



# Inside Oversight

Office of Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance  
U.S. Department of Energy

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## Streamlining Oversight for 2002

The Department’s independent oversight program, carried out by the Office of Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance (OA), complements DOE line efforts and provides senior DOE management with an independent perspective on the status of environment, safety, and health (ES&H), safeguards and security, cyber security, and emergency management at DOE sites. OA believes that independence, a proven systematic process, and performance-based evaluation techniques are among the essential foundations of its success and effectiveness. With the recent move of ES&H oversight to OA, OA intends to improve upon those foundations in the ES&H program area by:

- Scheduling coordination with program and field offices
- Increasing the emphasis on evaluating self-assessment programs and Federal involvement in line management, program implementation, and local oversight
- Fully implementing new site prioritization and scheduling methodologies
- Expanding the use of work observations and performance testing.

The new ES&H oversight model is illustrated on page 4.

### Oversight Emphasis

In the long term, field programs can best be improved through robust, comprehensive, critical, performance-oriented contractor self-assessment programs, with periodic independent verification by OA. However, most self-assessment programs are not yet mature and rigorous enough to support this long-term goal. As individual self-assessment programs (and the programs they assess) improve and merit more confidence, OA will be able to reduce the frequency of OA appraisals, where warranted. In addition, OA will focus more on the effectiveness of DOE organizations in managing their site contractors by examining such Federal activities as setting expectations, providing program implementation guidance, allocating resources, assessing performance-based contractual expectations, and monitoring contractor self-assessments.

### Site Prioritization

OA’s new appraisal process examines the relative risk, hazard, and potential impact and determines the appraisal priority for each DOE site, taking into account the results of previous oversight appraisal activities and adjusting the frequency of oversight activities accordingly. Sites that demonstrate effective performance may be evaluated less often or with a



Investigation Team Sampling Groundwater

reduced scope, allowing OA to maximize the value of its activities and minimize the impact on the site; schedules will be coordinated with line management, taking into account other mission-critical milestones and commitments. Also, OA will take full advantage of the synergies gained by combining the areas of safeguards and security and cyber security, on the one hand, and emergency management and ES&H on the other. OA has taken this approach on several recent appraisals, with positive results.

### Observing Work Processes

OA emphasizes performance rather than compliance as the cornerstone of its oversight philosophy. While compliance with policy is given due consideration, OA focuses on determining whether a program or system actually performs effectively. Observation of actual performance is an essential part of every OA activity. For activities that cannot be routinely observed, such as rare or unusual activities or the planned response to an emergency situation, OA typically plans and

*(Continued on Page 2)*

# Independent Oversight Now Includes Environment, Safety, and Health

OA is the Department of Energy's sole focal point for *independent* evaluations of nuclear safeguards and security, cyber security, emergency management, and ES&H. ES&H oversight responsibility was added to OA as a result of changes in the Department's management responsibilities announced by the Secretary in July 2001 and a subsequent memo issued in August 2001 by the Deputy Secretary. Because OA reports directly to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, OA can operate with the levels of independence and objectivity necessary to accurately inform senior managers, Congress, and other stakeholders of the status of safeguards and security, cyber security, emergency management, and ES&H policies and programs within the Department and the National Nuclear Security Administration.

The authority for OA to conduct independent oversight is formally established in DOE Order 470.2A, *Security and Emergency Management Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance Program*, approved on March 1, 2000, prior to the Departmental reorganization. This order is currently being revised to reflect OA's responsibility for independent oversight of ES&H and to provide a consistent set of requirements for the corrective action process used to address OA findings.

Establishing the Office of ES&H Evaluations (OA-50) has streamlined independent ES&H oversight by combining oversight activities previously conducted by four oversight offices within the Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH). OA-50 performs several types of evaluations concurrently during an appraisal. For example, OA-50

examines environmental programs and essential systems as part of its evaluation of integrated safety management implementation. As part of OA, OA-50 will utilize a new approach to prioritizing and scheduling evaluations that will reduce the number of appraisals. The appraisals, typically announced well in advance, will be conducted using a well-defined oversight appraisal process governed by formal protocols addressing all phases of the appraisal activity, from planning through follow-up. Consequently, OA-50 appraisals will involve fewer site visits and will be completed in less time, with a draft report going to the site about a week after the onsite phase of the appraisal. The process is implemented by a well-trained inspection staff and strongly emphasizes validation of information to ensure that results are thorough and reliable. ■

## Streamlining Oversight for 2002 (continued)

conducts realistic performance tests. To evaluate ES&H systems and programs, OA selects and observes vertical slices of work processes to determine whether they are properly designed and implemented to allow all work to be accomplished safely.

