

**APHIS INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY (ISS)**  
**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**1. PURPOSE**

This Directive establishes policy and sets forth the responsibilities for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) employees whose positions support the Information Systems Security Program (ISSP).

**2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

This Directive replaces APHIS Directive 3140.5, dated 3/17/09.

**3. AUTHORITIES/REFERENCES**

- a. Computer Security Act of 1987. In this Act (Public Law 100-235), Congress declares that improving the security and privacy of sensitive information in Federal computer systems is in the public interest, and creates a means for establishing minimum acceptable security practices for Federal information systems.  
<http://www.nist.gov/cfo/legislation/Public%20Law%20100-235.pdf>
- b. Clinger-Cohen Act. This Act (Public law 104-106, Division E) defines reforms in information technology acquisition management within the Federal Government.  
[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=104\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ106.104](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=104_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ106.104)
- c. Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA). This Act (Title III of the E-Government Act of 2002) provides a comprehensive framework for ensuring the effectiveness of information security controls over information resources that support Federal operations and assets.  
<http://csrc.nist.gov/drivers/documents/FISMA-final.pdf>
- d. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-130, Appendix III, Security of Federal Automated Information Resources. This Appendix establishes a minimum set of controls to be included in Federal automated information security programs. It also assigns Federal agency responsibilities for the security of automated information.  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a130/a130trans4.html>

- e. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Department Manual (DM) 3555-01, Certification and Accreditation (C&A) Methodology. This DM provides a high-level overview of the roles related to the certification and accreditation life cycle.  
<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/index.html>
- f. USDA APHIS Strategic Plan 2010-2015. The APHIS Strategic Plan defines the strategic direction as it relates to the Agency mission.  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/about\\_aphis/strategic\\_plan.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/about_aphis/strategic_plan.shtml)
- g. USDA APHIS Information Systems Security Handbook 3140. The APHIS handbook provides a high level overview for managing IT Security Program.  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/itd/it\\_directives.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/itd/it_directives.shtml)
- h. FIPS 200, Minimum Security Requirements for Federal Information and Information Systems. The FIPS 200 provides security requirements for applications.  
<http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/fips/fips200/FIPS-200-final-march.pdf>
- i. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication 800-61, Computer Security Incident Handling Guide. This Guide provides incident handling capability models.  
<http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/PubsSPs.html>
- j. NIST Special Publication 800-53A, Guide for Assessing the Security Controls in Federal Information Systems, Test Procedures. This Guide provides guidance in executing the Security Test and Evaluation (ST&E) process.  
<http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/PubsSPs.html>
- k. Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. This Act holds employees individually and personally responsible for their computers.  
[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse\\_usc&docid=Cite:+18USC1030](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+18USC1030)

#### **4. SCOPE**

- a. This Directive applies to all APHIS employees, contractors, as well as other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and private organizations or individuals who use APHIS information systems to accomplish APHIS business functions. All of the aforementioned are considered users and are included wherever the words “user” or “users” are referenced within this Directive.
- b. APHIS information systems covered by this Directive include all information systems that process, store, or transmit data in support of APHIS’ mission. This includes all computer hardware, software, telecommunications equipment, mobile devices, or other information resources that comprise the APHIS network of general support systems or applications and services they support.

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

Program Units must ensure that the Responsibilities outlined in this Directive for each Role are implemented within their Program. This Directive must be implemented within 90 days of issuance.

## 6. POLICY

- a. All APHIS users have a responsibility to participate in the ISSP and must perform their duties in ways that support ISSP goals. In keeping with the philosophy of "least privilege", users will be provided access to and use of only those information resources needed to accomplish their official business duties. Systems will be installed, operated, and maintained with only those features or services required to satisfy official business requirements in support of APHIS' mission.
- b. APHIS has a specific responsibility to protect information resources and will comply with all Federal and Departmental policies, regulations, and requirements.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The Administrator, in accordance with FISMA, will ensure that APHIS has an established ISSP that:
  - (1) Provides information security protections commensurate with the risk in consideration of the magnitude of the harm resulting from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction of information and information systems.
  - (2) Ensures that information security management processes are integrated with Agency strategic and operational planning processes.
  - (3) Delegates to the APHIS CIO the authority to ensure compliance with the requirements imposed by FISMA.
  - (4) Ensures the Agency has trained personnel to assist in FISMA compliance.
  - (5) Ensures that the APHIS CIO, in coordination with program unit senior program officials, reports annually on the effectiveness of the APHIS ISSP to USDA.
- b. Program Deputy Administrators/Heads of program units are responsible for their program unit's Information Technology (IT) security, and must:
  - (1) Serve as the Authorizing Official (AO) for systems in their programs. The AO is a USDA program executive with the authority to evaluate the

mission, business case, and budgetary needs for the system in view of the security risks present in the system's operating environment.

