OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Energy

# INSPECTION REPORT

DOE-OIG-25-34 September 2025

## ALLEGATIONS OF FLIGHT CONCERNS AT THE NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION'S REMOTE SENSING LABORATORY

**Department of Energy**
Washington, DC 20585

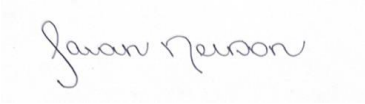
September 11, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: Inspection Report: *Allegations of Flight Concerns at the National Nuclear Security Administration's Remote Sensing Laboratory*

The attached report discusses our inspection on allegations of flight concerns at the Remote Sensing Laboratory. We substantiated the allegation that Mission Support and Test Services, LLC (MSTS) management approved the transport of a supplemental pilot during a training flight from Tennessee to the Remote Sensing Laboratory at Joint Base Andrews using a National Nuclear Security Administration-owned aircraft. From time to time, a flight program may find it necessary or beneficial to secure the services of a part-time or supplemental pilot. In this specific instance, a Nevada Field Office official verbally authorized the flight to address a pilot availability issue. However, we questioned whether the supplemental pilot's role on the training flight was needed. Additionally, there were differences in understanding by MSTS aviation personnel about how readiness was tracked in the system. We also substantiated the allegation that the supplemental pilot was not added to the flight manifest. We have made five recommendations that, if fully implemented, should help ensure that National Nuclear Security Administration-owned aircraft are used for Government purposes and that flight manifest information is accurate. Management fully concurred with our recommendations.

We conducted this inspection from October 2024 through April 2025 in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* (December 2020). We appreciated the cooperation and assistance received during this inspection.



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

cc: Chief of Staff

# Department of Energy
## Office of Inspector General

***Allegations of Flight Concerns at the National Nuclear Security Administration's Remote Sensing Laboratory***
(DOE-OIG-25-34)

### WHY THE OIG PERFORMED THIS INSPECTION

On April 26, 2024, the Office of Inspector General received a complaint alleging that Mission Support and Test Services, LLC (MSTS) management at the Remote Sensing Laboratory (RSL) approved the transport of a supplemental pilot from Tennessee to RSL-Joint Base Andrews (RSL-Andrews) using a National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)-owned aircraft. Additionally, during a subsequent discussion, the complainant also alleged that MSTS did not list the supplemental pilot on the flight manifest.

We initiated this inspection to determine the facts and circumstances regarding the alleged flight concerns at the RSL.

### What Did the OIG Find?

We substantiated the allegation that MSTS management approved the transport of a supplemental pilot from Tennessee to RSL-Andrews using an NNSA-owned aircraft. An NNSA Nevada Field Office official verbally authorized the flight to address a pilot availability issue. However, we questioned whether the supplemental pilot's role on the flight was needed. In addition, there were differences in understanding by MSTS aviation personnel about how readiness (availability of assets to rapidly respond to incidents) was tracked in the system. Contributing factors for the issues we identified included the lack of: (1) a documented policy on readiness scores and aircraft availability requirements; (2) documented communication between the Nevada Field Office and MSTS officials; and (3) guidance pertaining to NNSA public aircraft operations.

We also substantiated the allegation that the supplemental pilot was not added to the flight manifest. This occurred because of the lack of a formal written RSL policy to verify personnel on flights.

### What Is the Impact?

Improving transparency and access to information helps ensure Government aircraft are used solely for official purposes. Accurate flight manifests are also critical for timely responses in aviation emergencies.

### What Is the Path Forward?

We have made five recommendations that, if fully implemented, should help ensure that NNSA-owned aircraft are used for Government purposes and that manifest information is accurate.

## BACKGROUND

The National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Remote Sensing Laboratory (RSL) has several crisis and consequence management emergency response teams specially trained and equipped to respond to a variety of radiological situations, including nuclear power plant accidents, nuclear terrorist incidents, and transportation events. Located at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland (RSL-Andrews) and Nellis Air Force Base (RSL-Nellis) in Nevada, the RSL is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can deploy these emergency response assets anywhere globally. The RSL is the only dedicated nuclear response aviation program in the world. The NNSA Nevada Field Office (NFO) provides oversight of flight operations conducted at the RSL.

