

**STATE OF FLORIDA AUDITOR GENERAL**

**Information Technology Operational Audit**

Report No. 2026-035  
October 2025

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
NETWORK SECURITY CONTROLS**

At Selected State Agencies



Sherrill F. Norman, CPA  
Auditor General

## State Agency Heads

The Florida Statutes establish the various State agencies and provide the title and selection process for the head of each State agency. The table below shows the three State agencies included in the scope of this information technology operational audit and the respective agency heads who served during the period of our audit.

State Agency	Established by Florida Statutes	State Agency Head
Department of Commerce	Section 20.60	J. Alex Kelly, Secretary
Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles	Section 20.24	Dave Kerner, Executive Director
Department of Juvenile Justice	Section 20.316	Dr. Eric Hall, Secretary

The Auditor General conducts audits of government entities to provide the Legislature, Florida's citizens, public entity management, and other stakeholders unbiased, timely, and relevant information for use in promoting government accountability and stewardship and improving government operations.

The team leader was Ben Ho, CISA, and the audit was supervised by Brenda Shiner, CISA.

Please address inquiries regarding this report to Brenda Shiner, CISA, Audit Manager, by e-mail at [brendashiner@aud.state.fl.us](mailto:brendashiner@aud.state.fl.us) or by telephone at (850) 412-2946.

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# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY NETWORK SECURITY CONTROLS

## At Selected State Agencies

### **SUMMARY**

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This operational audit focused on evaluating selected information technology (IT) network security controls at the Department of Commerce (COM), the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV), and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Our audit disclosed the following:

**Finding 1:** Certain network security controls at COM, the DHSMV, and the DJJ need improvement to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of agency data and IT resources.

### **BACKGROUND**

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Management designs information technology (IT) control activities to support the entity's information systems and automated business processes. The control activities are fundamental components of an entity's internal control system and apply broadly across the IT environment. IT general controls are the overarching policies and procedures that apply to all or a large segment of an entity's information systems and influence the effectiveness of application controls and other specific controls within an entity's IT environment. General controls help ensure the proper operation of information systems by creating the environment for the appropriate operation of application and user controls. General controls help mitigate information security risks and are designed to help entity management achieve the information security objectives of:

- Confidentiality, thereby preserving authorized restrictions on information access and disclosure.
- Integrity, thereby guarding against improper information modification or destruction.
- Availability, thereby ensuring timely and reliable access and use of information and IT resources.

Network security is one of the most fundamental parts of an entity's IT infrastructure environment, and strong network security controls are vital to protect entity IT resources and data. Malicious cyber actors routinely exploit weak network security controls to compromise an entity's IT systems. Strong network security controls include implementing multi-factor authentication for all network access, restricting administrative-level account access, and routinely performing vulnerability scanning, analysis, and remediation. Network security risks are potential vulnerabilities, threats, and weaknesses in the network infrastructure that malicious cyber actors can exploit. Such risks include unauthorized access attempts, malware infections, data breaches, denial of service, and configuration faults in network devices. Our audit evaluated selected network security controls at the Department of Commerce, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Pursuant to State law,<sup>1</sup> the Department of Commerce (COM) is to assist the Governor in working with the Legislature, State agencies, business leaders, and economic development professionals to formulate and implement coherent and consistent policies and strategies designed to promote economic

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<sup>1</sup> Section 20.60(4), Florida Statutes.

opportunities for all Floridians and serve as the State's chief agency for business recruitment and expansion and economic development.

The mission of the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) is to provide highway safety and security through excellence in service, education, and enforcement. The DHSMV partners with county tax collectors and local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies to promote a safe driving environment, issue driver's licenses and identification cards, facilitate motor vehicle transactions, and provide consumer protection and public safety services.

The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is to increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services. Pursuant to State law,<sup>2</sup> the DJJ is responsible for planning, coordinating, and managing the delivery of all programs and services within the juvenile justice continuum.

## ***FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION***

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### **Finding 1: Network Security Controls**

Network security controls are intended to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and IT resources. Our audit procedures disclosed that certain network security controls at COM, the DHSMV, and the DJJ need improvement. We are not disclosing specific details of the issues in this report to avoid the possibility of compromising those agencies' data and IT resources. However, we have notified appropriate COM, DHSMV, and DJJ management of the findings in the areas needing improvement.

Without appropriate network security controls, the risk is increased that the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of COM, DHSMV, and DJJ data and IT resources may be compromised.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that COM, DHSMV, and DJJ management improve certain network security controls to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of agency data and IT resources.

