

Security Audit Report

Prepared for
Public Service Staff
Relations Board

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1. Executive Summary

The Public Service Staff Relations Board (PSSRB) is subject to the Government Security Policy (GSP) and must ensure compliance with the GSP and operational standards. The PSSRB is responsible for the conduct of an audit every five years in order to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of its security program. At the request of the PSSRB, Consulting and Audit Canada conducted, in the spring of 2001, an audit of security to provide management of the PSSRB with an objective assessment on the above requirements. Overall we found that the PSSRB met the requirements of the GSP with respect to compliance, efficiency, and effectiveness. The paragraph following provides an overview of the main security measures we observed. We also identified areas for improvement.

Generally, the PSSRB has put in place a security program which complies with the GSP and operational standards. The roles and responsibilities of Security Management, Personnel Security, Physical Security, Information Technology Security as well as Contracting Management Security and Contingency Measures Security are clearly defined in the Security Management Structure.

The Departmental security officer (DSO) carries out his duties by coordinating, controlling and updating the security program on a regular basis. The PSSRB has implemented adequate mechanisms to ensure the protection of sensitive information and assets. The sensitive information and assets are classified, designated, declassified or disposed of, in compliance with the standards. Emergency and recovery plans are periodically developed, documented and revised, in compliance with the requirements.

Due to the size and location of the PSSRB, the responsibilities for the Physical Security are shared with Industry Canada. Both organizations implement joint mechanisms in order to reduce and eliminate threats and risks to information and assets handled by staff.

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) is currently responsible for security screening services which are conducted in compliance with the Security Policy and the Personnel Security standards. However, the original agreement between the two parties for this service is no longer valid. Furthermore, certain roles and responsibilities between the two parties are not clearly established and defined in the agreement. Presently, the PSSRB determines the security level related to the position requirements and requests the appropriate personnel screening. The PWGSC acts as the administrative security officer by granting the level of security requested by the PSSRB.

2. About the Audit

2.1 Context

The Public Services Staff Relations Board (PSSRB) is responsible for protecting sensitive information and goods under their authority. The information must be classified and designated taking into account the provisions for adequate exceptions of the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act. The material goods and those appropriate to information technologies must be classified and specifically designated according to their confidentiality, integrity, availability and value. Information and sensitive goods must be protected according to minimal standards, and related risk and threat assessment.

The PSSRB is responsible for the implementation of the Security Policy within its institution and must conduct an internal audit on their compliance with the policy and their efficiency in implementing it at least every five years. This audit is conducted within the framework of Treasury Board Secretariat's requirements in this respect.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the audit are to ensure the compliance of all sensitive information and goods with the Government Security Policy (GSP) and with the operational standards and the efficiency and effectiveness of the Security Program of the PSSRB.

More specifically, the objectives focussed on: Security Organisation, Security Management, Physical Security, Personnel Security, Security and Contingency Management and Security and contracting Management.

2.3 Scope of the Audit

The audit covered the following:

Security Organisation: the structure of security management at the PSSRB for the overall security program.

Security Management: the security program, the security education and training programs, the classification and designation of sensitive information and goods, the declassification and disposal of such goods, the measures of protection for sensitive information and goods, the breaches and violations of security and other security-related incidents, the protection measures taken for external communications.

Physical Security: the location and layout of installations, the identification and the application of protection measures in the installations, the examination and control of physical security measures.

Personnel Security: the personnel security investigations, the authorisation, refusal and revocation of security levels, the measures required at employees' termination of employment.

Security and management of emergency cases: necessary actions are taken to protect sensitive information and assets and employees during all types of emergencies.

Security and management of contracting: security measurements are included with other requirements in contracts involving access to sensitive information.

2.4 Approach and Methodology

The audit methodologies are comprised of interviews, data gathering, information and report analyses, the study of files and the observation of practices. The 1996 TBS Security Audit Guide was used for this audit.

