

Federal Agencies Experience Sharp Rise in Security Incidents

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We've all heard about security breaches occurring in the private sector. The public sector is also subject to security threats, as evidenced by a new report to Congress by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). From September 2010 through October 2011, the GAO conducted an audit of 24 major federal agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Energy, Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration. As a result of the audit, the GAO concluded that each of the 24 agencies demonstrated weaknesses in various information security controls, including in some cases, policies and procedures.

The GAO report, entitled "Information Security: Weaknesses Continue Amid New Federal Efforts to Implement Regulations," shows a 650% increase in the number of security incidents, like unauthorized access, denial of service and malicious code, experienced by these federal agencies over the past five years. In fiscal year 2006, there were 5,503 reported incidents and by fiscal 2010, this number increased to 41,776.

Whether you are operating in the public or private sector, implementing appropriate information security controls, starting with policies and procedures, can help to prevent or manage a security incident.

For more information about legislation or litigation involving technology, intellectual property protection of information technology assets or any other Information Technology law issue, contact your Miller Canfield attorney.