



WIRELESS NETWORK SECURITY:

Internal Controls Can Be Improved

Report Summary:

Because of the security sensitive information contained in this report, we are only providing a summary of the report.

Report No. OIG-A-2012-003 | December 7, 2011





Date: December 7, 2011

Subject: *Wireless Network Security: Internal Controls Can Be Improved*
(Report No. OIG-A-2012-003)

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit of Amtrak's wireless network security program. Our objectives were to (1) assess the adequacy of Amtrak's internal controls for wireless network security, and (2) assess the adequacy of Amtrak's wireless network security policies.

BACKGROUND

Amtrak has installed wireless networks to allow its employees and contractors to connect their laptops to Amtrak networks where wired networks are difficult and costly to implement. Wireless connections provide an economical and flexible solution to accessing corporate systems and information.

Wireless connections are inherently risky because information is broadcast over radio waves and can be accessed easily. Therefore, wireless networks are vulnerable to attacks from unauthorized persons. Having effective internal controls over wireless networks is critical to preventing the success of such attacks. Our audit focused on Amtrak's wireless security policy and practices as well as broader computer security and usage policy.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

While Amtrak's Office of Information Security has generally taken adequate measures to ensure that the company's wireless networks are secure and protect company information, some internal control weaknesses related to the wireless security program exist, along with some gaps in wireless security policies. These conditions occurred mainly due to weaknesses in oversight, policy enforcement, and the original security system design, as well as the lack of routine policy updates. The security control weaknesses related to encryption, passwords, and naming convention leave Amtrak information at risk of unauthorized access, modification, or destruction. As our audit progressed, we discussed these findings with Amtrak management officials, who agreed and have begun taking corrective action. While we did not find any evidence of

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security breaches of the wireless network, the weaknesses we noted represent security vulnerabilities and increase the risk of an undetected penetration of the network.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTS AND OIG RESPONSE

In commenting on a draft of this report, Amtrak's acting Chief Information Officer agreed with all of our findings and recommendations. The planned actions identified by Amtrak are responsive to our recommendations.

OIG TEAM MEMBERS

David R. Warren, Assistant Inspector General, Audits

Vipul Doshi, Senior Director, Audits

Vijay Chheda, Audit Manager

Ben Davani, Senior Auditor, IT

Ashish Tendulkar, Senior Auditor, IT

Michael Baker, Senior Auditor, IT

Michael P. Fruitman, Principal Communications Officer

Amtrak Office of Inspector General
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OIG MISSION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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| Amtrak OIG's Mission | <p>The Amtrak OIG's mission is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ conduct and supervise independent and objective audits, inspections, evaluations, and investigations relating to agency programs and operations; ▪ promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency within Amtrak; ▪ prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in Amtrak's programs and operations; ▪ review security and safety policies and programs; and ▪ review and make recommendations regarding existing and proposed legislation and regulations relating to Amtrak's programs and operations. |
| Obtaining Copies of OIG Reports and Testimony | Available at our website: www.amtrakoig.gov . |
| To Report Fraud, Waste, or Abuse | <p>Report suspicious or illegal activities to the OIG Hotline (you can remain anonymous):</p> <p>Web: www.amtrakoig.gov/hotline Phone: 800-468-5469</p> |
| Congressional and Public Affairs | <p>E. Bret Coulson, Senior Director Congressional and Public Affairs</p> <p>Mail: Amtrak OIG 10 G Street, N.E., 3W-300 Washington, D.C. 20002</p> <p>Phone: 202-906-4134 Email: bret.coulson@amtrakoig.gov</p> |