The management and operating contractor for the RSL is Mission Support and Test Services, LLC (MSTS), which conducts public aircraft operations in accordance with Department of Energy Order 440.2C, *Aviation Management and Safety*, and the Nevada Field Office Aviation Implementation Document (NFO AID).[1] Per Department Order 440.2C, Department/NNSA public aircraft missions are not subject to Federal Aviation Administration oversight or regulations, except for certain general operating rules; therefore, the Department must self-regulate public missions, as defined in Public Law 106-181. Public Law 106-181 § 702(a)[2] defines public aircraft, among other things, as an aircraft owned by the Government and operated by any person for purposes related to crew training, equipment development, or demonstration.

On April 26, 2024, the Office of Inspector General received a complaint pertaining to the misuse of Government property at the RSL. Specifically, the complainant alleged that MSTS management approved the transport of a supplemental pilot[3] from Tennessee to RSL-Andrews using an NNSA-owned aircraft. Additionally, during a subsequent discussion, the complainant also alleged that MSTS did not list the supplemental pilot on the flight manifest. We initiated this inspection to determine the facts and circumstances regarding the alleged flight concerns at the RSL.

## USE OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED AIRCRAFT NOT NECESSARY

We substantiated the allegation that MSTS management approved the transport of a supplemental pilot from Tennessee to RSL-Andrews using an NNSA-owned aircraft. An NFO official verbally authorized the flight to address a pilot availability issue. However, we questioned whether the supplemental pilot's role on the training flight was needed. In addition, there were differences in understanding by MSTS aviation personnel about how readiness[4] was tracked in the multipurpose dashboard system. Contributing factors for the issues we identified included the lack of: (1) a documented policy on readiness scores and aircraft availability

[1] Pursuant to 41 Code of Federal Regulations §§ 102-33.140 through 102-33.195, and Department Order 440.2C, *Aviation Management and Safety*, each Department/NNSA program or field element is required to develop and publish an AID.
[2] Title 49 United States Code § 40102(a)(41).
[3] According to Department Order 440.2C, from time to time, a flight program may find it necessary or beneficial to secure the services of a part time or supplemental pilot. Whether Federal or contractor, these pilots must meet the same experience requirements, flight standards, and flight-related training requirements as full-time pilots.
[4] Readiness represents, among other things, viable emergency response assets being available to rapidly respond to nuclear or radiological incidents, events, or emergencies.

requirements; (2) documented communication between the NFO and MSTS officials; and (3) guidance pertaining to NNSA public aircraft operations.

**NFO Aviation Official Approved Training Flight to Pick Up Supplemental Pilot**

We substantiated the allegation that MSTS management approved the transport of a supplemental pilot from Tennessee to RSL-Andrews using an NNSA-owned aircraft. An NFO official verbally authorized the flight to address a pilot availability issue. On Monday, April 15, 2024, as part of a training flight, two MSTS pilots flew from RSL-Andrews to Knoxville, Tennessee. The pilots returned the same day with another individual who resided in Tennessee, although employed by the MSTS as a supplemental pilot. While the flight schedule had a training flight scheduled that day, the destination was not specified.

The NFO official explained that the RSL must be mission capable and ready to go, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and that any time the mission status is impacted or moves to "red status,"[5] it must be reported to NNSA. According to the NFO official, without the supplemental pilot, and as a result of scheduled helicopter training for one of its pilots, RSL-Andrews would not have had the required two full pilots available on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. The NFO official stated that RSL-Andrews could pick up the supplemental pilot in Knoxville on Monday, April 15, 2024, the supplemental pilot could complete training on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, and then perform standby pilot duties on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. NFO and MSTS officials told the Office of Inspector General (OIG) that this was the first and only time a training mission had been utilized to transport an individual.

