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Office of Inspector General

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July 23, 2026

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC Generally Met Requirements for Site Access and Security Badging at the Savannah River Site



AUDIT REPORT



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

July 23, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MANAGER, SAVANNAH RIVER FIELD OFFICE

SUBJECT: Audit Report: *Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC Generally Met Requirements for Site Access and Security Badging at the Savannah River Site*

The attached report discusses our audit of site access and security badging at the Savannah River Site. This report contains one recommendation that, if fully implemented, should help ensure that site access requirements are met prior to the issuance of security badges. Although management did not specifically concur or nonconcur with the finding or recommendation, the National Nuclear Security Administration identified actions that were responsive to the recommendation and appropriately addressed our finding.

We conducted this audit from July 2025 through March 2026 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We appreciated the cooperation and assistance received during this audit.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sarah Nelson", is positioned above the typed name.

Sarah Nelson
Assistant Inspector General
for Management
Performing the Duties of the Inspector General
Office of Inspector General

cc: Deputy Secretary
Chief of Staff

DOE OIG HIGHLIGHTS

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC Generally Met Requirements for Site Access and Security Badging at the Savannah River Site

Why We Performed This Audit

The Department of Energy requires the use of security badges to support physical access controls at Department facilities. The Department's security badge is the Personal Identification Verification credential, which meets Federal Government-wide standards for identification and physical access control. However, when necessary to facilitate temporary or non-routine access, Department officials may authorize the issuance of Local Site-Specific Only security badges for physical access. The Department has a contract with Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC (SRNS) to manage and operate the Savannah River Site (SRS), and SRNS uses both types of badges to control physical access to the site. The Savannah River Field Office provides Federal oversight of SRNS' contract and activities.

We initiated this audit to determine the extent to which site access and security badging activities at SRS met established requirements.

What We Found

We found that SRNS generally met SRS security badging requirements. However, we identified one issue that SRNS could improve to help ensure completion of all site access requirements prior to the issuance of security badges. Specifically, we found that the process allowed certain employees to obtain Local Site-Specific Only security badges prior to completing substance abuse testing requirements by signing acknowledgement forms stating they would report to the onsite medical office to complete the testing immediately afterward. However, medical personnel were not required to notify Personnel Security Section staff when employees failed to complete the required substance abuse testing, and Personnel Security staff did not follow up to ensure testing was completed.

This issue occurred because SRNS' process for issuing badges to certain employees deviated from established requirements and did not require employees requesting site access badges to complete substance abuse testing prior to receipt of security badges. As a result, SRNS personnel may not satisfy substance abuse testing requirements.

What We Recommend

To address the issue identified in this report, we have made one recommendation that, if fully implemented, should help ensure that SRNS meets SRS site access requirements prior to the issuance of security badges.

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Background and Objective

The Savannah River Site (SRS) is a 310-square-mile-site near Aiken, South Carolina, that focused on the production of plutonium and tritium for use in manufacturing nuclear weapons since its inception in the early 1950s and until the end of the Cold War. In 1992, the focus at SRS turned to environmental cleanup, nuclear materials management, and research and development activities. Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC (SRNS) operates SRS under a management and operating contract with the Department of Energy that contains provisions and requirements governing safety, security, and environmental protection, so that missions are accomplished while protecting the public, the workforce, and the environment. The National Nuclear Security Administration's Savannah River Field Office provides Federal oversight of the SRNS contract and its activities.

Department Order 473.1A, *Physical Protection Program* (Order 473.1A), requires the use of security badges to control physical access to Department sites and facilities. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12, *Personal Identification Verification*, establishes mandatory, Federal Government-wide requirements for identification and physical access to federally controlled facilities. The Department's standard security badge meets these requirements and is known as a Personal Identification Verification (PIV) credential. The Department PIV credential must be issued to all Federal employees and contractor employees who require long-term (more than 6 months) physical access to Department facilities or information systems. When necessary to facilitate temporary (less than 6 months) or non-routine access, certain Department officials may authorize the issuance of Local Site-Specific Only (LSSO) security badges for physical access, as documented in an approved security plan.