NOTE: APHIS uses the AO title instead of Designated Authorizing Agent (DAA) to be compliant with NIST and Federal requirements.

- (2) Concur with the recommendation of the Cyber and Privacy Policy and Oversight (CPPO). In accordance with USDA DM 3555-001, the AO will:
  - (a) Be the business owner of the general support system or system being certified and accredited.
  - (b) Assume responsibility for the residual risks of operation of the system in a stated environment.
  - (c) Formally approve the operation of an IT system at an acceptable level of risk within its environment by issuing an accreditation decision. Accreditation decisions include the issuance of:
    - 1 Authorization to Operate (ATO). If, after assessing the results of the security certification and the CPPO Concurrency Review memo, the AO deems that the risk to Agency operations, Agency assets, or individuals is acceptable, and the criteria of the CPPO Concurrency Review memo will be met, an ATO is issued for the information system. If the requirements of the memo cannot be met, then a request for an extension will be submitted.
    - 2 Denial of Operation to Operate (DTO). If, after assessing the results of the security certification, the AO deems that the risk to Agency operations, Agency assets, or individuals is unacceptable, the authorization to operate the information system will be denied.
    - 3 Previous Authorization. In the event that a new AO is assigned responsibility for the information system, the newly assigned AO will review the current security accreditation package (i.e., accreditation decision, decision rationale, and terms and conditions) and the current system status reports to determine if a reaccreditation action is warranted. If the new AO is willing to accept the currently documented risk, then reaccreditation occurs only when there is a significant change to the information system or

when a specified time period has elapsed in accordance with Federal or Agency policies.

4 Approved security requirements documents to include: Memoranda of Agreement (MOA), Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), and any deviations from security policies.

- (d) Communicate to all APHIS employees that information systems security is important to APHIS' mission.
- (e) Assign security management and daily system operations to program officials and system owners.
- (f) Ensure that the annual mandatory Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior training is completed by employees.
- (g) Ensure that the annual mandatory Specialized Training is completed by employees.
- (h) Appoint, in writing, an ISSM and ISSO and alternates to implement the APHIS ISSP requirements. Copies of the assignment letters must be maintained on file for the duration of the employees' appointments.

c. The APHIS CIO, in accordance with FISMA, will:

- (1) Approve and issue APHIS ISSP directives and standards that establish a framework for an ISSP to be implemented by APHIS and its program units.
- (2) Monitor, evaluate, and report to the Administrator on the status of information systems security within APHIS.
- (3) In accordance with DM 3555-001, serve as the certification agent for:
  - (a) Low impact Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services (MRPBS) systems only. Low impact systems from other Program Units will be certified by the Program Unit CIO.
  - (b) Moderate and high impact applications/systems for all APHIS systems.
- (4) Designate, in writing, an ISSPM to execute the APHIS ISSP, which will:
  - (a) Develop and maintain an APHIS ISSP.

- (b) Develop and maintain ISS policies, procedures, and control techniques.
  - (c) Train and provide guidance to personnel with significant IT ISS responsibilities.
  - (d) Assist Agency officials in carrying out their FISMA responsibilities.
- (5) Act as the certification agent for all systems within his/her program. The certification agent will:
- (a) Conduct a security certification which includes a comprehensive assessment of the management and operational and technical security controls of an information system.
  - (b) Determine the extent to which the controls are implemented correctly, operating as intended, and producing the desired outcome in meeting the security requirements for the system.
  - (c) Provide the recommended corrective actions to reduce or eliminate vulnerabilities in the information system.
  - (d) Provide independent assessments of the system security plan to ensure the plan adequately describes the security controls for the information system. The certification agent will be in a position that is independent of individuals who are responsible for the:
    - 1 Development of the information system.
    - 2 Day-to-day operation of the system.
    - 3 Correction of security deficiencies identified during the security certification.