**Supplemental Pilot's Role on the Training Flight Was Questionable**

We questioned whether the supplemental pilot's role on the training flight was needed. According to an August 2024 NFO memorandum from the Contracting Officer to MSTS, NNSA-owned aircraft performing public aircraft operations are to be used for aviation missions that constitute Government functions. These aviation missions include aerial sensing and sampling,[6] emergency response deployment to transport emergency response personnel and equipment to the site of actual or exercise radiological or nuclear incidents, and training flights necessary to maintain flight crew proficiency for aviation-mission Governmental functions. Public Law 106-181 § 702[7] states that "[a]n aircraft […] does not qualify as a public aircraft […] when the aircraft is used for commercial purposes or to carry an individual other than a crewmember or a qualified non-crewmember."

MSTS officials considered the supplemental pilot to be a qualified non-crewmember on that flight. However, 41 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 102-33, § 102-33.20, defines a qualified non-crewmember as "[a]n individual, other than a member of the crew, aboard an aircraft […]

[5] "Red status" or "going Red" is an informal term reflecting readiness scores based on green/yellow/red indicators within the Asset Readiness Management System Deployer. In this context, "red status" would mean that RSL-Andrews' standby capability was impacted due to the pilot shortage.
[6] Aerial sensing and sampling consists of radiological sensing, aerial multi-spectral measurement, and other homeland-defense related activities for Federal, state, and city government organizations.
[7] Title 49 United States Code § 40125(b).

whose presence is required to perform or is associated with performing the Governmental function for which the aircraft is being operated (qualified non-crewmembers are not passengers)." Per the NFO AID, Government aircraft are to be used only for official purposes, which include mission requirements and other official travel, and does not permit the transport of passengers. Mission requirements are activities that constitute the discharge of the agency's official responsibilities. The supplemental pilot told the OIG that although they sat in the back of the plane as a qualified non-crewmember, they could have opened emergency exits or taken over if one of the pilots became incapacitated.

However, the supplemental pilot's presence on the training flight did not satisfy any mission requirements and was not required to perform nor was the supplemental pilot associated with performing the Governmental function for which the aircraft was being operated. The flight from RSL-Andrews to Knoxville and back was for training purposes for the two pilots who received actual flight time hours. The supplemental pilot served no practical role on the flight other than as a passenger, as the pilot's skills, duties, or expertise were not essential to performing or associated with performing mission requirements for which the aircraft was dispatched.

**RSL-Andrews' Mission Status Was Not in "Red Status" in the Tracking System**

There were also differences in understanding by MSTS aviation personnel about how readiness is tracked in the Asset Readiness Management System (ARMS) Deployer, a multipurpose dashboard system. Specifically, part of ARMS includes a "Personnel" score, which tracks whether RSL-Andrews has adequate personnel to perform its 24/7 function. While an MSTS official informed the OIG that RSL-Andrews had turned to red status when its pilot departed for helicopter training in Louisiana on April 9, 2024, ARMS did not reflect that RSL-Andrews' readiness status was affected by the pilot shortage. Specifically, the readiness status is tracked by green/yellow/red indicators. In fact, at no time from March 29, 2024, through April 19, 2024, were the overall readiness nor personnel scores for RSL-Andrews categorized as red status. Rather, the scores were in green status (readiness was not affected).

When we informed the MSTS official who proposed the training flight to the NFO official that RSL-Andrews was never in red status during the time period in question, the official stated that they had no idea that the score remained green. According to the MSTS official, they had assumed that RSL-Andrews was in red status because it was short a pilot; however, the official only reported the aircraft and personnel availability and did not know how the scores were calculated, or what the score was on any given day. An NNSA official informed the OIG that ARMS was not perfect nor the only tool available to track readiness. An MSTS official told the OIG that weekly rosters provided the availability for day-to-day personnel. However, the NNSA official acknowledged that there was some confusion on the term "readiness," and NNSA was working on ways to improve ARMS.

