



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Energy

MANAGEMENT ALERT

DOE-OIG-19-44

August 2019

**MANAGEMENT OF CYBERSECURITY
ACTIVITIES AT A DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY SITE**



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

August 20, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Teri L. Donaldson".

FROM: Teri L. Donaldson
Inspector General

SUBJECT: INFORMATION: Management Alert on the “Management of Cybersecurity Activities at a Department of Energy Site”

In January 2019, the Office of Inspector General initiated a review to determine whether the selected Department of Energy location had effectively managed its cybersecurity program. During the course of our test work, we noted several areas of immediate concern. Due to the nature of the work conducted at the site and the use of systems that have mission critical and safety significant functions, we are issuing this management alert to ensure that management is provided with the opportunity to initiate immediate actions to address risks identified within the site’s cybersecurity program.

Preliminary results of test work conducted at the site revealed potentially significant cybersecurity vulnerabilities on the site’s general support system, including major financial management and safety applications. Specifically, preliminary test work identified more than 11,000 critical- and high-risk vulnerabilities on workstations and servers during our limited testing. Furthermore, our early analysis of the site’s cybersecurity program revealed missing or deficient cybersecurity practices, including significant failures in the site’s process for authorizing the operation of systems and a lack of most components of a Risk Management Framework. The seriousness of the system authorization issues coupled with a multitude of identified vulnerability/configuration weaknesses indicate ineffective cybersecurity practices at the site. In our opinion, the issues described in detail in our management alert are serious enough to warrant immediate action on the part of Department Headquarters and the site to ensure that operation of the information systems does not place the Department’s information technology resources at risk.

During the course of our audit to date, we have issued 11 recommendations to the site’s manager to help improve its cybersecurity program. Our management alert also included a recommendation to the Under Secretary for Science. Management concurred with the recommendations and indicated that corrective actions were planned to mitigate the findings identified during our preliminary review.

Due to the sensitive nature of the vulnerabilities identified during our audit, the management alert issued to the Department was for Official Use Only. We provided site and program officials with detailed information regarding the vulnerabilities that we identified.

I would like to thank all participating Department elements for their courtesy and cooperation during our test work. We look forward to continuing our review and will provide the Department with another report at the conclusion of our test work.

cc: Deputy Secretary
Chief of Staff
Under Secretary for Science
Chief Information Officer

Report Number: DOE-OIG-19-44