NOTE: The independence of the certification agent is an important factor lending credibility to the security assessment results and ensuring the AO receives the most objective information possible in order to make an informed, risk-based, accreditation decision.

d. The APHIS ISSPM will:

- (1) Be a full-time Federal employee appointed by the APHIS CIO.
- (2) Develop, document, and implement an Agencywide ISSP.

- (3) Ensure information systems security is included in all initiatives to include strategic planning, security enterprise architecture, etc.
- (4) Monitor and evaluate the status of information systems security in APHIS by performing annual compliance reviews of program and system controls.
- (5) Advise the APHIS CIO and program unit CIOs of technological advances in information security that can be used on an Agencywide basis to provide reduced costs for information systems security efforts.
- (6) Report, as appropriate, to the APHIS CIO and external entities, such as OMB, the Government Accountability Office, and Congress, on APHIS ISSP.
- (7) Provide information system security guidance and technical assistance to all program units.
- (8) Monitor APHIS level weaknesses and monitor program level weaknesses reported as a result of self-assessments and external reviews using the FIMSA security management tool.
- (9) Identify resource requirements, including the funding and personnel needed to efficiently manage the APHIS ISSP.
- (10) Plan and chair regular meetings of the APHIS ISSM Council which is the sub-committee of the IT Leadership Advisory Council (IT-LAC).
- (11) Lead APHIS certification teams in support of the APHIS CIO certification duties.

e. The Program CIO, in accordance with FISMA, will:

- (1) Provide an information systems security program management infrastructure that supports APHIS ISSP requirements.
- (2) Ensure that Program Unit personnel perform their responsibilities as outlined in this Directive.
- (3) Appoint, in writing, an ISSM and ISSO and alternates, to implement the APHIS ISSP requirements. Copies of the assignment letters must be maintained on file for the duration of the employees' appointments.
- (4) Review security program management support semi-annually to ensure sufficient security personnel are in place to effectively support APHIS' ISSP requirements.

- (5) Ensure that all APHIS IT security requirements are implemented within program units.
- (6) Ensure that individuals working on ISS are properly trained and supported.
- (7) Provide feedback to the APHIS ISSPM on the status of the program's security posture as required by FISMA.
- (8) Serve as the certification agent for:
  - (a) Low impact program systems.
  - (b) Moderate and high impact applications/systems for other programs.

NOTE: The Program CIO will not certify moderate or high applications/systems for which he/she has direct operational control within his/her program.

f. System Owners are responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of applications and systems under their purview. In accordance with DM 3555-001, system owners will:

- (1) Ensure certification and accreditation is maintained for all current and new systems under their purview.
- (2) Ensure the system is deployed and operated according to the security controls.
- (3) Conduct annual self-assessments of system safeguards on all operational systems and applications under their purview.
- (4) Establish system-level plans of action and milestones (POA&Ms) and implement corrective actions in accordance with the APHIS standard for POA&Ms.
- (5) Grant individuals the fewest possible privileges necessary for job performance (any privileges not specifically granted are denied access) so that privileges are based on a legitimate need to have system access. APHIS will re-evaluate system owners' access privileges annually and revoke access in a timely manner upon personnel transfer or termination.
- (6) Implement rules of behavior for all systems that apply to all personnel managing, administering, or having access to the APHIS IT system.



- (7) Notify the ISSM/ISSO of any suspected incidents in a timely manner, and assist in the investigation of incidents, if necessary.
- (8) Ensure IT system service contracts include ISS provisions.
- (9) Ensure systems' personnel are properly designated, monitored, and trained, including the appointment, in writing, of an individual to serve as the ISSO.
- (10) Ensure system data is kept up-to-date using the FISMA security management toolset.
- (11) Manage the risk posture for all systems they own.
- (12) Ensure the systems that contain sensitive or Personally Identifiable Information is managed effectively to prevent unauthorized disclosure and modification to the data.

g. The APHIS Program ISSM will:

- (1) Be a full-time Federal employee appointed by the Program CIO.
- (2) Serve as the central point of contact for the program's overall ISSP.
- (3) Ensure that the appropriate operational security posture is maintained for applications/information systems in his/her program.
- (4) Serve as the principal advisor to the program's AO, Program CIO, and system owners on all matters involving the security of the program's applications and systems.
- (5) Maintain copies of all current program C&A packages for use in performing required security monitoring activities and reporting.
- (6) Perform certification duties in support of the program CIO and ensure annual compliance reviews are conducted to verify that all systems have in place effective, quality security documentation.
- (7) Conduct self-assessments of the program's ISSP annually to ensure effective implementation of, and compliance with, established policies, directives, and procedures.
- (8) Establish an internal standard process to monitor, track, and close remedial actions required to mitigate risks in accordance with the APHIS standard for POA&Ms and the FISMA security management toolset.