**Contributing Factors**

Contributing factors for the issues we identified included the lack of: (1) a documented policy on ARMS readiness scores and aircraft availability requirements; (2) documented communication between NFO and MSTS officials; and (3) guidance pertaining to NNSA public aircraft

operations. While a written policy had not been developed, an Office of Nuclear Incident Response official stated that they were working to document requirements for ARMS readiness scores and aircraft availability. The official stated aircraft at RSL-Nellis could cover the shortage at RSL-Andrews. Therefore, it would take a pilot shortage at both RSL-Andrews and RSL-Nellis for the personnel score in ARMS to turn into red status. NNSA also told the OIG that when there was an availability issue, the standard practice was to discuss with Headquarters what mitigations could be put in place to ensure mission requirements could be met. According to NNSA, one mitigation could include utilizing a crew responding from RSL-Nellis and accepting risks, such as extra travel time and impacted ability, to support two missions simultaneously at two different locations in the country. An MSTS official confirmed that RSL-Nellis had pilot availability during the period RSL-Andrews was experiencing a shortage. A documented policy would also improve RSL aviation personnel's understanding of how ARMS tracks readiness as well as its limitations.

Communication between the RSL and NFO about RSL-Andrews' pilot availability issues were handled verbally and, as such, not documented. An MSTS official told the OIG they could not prove when the NFO was notified of the pilot shortage. This was because the RSL had approximately 40 days after becoming aware of a potential shortage to notify the NFO and develop an appropriate contingency plan to ensure adequate pilot coverage.

Further, there was a lack of guidance pertaining to NNSA public aircraft operations. Differences of opinion existed among Department officials regarding the definition of qualified non-crewmembers and appropriate uses of aircraft. Specifically, an NFO official stated that the supplemental pilot on the training flight was a qualified non-crewmember. In contrast, a Department official within another program told the OIG that qualified non-crewmembers included individuals who were onboard for a specific in-flight reason in support of the aircraft's Governmental function, and that these flights could not carry an "unneeded" crewmember (i.e., someone getting a ride). The Department official further explained that carrying an "unneeded" crewmember would be considered a passenger operation and was expressly forbidden under public aircraft operations. Per Department Order 440.2C, final authority for decisions, deviations, and waivers to Department requirements rests with the NNSA Acting Administrator, following review and recommendation by the Department's Office of Aviation Management Director.

## THE RSL MAINTAINS FLIGHT SCHEDULES IN LIEU OF MANIFESTS

We substantiated the allegation that the supplemental pilot was not added to the April 15, 2024, flight schedule. The NFO AID requires personnel manifests for each flight to be completed and maintained. Before each flight, the contractor is required to file a manifest showing the names of the persons, and the corresponding name and phone number of a person not aboard the aircraft to notify in the case of an emergency. However, an NFO official stated that the RSL does not utilize manifests but, in lieu of, maintains flight and daily operating schedules. An MSTS official informed the OIG that the RSL used a system to capture manifest information—it had emergency contacts for flight personnel on file with a signed disclosure form, as well as a weekly flight schedule and daily operations report with the names of those onboard for each

aircraft tail number. The NFO official explained that the RSL had a small pilot cadre; and if anything were to happen, the RSL had the relevant information readily available. The NFO official acknowledged that the current RSL procedures did not strictly comply with the AID.

The supplemental pilot was not added to the flight schedule for that training flight because, according to an MSTS official, there was a lack of a formal written RSL policy to verify personnel on its flights. The two pilots on the training flight thought that the other had notified the RSL Operations Center about the change made to add the supplemental pilot to the flight, when in fact neither of them had done so. An MSTS official told the OIG that a formal procedure for verifying crew and schedule changes has been developed but not yet implemented.

