

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FOURTEENTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

RECOMMENDATION

The Treasury Board of Canada, in consultation with the Auditor General of Canada, adopts a strong policy regarding security requirements for handling draft audit reports of the Auditor General, including, but not limited to, sanctions such as ethics training, suspension and or dismissal for failing to comply fully with the document controls.

The Government is committed to working with the Auditor General of Canada to maintain the confidentiality of her draft audit reports before they are tabled in Parliament and takes this issue very seriously.

The Government currently has a strong Government Security Policy in place and other policies related to consequences of non-compliance such as the Terms and Conditions of Employment Policy, among others.

The Government will continue to ensure that these measures are effective and will assist the Office of the Auditor General in communicating their specific security requirements through the development of special guidance specific to the handling of their draft materials and consistent with the Government Security Policy. Once finalized, the Secretary of the Treasury Board will communicate these requirements to all Deputy Heads consistent with their accountabilities and ensure that Departmental Security Officers and departmental officials responsible for liaison with the Office of the Auditor General are informed of the guidance at the same time.

There are also clear consequences for failing to comply with the Government Security Policy and related security requirements. Those consequences flow from the *Financial Administration Act* and other legislation, as well as policies and guidelines that include the Terms and Conditions of Employment Policy and the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service which forms part of the conditions of employment in the core public administration.

Consistent with the *Federal Accountability Act* and Action Plan, the accountability of Deputy Heads in implementing the Government Security Policy and the consequences of non-compliance will be reaffirmed through the ongoing review of the Government Security Policy. The Treasury Board Secretariat is also exploring ways to further enhance oversight and monitoring of the policy. Work is also underway to develop a compliance framework and establish a deputy ministers committee to enable deputies to share best practices and ensure consistency in compliance initiatives, including discipline, across the core public administration.

Efforts are underway to explore the sharing of best practices among Departmental Security Officers and officials responsible for liaison with the Office of the Auditor General and the Government will continue ongoing training and awareness for public officials of their obligations and responsibilities consistent with their conditions of employment and pertaining to the security of information and the consequences of non-compliance.