



U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Inspector General
Office of Audits and Inspections

Audit Report

Management Alert on Protective Force Training Facility Utilization at the Pantex Plant

DOE/IG-0855

September 2011



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

September 27, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION

FROM:

Greg Friedman
Gregory H. Friedman
Inspector General

SUBJECT:

INFORMATION: Management Alert on "Protective Force Training
Facility Utilization at the Pantex Plant"

IMMEDIATE CONCERN

As part of our ongoing audit to determine whether the Department of Energy is effectively utilizing its protective force training facilities, we determined that the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Office of Secure Transportation (OST) plans to spend approximately \$2 million for a new Physical Training/Intermediate Use of Force (PT/IUF) facility at the Pantex Plant (Pantex) near Amarillo, Texas. Our preliminary analysis suggests that the new facility may not be needed, making the \$2 million expenditure unwarranted. Specifically, we noted that OST plans to construct the PT/IUF facility although Pantex has existing facilities that have the capability and capacity to fulfill OST's training needs. Our review of the analysis supporting construction of the PT/IUF facility revealed that officials did not fully consider Pantex's existing training facilities before deciding that they did not meet OST's needs. As such, we concluded that OST should reconsider the decision to construct its own PT/IUF facility at Pantex. We are bringing these matters to your attention in the expedited form of a management alert because OST plans to award a construction contract for the PT/IUF facility in November 2011.

BACKGROUND

NNSA's OST authorized approximately \$2 million in March 2011, to construct a PT/IUF facility at Pantex. The planned facility will allow OST to train and certify its Federal agents in physical fitness activities including running, cycling, and weightlifting; and, intermediate use of force activities such as gaining and maintaining control in passive and assault situations. OST policies require that agents participate in sanctioned PT activities as well as obtain an annual certification in IUF.

To meet the PT requirements, OST currently provides agents with a small exercise/fitness room at Pantex that is staffed by an exercise physiologist. This facility also includes lockers and a shower area. OST also provides agents with a membership to a national gym that can be used locally and while agents are on travel. OST conducts its IUF training in two existing facilities at Pantex and at an off-site location in Amarillo.

OST plans to construct a facility with 2,287 square feet for IUF activities, 1,820 square feet for PT, and 1,420 square feet for offices, locker rooms and janitorial space. The OST Facility Board, which is comprised of senior OST leaders, authorized construction of the Pantex facility in March 2011. Construction is to be financed through the OST's General Plant Project budget since the anticipated total cost of the project is under \$10 million.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

OST's plans to construct the PT/IUF facility at Pantex may not be cost effective nor necessary. Specifically, we noted that Pantex's existing PT and IUF facilities have the capacity to fulfill OST's training needs. Although OST's Board approved construction based on an internal analysis, we found that the analysis had not fully considered the features available in existing facilities. We recognize the importance of PT/ IUF training for OST agents. However, it appears that these requirements can be effectively met using existing facilities rather than spending approximately \$2 million to construct a new one. This matter takes on special importance given the Department's on-going efforts to reduce costs.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

OST's analysis to justify the construction of a new PT/IUF facility at Pantex did not fully consider the capability and capacity of Pantex's existing facilities. In particular, we found that OST had not considered the availability of Pantex's existing PT/IUF facilities as measured by their utilization rates. The justification document for the new facility stated that OST personnel could use Pantex's existing facilities; however, the existing facilities were not sufficient to meet training needs and there was no formal mechanism to control scheduling to allow for flexible accommodations for the OST agents. According to Facility Management officials, OST chose not to fully consider the utilization schedules or availability of Pantex's facilities because its agents informed management that the existing facilities were not suitable for PT training since it would mix Federal and contractor personnel. An OST Facility Management official stated that the facilities were also not suitable for IUF training since they lacked key features such as mats and reinforced walls.

Our analysis of existing facilities showed, however, that Pantex's PT and IUF facilities have the capability and capacity to meet OST training needs. Further, we did not find the argument concerning mixing Federal and contractor personnel compelling since OST's current practice of providing gym memberships results in the agents training with the general public.

Physical Training Facilities

Pantex's PT facility, which is separate from the small exercise/fitness room currently used by OST on-site, has the equipment and capacity to meet OST needs. Specifically, Pantex's facility is equipped with treadmills, weights, and cycling equipment and has training personnel on staff. According to a Pantex official, the existing PT facility can accommodate 25 people at a time. Based on one month's usage, we found that on average eight people exercised at the facility at any given time. We also estimated that Pantex's exercise facility was used approximately 33 percent of time on a daily basis. Thus, based on current actual usage, Pantex's PT facility has

more than enough excess capacity to meet OST personnel training needs. Finally, we noted that OST's proposed PT facility has less square footage than Pantex's current PT facility; and, that it will accommodate fewer than 25 agents at one time.