## IMPACT

Improving transparency and access to information helps ensure Government aircraft are used solely for official purposes. Accurate flight manifests are also critical for timely responses in aviation emergencies. An accurate manifest is crucial for the investigative process as it provides the primary source of information to identify all passengers and crew members on board, as well as emergency contacts for reaching out to families and loved ones.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Acting Administrator, NNSA:

1. Direct the Office of Nuclear Incident Response to issue formal, written policy and procedures clarifying the requirements for fixed-wing aircraft availability and readiness scores in ARMS.

2. Direct the NFO to ensure that the RSL provides notifications in writing regarding pilot availability and potential readiness issues, and for the NFO to document decisions made pertaining to aviation matters.

3. Determine whether the use of a training flight on a Department/NNSA-owned aircraft to transport a pilot or other personnel whose presence is not required to satisfy mission requirements, and is not required to perform nor is associated with performing the Governmental function for which the aircraft is being operated, meets requirements; and issue guidance on the appropriate uses of Department/NNSA-owned aircraft for public aircraft operations.

4. Determine whether the use of flight schedules and other sources of information are appropriate in lieu of manifests.

5. Direct the NFO to ensure that the RSL issues and implements a written policy or procedure that formalizes the process to verify personnel on flights.

## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Management fully concurred with our recommendations and provided corrective actions that will be completed by December 31, 2025. According to NNSA, the Office of Nuclear Incident Response will issue written policy clarifying the requirements for its aircraft availability and associated readiness scores. Additionally, NNSA stated that the NFO will update the AID to require written notification of pilot availability, potential readiness issues, formal written communication of NFO decisions pertaining to aviation matters, guidance on the appropriate uses of Department/NNSA-owned aircraft for public aircraft operations, the use of an accurate flight manifest, and written procedures to verify personnel on flights.

However, NNSA stated that the report as written did not accurately reflect the mission requirements that were satisfied during the noted flight. Additionally, according to NNSA, the report's discussion on emergency response readiness was incomplete.

Management's comments are included in Appendix 2.

## INSPECTOR COMMENTS

Management's response and proposed corrective actions are fully responsive to our recommendations.

However, NNSA stated that once the supplemental pilot boarded the aircraft, they were able to operate in a standby capacity, and the aircraft became a viable emergency response asset available to rapidly respond to nuclear or radiological incidents, events, or emergencies anywhere with the United States. While the RSL's *Aviation Training Manual* states that a pilot who fails to fulfill RSL mission proficiency requirements may act as a Second-in-Command pilot with a mission-proficient Pilot-in-Command, there was no evidence that the supplemental pilot's role on the training flight was intended to act as a Second-in-Command pilot. Specifically, the supplemental pilot was not designated as a Second-in-Command pilot in any of the flight schedules or documentation that MSTS provided for April 15, 2024. In fact, the supplemental pilot was not listed at all in the schedules or daily operations reports for that day, including the schedule that MSTS intended to serve as its flight manifest.

NNSA also stated that the report's discussion exclusively focused on ARMS and was based on conversations with personnel who are not responsible for and do not have the authority to determine readiness. However, our discussions conveyed that there was a disconnect regarding the understanding of readiness by aviation personnel and how readiness was tracked in ARMS. Additionally, according to the internal MSTS investigation report into the matter, an Aviation management official stated that "the decision to use our aircraft to pick up […] was based on the fact that MSTS were [*sic*] about to 'go red' at [RSL-Andrews]." These differences in understanding are further compounded by the fact that there was no written policy or procedure about ARMS.

## Appendix 1: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

### OBJECTIVE

We initiated this inspection to determine the facts and circumstances regarding the alleged flight concerns at the Remote Sensing Laboratory (RSL).

### SCOPE

The inspection was performed from October 2024 through April 2025. We conducted the inspection at RSL-Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, RSL-Joint Base Andrews in Maryland; and the John A. Gordon Albuquerque Complex in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The scope was limited to the facts and circumstances regarding the alleged flight concerns at the RSL from January 2023 through October 2024. The inspection was conducted under Office of Inspector General project number S25AL002.

