# Chapter 29
# Public Employees Benefits Agency—Securing Information Systems and Data

## 1.0 MAIN POINT

This chapter reports our third follow-up of an outstanding recommendation from our *2010 Report – Volume 2,* Chapter 8, regarding the Public Employees Benefits Agency's (PEBA) processes to secure its information systems and data.

By March 2016, PEBA had fully implemented this recommendation. PEBA formalized its process for testing information technology (IT) security, and continues to periodically test the effectiveness of its IT security.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

PEBA administers certain government pension and benefit plans. To carry out its responsibilities, PEBA uses IT systems to manage, and provide pension and benefit information to plan members. Securing pension and benefit information is vital to fulfilling PEBA's objectives.

In our *2010 Report – Volume 2,* Chapter 8, we concluded that PEBA had adequate controls to secure its information systems and data with some exceptions. We made five recommendations. By January 31, 2014, as reported in our *2014 Report – Volume 1,* Chapter 25, PEBA had implemented four recommendations, and partially implemented the fifth.

To conduct this review engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*. To evaluate PEBA's progress towards meeting our recommendation, we gathered relevant evidence and assessed management's progress towards addressing the outstanding recommendation. We reviewed its documentation for periodically testing its IT security. We reviewed security assessments (both completed and in progress) and contracts with third parties PEBA hired to complete security assessments.

## 3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION

This section sets out the outstanding recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at March 10, 2016, and PEBA's actions up to that date.

## 3.1 Effectiveness of Security Tested

We recommended that the Public Employees Benefits Agency periodically test the effectiveness of its information technology security. (2010 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement May 18, 2011)

**Status** – Implemented

PEBA formalized its process for periodically testing its IT security by developing an ongoing IT security testing plan. Also, PEBA continued to periodically test its IT security. In accordance with its established process, PEBA hired an external expert to complete an external web and network penetration test in 2015. PEBA hired another external expert to complete a comprehensive assessment of its IT security; this assessment was in progress at March 10, 2016.