released for 2013-2017 as reported on the publicly available database, and the total pounds EPA provided to us separately

EPA identified

• the publicly available database did not include the POTW release amounts
Why Should You care?

• Community members living near facilities, world-wide researchers, or anyone that queries data who relies on the data isn’t getting information on chemicals that may significantly impact human health and the environment.
Recommendations and Actions

• We recommended that EPA correct the discrepancies and disclose the degree to which the errors impact the public reporting. EPA indicated it has completed both actions.

• OIG is verifying completed actions as part of continuing work. A final report is anticipated Winter 2019.
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OIG Information

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- OIG_Hotline@epa.gov
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