



Audit of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms
and Explosives' Information Security Management
Program Pursuant to the Federal Information
Security Modernization Act of 2014,
Fiscal Year 2023



AUDIT DIVISION

24-035

FEBRUARY 2024



COMMENTARY AND SUMMARY

Audit of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Information Security Management Program Pursuant to the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014, Fiscal Year 2023

Objectives

The objectives of this audit were to: (1) determine whether the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) overall information security management program and practices were consistent with the requirements of the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 (FISMA); (2) examine areas and vulnerabilities specified within the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Reform Letter (Congressional Letter) related to the facilitation of telework during the coronavirus pandemic; (3) determine whether the ATF has taken action in response to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Binding Operational Directive 23-01; and (4) complete the DHS fiscal year 2023 Cyberscope reporting metrics.

Results in Brief

The audit identified weaknesses in four of the nine domain areas and in one of the eight Congressional Letter areas that need to be strengthened to ensure that ATF's information systems and data are adequately protected.

Recommendations

This audit provides 12 recommendations for improving ATF's information security management program.

To ensure ATF was immediately aware of the findings identified during this audit, the auditors presented the findings to ATF management prior to the issuance of this report. ATF management concurred with the identified weaknesses.

Public Release

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is publicly releasing this Commentary and Summary of the report rather than the full report itself because Inspectors General are required by FISMA to take appropriate steps to ensure the protection of information that, if disclosed, may adversely affect information security. Such protections shall be commensurate with the risk.

Audit Approach

KPMG LLP conducted this performance audit of ATF's information security management program under the direction of the DOJ OIG and in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reporting requirements. The OIG reviewed KPMG LLP's report and related documentation for compliance with GAGAS. The OIG's review was not intended to enable the OIG to make a conclusion about the effectiveness of ATF's information security controls. KPMG LLP is responsible for the attached auditors' report dated September 22, 2023, and the conclusions expressed in the report. The OIG's review disclosed no instances where KPMG LLP did not comply, in all material respects, with GAGAS and OMB reporting requirements.

Background

FISMA was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in 2014. FISMA assigns responsibilities to federal agencies, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and OMB to strengthen federal information system security. This includes directing NIST to develop standards and guidelines for ensuring the effectiveness of information security controls over information systems that support federal agencies' operations and assets, and requiring the head of each agency to implement policies and procedures to cost-effectively reduce risks to an acceptable level.

Annually, agency Inspectors General are required to either perform an independent evaluation or contract an independent external auditor to perform an evaluation of the agency's information security program and practices to ensure the effectiveness of the program and practices. Each evaluation must include: (1) testing the effectiveness of information security policies, procedures, and practices of a representative subset of the agency's information systems; (2) an assessment (based on the results of the testing) of compliance with FISMA; and (3) separate representations, as appropriate, regarding information security related to national security systems.