



## **OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / [www.oig.dhs.gov](http://www.oig.dhs.gov)

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### **DHS Still Challenged in Safeguarding Weapons, Badges, and other Sensitive Assets**

A new report from the Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), reveals that the nation's largest law enforcement agency continues to face challenges in safeguarding its most sensitive assets, including firearms and badges issued to employees.

The new report, "DHS' Controls over Firearms and Other Assets," found that despite the controls the Department implemented following a 2010 OIG audit, between 2014 and 2016 Department personnel lost a total of 2,142 highly sensitive assets — 228 firearms; 1,889 badges; and 25 secure immigration stamps. Typically, assets were lost or stolen from vehicles, residences and public locations. In more than half of the cases OIG auditors reviewed, the sensitive equipment was lost due to poor safeguarding practices on the part of officers who disregarded policy or used poor judgment. DHS agencies did not consistently hold these officers accountable and none of them received remedial training for failing to safeguard the equipment. Moreover, of the cases auditors reviewed, police recovered three firearms and one badge from convicted felons.

OIG conducted 21 site visits in five states and found that DHS components did not always keep accurate property records and that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has no official inventory system to track secure immigration stamps and security ink. DHS OIG made six recommendations encouraging DHS to strengthen component compliance in safeguarding assets, retrain custodians and personnel in providing timely updates inventory records, ensure that CBP tracks secure immigration stamps, and enforce Departmental oversight to ensure agencies are complying with all relevant policies.

OIG further recommended that DHS agencies stop issuing badges to non-law enforcement personnel. More than 135,000 of these badges have been issued at a considerable cost to taxpayers; as of July 2017, the Department spent approximately \$6 million. Because DHS agencies lost eight times as many badges as firearms, discontinuing the use of these badges could potentially save millions while also reducing unnecessary risk.

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“DHS agencies must do a better job of securing firearms, badges, and other crucial assets,” said Inspector General John Roth. “In the wrong hands, these assets pose a clear danger to the public and can facilitate fraud against DHS programs and the people they are designed to serve.”