### METHODOLOGY

To accomplish our inspection objective, we:

- Identified and reviewed applicable criteria (i.e., laws, regulations, Department directives, as well as policies and procedures) related to the allegations;
- Held discussions with the Department of Energy, including the National Nuclear Security Administration, and Mission Support and Test Services, LLC officials;
- Reviewed prior and related reports to determine the impact, if any, on the inspection;
- Reviewed pertinent documentation pertaining to Asset Readiness Management System Deployer readiness scores for RSL-Joint Base Andrews;
- Obtained and reviewed the availability of commercial flights from Knoxville, Tennessee, to Washington, DC; and
- Obtained and reviewed RSL-Joint Base Andrews' flight schedule and daily operations reports related to the allegations.

We conducted our inspection in accordance with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation* (December 2020) as put forth by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. We believe that the work performed provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

Management officials waived an exit conference on August 21, 2025.

## Appendix 2: Management Comments

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

August 19, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SENIOR OFFICIAL PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

FROM: TERESA M. ROBBINS
ACTING UNDER SECRETARY FOR NUCLEAR SECURITY
AND ADMINISTRATOR, NNSA

SUBJECT: Response to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Draft Report, *Allegations of Flight Concerns at the National Nuclear Security Administration's Remote Sensing Laboratory* (S25AL002)

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the subject draft report. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) appreciates the OIG's independent review and agrees that clarification of aircraft availability and readiness requirements and decisions will be beneficial. We are concerned, however, that the report as written, does not accurately reflect the mission requirements that were satisfied during the noted flight.

The OIG report focuses on the training aspect of the flight in question, but does not acknowledge that the supplemental pilot's presence on the flight addressed emergency response mission requirements. Specifically, one of the primary missions performed by these aircraft is emergency response deployment in support of NNSA's Office of Nuclear Incident Response, which maintains the only nuclear response aviation program in the world. At the time, the program was experiencing a pilot shortage. To mitigate the risk from the pilot shortage, the Nevada National Security Site's management and operating contractor arranged to have an already scheduled training flight pick up the supplemental pilot, with approval from the Nevada Field Office. Once the supplemental pilot boarded the aircraft, he was able to operate in a standby capacity and the aircraft became a viable emergency response asset available to rapidly respond to nuclear or radiological incidents, events, or emergencies anywhere within the United States.[1] Thus, while the pilot's purpose on the flight was not associated with training, his presence did satisfy emergency response mission requirements.

Additionally, the report's discussion on emergency response readiness is incomplete. The

[1] Mission Support and Test Services, LLC (MSTS) is required to maintain two aircraft at RSL-Andrews and one aircraft at Nellis Air Force Base (RSL-Nellis) on alert status 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide emergency response support as part of RSL's radiological incident response mission. Due to training cancellations because of weather and other circumstances, RSL-Andrews lacked the required number of pilots available on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. To address this pilot availability issue, MSTS worked with the Nevada Field Office to pick up a supplemental pilot in Knoxville, Tennessee, as part of a scheduled training flight to fill the vacant roster position.

discussion exclusively focuses on the Asset Readiness Management System (ARMS) and is based on conversations with personnel who are not responsible for and do not have the authority to determine readiness. While the ARMS system is a tool used to track various metrics that are components of readiness, ARMS metrics do not consider individual personnel availability on a day-to-day basis. Personnel availability is assessed through the rostering process and aviation rosters are distributed to officials within NNSA's Nevada Field Office and Office of Nuclear Incident Response through Aviation Department Daily Operations Reports. At the time in question, the Remote Sensing Laboratory at Joint Base Andrews was operating in a degraded readiness position based on roster status. While we agree that the Nevada Field Office's approval to transport the supplemental pilot via the training flight could have been better documented, the decision to do so was appropriate and allowed the contractor to restore readiness and reduce risk.

The attached management decision provides detailed responses to the five recommendations in the report. NNSA concurs with the OIG's recommendations. Our subject matter experts have also provided extensive technical comments under separate cover to enhance the accuracy and clarity of the report. If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Mr. George Webb, Acting Director, Audits and Internal Affairs, at (301) 903-3436.