In our opinion, OST's justification for constructing a new PT facility was based on faulty assumptions. Specifically, OST officials stated in the justification that Pantex's PT scheduling mechanism would not accommodate agent's need for a flexible schedule and would mix the Federal work force with the contractor employees. However, as noted, we found that OST did not specifically review schedule availability at Pantex's PT facility. Additionally, OST provided private gym memberships that would provide agents with any residual need for schedule flexibility. OST had not made a decision if they will maintain the private gym memberships even with the construction of a new PT facility. Further, we noted that as a practical matter, mixing the Federal work force with the general public occurs as a direct result of the private gym membership provided by OST to agents. Interacting with other contractor employees does not appear to be a reasonable basis for not using existing PT facilities.

Intermediate Use of Force Facilities

Similarly, Pantex's existing IUF facilities have the capability and capacity to meet OST needs, and, in fact, have been used by OST to meet its training requirements. Currently, OST conducts its IUF training in two facilities at Pantex and at an off-site location in Amarillo. One Pantex facility has vacant office space in which OST brought in mats for the IUF training. The second facility was Pantex's new training building with two classrooms and an open assembly area. Although OST has used these two facilities in the past, OST also used space at a local college, at no cost, to conduct IUF training. According to OST personnel, this use was based on the ease with which arrangements could be made and the ability to accommodate additional observers. OST personnel also told us that they resorted to using the off-site facility because they did not believe Pantex's existing facility was suitable for IUF training. Specifically, OST stated that the facility did not sufficiently accommodate all necessary personnel; floor mats were not available; the facility was not always available; and, there was no scheduling system to accommodate training requests.

We found, however, that protective force personnel conduct their IUF training in Pantex's new training facility. Pantex's new facility has a classroom with the capacity to hold up to 30 individuals and an assembly area that will hold 100. In addition, according to Pantex officials, the building was constructed to provide additional training space and an area where mats could be placed on the floor for use during IUF activities. Pantex officials also stated that the new IUF training facility does not have reinforced walls since the size of the room was large enough to avoid wall damage during training sessions. Further, as mentioned previously, in our review of the facility's usage, we found that Pantex utilized its IUF training area less than 18 percent of the time during the first year after it was constructed. We also found that Pantex has a formal scheduling system in place for facility usage. According to Pantex personnel, the new facility is considered a "co-use" facility for Pantex and OST personnel. Pantex's facility can be used on a first come, first serve basis; however, qualification needs are prioritized above other training requests with regard to facility availability. To conduct OST's IUF training, OST stated that

they need a facility to train at least 20 agents per session and have access to floor mats. We concluded that the Pantex training facility's 82 percent excess capacity could meet OST's IUF training requirements.

Modification to Planned Facility

OST's Board approved the construction of the Pantex facility based on the design and cost for the recently constructed PT/IUF facility at the Department's Oak Ridge, Tennessee, site. OST requested that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prepare a construction estimate for the PT/IUF facility at Pantex, since they provided oversight on the construction of the PT/IUF facility in Oak Ridge. An OST official stated that preliminary estimates show it will cost more at Pantex to build the same facility since Pantex has additional requirements for security and safety features. In order to stay within the \$2 million budget, an OST official stated that project modifications could be required, which could then result in a smaller facility than originally planned. We noted and an OST official agreed that any reductions in size would result in constructing a facility that is smaller than the existing Pantex spaces. OST plans to issue a request for proposal in September 2011 and award a construction contract by November 2011.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on our review, we believe that the need for a new training facility at Pantex is highly questionable. We recognize that decisions, such as the one regarding the planned PT/IUF facility, are often more complex than they might appear. However, we wanted to ensure that NNSA decision makers were aware of our concerns before resource commitments were made regarding the path forward for this \$2 million facility.

Accordingly, we recommend that NNSA re-evaluate OST's training facility needs at Pantex, focusing on the costs and benefits of utilizing existing facilities before proceeding to construct the new facility.

MANAGEMENT REACTION AND AUDITORS COMMENTS

Management reviewed a draft of this report and stated that in response to the recommendation OST, in conjunction with the Pantex Site Office, will re-evaluate its training facility requirements to determine whether a separate OST PT/IUF facility is in NNSA's best interest.

We commend management for taking prompt action to address the recommendation.

cc: Deputy Secretary
Associate Deputy Secretary
Associate Deputy Administrator for Secure Transportation
Chief of Staff

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