



## Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration

### Inspections and Evaluations

# Highlights

Highlights of Report Number: 2014-IE-R004 to the Internal Revenue Service Deputy Commissioner for Operations Support.

### WHY TIGTA DID THIS STUDY

TIGTA initiated this project to determine whether policies and procedures in place to detect and minimize the effects of explosives, hazardous material, and other suspicious mail submitted to the IRS submission processing centers are sufficient and effective.

### WHAT TIGTA RECOMMENDED

TIGTA recommended the Chief, Agency-Wide Shared Services implement regulations for minimum mail screening requirements to ensure policies and supplemental screening procedures are available the entire year. TIGTA also recommended hanging posters and other signs in and around IRS mail receiving and processing areas reminding personnel of hazardous material threats and known identifiers. Lastly, TIGTA recommended verify whether IRS posts of duty receive mail directly from the U.S. Postal Service and small package carriers, and ensuring those posts of duty have procedures in place to detect and minimize the effects of explosives and hazardous material received through the mail.

IRS officials agreed with TIGTA's recommendations. The IRS plans to implement regulations for minimum mail screening requirements, and increase employee awareness, incident reporting and training. The IRS also plans to recertify those posts of duty that receive mail directly from the U.S. Postal Service and small package carriers, and implement procedures and controls to mitigate risks for those posts of duty.

Issued on December 13, 2013

## INSPECTION OF THE SUBMISSION PROCESSING CENTERS' MAILROOM SCREENING PROCEDURES FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

### WHAT TIGTA FOUND

TIGTA inspected two IRS submission processing centers and found the centers have controls in place to detect and minimize the effects of explosive and hazardous material submitted via mailrooms; however, additional controls should be considered to improve procedures and ensure effective screening measures are available throughout the year. TIGTA found that procedures were generally consistent and effective in identifying, reporting, and responding to suspicious packages and unknown substances.

For the facilities included in the inspection, the IRS followed proper procedures for reporting suspicious packages or unknown substances to IRS Physical Security and Emergency Preparedness personnel, and local enforcement and emergency authorities were notified and responded accordingly. Additionally, IRS personnel receive annual safety training, which includes identifying and responding to potential hazardous material and suspicious mail and packages.

However, the centers were inconsistent with regard to displaying signs in and around loading docks and mailrooms to increase hazardous material awareness and reminding employees of incident reporting procedures.

TIGTA also found that one location received its mail directly from the U.S. Postal Service and small package carriers, which directly contradicted findings in the facility's security risk assessment. This facility does not have an Explosive Detection Dog Program or an x-ray machine available to screen parcels. Additionally, the mailroom within facility shares the facility's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system, which would further complicate response and containment efforts if an actual hazardous material incident were to occur.

### READ THE FULL REPORT

To view the report, including the scope, methodology, and full IRS response, go to:

<http://www.treasury.gov/tigta/iereports/2014reports/2014ier004fr.pdf>