



## Amtrak OIG finds inefficiencies in employee background check processes

**For Immediate Release**

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WASHINGTON –Amtrak has improved its background check process for new hires, but still faces challenges with oversight and implementation, according to an Amtrak Office of Inspector General audit released Monday.

The OIG found improvements in the company's background check process since [the OIG last reviewed this issue in a 2012 report](#), which cited numerous management control weaknesses. For example, of the 1,293 employees hired in fiscal year 2017, only seven did not have completed background checks before they started work, and those seven background checks were completed within several days of the employees' start dates. By comparison, the OIG's 2012 report found significant numbers of employees reported to work before they were cleared.

Monday's report noted that Amtrak has strengthened its process for reviewing criminal histories of prospective employees, but remains hindered by limitations in its contract with the vendor conducting background checks. In fiscal year 2017, the vendor referred 54 percent of its background checks back to Amtrak for completion because of discrepancies in employment or education histories. The high return rate was because of counterproductive contract provisions that restricted the extent to which the vendor could check these histories and Amtrak's limited oversight over the vendor's education and employment history checks.

The report also found that Amtrak had challenges complying with its own policies for companies who supply them with contractor employees. Under Amtrak's policy, supplying companies must certify that they completed background checks for employees contracted to work for Amtrak. As of September 2018, Amtrak had not implemented this control because it had not determined which department should be responsible for informing contractors of this requirement. Another policy required Amtrak to develop a list of approved background check vendors for contractors to use, but it had not been implemented for the same reason.

Additionally, a policy required Amtrak to audit contractors' compliance with the background check requirements. Amtrak had not conducted these audits due to a lack of company resources, according to the report. Because Amtrak has not implemented controls to ensure

contractors complete required checks on their employees, the company lacks assurances its contractors do not pose a risk to company operations.

To address the findings in the report, the OIG recommended that Amtrak strengthen oversight of its background check vendor to ensure it follows company guidance for resolving questions about the education and employment histories of prospective employees. An Amtrak official said they plan to revise the contract provisions to address the limitations identified in the current contract regarding education and employment reviews, according to the report.

Additionally, the OIG recommended that Amtrak clarify which of its departments is responsible for implementation and oversight of Amtrak's background check policy and processes related to contractors. Specifically, the responsible departments would ensure contractors certify they have completed background checks on their employees who work for Amtrak and would audit contractors' compliance with the company's background check requirements. Finally, the OIG recommended that the company clarify its policy requiring it to develop a list of approved vendors that contractors can use in conducting background checks.

Company officials concurred with the report's findings and agreed to implement all of the OIG recommendations.

To download the full report, go to <https://go.usa.gov/xPpIj>

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