

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 6, 2023

REPLY TO

ATTN OF: IG-60 (S21HQ015)

SUBJECT: Review of the Department of Energy's Insider Threat Analysis and Referral Center

TO: Deputy Secretary, DS

The subject report is attached. Be advised that this report contains Controlled Unclassified Information. Handling, storage, reproduction, and disposition of this report must be in accordance with 32 Code of Federal Regulations 2002 and applicable agency policy.

We initiated this inspection to determine if the Department of Energy is operating a single centralized insider threat Analysis and Referral Center (ARC) for insider threat assessments.

We found that the Department is not operating a single centralized insider threat ARC for insider threat assessments. The issues we identified occurred, in part, because the ARC was not consistently receiving information from the Local Insider Threat Working Groups, the Designated Senior Official did not have access to classified referrals and did not provide annual insider threat reports to the Secretary of Energy, and the Department Order was outdated.

Management agreed with our findings and recommendations, and its proposed corrective actions are consistent with our recommendations.

We appreciated the cooperation of your staff during the review.

Anthony Cruz Assistant Inspector General for Inspections, Intelligence Oversight, and Special Projects Office of Inspector General

Attachment cc: Chief of Staff, DS

Director, Office of Financial Policy and Audit Resolution, CF-20 Audit Resolution Specialist, Office of Financial Policy and Audit Resolution, CF-20 Audit Liaison, Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security, EHSS-1 Audit Liaison, Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, IN-1 Senior Advisor, DS



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Energy

DOE-OIG-23-15 March 2023

CONTROLLED UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION



REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S INSIDER THREAT ANALYSIS AND REFERRAL CENTER

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<u>May</u> be exempt from public release under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552). OIG Review required before public release. <u>CUI Category:</u> INTEL

Controlled by: OIG Office of Inspections, Intelligence Oversight, and Special Projects

Contact Information: 202-586-4073



Department of Energy Washington, DC 20585

March 6, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

SUBJECT: Inspection Report on the Department of Energy's Insider Threat Analysis and Referral Center

The attached report discusses our inspection to determine if the Department of Energy is operating a single centralized insider threat Analysis and Referral Center for insider threat assessments. This report contains six recommendations that, if fully implemented, should help ensure that the issues identified during this inspection are corrected. Management fully concurred with our recommendations.

We conducted this inspection from May 2021 through June 2022 in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*. We appreciated the cooperation and assistance received during this evaluation.

Anthony Cruz Assistant Inspector General for Inspections, Intelligence Oversight, and Special Projects Office of Inspector General

cc: Chief of Staff Director, Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security Director, Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence



WHY THE OIG PERFORMED THIS REVIEW

An insider threat program must be developed and maintained to deter, detect, mitigate, analyze, and respond to insider threats. The Analysis and Referral Center (ARC) involves gathering, integrating, and analyzing information derived from counterintelligence, security, information assurance, human capital, law enforcement, the monitoring of user activity, and other sources, as necessary and appropriate, to identify potential insider threat activity for referral and response.

We initiated this inspection to determine if the Department of Energy is operating a single centralized insider threat ARC for insider threat assessments.

Department of Energy Office of Inspector General

The Department of Energy's Insider Threat Analysis and Referral Center (DOE-OIG-23-15)

What Did the OIG Find?

We found that the Department is not operating a single centralized insider threat ARC for insider threat assessments. Specifically, we identified the following opportunities for improvement: the ARC receiving information from the Local Insider Threat Working Groups; the ARC consistently receiving feedback from referrals; the Department's Designated Senior Official's receiving notification of referrals; the Designated Senior Official's involvement with oversight of referrals that are generated at the ARC; and the Designated Senior Official issuing an annual progress and status report to the Secretary of Energy.

What is the impact?

Operational duties for the ARC involve gathering, integrating, and analyzing information to identify potential insider threat activity for referral and response. The ARC refers identified and potential insider threat issues to the appropriate programs or offices for investigations or other responses. The deficiencies we identified expose the Department to potential damage to its infrastructure and jeopardize the safety and security of its personnel.

What Is the Path Forward?

To address the issues identified in this report, we have made six recommendations that, if fully implemented, should help ensure problems identified during our inspection are corrected.