According to Order 473.1A, if LSSO security badges are used, their design, issuance, accountability, and return process must be documented. SRNS' Manual 7Q, Procedure 311, "Security Badges," describes the requirements for security badges and credentials used for identification and site access for employees at SRS and affiliated support facilities. Further, per the *SRS Site Access Authorization Denial Policy*, individuals who receive a positive substance abuse screen or attempt to defeat the substance abuse screening test should be denied access to SRS.

The SRNS Safeguards, Security and Emergency Services Division has a Personnel Security Section (Personnel Security) that provides customer support to site employees and visitors seeking site access. Among other things, Personnel Security is responsible for:

- Maintaining policies and procedures for authorizing site access and the issuance of security badges;
- Verifying the identification of badge recipients; and
- Issuing security badges to site employees, visitors, and subcontractors.

We initiated this audit to determine the extent to which site access and security badging activities at SRS met established requirements.

Results of Review

SRNS GENERALLY MET BADGING REQUIREMENTS BUT COULD IMPROVE PROCESSES

We found that SRNS generally met security badging requirements. However, we identified one issue related to substance abuse testing that SRNS could improve to ensure completion of all site access requirements prior to the issuance of security badges. We reviewed several key activities that SRNS personnel were required to complete before the issuance of security badges, including background investigations, National Crime Information Center checks, substance abuse testing, identification verification, security clearance approvals, and site-specific briefings/trainings. Among these activities, we identified no issues related to the completion of background investigations, National Crime Information Center checks, security clearance approvals, and site-specific briefings/trainings. However, we found that SRNS personnel did not always ensure badge recipients completed substance abuse testing, as required, prior to the issuance of LSSO security badges.

Substance Abuse Testing

Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 707, *Workplace Substance Abuse Programs at DOE Sites*, establishes requirements for developing and implementing programs that help to maintain a workplace free from the use of illegal drugs. Specifically, 10 Code of Federal Regulations § 707.5, “Submission, approval, and implementation of a baseline workplace substance abuse program,” requires the Department’s management and operating contractors to develop a written program to implement a workplace substance abuse program and submit it to the Department for approval. SRNS’ Manual 7Q, Procedure 311, “Security Badges,” requires that individuals requesting security badges at SRS must complete substance abuse testing requirements prior to receipt of a security badge.

We found that some employees received LSSO security badges prior to completing substance abuse testing requirements. Specifically, Personnel Security officials allowed full-service employees¹ to sign acknowledgement forms instructing them to report to the onsite medical office to complete substance abuse testing after receiving security badges, rather than before, as required. We reviewed 50 LSSO security badge issuances, which included 17 instances involving full-service employees, all of whom were issued badges before completing required substance abuse testing.

This occurred because Personnel Security’s process for issuing security badges to full-service employees deviated from the requirements established in SRNS’ Manual 7Q, Procedure 311. Specifically, Personnel Security’s process did not require full-service employees to complete Federal requirements for substance abuse testing prior to receipt of security badges. Instead, full-service employees were allowed to sign an acknowledgement form with instructions to report for substance abuse testing immediately upon receipt of a badge. According to SRNS management,

¹ Full-service employees are non-craft, contractor employees who are scheduled to work more than 20 hours per week and hired to fill a permanent job vacancy. Craft employees are those who have specific knowledge, skills, and abilities attained through formal training in an apprenticeship program (e.g., electricians, pipefitters, mechanics).

the Procedure 311 requirements were vague and necessitated interpretation, which led to Personnel Security management developing a process that deviated from established requirements for issuing security badges.

