



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 30, 2010

CDC Property Worth Millions Unaccounted For in 2007

House Republicans Joe Barton of Texas and Greg Walden of Oregon requested that the Inspector General audit the CDC for its inventories after accusations arose that \$22 million of its property had been lost or stolen. The audit of the \$350 million in equipment belonging to the Centers was carried out in 2007.



[Fox News](#) reports,

The report was released this week by the inspector general for the Department of Health and Human Services, the parent agency of the CDC. In 2007, the auditors checked on 200 randomly sampled items and found 15 were lost or not inventoried.

The [Associated Press](#) adds,

The [government audit] says among the more than \$8 million in property unaccounted for were a \$1.8 million hard disk drive and a \$978,000 video conferencing system.

CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden indicates that the CDC does not contest the report's conclusions and claims to have implemented a better management system that has helped to account for all of CDC's property this year. Frieden adds that 99 percent of the lost property was accounted for in 2009.

Fox News adds,

The agency still hasn't explained what happened to the 15 pieces of missing equipment from 2007, auditors said. But a CDC spokeswoman on Wednesday said all but four of the items — including the two most expensive ones — have since been accounted for.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention faced similar issues in 1995. After being audited, the agency discovered that it could not account for over \$5 million in property.

According to Fox News, while the CDC "gets high marks for how well it does at its core mission of promoting health and investigating outbreaks of illness," it lacks "incentive" to maintain inventory on its property.

Tom Schatz of Citizens Against Government Waste responded to the report's conclusions:

It's just a good thing they haven't lost any diseases. There are a lot of agencies that do their job well, but they don't manage the 'little things' very well. The Defense Department is notorious for losing all kinds of equipment, but they do a pretty good job defending the country.

The CDC was also under scrutiny in [1999](#) after Congress discovered that \$23 million approved for research on chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) was spent on other things, and that the CDC attempted to falsify information about the spending. CDC researcher William Reeves reportedly revealed the



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misappropriation of the funds, prompting an audit by the Inspector General.

The 1999 report found that “CDC’s various centers, divisions and branches are able to arbitrarily charge indirect costs to some or all of their programs, with no assurance that those charges will be reasonable and consistent.”

The most recent audit is unique to the Centers for Disease Control, as it is the only Health and Human Services agency to undergo such an investigation. Other HHS agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration, have not been subject to such audits.

Photo: CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden



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