BACKGROUND

In October 2011, Executive Order 13587, Structural Reforms to Improve the Security of Classified Networks and the Responsible Sharing and Safeguarding of Classified Information, required Federal agencies to implement an insider threat detection and prevention program consistent with guidance and standards developed by the Insider Threat Task Force. In November 2012, a Presidential Memorandum created the National Insider Threat Policy, which focuses on strengthening and safeguarding classified information to counter the threat of insiders who may use their authorized access to compromise sensitive information. This policy incorporated requirements from Executive Order 13587 that are part of a Government-wide insider threat program for the deterrence, detection, and mitigation of insider threats, including the safeguarding of classified information from exploitation, compromise, or other unauthorized disclosure. The National Insider Threat Policy was established to be consistent with Executive Order 13587 in establishing minimum standards for insider threat programs for Executive Branch agencies.

In 2014, in response to these requirements, the Department of Energy issued Department Order 470.5, *Insider Threat Program*, to establish the responsibilities and requirements for the agency-wide Insider Threat Program (ITP) to deter, detect, and mitigate insider threat actions by Federal and contractor employees, per the requirements of Executive Order 13587. Department Order 470.5 requires that the Designated Senior Official (DSO) establish and provide direction and oversight to ITP multi-organizational or multi-functional groups in accordance with the Order, including a single centralized insider threat Analysis and Referral Center (ARC).

The ARC is operated by personnel from the Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence (Intelligence) who develop and document DSO-approved insider threat detection, assessments, referral criteria, and procedures. The ARC Concept of Operations and Procedures (CONOPS) explains that the ARC provides the Department and National Nuclear Security Administration with the capability to gather, integrate, review, and assess relevant insider threat reporting and audit collection data. The ARC is also responsible for identifying and documenting data sources and formats needed to support the ARC's designed analytic operations. Through the DSO or according to DSO-approved procedures, the ARC refers identified and potential insider threat issues to the appropriate programs or offices for investigations or other responses.

We initiated this inspection to determine if the Department is operating a single centralized insider threat ARC for insider threat assessments.

ARC OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

We found that the Department is not operating a single centralized insider threat ARC for insider threat assessments. Specifically, we identified the following opportunities for improvement: the

ARC receiving information from the Local Insider Threat Working Groups (LITWGs);¹ the ARC

consistently receiving feedback from referrals; the Department's DSO receiving notification of referrals; the DSO's involvement with oversight of referrals that are generated at the ARC; and the DSO issuing an annual progress and status report to the Secretary of Energy.

ARC Not Consistently Receiving Information from LITWGs

We found that the ARC was not consistently receiving information from LITWGs. The CONOPS explains that the ARC's comprehensive threat detection and analysis program relies on the cooperative and integrated efforts of several Department components. The ARC's efforts to detect insider threats require continuous and accurate analysis of multiple indicators from many different sources. The ARC may conduct an insider threat assessment that is predicated on information provided by external sources. When the ARC receives information from an external source, it reviews and documents the information as an insider threat assessment.

According to Department Order 470.5, LITWGs must facilitate access to local data to support the ARC's analytic responsibilities. We also reviewed the 2021 Office of Enterprise Assessments report, *Special Assessment of the Department of Energy's Insider Threat Program*, and found that the Office of Enterprise Assessments observed that some LITWGs assumed the function of manually integrating, reviewing, and assessing selected LITWGs information, even though the 2015 Memorandum established that this function should only occur at the ARC.

In our discussions with the ARC Director, we learned that one reason LITWG contractors did not provide information to the ARC was fear of losing the contract. Additionally, the ARC Deputy Director stated that the ARC did not have control over LITWGs, and LITWGs determined whether to act on an insider threat lead or assessment. Further, we were told by an ARC analyst that the ITP was not properly advertised throughout the Department because the website for the ITP did not have adequate information about how LITWGs or others were to report insider threats to the ARC or other ITP personnel. We reviewed material from the website and verified the ARC analyst's concerns. The ability of the Department's ARC to act as a single centralized insider threat ARC for insider threat assessments is impaired by the ARC's inability to obtain information from LITWGs.

ARC Not Receiving Consistent Feedback from Referrals

The ARC did not obtain feedback from LITWGs that received referrals. Per the *Analysis and Referral Center Concept of Operations and Procedures* (April 2016), the ARC is tasked with checking the status of open referrals to ensure feedback is received. The CONOPS also states that feedback to the ARC should be provided in writing to the ARC Director.

¹ The LITWG is a working group designed to develop and maintain a collaborative environment to identify, coordinate, and integrate local activities to address and respond to insider threats. According to the CONOPS, the LITWG coordinates, synchronizes, and deconflicts actions associated with potential insider issues among local action entities, whether the issues originated locally or via the work of the ARC. The LITWG comprises mandatory representation from the supporting Counterintelligence Intelligence field office, physical security, cybersecurity, and personnel security.

