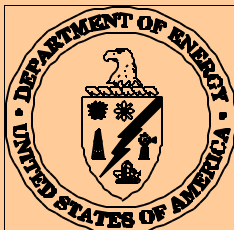


INS-O-01-04

INSPECTION REPORT

INSPECTION OF THE PURCHASE OF PROTECTIVE FORCE RESPIRATORS

APRIL 2001



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Washington, DC 20585

April 12, 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SECURITY AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

FROM: Sandra L. Schneider /s/
Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

SUBJECT: INFORMATION: Report on "Inspection of the Purchase of
Protective Force Respirators" (INS-O-01-04)

BACKGROUND

Office of Security and Emergency Operations (SO) officials determined that SO's program to counter the threat to Department of Energy (DOE) security forces from chemical and biological attacks should include the use of "standardized" equipment. Therefore, SO officials initiated an evaluation of chemical protective gear for the purpose of selecting and procuring a "standard" respirator for use by protective force personnel at all sites. The centralized procurement of a "standard" respirator was intended to: (1) provide a respirator that has proper form, fit, and function that is compatible with weapons and gear, including night vision goggles, used to interdict terrorists;

- (2) create economies of scale purchasing;
- (3) allow standardized training at the National Nuclear Security Institute (NNSI), and
- (4) allow ease of movement of protective force personnel from one site to another in the event of exigent circumstances.

RESULTS OF INSPECTION

We concluded that SO officials did not adequately plan and execute the procurement of respirators for use by the Department's protective forces. We determined that the procurement was not adequately coordinated with affected organizations; that considerably more respirators may be procured than needed; and that by using an NNSI contractor to conduct the procurement, SO officials may have unnecessarily spent about \$63,000 to purchase the respirators and other chemical protective equipment. We also determined that the SO procurement will not result in a standard respirator for use by protective force personnel Department-wide, which was a goal of the procurement. We recommended actions to ensure that future efforts by SO to select and procure "standardized" equipment for protective forces are adequately planned and coordinated, and that SO officials responsible for procurement of equipment for protective forces are knowledgeable of, and appropriately trained in the Department's acquisition process. Management concurred with our recommendations.

Attachment

cc: Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration
Chief of Defense Nuclear Security
Director, Office of Management and Administration
Team Leader, Audit Liaison Team

INSPECTION OF THE PURCHASE OF PROTECTIVE FORCE RESPIRATORS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview

Introduction and Objective..... 1

Background..... 1

Observations and Conclusions..... 2

Details of Findings..... 3

Procurement Will Not Result In
“Standard” Respirators..... 3

Excessive Numbers of Respirators
May Be Purchased..... 3

Procurement Not Adequately Coordinated..... 4

Procurement Approach Added Unnecessary Costs..... 5

Recommendations..... 5

Management Comments..... 6

Inspector Comments..... 6

Appendix

A. Scope and Methodology..... 7

Overview

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

The purpose of our inspection was to review selected issues regarding the procurement by the Department of Energy (DOE) of chemical protective masks (respirators) for use by DOE and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) protective force personnel. Our objective was to determine whether the procurement by the DOE Office of Security and Emergency Operations (SO) of a large quantity of respirators resulted in SO achieving its goal of providing “standardized” respirators for use by protective force personnel Department-wide.

BACKGROUND

SO officials determined that their program to counter the threat to security forces from chemical and biological attacks should include the use of “standardized” equipment. In addition to requesting funds in their FY 2001 budget to “standardize” protective force equipment, SO officials initiated an evaluation of chemical protective gear for the purpose of selecting and procuring a “standard” respirator for use by protective force personnel at all sites.

SO officials told us that the centralized procurement of a “standard” respirator was intended to: (1) provide a respirator that has proper form, fit, and function that is compatible with weapons and gear, including night vision goggles, used to interdict terrorists; (2) create economies of scale purchasing; (3) allow standardized training at the National Nuclear Security Institute (NNSI), formerly the Central Training Academy; and (4) allow ease of movement of protective force personnel from one site to another in the event of exigent circumstances.