### Performance Testing

Within OA, the Office of Safeguards and Security Evaluations (OA-10) has the longest history—nearly 20 years—of performance-oriented oversight and includes performance tests when evaluating most safeguards and security topics. Tests range in complexity from very simple tests of individual skills to large-scale, laser Engagement Simulation System-enhanced force-on-force performance tests involving up to 100 combatants, similar numbers of controllers and evaluators, and dozens of vehicles. Most performance tests fall somewhere in between these two extremes. For example, the physical security systems topic involves extensive tests of alarm function, component sensitivity, and sensor coverage to determine whether an individual (or group) can get through or past a sensor array without triggering an alarm or being detected by surveillance cameras. In the protective force topic, OA uses limited-scope performance tests of marksmanship, physical

fitness, and skills in using equipment and in handling routine and emergency situations. Other topics, such as material control and accountability and classified matter protection and control, generally conduct smaller-scale tests of individual skills or procedures. OA-10's experience in performance testing is being applied to enhance the appraisal process throughout OA.

### Reporting: Ratings, Findings, and Opportunities for Improvement

To add value, OA provides ratings, findings, and opportunities for improvement in its appraisal reports. These give the evaluated site or organization an indication of their performance, specific areas that require corrective actions, and suggestions for improving the way they do business.

Ratings are assigned to specific areas based on data collection, analysis, and conclusions developed during the appraisal. For example, each of the five core functions of integrated safety management could be rated as "effective performance" (green), "needs improvement" (yellow), or "significant weakness" (red). The rating is based on whether the area being assessed provides reasonable assurance that the identified

protection needs are met (green), are only partially met (yellow), or are not adequately met (red).

Findings are issued for significant deficiencies that warrant a high level of management attention. If left uncorrected, such deficiencies could adversely affect the DOE mission, the environment, the safety or health of workers or the public, or national security. Findings are clearly identified in the appraisal report, define the specific nature of the deficiency and whether it is localized or indicative of a systemic problem, and identify which organization is responsible for corrective actions. Field management must address findings through a formal corrective action process.

Opportunities for improvement provide a way for OA inspectors to apply their broad range of experience to correct specific problems noted during an appraisal. When OA notes inefficiencies in program implementation at an inspected site, the OA inspectors may develop specific opportunities for improvement, based on successful approaches observed at other DOE sites, that the inspected site might consider implementing. ■

## Review Evaluates Headquarters Facilities Emergency Response Plans

In light of the events of September 11, 2001, OA reviewed the emergency response plans for DOE Headquarters facilities in February 2002 to assess the Department's readiness to respond to emergency events, such as fires and hazardous material releases at or near DOE Headquarters facilities. Important aspects of the review included examining the roles and responsibilities for developing, maintaining, and implementing the Headquarters facility occupant emergency plans; comparing program content to a complex set of Federal property management regulations, Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations, and DOE requirements; and evaluating the adequacy of facilities and equipment for notifying and protecting workers.

It was evident during the review that the ongoing threat of terrorism has led DOE to reexamine its capabilities for protecting the public and DOE employees, facilities, and assets. The Department is making notable progress in developing a more effective emergency response for Headquarters facilities. For example, although the facilities can be evacuated using current equipment and plans, the Office of Management, Budget, and Evaluation (ME) has initiated an ambitious effort to upgrade response plans and install new equipment. Insights on emergency planning were obtained from other Federal agencies in the Washington area, including the General Services Administration, to enhance the development process. Through safety and planning committees, DOE employees are helping improve the occupant emergency plans, which describe the emergency response concept for each facility. Employee volunteers have come forward to serve as wardens and monitors—key roles in carrying out protective actions, such as evacuating buildings and relocating the occupants. Facilities and emergency equipment are being upgraded in both the Forrestal and the main Germantown buildings to substantially improve the ability to communicate emergency information and protect the occupants.

Seven of the Headquarters facilities are just beginning to implement the new, comprehensive occupant emergency plans. OA noted several items requiring attention in these plans.

Overall, OA concluded that the Department has made substantial progress in developing and implementing effective emergency response within Headquarters

facilities since the events of September 11, 2001. The information from the OA review is being used to further improve the occupant emergency program. Ultimately, the upgrades should significantly improve the timeliness and effectiveness of the response to an emergency at a Headquarters building and better protect against a broader range of potential hazards and threats. ■



### OPSEC and the OA Web Site

The events of September 11, 2001, increased public awareness of operations security (OPSEC) and the information available through the Internet. The Deputy Secretary required a DOE-wide review of information accessible to members of the public and the removal or restriction of access to that information, as appropriate, to ensure that sensitive information is protected from compromise and secured against unauthorized disclosure. In response to these increased concerns, OA password-protected the reports section of the OA web site to limit access. Based on a subsequent assessment of the vulnerabilities and benefits associated with disseminating OA reports via the Internet, OA has revised its protocol for limiting web access. DOE Federal and contractor staff can now access OA reports directly via the trusted

corporate network referred to as DOENET (if they already have access to this network). Other government organizations will still be required to obtain a password for access for each section of the OA reports web page. Members of the public will not be permitted electronic access; however, requests for hard copies of unclassified reports will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. As always, OA reports will be reviewed and marked for proper classification in accordance with the Department's information security program before being released in an approved manner. Additionally, before any information is posted on the Internet, OA will continue to conduct an OPSEC review to ensure that sensitive information is protected from compromise and secured against unauthorized disclosure via the web. ■

## Contractor Medical Program Accreditation Expands Under OA

With the move of ES&H oversight, OA is supporting reaccreditation of contractor medical programs. This reaccreditation effort challenges a medical program to improve the delivery of health care through continued self-assessment and quality improvement. The Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Health Services Group has the distinction of becoming the first DOE medical program to be reaccredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC). This program obtained its first full accreditation with AAAHC in 1998.

The Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) Health Services Division has also joined the ranks of AAAHC accredited occupational medical programs. They achieved a three-year term of accreditation by AAAHC, the maximum number of years attainable. ORNL joins the Brookhaven National Laboratory, Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Pantex Plant, Sandia National Laboratories-New Mexico, and the Y-12 Plant in earning this achievement.

DOE established an agreement with the AAAHC in 1998 to help assess the performance of DOE contractor occupational medicine programs. The AAAHC, founded in 1979, is a non-governmental, nationally recognized organization for accrediting ambulatory health care facilities. The agreement provided a process for contractor occupational medicine programs to voluntarily seek accreditation. To receive full accreditation, the program must comply with DOE requirements and with AAAHC core and adjunct standards. ■

## Ongoing Activities

As announced through correspondence in December 2001, OA invites qualified experts from Headquarters and the field to participate as members of its inspection teams through its field augmentation program, which is currently being expanded and reinvented. Such participation allows field augmentees complete access, as full team members, to all inspection team activities and deliberations, and provides an "inside view" of the OA inspection

process. This program further demonstrates that the OA process is open and objective, and allows the augmentees to accurately relate their experiences as part of the OA process to their home facilities. OA sees significant increased potential value in the field augmentation program, for OA and for the field, and intends to encourage greater participation by the field during the coming year.

DOE Order 470.2A is being revised to formally include OA's responsibility for ES&H oversight and to clarify the responsibilities of line management with respect to the Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance program, including the corrective action process. This revision is being coordinated through the DOE Directives System. Current plans are to have all comments resolved by the end of April 2002. ■

### Upcoming Oversight Activities

#### ES&H and Emergency Management

Los Alamos National Laboratory

Argonne National Laboratory - East

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

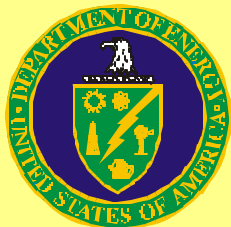
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

#### Security and Cyber Security

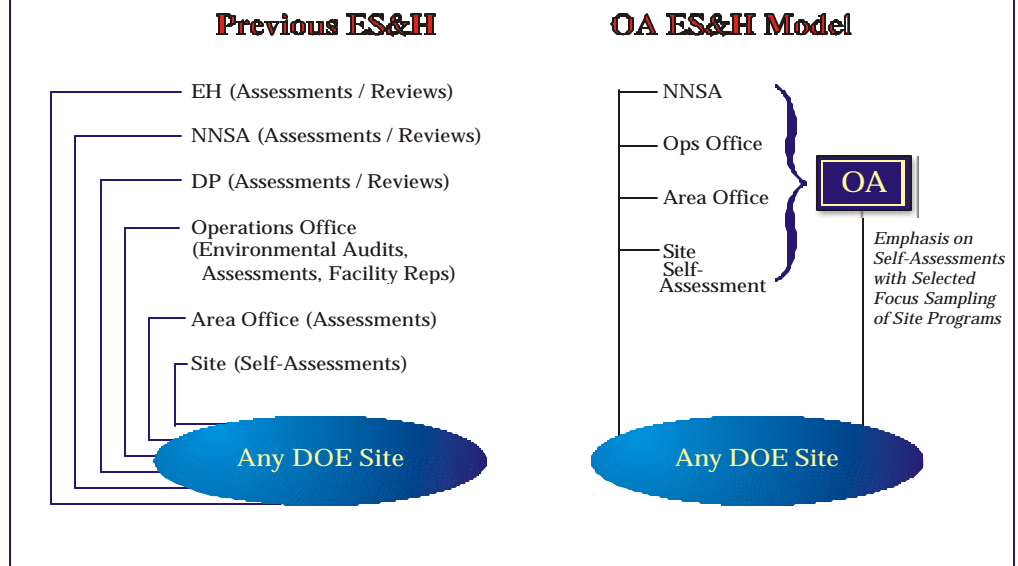
Pantex

Rocky Flats

Office of Transportation Safeguards



## Oversight Redefined



## Solicitation of Comments, Questions, and Suggestions

OA welcomes your thoughts about our newsletter. Please send or phone comments, questions, or suggestions to:

Glenn S. Podonsky, Director  
Office of Independent Oversight and Performance Assurance  
U.S. Department of Energy  
19901 Germantown Road  
Germantown, MD 20874  
301-903-3777

e-mail: [Glenn.Podonsky@oa.doe.gov](mailto:Glenn.Podonsky@oa.doe.gov)

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