For example, in our review of ARC referrals, **(b)** (7)(F) were initiated and sent to the assigned Department entity, which validated that the ARC was opening referrals. However, we noted that in four referrals the ARC had not received updates from the designated LITWGs. An insider threat analyst from the ARC informed us that he was checking the status of open referrals but had issues with LITWGs reporting results of its referrals. The analyst told the OIG that the ARC sometimes reaches out to request this information from LITWGs. We were told that this communication is often informal, via phone call or email, and is not documented. However, the ARC Deputy Director told us that the ARC was working on improving communication between the ARC and the LITWGs. The ITP Director stated that she deduced that the ARC was not receiving feedback for referrals, in part, because LITWGs receiving referrals were not properly trained on how to handle referrals. When the ARC does not receive feedback, it impacts the ARC's ability to take appropriate steps to clarify and resolve the identified potential insider threat issue, determine if other actions are needed, and provide valuable information for potential process and program improvements.

DSO Lacked Access to Referrals

We found that the DSO did not have access to referrals and was not involved with the oversight of referrals generated at the ARC. Specifically, during interviews with both ARC and ITP personnel, it was confirmed that the DSO did not have access to referrals. Further, the ARC is part of Intelligence and is managed by Intelligence personnel, and the DSO stated that he did not have the clearance to enter Intelligence areas. Intelligence's ITP Director stated that the DSO can obtain a classified account to receive emails about referrals but had never requested an account. The DSO informed us that he does not have a classified account, had not been briefed on referrals, and relied on the ARC Deputy Director to inform him on the most severe referrals.

This occurred because the ARC and DSO did not consistently or proactively collaborate regarding critical threat information, and the ARC does not communicate insider threat risks and program challenges to the DSO, as required. During our review of the CONOPS, we found that the DSO should receive verbal notification from the ARC regarding referrals to LITWGs. Department Order 470.5 requires that the ARC, through the DSO or according to DSO-approved procedures, refer identified and potential insider threat issues to the appropriate programs or offices leading to investigations or other responses. However, according to the DSO, the ARC did not inform him of all referrals. The DSO further stated that to find out about referrals at LITWGs, he would have to contact individual LITWGs because LITWGs' General Counsel and Human Capital maintain those records. Without this feedback, the DSO cannot provide adequate oversight and coordinate with personnel concerning the Special Access Program, Restricted Data access, Formerly Restricted Data access, data needs, or issues.

DSO Not Issuing Annual ITP Reports

We found that the DSO did not provide annual ITP reports to the Secretary of Energy. According to the *National Insider Threat Policy*, the DSO is required to issue an annual report to the agency head. Annual reports include annual accomplishments, resources allocated, insider threat risks to the agency, recommendations and goals for program improvement, and significant

challenges. Department Order 470.5 confirms the DSO's obligation to submit an annual ITP progress/status report to the Secretary of Energy. However, the ITP Director informed us that reports for 2018, 2019, and 2020 had not been prepared. Therefore, the former DSO decided to combine the 2018 and 2019 annual reports, but due to a change in leadership, the combined annual report was not issued. The current DSO informed us that he did not assume his duties until July 2019 and could not influence when prior reports were submitted. He added that due to limited building access resulting from COVID-19, the reports were not submitted to the Secretary of Energy. Also, the DSO commented that it was difficult to get information from Intelligence because it did not disseminate classified information, which made it difficult to produce a report for 2021.

We acknowledge that the current DSO could not affect whether prior reports were submitted by his predecessor. While we recognize COVID-19 led to the implementation of maximum telework, the Federal Government did not begin maximum telework until March 2020. Therefore, the DSO was in his position in July 2019 but failed to issue the required annual report. Further, the maximum telework posture did not preclude employees from working onsite, with proper approvals, to execute mission-critical work, as necessary. Given that the operational duty for the ARC is to identify potential insider threat activity for referral and response, the ARC's mission is critically important. Without the required annual ITP reporting, the Secretary of Energy would not be informed on the progress or status of the ITP on an annual basis regarding security threats that may have an insider threat nexus.

CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE NEED UPDATES

We identified that Department Order 470.5 is outdated. Specifically, it was written in 2014, which was prior to the Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security (Health and Safety) establishing the ITP Office in 2015. Health and Safety has administrative control of the ITP and is the office of primary interest for Department Order 470.5; however, this Order does not address coordination between the ITP Office and the ARC.