The standardization of protective force equipment was discussed in an earlier Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit report titled “Audit of the Management and Cost of the Department of Energy’s Protective Forces,” DOE/IG-0354, dated July 1994. Among other things, the OIG audit report discussed the potential savings that could be realized by the purchase of standardized protective force supplies and equipment.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

We concluded that SO officials did not adequately plan and execute the procurement of respirators for use by the Department's protective forces. We found that the SO procurement will not result in a standard respirator for use by protective force personnel Department-wide, which was a goal of the procurement. We also found that SO officials may be procuring considerably more respirators than needed; that SO officials did not adequately coordinate the procurement with affected organizations; and that, by using an NNSI contractor to conduct the procurement, SO officials may have unnecessarily spent about \$63,000 to purchase the respirators and other chemical protective equipment.

Details of Findings

The only requirement we found regarding protective force respirators was a requirement in the DOE “Protective Forces Program Manual” (PFP Manual) that protective force personnel have a respirator that meets specified criteria. SO officials acknowledged that there are a number of different respirators that can meet the PFP Manual criteria.

Procurement Will Not Result in “Standard” Respirators

We found that the SO procurement will not result in a standard respirator for use by protective force personnel Department-wide. Both the NNSA Office of Transportation Safeguards (OTS), formerly the Transportation Safeguards Division, and the DOE Idaho Operations Office (ID) recently procured different respirators that apparently meet the PFP Manual criteria for an acceptable respirator for protective force personnel. Therefore, according to SO officials, SO will not provide respirators to OTS. Although, SO officials said they would provide respirators for all ID protective force members, we were told by ID officials that about one-third of the ID protective force personnel would be using a different respirator. As a result, OTS personnel will not be equipped with the SO “standard” respirator, while ID protective personnel will be using a mix of respirators, including the SO “standard” respirator and the respirator procured by ID. According to SO officials, other DOE sites may also seek exceptions to the use of the SO “standard” respirator.

Excessive Numbers of Respirators May Be Purchased

We also found that SO officials might be procuring considerably more respirators than needed. The SO official responsible for determining the number of respirators to be purchased said that he experienced difficulty obtaining information from the sites about their specific respirator needs. Therefore, he used a DOE quarterly report entitled “On-Hand Protective Force and PF Support Personnel Strength, Maintained by SO-212 (FOD)” to determine the number of respirators required. He said that he tallied the number of Security Protection Officers II and III and OTS Special Agents in the report, added the NNSI requirements, and then added an additional 10 percent factor for replacement respirators. He said that using this methodology he arrived at a total requirement of 3700 respirators.

Using the SO official’s methodology, however, we calculated that, at most, only 3,067 respirators (2,825 respirators if OTS personnel are excluded) should be procured. We discussed the results of our calculation with the SO official, who was unable to duplicate his earlier calculation that resulted in the figure of 3700 respirators. He acknowledged that his earlier calculation would result in SO officials procuring more respirators than may be required.

**Procurement Not
Adequately
Coordinated**

We found that SO officials did not adequately coordinate the selection and procurement of the respirators with affected organizations, such as those that will be required to fit and maintain the respirators in the field. Traditionally, the Respirator Protection Program Administrators (RPPAs) at various sites assess their individual site's concerns and specific hazards. Respirators are then selected for all personnel at the site based on these considerations. However, an SO official said that SO expects the RPPAs to fit and maintain the respirators procured by SO for the protective force personnel at their site.

We were told that an SO official discussed the respirator procurement at the annual RPPA conference on April 11, 2000. Although the RPPAs raised a number of concerns, SO officials proceeded with the selection of a "standard" respirator for all sites and subsequently initiated the procurement of the respirators without additional input from or coordination with the respective RPPAs. An SO official acknowledged that there were no RPPAs on the source selection team for the procurement of the chemical protective equipment. Although the SO official said that SO consulted with a contractor RPPA from Sandia National Laboratories regarding the respirators, the contractor RPPA told us that he did not represent the RPPA community, nor was he asked to coordinate with his colleagues.

We learned that site RPPAs, among others, have concerns with SO selecting a specific respirator for use at all DOE sites. One concern is that each site has a different environment with different on-site hazards, which makes some respirators more suitable than others from a maintenance perspective. The RPPAs were also concerned with possible safety issues associated with such things as fit testing of the respirator and the respirator drinking tube. Although an SO official told us that he believed that SO had done an "outstanding" job of coordination on the respirators, he said that SO would commit to reaching out to RPPAs to address their concerns.