3. Findings and Management Responses

3.1 Security Organisation

3.1.1 Objective: To verify whether there is in place a security management structure meeting the Agency's requirements for the overall security program, specifically management security, physical security and personnel security.

PSSRB has implemented a security management structure which meets the overall security program needs of the Agency. The security responsibilities are clearly defined, established and assigned to personnel whose positions include security responsibilities defined in the position description. Industry Canada, a tenant in the same building as PSSRB, is responsible for the development and implementation of the physical security. For personnel security screening PSSRB depends on the services of PWGSC.

Area of improvement

The audit has found that the agreement between the PSSRB and PWGSC for the delivery of personnel security screening services has expired. Furthermore, certain roles and responsibilities of PWGSC as related to the security of the PSSRB personnel were not clearly established in the expired agreement.

Management Response

The PSSRB recognizes the importance of maintaining valid agreements with its service providers, especially when dealing with security issues. The PSSRB also appreciates the necessity of having clear roles and responsibilities defined in the agreement and understood by all parties.

After being apprised of the above situation, the PSSRB contacted PWGSC to begin negotiation on a new agreement, which would clearly state roles and responsibilities of all parties.

The PSSRB will also ensure that this agreement is revised periodically and that it is extended, based on operational requirements.

3.2 Security Management

3.2.1 Objective: To verify whether a good security program is an integral part of the PSSRB's overall program and meets the GSP requirements and operational standards.

The PSSRB currently has a good security program in place which complies with the requirements of the GSP and operating standards. The responsibilities assigned to security personnel are fully carried out. Guides and procedures have been developed which are used as guidelines for those in charge of security.

Area of improvement

Develop a security policy or adapt the TBS security policy to meet the PSSRB requirements.

Management Response

The PSSRB will review current Government Security Policy and determine how and if it can be adapted to meet PSSRB requirements. Should this not be feasible, the PSSRB will develop its own internal security policy.

It should be noted that although the PSSRB has no official internal policy which covers all aspects of security, it does have a policy on electronic mail, which sets out standards for ensuring that established security levels are adhered to and that needed information is preserved.

3.2.2 Objective: To verify whether there are good security education and training programs.

The PSSRB does not have in place a security education and training program.

Area of improvement

Provide training to employee with security responsibilities.

Management Response

The PSSRB is fully supportive in providing training to its employees. Each year, a training plan is submitted by employees and approved by the Chairperson. The PSSRB will ensure that those employees with specific security functions are made aware of and encouraged to take training necessary to meet current and upcoming security requirements.

3.2.3 Objective: To verify whether sensitive information and goods are classified and designated in compliance with the GSP and operational standards, and whether the classifications and designations are unclassified or eliminated when the information and the goods are no longer, or less of a sensitive nature.

The PSSRB has implemented a mechanism to ensure that goods of a sensitive nature are classified and designated in compliance with the GSP and operational standards; the same mechanism is also being used to declassify or dispose of the same goods.

Area of improvement

No recommended improvement

3.2.4 Objective: To verify whether protection measures are applied for sensitive information and goods, as well as for employees, in compliance with the mandatory standards and with a risk management methodology.

The PSSRB has implemented mechanisms to ensure the security of sensitive information. A process is in place to declassify sensitive information when it is no longer sensitive. The controls in place ensure that sensitive information is sent to individuals with the appropriate level of clearance or who are authorized to receive such information.

Area of improvement

No recommended improvement

3.2.5 Objective: To verify whether breaches of security, security violations and other security-related incidents that may happen are the subject of an enquiry, that measures are taken to minimise the losses and that the necessary administrative or disciplinary measures are taken if warranted.

Breaches of security, security violations and other security-related incidents are reported to Industry Canada. Industry Canada is responsible to take the necessary administrative measures and to ensure follow-up.

A mechanism is in place and is used to report security breaches and to prepare reports.