## ***OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY***

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The Auditor General conducts operational audits of governmental entities to provide the Legislature, Florida's citizens, public entity management, and other stakeholders unbiased, timely, and relevant information for use in promoting government accountability and stewardship and improving government operations.

We conducted this information technology (IT) operational audit from December 2024 through July 2025 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for the audit findings and our conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the audit findings and our conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 20.316(1)(b), Florida Statutes.

This IT operational audit focused on evaluating selected significant IT network security controls at the Department of Commerce (COM), Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV), and Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) during the period July 2024 through March 2025 and selected actions subsequent thereto. For those areas addressed by this audit, our audit objectives were:

- To determine the effectiveness of selected significant IT controls in achieving management's objectives in the categories of compliance with controlling laws, administrative rules, and other guidelines; the confidentiality, integrity, availability, relevance, and reliability of data; the safeguarding of IT resources; and the effectiveness and efficiency of IT operations.
- To identify statutory and fiscal changes that may be recommended to the Legislature pursuant to Section 11.45(7)(h), Florida Statutes.

This audit was designed to identify, for the IT systems included within the scope of the audit, deficiencies in management's internal controls that were significant to our audit objectives; instances of noncompliance with applicable governing laws, rules, or contracts; and instances of inefficient or ineffective operational policies, procedures, or practices. The focus of this audit was to identify problems so that they may be corrected in such a way as to improve government accountability and efficiency and the stewardship of management. Professional judgment has been used in determining significance and audit risk and in selecting the particular IT controls, legal compliance matters, and records considered.

As described in more detail below, for the IT systems included within the scope of this audit, our audit work included, but was not limited to, communicating to management and those charged with governance the scope, objectives, timing, overall methodology, and reporting of the audit; obtaining an understanding of and evaluating the IT systems and related significant controls; exercising professional judgment in considering significance and audit risk in the design and execution of the research, interviews, tests, analyses, and other procedures included in the audit methodology; obtaining reasonable assurance of the overall sufficiency and appropriateness of the evidence gathered in support of the audit findings and our conclusions; and reporting on the results of the audit as required by governing laws and auditing standards.

This audit included the selection and examination of IT system controls and records. Unless otherwise indicated in this report, these items were not selected with the intent of statistically projecting the results, although we have presented for perspective, where practicable, information concerning relevant population value or size and quantifications relative to the items selected for examination.

An audit by its nature does not include a review of all records and actions of agency management, staff, and contractors and, as a consequence, cannot be relied upon to identify all instances of noncompliance, fraud, waste, abuse, or inefficiency.

In conducting this audit, we:

- Interviewed COM, DHSMV, and DJJ personnel and reviewed applicable agency laws, rules, policies and procedures, and other guidelines to obtain an understanding of the agencies' organizational structures, statutory requirements, and operational processes.
- Reviewed COM, DHSMV, and DJJ records and obtained an understanding of the agencies' network domain infrastructures, including purpose, users, and access methods.
- Reviewed COM, DHSMV, and DJJ records and obtained an understanding of the agencies' vulnerability management processes.

- Evaluated the adequacy of COM, DHSMV, and DJJ network authentication and security controls.
- Evaluated the adequacy of COM, DHSMV, and DJJ vulnerability management policies and procedures and the effectiveness of vulnerability management processes, including the timely performance of authenticated scans and analysis and remediation of identified vulnerabilities. Specifically, we evaluated vulnerability scans performed by the agencies in February 2025 to determine whether vulnerabilities identified as critical or high on the Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures list were timely remediated.
- Communicated on an interim basis with applicable officials to ensure the timely resolution of issues involving controls and noncompliance.
- Performed various other auditing procedures, including analytical procedures, as necessary, to accomplish the objectives of the audit.
- Prepared and submitted for management response the finding and recommendation included in this report describing the matters requiring corrective actions. Management responses are included in this report under the heading **MANAGEMENT RESPONSES**.

## ***AUTHORITY***

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Section 11.45, Florida Statutes, provides that the Auditor General may conduct audits of the IT programs, activities, functions, or systems of any governmental entity created or established by law. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 11.45, Florida Statutes, I have directed that this report be prepared to present the results of our IT operational audit.



Sherrill F. Norman, CPA  
Auditor General

# MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

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Ron DeSantis GOVERNOR  
J. Alex Kelly SECRETARY

October 20, 2025

Ms. Sherrill F. Norman, CPA  
Auditor General  
G74 Claude Pepper Building  
111 West Madison Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1450

Dear Ms. Norman:

This is regarding the preliminary and tentative finding resulting from your Information Technology Operational Audit of Network Security Controls. Our response is enclosed.