In addition, we found there was no internal control to ensure full-service employees completed substance abuse testing after they signed the acknowledgement forms, which could allow employees who circumvented the testing to go undetected. We examined 17 instances in which full-service employees received LSSO badges prior to completing substance abuse testing, and 1 (or 5.88 percent) failed to complete the required substance abuse testing immediately upon receipt of the security badges and instead completed testing 4 days later. According to Personnel Security officials, they did not receive confirmation from medical operations personnel when employees failed to show up for the substance abuse screening. Likewise, medical operations personnel confirmed that they did not report “no shows” to Personnel Security but stated that they did report individuals who failed substance abuse screens.

CONCLUSION

Given the nature and sensitivity of SRS’ mission, it is essential that SRNS maintains strict control over physical access to SRS grounds and facilities, including ensuring that substance abuse testing is completed in a timely manner as part of the process to issue security badges. Strengthening controls over this process and ensuring management and staff are aware of and adhere to policy guidance would further support the Department’s goal of maintaining a secure and drug-free work environment. Substance abuse can reduce the reliability, stability, and good judgment expected from personnel with access to sensitive information. Further, employee substance abuse creates the potential for coercion and undue influence that may pose serious risks to national security and public safety, and can impair the Department’s operational efficiency, undermine public confidence, and make it more difficult for other employees to perform their jobs effectively. The risk of granting unescorted site access to a potentially impaired employee through the issuance of an LSSO badge would be avoided by requiring the employee to complete substance abuse testing first, as called for in SRNS policy. Therefore, SRNS should ensure full-service employees receive LSSO security badges only after completing substance abuse testing with a result that confirms illicit substances are not present.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Manager, Savannah River Field Office, direct SRNS to:

1. Retrain the individuals responsible for issuing LSSO security badges to full-service employees in accordance with approved procedures to ensure badge recipients complete substance abuse testing prior to receipt of security badges at SRS, as required.

Management Comments and OIG Response

In its response, management did not specifically state that it concurred or nonconcurred with our recommendation and finding, as required by Department Order 224.3A, *Audit Coordination, Resolution, and Follow-up*. Department Order 224.3A states that the draft report response should

clearly indicate the Departmental Element's agreement (concurrence) or disagreement (nonconcurrence) with the report's findings and recommendations. However, management identified actions it has taken that are responsive to the recommendation and appropriately addressed our finding. Specifically, management stated that SRNS has revised its pre-employment substance abuse testing process, which addresses the concern reported by the Office of Inspector General. Further, in January 2026, SRNS began utilizing an offsite location to perform required pre-employment substance abuse testing prior to employees coming onsite and receiving a badge. Due to the number of employees and the need to ensure that the offsite provider has the required staff to support the increased testing volume, SRNS is implementing the new process in phases. Full transition to the new process is expected to be complete by June 30, 2026. Based on management's comments, we added information to the report to clarify the recommendation.

Management's comments are included in Appendix 3.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Objective

We conducted this audit to determine the extent to which site access and security badging activities at the Savannah River Site (SRS) met established requirements.

Scope

The audit was performed from July 2025 through March 2026 at SRS, near Aiken, South Carolina; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Washington, DC. The scope of the audit included site access and security badging activities at SRS from October 2024 through March 2025. The audit was conducted under Office of Inspector General project number A25SR004.

Methodology

To accomplish our audit objective, we:

- Reviewed applicable laws, regulations, policies and procedures, and Department of Energy guidance related to site access and security badging.
- Reviewed prior reports related to the Department's site access and security badging.
- Interviewed personnel from the Savannah River Field Office and various contractors regarding site access and security badging.
- Obtained data from Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC, Personnel Security Section, encompassing 2,326 Personal Identification Verification credentials and 902 Local Site-Specific Only security badges printed at SRS from October 2024 through March 2025.
- Selected nonstatistical random samples of 50 Personal Identification Verification credential transactions and 50 Local Site-Specific Only security badge issuance transactions. Because selections were based on nonstatistical samples, results and overall conclusions are limited to the items tested and cannot be extrapolated to the entire populations or universes of security badge issuance transactions.
- Reviewed sample selections for compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies and procedures, and Department guidance related to site access and security badging.

