



# OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

## U.S. Department of Justice

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### **INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Findings Concerning the DEA's Use of a TSA Airport Security Screener as a Paid Confidential Source**

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) initiated this investigation upon the receipt of information from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) that a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) airport Security Screener had been registered as a paid Confidential Source (CS) for the DEA. This investigation was initiated to determine whether it was appropriate for the DEA to register a TSA employee as a CS and pay the employee for providing information to the DEA that the employee obtained during the course of his official duties. The investigation also examined whether the DEA directed the TSA Security Screener to search passenger luggage at the airport for evidence of illicit activity in violation of DEA policy or federal law.

The OIG determined that registering a TSA Security Screener as a CS violated DEA policy, which precludes registering as a CS "employees of U.S. law enforcement agencies who are working solely in their official capacity with DEA." The OIG also found that TSA Security Screeners are obligated to report to law enforcement suspected criminal activity that they observe in the course of their duties. Therefore, by registering a TSA Security Screener as a CS, the DEA agreed to pay for information that the screener was already obligated to provide to law enforcement.

The OIG further determined that asking the TSA Security Screener to notify the DEA of passengers carrying large sums of money in exchange for a reward based on money seized by the DEA violated the DEA's interdiction manual, and could have violated individuals' protection against unreasonable searches and seizures if it led to a subsequent DEA enforcement action.

While the OIG concluded that the DEA violated its policies by registering the TSA Security Screener as a CS and by offering the screener a reward for money seized based on information he provided, the OIG found that the TSA Security Screener did not provide DEA any actionable information while a CS, and was not paid any money by the DEA. The CS was deactivated for inability to provide any useful information.

The OIG provided its report to the DEA for appropriate action. The OIG also issued an audit report of the DEA's CS program in July 2015, <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/2015/a1528.pdf>, and is conducting additional audit work relating to the program.

*Posted to [oig.justice.gov](http://oig.justice.gov) on January 7, 2016*