We thank you and your staff for the recommendations. Please contact Jim Landsberg or Sean Shrader at (850) 245-7135 if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Alex Kelly".

J. Alex Kelly  
Secretary

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**Florida Department of Commerce  
Information Technology Operational Audit of Network Security Controls  
Response to Preliminary and Tentative Finding**

**Finding 1: Network Security Controls**

**Auditor Recommendation:** We recommend that COM, DHSMV, and DJJ management improve certain network security controls to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of agency data and IT resources.

**FloridaCommerce Response:** FCOM will work to improve network security controls to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of FCOM's data and IT resources. Our anticipated completion date to address all recommendations associated with this finding is December 31, 2025.

Dave Kerner  
Executive Director

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Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0500  
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Ron DeSantis  
Governor

James Uthmeier  
Attorney General

Blaise Ingolia  
Chief Financial Officer

Wilton Simpson  
Commissioner of Agriculture

October 9, 2025

Sherrill Norman, CPA  
Auditor General  
G74 Claude Pepper Building  
111 West Madison Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1450

Dear Ms. Norman:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the preliminary and tentative findings and recommendations from your information technology operational audit of Network Security Controls at the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. We appreciate the efforts of your staff and in accordance with Section 11.45(4)(d), Florida Statutes, we have included our response to the recommendations made in your report.

The Department is committed to providing highway safety and security through excellence in service, education, and enforcement. The results of your report will be used as part of the Department's continuous efforts to improve operations.

If you have any questions regarding our response, please contact Erin Mook, Audit Director at (850) 617-3104.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'DK', followed by a horizontal line.

Dave Kerner  
Executive Director

DMK/em

Enclosure

cc: Mike Stacy, Inspector General

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**Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles  
Response to the Auditor General's IT Operational Audit  
Preliminary and Tentative Audit Findings**

**Finding No. 1: Network Security Controls**

Certain network controls at COM, the DHSMV, and the DJJ need improvement to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of agency data and IT resources.

**Recommendation**

We recommend that COM, DHSMV, and DJJ management improve certain network security controls to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of agency data and IT resources.

**Agency Response**

During the operational audit, Information Systems Administration made some improvements to network security controls and concurs with finding 1. The Department will continue to implement improvements to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of agency data and IT resources.



## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

October 9, 2025

Sherrill F. Norman, CPA  
Auditor General  
Claude Denson Pepper Building, Suite G74  
111 West Madison Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1450

Dear Ms. Norman:

Please find attached the Department's response to preliminary and tentative findings from your recent operational audit of selected information technology (IT) network security controls at the Department of Juvenile Justice. We agree with the findings and have taken the appropriate steps to ensure corrective actions will or have already been put in place.

I appreciate the professionalism demonstrated by your team throughout the audit process. I am confident that this audit will contribute significantly to ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the department's data and IT resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew J. Walsh MSW".

Matthew J. Walsh, MSW  
Secretary

cc: Heather DiGiacomo, Chief of Staff  
Timothy Niermann, Deputy Secretary  
T. Dodie Garye, Assistant Secretary for Administration  
Gregory Davis, Deputy Secretary for Administration  
Robert Munson, Inspector General  
Kelly Neal, Audit Administrator

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Ron DeSantis | Governor

Matthew J. Walsh, MSW | Secretary

*The mission of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice is to enhance public safety through high-quality effective services for youth and families delivered by world-class professionals dedicated to building a stronger, safer Florida.*

**Florida Department of Juvenile Justice  
IT Operational Audit of Network Security Controls**

**Finding 1: Network Security Controls**

Network security controls are intended to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and IT resources. Our audit procedures disclosed that certain network security controls at COM, the DHSMV, and the DJJ need improvement. We are not disclosing specific details of the issues in this report to avoid the possibility of compromising those agencies' data and IT resources. However, we have notified appropriate COM, DHSMV, and DJJ management of the findings in the areas needing improvement.

Without appropriate network security controls, the risk is increased that the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of COM, DHSMV, and DJJ data and IT resources may be compromised.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend that COM, DHSMV, and DJJ management improve certain network security controls to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of agency data and IT resources.

**Response:**

The department acknowledges the findings and agrees with the recommendation. The department is improving network security controls to ensure confidentiality, integrity, and availability of agency data and IT resources. The department is taking actions that will enhance the agency's overall security posture and ensure alignment with best practices.