



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

AUD-FM-25-22

What OIG Audited

The Department of State (Department) administers the post assignment travel (PAT) program and manages the costs related to travel for employees and their families to move from one official duty station to another. In FY 2023, the Department spent more than \$283 million for the PAT program. Of that \$283 million, more than \$212 million (75 percent) was used for the shipment and storage of personal effects.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit to determine whether the Department administered PAT services for shipping and storing personal effects in accordance with federal and Department requirements. To perform the audit, OIG tested applicable FY 2023 travel services transactions for U.S. Embassies Berlin, Germany; Cairo, Egypt; and Bogota, Colombia.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made four recommendations to improve the administration of PAT services for shipping and storing personal effects. On the basis of the Bureau of Administration's response to a draft of this report, OIG considers the four recommendations resolved, pending further action. A synopsis of management's response to the recommendation offered and OIG's reply follow each recommendation in the Audit Results section of this report. The Bureau of Administration's response is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

May 2025

OFFICE OF AUDITS

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Audit of the Department of State's Administration of the Shipment and Storage of Personal Effects During Post Assignment Travel

What OIG Found

The Department did not always administer PAT services for shipping and storing personal effects in accordance with requirements. Specifically, selected posts reviewed for this audit did not always establish direct procurement service agreements and select and manage transportation service providers in accordance with requirements. For example, OIG found that the Department did not always include the required terms and conditions in tenders. In addition, Department personnel executing the PAT program did not use consistent decision factors to select the appropriate method for shipping personal effects and could not always demonstrate that they had selected the appropriate shipping method. For example, OIG found the Department's despatch agencies could not justify selecting a direct procurement method for 32 (10 percent) of 306 shipments tested.

The deficiencies occurred, in part, because the Department did not have sufficient internal controls to ensure that key personnel consistently administered shipping and storage services as required. For example, the Department did not have sufficient policies outlining requirements or management expectations for certain aspects of PAT administration. Similarly, the Department did not have sufficient procedures to ensure that personnel had the information needed to properly and consistently implement policy requirements. In addition, the Department did not have standardized, formal training for personnel responsible for evaluating shipments of personal effects and selecting the appropriate shipment method.

Until internal controls are improved, the Department will have limited assurance that shipment methods are selected in accordance with requirements and to achieve the best value for the Department. In addition, without sufficient guidance and employee training for those executing the PAT program, the Department cannot ensure that it consistently and efficiently administers PAT services in accordance with federal regulations and Department policies and objectives.