



Summary of Investigation

Investigation into Allegations That FirstNet Authority Senior Officials Interfered with OIG Audits

Case No. 24-0175

Date Posted: August 28, 2025

► **What We Investigated** | We received three complaints from senior officials at the First Responder Network Authority, who alleged that FirstNet Authority leadership tried to obstruct audits by the Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) Office of Audit and Evaluation (OAE). The misconduct described in the complaints included:

- Planning to “combat the OIG” by seeking compromising information about the Inspector General
- Directing FirstNet Authority staff to track and report communications with OIG, insert improper disclaimers into emails, and record conversations with OIG employees
- Taking retaliatory actions, including placement on administrative leave, loss of duties, and pressure to resign, against staff who shared information with OIG

► **What We Found** | Our investigation revealed that FirstNet Authority officials altered or withheld documents that OAE requested, including after-action reports and meeting minutes, impeding the accuracy and timeliness of information needed for OIG audits. We also reviewed internal communications that emphasized a “warlike” relationship toward OIG and referred to OIG as their “common enemy.” Additionally, we found that FirstNet Authority officials attempted to identify and intimidate staff who communicated with OIG personnel, including but not limited to improperly monitoring employees’ communications with OIG, and in one case taking retaliatory action against an employee who cooperated with OIG.

Collectively, these actions violated the requirements that FirstNet Authority employees cooperate with OIG and protect employees from retaliation, thereby interfering with OIG’s statutory right of access and duty to keep the Secretary of Commerce and Congress informed of serious issues affecting FirstNet Authority.

This case was declined for criminal prosecution. We referred our findings to the Department in April 2025 for any appropriate action. In August 2025, we received a response from FirstNet Authority stating that several individuals involved in the investigation are no longer employed by the Department and that appropriate counseling was provided to those who remain. FirstNet Authority also noted that new leadership is in place.