



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Inspector General (OIG), conducted this review to determine whether the EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) and EPA regions have targeted facilities in overburdened communities, or communities with disproportionate impacts, for air toxics inspections. Air toxics compliance evaluations (commonly referred to as inspections) are onsite visits and offsite record reviews to determine whether a facility is in compliance with laws and regulations that limit emissions.

Air toxics are pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects. Communities that experience elevated or disproportionate impacts from air toxics may be areas of environmental justice (EJ) concern. EPA regions are supposed to consider potential EJ concerns and impacts to communities when targeting sources for air toxics inspections.

This report addresses the following EPA goals or cross-agency strategies:

- *Addressing climate change and improving air quality.*
- *Protecting human health and the environment by enforcing laws and assuring compliance.*
- *Working to make a visible difference in communities.*

Send all inquiries to our public affairs office at (202) 566-2391 or visit www.epa.gov/oig.

The full report is at: www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2015/20150226-15-P-0101.pdf

EPA Regions Have Considered Environmental Justice When Targeting Facilities for Air Toxics Inspections

What We Found

All 10 EPA regions have considered EJ when targeting facilities for air toxics inspections. EJ is one of many different factors that regions used when deciding where to conduct air toxics inspections. Other common factors that EPA regions used to target air toxics inspections included:

- Cancer risk in the area surrounding a facility.
- Overall emissions from a facility.
- A facility's compliance history.

Regions have had limited resources to do air toxics inspections, and these factors helped regions prioritize their inspections.

OECA has developed several tools to help regions select air toxics facilities for inspection. One tool, the High-Risk Facilities (HRF) list, identifies large facilities in areas with elevated cancer risks associated with air toxics. The list includes an "EJ Score" for each facility to help regions prioritize which facilities to inspect. The most recent HRF list, provided to the regions in November 2014, uses EJ information from a relatively new EPA tool, called EJSCREEN, to develop the "EJ Score." EJSCREEN is an online mapping and analysis tool developed and issued internally by the EPA to help program offices and regions integrate EJ into multiple facets of the agency's work. While regional staff identified several aspects of EJSCREEN that limit its usefulness for the targeting of air toxics inspections, recent and planned updates to EJSCREEN include enhancements that address most of these limitations.

In addition, OECA has developed new mapping tools that combine data from EJSCREEN with data layers from the EPA's GeoPlatform. These tools produce maps that include useful information about the location of facilities and also note areas of potential EJ concerns in nearby communities. OECA demonstrated these tools to EPA regions and has worked with two regions to develop individualized mapping tools based on specific regional needs. We believe that these new mapping tools will help regions target potentially overburdened communities for air toxics inspections.

We make no recommendations.

The EPA has considered EJ in its air toxics facility targeting activities, and the implementation of new tools should enhance agency efforts.