




UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

February 16, 2021

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Notification of Evaluation:
Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on EPA's Ability to Conduct Laboratory Testing
and Assurance Compliance with Mobile Source Emission Standards
Project No. OE-FY21-0047

FROM: Patrick Gilbride, Director 
Environmental Research Programs Directorate
Office of Evaluation

TO: Joseph Goffman, Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of Air and Radiation

In an email dated November 20, 2020, the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency informed the Office of Air and Radiation of our intent to examine:

1. How the coronavirus pandemic—that is, the SARS-CoV-2 virus and resultant COVID-19 disease—has impacted laboratory operations and testing at the EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality's National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory, or NVFEL, in Ann Arbor, Michigan.
2. Any resulting impacts on the Office of Transportation and Air Quality's compliance programs designed to minimize the potential for emissions in excess of standards or for noncompliance with regulations in heavy-duty, light-duty, and non-road vehicles, engines, and equipment.

We initially began preliminary research on this matter under the OIG's broad coronavirus pandemic research initiative, Project No. [OA&E-FY20-0212](#). We are now issuing this notification memorandum to notify the public of our intent to continue work in this specific area.

This evaluation is being conducted using *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The anticipated benefits of this evaluation include informing the public of the EPA's continuity of operations in overseeing mobile source compliance during the coronavirus pandemic and ensuring compliance with clean air laws and regulations. In addition, this evaluation addresses the following top management challenge for the Agency, as identified in our [EPA's FYs 2020–2021 Top Management Challenges](#) report, issued July 21, 2020: maintaining operations during pandemic response.

We respectfully note that the OIG is authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, to have timely access to personnel and all materials necessary to complete its objectives. We will request that you immediately resolve the situation if an Agency employee or contractor refuses to provide requested materials to the OIG or otherwise fails to cooperate with the OIG. We may report unresolved access matters to the administrator and include the incident in the *Semiannual Report to Congress*.

We will post this memorandum on our public website at www.epa.gov/oig.

cc: Dan Utech, Chief of Staff

Wesley J. Carpenter, Deputy Chief of Staff

Avi Garbow, Special Advisor to the Administrator

Elizabeth Shaw, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation

Alejandra Nunez, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Mobile Sources, Office of Air and Radiation

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