The DSO informed us that he surmised that Department Order 470.5 should be updated to clarify LITWGs' responsibilities. He thought that there was a significant disconnect between the Order and what has been implemented. For example, the DSO concluded that LITWG insider threat activities need to be restructured to clearly identify who should be informed of issues because he is not confident instructions in the Order are clear. In discussions with the ITP Director, we were told that the Order is vague and that efforts are being made to update it.

IMPACT

Since the Department does not operate a single centralized insider threat ARC for insider threat assessments, Department facilities may be exposed to potential damage, personnel may be exposed to actual or threatened harm, and there could be exploitable gaps in the ITP that could undermine the Department's ability to carry out its operations effectively. Without the ARC's proper collection and integration of referrals, the ITP cannot fully maintain, detect, mitigate, analyze, and respond to insider threats. Further, collecting and generating insider threat referrals and improving collaboration with program offices will enable the Department to protect its

resources more effectively. Additionally, the ARC and the DSO's failure to obtain referral feedback inhibits the Department's and DSO's abilities to ensure insider threat response actions are appropriately documented, completed, and reported for ITP purposes. Finally, an outdated ITP Order impacts the Department's ability to deter, detect, and mitigate insider threat actions by Federal and contractor employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the issues identified in our report, we recommend that the Deputy Secretary of Energy:

- 1. Ensure that Department Order 470.5 is updated to provide more descriptive guidance for LITWGs and add the roles and responsibilities for the Office of Insider Threat;
- 2. Ensure that the ARC is receiving insider threat information from LITWGs to be collected and integrated to generate referrals for detection, mitigation, and analysis for the ITP to respond to insider threats;
- 3. Ensure that a method is established for the DSO to receive insider threat information proactively and consistently from the ARC and other relevant offices;
- 4. Implement cross-organizational communication and collaboration with LITWGs to ensure that referrals with the ARC are addressed, as required;
- 5. Ensure that the DSO is submitting annual reports to the Secretary of Energy per the *National Insider Threat Policy* and Department Order 470.5; and
- 6. Disseminate and publicize the ITP appropriately throughout the Department to ensure that employees know the proper procedures for reporting insider threats.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Management fully concurred with our recommendations. According to the management response, both Health and Safety and the Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence (Intelligence) agree that greater clarity is required on the roles, responsibilities, and procedures that are not otherwise specified as required. The Department is actively evaluating the roles and responsibilities currently undertaken within Intelligence, Health and Safety, and LITWGs in executing the ITP. Also, Intelligence, in coordination with the DSO, will continue to implement procedures to better inform the ARC about local conditions known to LITWGs but not captured in User Account Monitoring.

Management comments are included in Appendix 2.

INSPECTOR COMMENTS

Management's comments and corrective actions are responsive to our recommendations. Subsequent to receiving management's comments, on February 7, 2023, the Secretary of Energy issued a memorandum with the subject: Designating the Department of Energy's Designated Senior Official for Insider Threat and Updating Department Order 470.5, *Insider Threat Program*.

Appendix 1: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

OBJECTIVE

We conducted this inspection to determine if the Department of Energy is operating a single centralized insider threat Analysis and Referral Center (ARC) for insider threat assessments.

SCOPE

The inspection was performed from May 2021 through June 2022 at the Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security and the Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence in Washington, DC. We reviewed all relevant information about collecting, integrating, reviewing, assessing, and initiating insider threat referrals by the ARC to the appropriate agencies from fiscal year 2019 through fiscal year 2021. The inspection was conducted under the Office of Inspector General project number S21HQ015.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish our inspection objective, we:

- Conducted interviews with personnel at the ARC;
- Conducted interviews with personnel from the Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security;
- Conducted interviews with the Assistant General Counsel for International and National Security Programs;
- Conducted interviews with Office of Inspector General personnel;
- Reviewed applicable policies and procedures;
- Reviewed insider threat referrals;
- Reviewed previous annual insider threat reports; and
- Reviewed results of a prior assessment conducted by the Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security.

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.

We held an exit conference with management officials on January 9, 2023.

Appendix 2: Management Comments



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

December 20, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

FROM:	TODD N. LAPOINTE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY
	Steven K. Black Digitally signed by Steven K. Black Digitally sign
SUBJECT:	DRAFT INSPECTION REPORT COMMENTS: Inspection Report the Department of Energy's Insider Threat Analysis and Referral Center (Project Number: S21HQ015)

The Department of Energy (DOE or Department) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) draft inspection report titled, "Department of Energy's Insider Threat Analysis and Referral Center."

