



Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government: The Green Book 2014

Comptroller General of the United States

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This key resource is often referred to as the "Green Book".

Federal policymakers and program managers are continually seeking ways to better achieve agencies' missions and program results, in other words, they are seeking ways to improve accountability. A key factor in helping achieve such outcomes and minimize operational problems is to implement appropriate internal control. Effective internal control also helps in managing change to cope with shifting environments and evolving demands and priorities. As programs change and as agencies strive to improve operational processes and implement new technological developments management must continually assess and evaluate its internal control to assure that the control activities being used are effective and updated when necessary.

The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 (FMFIA) requires the General Accounting Office (GAO) to issue standards for internal control in government. The standards provide the overall framework for establishing and maintaining internal control and for identifying and addressing major performance and management challenges and areas at greatest risk of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

This report explores the Five Standards for Internal Control as identified by GAO for policymakers and program managers:

- Control Environment
- Risk Assessment
- Control Activities
- Information and Communications
- Monitoring

These standards apply to all aspects of an agency's operations: programmatic, financial, and compliance. However, they are not intended to limit or interfere with duly granted authority related to developing legislation, rule-making, or other discretionary policy-making in an agency. These standards provide a general framework. In implementing these standards, management is responsible for developing the detailed policies, procedures, and practices to fit their agency's operations and to ensure that they are built into and an integral part of operations.

Federal agency staffs, especially IT departments and operational departments may find this book helpful to implementing policy standards.

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