- (9) Participate in the POA&M planning process to create individual POA&Ms.
- (10) Attend weekly status meetings as established by the System Owner and address open POA&Ms, annual assessments, and other action items. Provide feedback to Lessons Learned documents after every C&A project.
- (11) Assist the system owner in establishing a standard internal process to ensure that all users receive periodic security awareness briefings, copies of rules of behavior, and are trained to fulfill his/her ISS responsibilities.
- (12) Assist the system owner in ensuring access privileges are revoked in a timely manner (e.g., transfer, resignation, retirement, change of job description, etc.) -- immediately for an individual being separated for adverse reasons or just prior to notifying him/her of the pending action.
- (13) Notify system owners of user infractions identified during routine compliance assessments.
- (14) Maintain the IT system inventory in accordance with the FISMA management toolset.
- (15) Act as the program unit's central point of contact for all information security incidents and report incidents to the APHIS ISSPM.
- (16) Distribute, as necessary, information to systems administrators and others concerning risks and potential risks to systems.
- (17) Participate as a voting member of the APHIS ISSM Council, participate in special committees under the ISSM Council, and provide other support for the ISSM Council, as appropriate.
- (18) Serve as the Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR) on IT security related contracts (e.g., C&A, etc.) within his/her program.
- (19) Ensure that all deliverables are in compliance with all NIST, Departmental, and APHIS guidelines.
- (20) Assist the IT Project Manager with ensuring that ISSP requirements are included within those systems that are in the development stages.
- (21) Ensure new employees have completed the paper-based security awareness training as part of their on-boarding procedures.
- (22) Ensure that all new and legacy systems that are being enhanced have Secure Code Testing performed.

- h. The Program ISSO works with the system owner and ISSM and ensures the appropriate operational security posture is maintained for an information system. Multiple information systems may be assigned to a single ISSO. The Program ISSO must:
- (1) Ensure the implementation of security protection controls and procedures that are documented in, or referenced by, the System Security Plan for each information system for which he/she is responsible.
  - (2) Assist the system owner and ISSM in ensuring that all users have the requisite security clearances, authorization, need-to-know, and are aware of their security responsibilities before being granted access to the information system.
  - (3) Assist the system owner, IT Project Manager and ISSM in ensuring that each information system user acknowledges his/her responsibility for the security of information systems and information.
  - (4) Maintain, and update annually, a copy of the C&A package for each information system for which he/she is the ISSO.
  - (5) Ensure that the ISSM is notified when an information system is no longer needed or when changes are planned that might affect the accreditation of the information system.
  - (6) Participate in the ISSM's self-assessment and training programs.
  - (7) Participate in the POA&M planning process to create individual POA&Ms.
  - (9) Communicate individual incident(s) and potential incident reports to the ISSM and initiate protective or corrective actions.
  - (10) Ensure that unauthorized personnel are not granted use of, or access to, the information system.
  - (11) Assist the ISSM with ensuring that employees have completed the mandatory USDA Information Security Awareness and Rules of Behavior training. This includes assisting with grading and scoring the paper-based exams that are completed by employees in their program unit.

- (12) Attend weekly status meetings as established by the System Owner and address open POA&Ms, annual assessments, and other action items; and provide feedback to Lessons Learned documents after every C&A project.
- i. IT Incident Response Personnel will implement an incident handling capability for security incidents that includes preparation, detection and analysis, containment, eradication, and recovery. The incident response capability *may* adopt one of several models described in NIST Special Publication 800-61, Computer Security Incident Handling Guide, and will:
- (1) Ensure that each system or program unit's respective IT incident response personnel have been trained in their incident response roles and responsibilities and provided refresher training annually.
  - (2) Test the incident response capability annually using tests and conduct exercises as defined by the system owner to determine the incident response effectiveness.
  - (3) Manage, monitor, and document all ISS incidents on an ongoing basis.
- j. The IT Project Manager will work with the system owner and Program ISSM to coordinate all activities that comprise a system's life cycle from design through implementation. The IT Project Manager reports to the system owner, and will:
- (1) Assist with ensuring that C&A tasks include costs into the project schedule and budget C&A costs for both the development and maintenance stages of the project in alignment with the Capital Planning and Investment Control process.
  - (2) Coordinate and manage POA&Ms with the various subject matter experts who own and use the system.
  - (3) Ensure that all vulnerabilities are remediated within the system.
  - (4) Ensure that all new and legacy systems that are being enhanced have Secure Code Testing performed.
- k. The System/Network Administrator's role may include security of local area network or application administration. As required, the system/network administrator will:
- (1) Assist in the development and maintenance of system security plans and contingency plans for all systems under his/her responsibility.