Area of improvement

No recommended improvement

3.2.6 Objective: To verify whether the necessary protection measures are taken for the sensitive information communicated to or from official sources outside the department.

The PSSRB is in compliance with procedures concerning sensitive information transmitted to official sources outside the department.

Area of improvement

No recommended improvement

3.3 Physical Security

3.3.1 Objective: To verify whether consideration was given to providing good siting to, as well as adequate retrofit of installations, so as to reduce or eliminate threats and risks to which the information, the goods and the employees in those installations are exposed.

The PSSRB uses the facilities along with other government departments. Industry Canada ensures the physical security, thus reducing or eliminating threats and risks. A physical security committee is established with a representative of the PSSRB.

The physical security is adequate.

Area of improvement

No recommended improvement

3.3.2 Objective: To verify whether the required physical protection measures are applied in installations, so that sensitive information and goods are well protected.

The current physical protection measures ensure that sensitive information and goods are well protected.

Area of improvement

No recommended improvement

3.3.3 Objective: To verify whether the physical security measures required are applied in the installations to ensure the protection and security of staff.

Implemented physical security measures in the PSSRB facilities ensure employee protection and security.

Area of improvement

No recommended improvement

3.3.4 Objective: To verify whether the physical security measures are periodically reviewed and controlled.

Security measures are reviewed and controlled periodically.

Area of improvement

No recommended improvement

3.4 Personnel Security

3.4.1 Objective: To ensure that the personnel of the PSSRB is subjected to a security check according to the Government Security Policy (GSP) and the standard on Personnel Security

The audit found that security checks were conducted in compliance with the Government Security Policy (GSP) and the standards on Personnel Security. PWGSC is responsible for the safe storing of personnel records and for the filling in and storing of security investigation forms requests.

Area of improvement

No recommended improvement

3.4.2 Objective: To verify whether the necessary levels of security are authorised, refused and revoked according to the GSP and to the personnel security standard, and whether such measures are taken in a just and impartial way.

The PSSRB has no record of refusals or revocations of levels of security. The PSSRB recognizes its responsibilities in this matter.

Area of improvement*No recommended improvement***3.4.3 Objective: To verify that the necessary measures are taken to reduce or eliminate any risk for the sensitive information and goods, as well as for the department's essential systems at the termination of employment.**

The audit found that the necessary measures are taken at the termination of employment.

Area of improvement*No recommended improvement***3.5 Security and Contingency Management****3.5.1 Objective: Ensure that managers of facilities throughout the department have taken the necessary action to protect sensitive information and goods and employees during all types of emergencies.**

The PSSRB has put in place the necessary measures required to protect sensitive information and goods, as well as the employees during all types of emergencies. These plans were developed to be ready for all types of emergency situations.

Emergency actions plans are maintained and reviewed periodically.

Area of improvement*No recommended improvement***3.5.2 Objective: Ensure that department- wide plans are developed to provide for the resumption of essential business operations following an unplanned interruption.**

Resumption of operations plans are developed and in place. A list of official documents updated twice yearly is forwarded to the National Archives to ensure the resumption of operations. The information saved on tapes are also forwarded to National Archives on a weekly basis.

Grievance and complaints files are maintained as examples for the resumption of operations.

Area of improvement*No recommended improvement*

3.6 Security and Contracting Management

3.6.1 Objective: Ensure that security requirements are included with other requirements in contracts when they involve access to sensitive information and goods.

The PSSRB does not have mechanisms in place to check authorisation to access facilities by the contracting parties.

Area of improvement

Put in place a mechanism to check the authority to access the facilities by the contracting parties.

Management response

The PSSRB is fully aware of its responsibility to ensure that only those individuals with proper authority are given access to its facilities. In some cases, authority to access PSSRB facilities is given by another department, such as Industry Canada, but the PSSRB is informed in advance. The PSSRB will ensure that in those situation where another department gives access to its facilities, once the individuals show up, their name and authority will be verified with the other department.