We also learned that Headquarters protective force personnel currently do not possess respirators. According to an SO official, SO will provide respirators to Headquarters protective force personnel as part of its procurement. The SO official provided us the name of an Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) official who he "assumed" would administer the respirator program for the Headquarters protective force. However, the EH official told us that he did not know who would be responsible for the respirator program at Headquarters.

Procurement Approach
Added Unnecessary
Costs

We also found that, by using an NNSI contractor to conduct the procurement, SO officials may have unnecessarily spent about \$63,000 to purchase the respirators and other chemical protective equipment. We understand that SO decided to procure the respirators through a subcontract with Wackenhut Services, Inc. (WSI), the managing and operating contractor for NNSI, instead of using the DOE Office of Headquarters Procurement Services (DOE procurement). We believe that by using DOE procurement, SO could have avoided an estimated \$63,000 in “administrative” costs added to the cost of the procurement by WSI.

We believe that SO used WSI because of a mistaken belief that DOE procurement officials could not conduct the procurement. The SO official responsible for the procurement acknowledged that he had not received any formal acquisition training. According to his supervisor, he (the supervisor) had been informed by a DOE procurement official that DOE procurement could not act as the contracting entity for the respirator procurement. However, when asked, the supervisor could not recall the identity of the DOE procurement official who provided him the information. When we discussed the procurement with a DOE procurement official, he advised us that his office could have performed the procurement. Accordingly, it appears that SO received no additional value in return for the \$63,000 provided to WSI to conduct the procurement of the respirators and other chemical protective equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Director, Office of Security and Emergency Operations:

1. Ensure that the future selection and procurement of “standardized” equipment for protective forces are adequately planned and appropriately coordinated with affected organizations.
2. Ensure that SO officials responsible for procurement of equipment for protective forces are knowledgeable of, and appropriately trained in the Department’s acquisition process.

**MANAGEMENT
COMMENTS**

In comments dated March 30, 2001, to our draft report, the SO Acting Director stated that SO agrees with our recommendations. Regarding Recommendation 1, he stated that SO agrees that better coordination should have been effected between SO, the Headquarters procurement office, and others impacted by the procurement and SO is taking steps to avoid this situation in the future. He said that program managers will be provided a copy of the OIG report covering this incident as a Lessons Learned exercise. Additionally, appropriate program management personnel will be scheduled to attend a course on procurement in line with the schedule identified in the response to Recommendation 2.

Regarding Recommendation 2, the SO Acting Director stated that SO is reviewing the available courses for program managers and will schedule appropriate personnel as courses are offered. He said that a plan that identifies individuals to be trained and the courses each should attend will be completed by April 17, 2001.

Regarding our finding that the SO procurement will not result in a standard respirator for use by protective force personnel Department-wide, the SO Acting Director stated that the standardization of protective masks is not a goal in and of itself. Rather, it is a step toward the goal of enhanced “interoperability” among the Department’s protective forces. He said the procurement facilitated the accomplishment of this step.

**INSPECTOR
COMMENTS**

The corrective actions proposed by management are responsive to our recommendations.

To the extent that obtaining a specific respirator that would be used by protective force personnel Department-wide was a goal of the SO procurement, the goal was not achieved. As we discussed in our report, OTS personnel were equipped with a different respirator. Also, about one-third of ID protective force personnel planned to use a different respirator than the respirator provided by SO. Moreover, SO officials acknowledged that other DOE sites may seek exceptions to using the respirator provided by SO.

Appendix A

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

We conducted the fieldwork portion of our review during the period July to March 2000. Our review included interviews with Department of Energy (DOE) officials, including National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) officials, at DOE Headquarters and selected field sites, who were involved in protective force activities, procurement of chemical/biological protective equipment, respiratory protection, and procurement activities. These included officials in the DOE Office of Security and Emergency Operations, the DOE Office of Management and Administration, the DOE Office of Environment, Safety and Health, the DOE Office of Environmental Management, the DOE Office of Science, and the NNSA Office of the Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs. We also interviewed DOE and DOE contractor officials at selected field sites, including members of the Respirator Protection Program Administrators Group. In addition, we reviewed applicable Federal rules and regulations, as well as DOE policies and procedures, regarding respiratory equipment.

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency.

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