We conducted this performance audit 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 our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We assessed internal controls and compliance with laws and regulations necessary to satisfy the audit objective. In particular, we

assessed the design of control activities related to site access and security badging at SRS and the related implementation principles. However, because our review was limited to these internal control components and underlying principles, it may not have disclosed all internal control deficiencies that may have existed at the time of this audit. Finally, we relied on computer-processed data to accomplish our audit objectives. We assessed this data by tracing it to source documents and interviewing various Department and contractor personnel to obtain additional information. We determined this data to be sufficiently reliable to provide a basis for our conclusions.

Management officials waived an exit conference on June 16, 2026.

Prior Reports

Office of Inspector General

- Audit Report: [*Implementation and Administration of the Human Reliability Program at the Savannah River Site*](#) (DOE-OIG-24-25, August 2024). Because this report contains Controlled Unclassified Information, it was not released to the public.
- Audit Report: [*Personnel Security Clearances and Badge Access Controls for Separated Employees*](#) (DOE-OIG-21-12, January 2021). The audit found that the Department of Energy had not always terminated security clearance and Personal Identity Verification card access for separated Federal and contractor employees, as required. Federal regulations, Department orders, and other guidance documents establish several required control procedures designed to prevent access to Department sites and facilities when Federal and contractor employees separate their association with the Department. The problems identified with updating USAccess, destroying badges, and terminating security clearances for separated employees occurred because requirements did not clearly delineate responsibility and accountability for access authorization termination actions. In addition, directives did not require a formal security out-processing procedure or outline enforcement measures. Given the important role the Department plays in the Nation's security posture, we made recommendations designed to improve the Department's controls for terminating security clearances and Personal Identity Verification card access for separated employees.

Management Comments



Department of Energy
Under Secretary for Nuclear Security
Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585



May 21, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SENIOR OFFICIAL PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF
 INSPECTOR GENERAL

FROM: BRANDON M. WILLIAMS

SUBJECT: Response to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Draft Report,
*Actions Needed to Strengthen Controls Over Site Access and Security
 Badging at the Savannah River Site (A25SR004)*

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the subject draft report. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) appreciates OIG's confirmation that Savannah River Nuclear Solutions' (SRNS) badging processes met security requirements, and validation that all sampled employees were appropriately drug tested.

The SRNS badge office services a wide variety of customers, including employees for multiple management and operating contractors, other prime and subcontractors, and Federal employees that require site access. Given the diverse customer base with varying substance abuse testing requirements, NNSA's Savannah River Field Office directed SRNS in March 2025 to begin initiating efforts for off-site pre-employment substance abuse testing. In January 2026, SRNS began moving to a process wherein applicable employees complete testing at an off-site location prior to coming on-site and receiving a badge. This change should alleviate any concerns about the timing of substance abuse testing and badging.

The attached management decision provides additional details regarding SRNS' new process. Our subject matter experts have also provided technical comments under separate cover to enhance the accuracy and clarity of the report. If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Ms. Jessica Juneja, Acting Director, Audits and Internal Affairs, at (240) 220-4654.

Attachment

NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Management Decision

Actions Needed to Strengthen Controls Over Site Access and Security Badging at the Savannah River Site (A25SR004)

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) recommends the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) direct Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC (SRNS) to:

Recommendation 1: Retrain the individuals responsible for issuing Local Site-Specific Only (LSSO) security badges to full-service employees in accordance with approved procedures to ensure badge recipients complete substance abuse testing prior to receipt of security badges at SRS, as required.

Management Response: The intent of this recommendation is unclear as training was not addressed in the audit report. However, SRNS has revised its pre-employment substance abuse testing process, which addresses the concern reported by the auditors. In January 2026, SRNS began utilizing an off-site location to perform required pre-employment substance abuse testing prior to employees coming on-site and receiving a badge. Due to the number of employees at the Savannah River Site and the need to ensure the off-site provider has the required staff to support the increased testing volume, SRNS is implementing the new process in phases. Full transition to the new process is expected to be complete by June 30, 2026.

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