Recommendation 1: Ensure that Department Order 470.5 is updated to provide more descriptive guidance for the LITWGs and add the roles and responsibilities for the Office of Insider Threat.

Management Response: Concur

Action Plan: Both EHSS and IN agree that greater clarity on roles, responsibilities and procedures not otherwise specified is required. The Department is actively evaluating the roles and responsibilities currently undertaken within IN, EHSS and the LITWGs in executing the Department's Insider Threat Program. Guidance to the Designated Senior Official (DSO) is forthcoming which will include direction to codify all relevant roles and responsibilities in updating Departmental Order 470.5, *Insider Threat Program*.

Estimated Completion Date: Guidance to the DSO from the Deputy Secretary is anticipated no later than January 31, 2023. Updates to the Order will be completed during FY 2023 consistent with the Deputy Secretary's guidance. The specific timeline and process to revise DOE Order 470.5 will be coordinated with the Directives Review Board.

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Appendix 2: Management Comments

Recommendation 2: Ensure that the ARC is receiving insider threat information from the LITWGs to be collected and integrated to generate referrals for detection, mitigation, and analysis for the ITP to respond to insider threats.

Management Response: Concur

Action Plan: IN, in coordination with the DSO, will continue to implement procedures that were modified during the IG Inspection to better inform the ARC about local conditions known to the LITWGs but not captured in User Account Monitoring. IN will also task the new LITWG Coordinator to manage the LITWG referral process with Headquarters (HQ) DOE.

Communication between the ARC and the LITWGs has been increasing as the ARC's capabilities and function have become better known throughout the DOE Insider Threat community. LITWGs now contact the ARC for various requests, and referrals from the ARC to LITWGs have also become more productive. Furthermore, as the ARC develops additional User Activity Monitoring (UAM) initiatives, the ARC expects an increase in referrals to LITWGs (and vice-versa), as its analysts will have more thorough information about potential insider threat behaviors.

IN has created a case-management system, where Insider Threat case-related matters are contained and can be shared. It is covered under the current Insider Threat System of Records Notice (SORN) (DOE CI-81). This expanded coordination process is being streamlined and will be under the cognizance of the new LITWG Coordinator. This position was proposed and created as the IG inspection was being conducted and is a direct response to other reports regarding the DOE's Insider Threat Program. The new position and expanding communication ensure greater compliance with DOE Order 470.5, which mandates that IN establish and provide guidance for LITWGs.

As DOE Order 470.5 is updated clarification for roles and responsibilities for receiving, collecting, and integrating insider threat information between the ARC and the LITWGs will be addressed.

Estimated Completion Date: IN has already implemented most policies and procedures and the new hire is onboard.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that a method is established for the DSO to receive insider threat information proactively and consistently from the ARC and other relevant offices;

Management Response: Concur.

Action Plan: The DSO will be required to maintain Special Compartmented Information (SCI) access. The DSO and the ARC will conduct weekly meetings to discuss all matters and ensure that the DSO has access to a HAL account for updates.

Estimated Completion Date: January 31, 2023

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Appendix 2: Management Comments

Recommendation 4: Implement cross-organizational communication and collaboration with the LITWGs to ensure that referrals with the ARC are addressed, as required.

Management Response: Concur

Action Plan: The DSO, working with IN, will distribute new policies and procedures to the LITWGs through the newly hired LITWG Coordinator as the main point-of-contact for HQ-LITWG communications, per DOE Order 470.5.

Estimated Completion Date: Ongoing, but the newly-hired LITWG Coordinator has arrived at HQ DOE.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that the DSO is submitting annual reports to the Secretary of Energy per the National Insider Threat Policy and Department Order 470.5.

Management Response: Concur

Action Plan: The annual report is being drafted and will begin internal reviews by January 31, 2023

Estimated Completion Date: July 31, 2023

Recommendation 6: Disseminate and publicize the ITP appropriately throughout the Department to ensure that employees know the proper procedures for reporting insider threats.

Management Response: Concur

Action Plan: The DSO uses multiple means to disseminate the corporate Insider Threat Program message across the Department, including via Deputy Secretary and Secretary DOECAST releases. The DSO also recognizes the need to manage and update web content for information accuracy and timeliness. The reporting information in question has been updated on our website. https://itp.energy.gov. Additionally, the DSO will evaluate current employee engagement strategies, develop and implement a plan to ensure multiple means of communication are utilized to increase awareness regarding the insider threat program.

Estimated Completion Date: April 30, 2023

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