- (2) Participate in risk assessments to periodically re-evaluate sensitivity of the system, risks, and mitigation strategies.
- (3) Participate in self-assessments of system safeguards, program elements, and C&A of the system.
- (4) Evaluate proposed technical security controls to ensure proper integration with other system operations.
- (5) Identify requirements for resources needed to effectively implement technical security controls.
- (6) Ensure the integrity of the implementation and operation of technical security controls by conducting control security tests and evaluations.
- (7) Develop system administration and standard operating procedures and manuals as directed by the system owner.
- (8) Evaluate and develop procedures to ensure proper integration of service continuity with other system operations.
- (9) Notify the responsible system owner or ISSM/ISSO of any suspected incidents in a timely manner, and assist in the investigation of incidents, if necessary.
- (10) Read and understand all applicable training and awareness material.
- (11) Read and understand all applicable use policies or other rules of behavior regarding use or abuse of program unit IT resources. He/she will:
  - (a) Know which systems or parts of systems for which he/she is directly responsible (e.g., network equipment, servers, LAN, etc.), the sensitivity of the data he/she handles, and take appropriate measures to protect it.
  - (b) Know and abide by all applicable APHIS and program directives and procedures.

1. Application Developers are responsible for developing applications. All applications must be developed in accordance with FIPS 200, Minimum Security Requirements for Federal Information and Information Systems. The Developers will:

- (1) Ensure that security controls are embedded into the system during the System Development Lifecycle process.

- (2) Assist the system owner with developing security controls that relate to the application.
  - (3) Develop the automated mechanisms to implement the security controls.
  - (4) Develop protection that prohibits or limits the effects of denial of service attacks.
  - (5) Assist in the continuous monitoring that is a part of the C&A process.
  - (6) Ensure that all vulnerabilities are remediated within the system.
  - (7) Ensure that all new and legacy systems that are being enhanced have Secure Code Testing performed.
- m. Procurement Personnel will ensure all IT contracts have specifically and adequately addressed the Federal Acquisitions Process, APHIS ISSP, USDA Departmental Regulations, and the NIST guidelines in their language and implementation. They will:
- (1) Advise all key APHIS personnel of any procurement regulation changes that can affect the ISSP.
  - (2) Ensure that all necessary security clauses are included in all Government contracts.
- n. APHIS Human Resources Personnel will implement policy and procedures to ensure personnel security is covered. They will:
- (1) Report all IT Security incidents to the MRPBS ISSM.
  - (2) Advise the APHIS ISSPM of any personnel regulation changes that can affect the ISSP.
- o. APHIS Users, Contractors, and Sub-contractors will comply with all Federal, USDA, and APHIS IT security requirements pertaining to the information resources they use.

## **8. EXCEPTIONS**

- a. Exceptions that reduce the requirements of this Directive may be approved only in writing by Unit Heads, the CIO, or the APHIS Administrator.
- b. Each Program/Business Unit is authorized to develop and implement policies and procedures which may (based on risk assessment, mission, legislative mandate, or

information sensitivity) be more stringent or specific than those documented in this Directive.

## **9. COMPLIANCE AND SANCTIONS**

All employees who work with APHIS resources are individually and personally responsible for applying the appropriate security measures and for complying with Federal, USDA, and APHIS policies and procedures on the subject. Willful failure to comply may result in punishment, including dismissal, under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act and other appropriate Federal statutes.

## **10. INQUIRIES**

- a. Direct inquiries or requests for changes to this Directive to the APHIS ISSPM, 4700 River Road, Unit 103, Riverdale, MD 20737 or call 301-851-2551.
- b. Copies of current APHIS Directives can be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/directives/>

/s/

Gary S. Washington  
APHIS Chief Information Officer

Attachments