Attachment

**NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**
**Management Decision**

*Allegations of Flight Concerns at the National Nuclear Security Administration's Remote Sensing Laboratory* (S25AL002)

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) recommends the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Acting Administrator:

**Recommendation 1:** Direct the Office of Nuclear Incident Response to issue formal, written policy and procedures clarifying the requirements for fixed-wing aircraft availability and readiness scores in ARMS.

**Management Response:** Concur. NNSA's Office of Nuclear Incident Response (NA-84) will issue written policy clarifying the requirements for its aircraft availability and associated readiness scores, to include both readiness metrics in ARMS and other components of readiness, such as daily rosters. The Nevada Field Office (NFO) will direct the Nevada National Security Site's (NNSS) management and operating (M&O) contractor responsible for the Remote Sensing Laboratory (RSL) to ensure operational policies and procedures are consistent with NA-84 policy. The estimated completion date is December 31, 2025.

**Recommendation 2**: Direct the NFO to ensure that the RSL provides notifications in writing regarding pilot availability and potential readiness issues, and for the NFO to document decisions made pertaining to aviation matters.

**Management Response:** Concur. Pilot availability and potential readiness issues are documented in Daily Operations Reports. NFO will update the Aviation Implementation Document (AID) to require written notification of pilot availability and potential readiness issues and formal written communication of NFO decisions pertaining to aviation matters. The estimated completion date is December 31, 2025.

**Recommendation 3**: Determine whether the use of a training flight on a Department/NNSA-owned aircraft to transport a pilot or other personnel whose presence is not required to satisfy mission requirements and is not required to perform nor is associated with performing the Governmental function for which the aircraft is being operated, met requirements and issue guidance on the appropriate uses of Department/NNSA-owned aircraft for public aircraft operations.

**Management Response:** Concur. NNSA has determined the use of a training flight on a Department of Energy (DOE) /NNSA-owned aircraft to transport a pilot to satisfy emergency response readiness meets applicable requirements. Guidance on the appropriate use of DOE/NNSA-owned aircraft for public aircraft operations is documented in official correspondence from the NFO Contracting Officer to the NNSS M&O contractor responsible for

aviation operations. NFO will update the AID to include guidance on appropriate uses of DOE/NNSA-owned aircraft for public aircraft operations. The estimated completion date is December 31, 2025.

**Recommendation 4**: Determine whether the use of flight schedules and other sources of information are appropriate in lieu of manifests.

**Management Response:** Concur. NNSA has determined that flight manifests are an important record and should be accurate. The NNSS M&O contractor completed actions in November and December 2024 to ensure use of accurate flight manifests, including an update to the Aviation Operations Manual. The manual now requires the Pilot-in-Command (PIC) to provide the designated flight follower information on the number and names of people on board and a Risk-Brief-Debrief-Weight and Balance checklist, which requires the PIC to verify the accuracy of the flight schedule and manifest. NFO will update the AID to require the use of an accurate flight manifest. The estimated completion date is December 31, 2025.

**Recommendation 5**: Direct the NFO to ensure that the RSL issues and implements a written policy or procedure that formalizes the process to verify personnel on flights.

**Management Response:** Concur. NFO will update the AID to require written procedures to verify personnel on flights. NFO will conduct oversight and document review of the NNSS M&O contractor responsible for aviation operation to ensure compliance with the requirements of the AID. The estimated completion date is December 31, 2025.

## FEEDBACK

The Office of Inspector General has a continuing interest in improving the usefulness of its products. We aim to make our reports as responsive as possible and ask you to consider sharing your thoughts with us.

If you have comments, suggestions, and feedback on this report, please reach out at OIG.Reports@hq.doe.gov. Include your name, contact information, and the report number.

For all media-related questions, please send inquiries to OIGpublicaffairs@hq.doe.gov and include your name, contact information, and the report number.