

AUDIT PROGRAM

The Arkansas Crime Information Center is mandated by the National Crime Information Center to audit law enforcement agencies that utilize its system. The audit procedure not only serves to improve the existing criminal justice information system, but it should also detect problem areas that might hamper the system's operation. The ACIC audit involves four elements. They are as follows:

1. Compliance – determines whether the agency is conforming to ACIC and NCIC policies and regulations.
2. Efficiency – determines whether the agency is managing and utilizing its records/filing system economically and efficiently allowing proper hit confirmation procedures.
3. Data quality – determines whether data integrity meets ACIC/NCIC minimum standards for accuracy thereby reducing potential agency liability.
4. Effectiveness – determines whether the desired results or benefits are being achieved.

Every law enforcement agency with records entered in ACIC/NCIC is audited a minimum of once every two years. Additional audits may be conducted as needed if initial audit findings demand such action be taken. In all instances, the audit is to be used as an instrument for improving the criminal justice information system, not for imposing penalties.

AUDIT PROCESS

The ACIC Audit Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the entire audit process. Questions or information about the audit may be addressed by the coordinator, however, scheduling changes and follow-up visitations or modifications are the responsibility of the auditor.

I. PREPARATION

- A. Forty-five days before an audit, the coordinator will send the agency a pre-audit packet to introduce the audit date, and include copies of ACIC's Audit Program, System Regulations Manual, Record Validation Policy, and Terminal Training Policy. A pre-audit questionnaire will also be included in the packet, which will be used for gathering data prior to the audit. It also serves the purpose of making agencies aware of policies and procedures that will be reviewed. If the agency is a terminal site, The packet will be sent to the TAC and only the cover letter introducing the audit date will be sent to the administrator.
- B. The agency's TAC or Records Coordinator should complete and return the pre-audit questionnaire with additional required documents to ACIC *no later than 20 days prior to the audit*.
- C. Copies of the agency's most recent criminal history queries, training records (for terminal sites), the pre-audit questionnaire, a sample printout of records in the system, and an audit fact sheet (which includes results from the most recent audit, purges due to poor validations, delayed hit responses, and Holder of Record agreements) will be reviewed in the audit.

II. AUDIT

A. Data Quality Review

1. The first phase of the audit consists of reviewing a sample of the agency's ACIC/NCIC entries. This task will be done by pulling the physical files used for entry and reconciling them with the data file records. A maximum sample size of 25 records per file will be used. The files to be reviewed in the audit will include Wanted and Missing Person, Vehicles, and Protection Orders. Also Included on a rotating basis from audit cycle to audit cycle, will be any two of the following four files: Boats, Parts, Guns, and Gang and Terrorist Organization records.
2. Complainant contact on applicable records will be made by the auditor as part of the audit to verify proper validation procedures are being followed and the records are valid.
3. Discrepancies uncovered in the data records require immediate correction to reflect the information contained in the officer's report. Entries not supported by a physical file will be subject to immediate removal from the system. Errors found in this phase of the audit directly affect the review of policies and procedures in the next phase of the audit.

B. Policies and Procedures Review

1. The second phase of the audit will commence with a structured and in depth review of several policies and procedures as described in the ACIC Regulations Manual and interface agreement as applicable. Four primary areas will be reviewed; the first of which is Administrative procedures. This includes review of proper validation, hit confirmation, packing the record, record removal, timely entry, use and logging of pooled id's, and 2nd party review procedures as applicable to each agency under audit.
2. The next area to be reviewed will be Terminal Operator Training. Training records will be reviewed to ensure operators are properly trained to the capacity level of the terminal i.e., whether inquiry only or not.
3. Terminal Security is the next area that will be reviewed which includes policies on security, disposal of printouts, Internet access, background checks, and whether an agency can perform unauthorized transactions on the ACIC terminal.
4. The last area to be reviewed will be Criminal History procedures. This area of study is centered around reviewing an agency's policy on dissemination logging.

C. Findings Conference

1. Upon completion of the data quality review phase, the auditor will conduct an exit interview with the agency's chief official and the TAC to discuss findings, possible problems and recommendations.
2. It is during this process that any discrepancies, misunderstandings or misconceptions between the auditor and the agency are clarified to ensure the final written report reflects a true and accurate finding of the agency's policies, procedures and guidelines associated with records. Also at this time, based on the auditor's findings, appropriate action (modification or removal of records) should be taken by the agency.

III. AUDIT REPORT

- A. A final audit report based on the auditor's findings will be generated and forwarded to the chief official, auditor, and local agent. In addition, copies will be maintained by ACIC in electronic and hard copy forms. The written assessment of the agency will include:
1. A description of any weaknesses found in the agency's internal control systems.
 2. Notations about significant instances of non-compliance with ACIC/NCIC regulations, policies, or procedures found during or in connection with the audit.
 3. Audit findings, recommendations for actions to improve problem areas, suggestions to improve operations and other pertinent information discussed with the agency official.
 4. A description of noteworthy accomplishments, particularly when this information may benefit other agencies.
 5. In essence, all information discussed during the exit interview should be included in the final audit report to ensure a fair and thorough outcome.

IV. SANCTIONS

A. Record Quality

1. As a result of the auditor's findings and recommendations made in the final audit report, ACIC may impose sanctions, based on the following guidelines:
 - a. Determine a percentage of error for each data file (i.e., wanted, missing, vehicle, etc.)
 - b. If the error rating is at or below 10%, no other action will be taken regarding the data files under audit.
 - c. If the error rating exceeds 10%, ACIC will notify the agency in writing of the errors via the audit report and re-audit the agency's bad file(s) within 90 days if the number of new and/or old records mandate it. The local ACIC agent will conduct the re-audit and is available to assist the agency in the correction process prior to the re-audit.
 - d. If at the time of re-audit, the agency's file(s) remain(s) above 10% rating, ACIC will:
 - (1) Purge records in the questionable file(s), with the exception of the Missing Person file.
 - (2) Prohibit the agency's entry capabilities in that/those file(s) until compliance is achieved.
2. To be reinstated and regain the ability to enter records, the chief official of the agency must appeal in writing to the ACIC director, outlining in detail the steps the agency has taken to meet compliance standards.
3. Any agency where sanctions are imposed will be subject to an audit the following year.

IV. SANCTIONS (continued)

B. Policies and Procedures

1. Consideration will also be given to policies in the four areas described in section II, A. These policies and procedures will be evaluated to determine compliance in this area of the audit.
2. If an agency is found out of compliance in any policy or procedure, a request for a “policy correction letter” will be made in the cover letter of the audit report. The letter must list the steps the agency will take or has taken to improve their procedures. The violations must be responded to *within thirty days* of the date on the audit report. Failure to comply with this request will result in the agency being reported to the Operations Sub-Committee of the ACIC Supervisory Board for a recommendation of action to be taken.
3. Agencies which have repeated areas of non-compliance from audit to audit and do not show any changes in their procedures to improve those areas will be subject to further audit procedures. Agencies may also be reported to Operations Sub-Committee of the ACIC Supervisory Board for a recommendation of action to be taken.