



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
National Labor Relations Board
Office of Inspector General

Memorandum

June 2, 2010

To: Bryan Burnett
Chief Information Officer

From: David Berry
Inspector General

Subject: Inspection Report No. OIG-INS-59-10-02: Headquarters Productivity During the Government Closure in February 2010

We initiated this inspection in February 2010, to determine the level of work that occurred during the Government closure and to determine what worked well for those employees and what suggestions the employees may have to improve their ability to perform work-at-home during a Government closure.

We found that, on average, 49.6 percent of the Headquarters employees who responded to our survey engaged in work-at-home for about 3.32 hours on any given day of the Government closure. In total, those employees reported working 1,867 hours. Another 6.4 percent of the Headquarters employees reported coming into Headquarters on at least 1 day during the Government closure. Those employees reported working a total of 128 hours.

BACKGROUND

During February 2010, the Office of Personnel Management closed the Government in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area for 4 days due to snowstorms. During that time, it was widely reported that the cost of the Government closure was calculated as if no work was being completed by Federal employees. It was also reported that methods used to compute the costs were outdated, given that Federal employees can engage in work-at-home.

SCOPE

This inspection was conducted using an electronic survey. We obtained a list of e-mail addresses from the Office of the Chief Information Officer for employees at Headquarters, and sent an e-mail message with an Internet link to the survey to the employees on the list. After the initial e-mail message, we sent out two reminder e-mail messages to the employees who had not yet responded. We also made corrections to the e-mail addresses for omissions that were brought to our attention. After a correction was made, we sent the employees an individual

message with an Internet link to the survey. Through these efforts, we achieved an 87.9 percent survey completion rate.

This review was done in accordance with the Quantity Standards for Inspections issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency.

RESULTS

The following table shows the distribution of employees, by position, who responded to the survey:

Employee Category	Percentage of Employees
Board Attorney	11.1%
GC Attorney	17.3%
Board Manager	7.0%
Board Supervisor	4.6%
GC Manager	14.1%
GC Supervisor	7.8%
Board Administrative	8.1%
GC Administrative	11.1%
Board Support Staff	7.0%
GC Support Staff	11.4%
Presidential Appointee	0.5%

Productivity

Of the employees who responded to our survey, 179 (49.6 percent) indicated that they performed work-at-home on at least 1 day when the Government was closed in the D.C. metropolitan area during the snowstorms. About 25 percent of the employees indicated that at least one of the days that the Government was closed would have been a pre-scheduled work-at-home day. The table below shows the daily average and total hours that employees engaged in work-at-home during the closure:

Day	Average Hours Worked	Total Hours Worked	Number of Employees
Monday	3.36	461	137
Tuesday	3.23	442	137
Wednesday	3.44	495	144
Thursday	3.23	469	145

About 6 percent of the employees responded that, on at least 1 day, they came into Headquarters during the Government closure. The table below shows the average and total hours worked by employees who came into Headquarters:

Day	Average Hours Worked	Total Hours Worked	Number of Employees
Monday	2.33	14	6
Tuesday	3.92	47	12
Wednesday	3.57	25	7
Thursday	3.82	42	11

Use of Information Technology

Over the last several years, the Agency has devoted significant resources to building and maintaining its information technology infrastructure. As a result, many Agency systems can now be accessed by employees from any location that has an Internet connection. For example, the Agency's e-mail system is available to any computer or mobile device with Internet access.

We found that 67 percent of the employees who responded to the survey have a Government laptop computer that the employee could take home. Additional access to the Agency's networks and systems is achieved through the use of an RSA token that allows remote access through Aventail software. The RSA token and Aventail software can be used for either a Government laptop or an employee's personal computer. Based on our survey results, we found that about 44 percent of employees have an RSA token.

Laptop Preparedness

The following table shows the frequency that employees take the Government laptop computer home:

Frequency of Taking the Laptop Home	Percentage of Employees
Almost daily	11.1%
About once or twice a week	21.4%
More than twice a week	3.7%
Almost never	63.8%

Although the severity of the snowstorms and the duration of the Government closure were unknown, there were indications that commuting to work after the storms would be difficult and that there could be a closure or unscheduled leave. About 8 percent of the employees responded that their manager encouraged employees to take the Government laptop computers home prior to the snowstorms. Based on our survey results, we determined that during the closure, almost 36 percent of the employees had a Government laptop computer at

home. The following table shows the distribution of whether the employee took a Government laptop computer home prior to the Government closure, and, if so, why:

	Percentage of Employees
Taking the Laptop Home during the Snowstorm	
I took it home because I almost always take it home.	14.0%
I wanted to make sure I could work if I was not able to come into the office.	21.8%
I did not take the Government laptop computer home.	64.2%

Of the employees who did not take the Government laptop computer home prior to the snowstorm, about 42 percent responded that they would be more inclined to do so in the future.

Equipment Used and Systems Accessed

The tables below show what information technology equipment was reported as being used and what systems were accessed by the employees who performed work-at-home during the Government closure:

	Percentage of Employees
Equipment Used	
Laptop with remote access	33.1%
Laptop without remote access	10.3%
Remote access from personal home computer	48.6%
Blackberry	32.0%
None	14.3%

	Percentage of Employees
Agency Systems Accessed	
E-mail	95.4%
NxGen Case Management	7.4%
eRoom	17.1%
G: and H: drives	22.3%
Legal Research	17.7%
Momentum Financial	0.0%
FPPS Payroll	1.7%
Other	30.3%

For the "Other" category, employees noted: legal research; the Agency's Internet and Intranet sites; electronic travel system; and CATS.

Employee Observations

We also asked employees what worked well for them and what the Agency could do to improve the employee's ability to perform work-at-home. We received 133 responses to this

question, and of those who responded, 87 employees indicated that everything worked well or had no suggestions. Among the employees who have a Government Blackberry, 13 noted that the Blackberry was useful during the Government closures. Some of the suggestions also noted that more planning or information about management's expectations would have been helpful. The table below provides the general nature of the suggestions with regard to information technology issues:

Suggestions	Number of Employees
Would like a Blackberry	4
Would like an additional or better laptop computer	11
Would like Aventail software/RSA token	8
Provide refresher training	2
Could not print from the laptop computer	4
Internet access issues	3
Had difficulty using Aventail	7
More Access (for example: Momentum)	4