



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
U.S. Department of Energy

# INFORMATION REPORT

OIG-IR-17-02

March 2017

**REVIEW OF THE ALLEGATIONS  
INVOLVING PANTEX'S EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**



**Department of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

March 16, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY  
ADMINISTRATION

*April Stephenson*

FROM: April G. Stephenson  
Acting Inspector General  
Office of Inspector General

SUBJECT: INFORMATION: Information Report on "Review of the Allegations  
Involving Pantex's Emergency Management Program"

BACKGROUND

The National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Pantex Plant (Pantex) is the nation's primary site for assembly and disassembly of nuclear weapons. Pantex maintains hazardous materials, which include special nuclear material, and is required to have an emergency management program that includes preparing for and responding to all emergencies relating to these materials. The Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board (DNFSB) is an independent Federal entity authorized to review and evaluate the content and implementation of the standards relating to the design, construction, operation and decommissioning of defense nuclear facilities. Over the past 2 years, the DNFSB has conducted a number of reviews and has issued recommendation reports regarding emergency management programs at the Department of Energy's defense nuclear facilities, including Pantex.

The Office of Inspector General received a complaint that alleged management weaknesses in Pantex's Emergency Management Program. The objective of our evaluation was to examine the facts and circumstances regarding the allegation of management weaknesses in Pantex's Emergency Management Program.

RESULTS OF EVALUATION

During our evaluation, we noted that subject matter expert reports from Departmental organizations, such as NNSA's Office of Safety and Health, and the DNFSB, identified management weaknesses in Pantex's Emergency Management Program similar to those contained in the allegation. Examples of emergency management program weakness identified in the subject matter expert reports include, but are not limited to: Training, drills, and exercises were not always adequately planned, conducted, or completed timely and program self-assessments did not always identify program weaknesses. Additionally, emergency management

program weaknesses were not always tracked and adequately addressed at Pantex. Finally, emergency response weaknesses that were identified by independent review groups had not always been identified by Pantex management.

On June 16, 2016, the Department issued the Implementation Plan for DNFSB Recommendation 2015-1, *Emergency Preparedness and Response at the Pantex Plant* (Implementation Plan), and committed to make improvements to Pantex's Emergency Management Program. Further, in response to the DNFSB's recommendations to correct the identified weaknesses, the Department established specific performance goals for the Pantex emergency management program to include improvements in the areas identified by DNFSB as delineated in the June 2016 Implementation Plan. Additionally, in January 2016, in response to DNFSB emergency management concerns specific to Pantex, the Secretary of Energy stated that improvement actions were needed that complemented actions NNSA has taken at Pantex as part of the defense nuclear complex improvement plan.

In addition to the specific issues at Pantex, the Department has acknowledged that weaknesses exist in its emergency management programs within the overall defense nuclear complex. In an April 24, 2015 letter to the DNFSB, the Secretary stated that actions were needed to improve emergency preparedness and response capabilities at the Department's defense nuclear facilities. Further, the letter provided a Department-wide emergency management implementation plan that contained individual prioritized milestones with delivery dates. However, in a February 16, 2017 letter, the DNFSB expressed concern about the "...limited improvements in the conduct of site exercises throughout the defense nuclear complex." Additionally, the DNFSB stated, "We view the Implementation Plan of Recommendation 2014-1 as inadequate and significantly behind schedule..."

Because the Department and the DNFSB have identified weaknesses in the Department's Emergency Management Program at Pantex similar to those contained in the allegation and a milestone plan was developed to resolve those weaknesses, we are not making any formal recommendations or suggested actions.

Attachment

cc: Deputy Secretary  
Chief of Staff

## **OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY**

### **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this evaluation was to examine the facts and circumstances regarding the allegation of management weaknesses in the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Pantex Plant's (Pantex) Emergency Management Program.

### **SCOPE**

The Office of Inspector General received a complaint that, in part, alleged management weaknesses in Pantex's Emergency Management Program. However, certain aspects of the allegation involved personnel issues that were examined by the Office of Special Counsel. We did not address these personnel issues. The focus of our evaluation was the allegation regarding management weaknesses in Pantex's Emergency Management Program. We performed this evaluation between October 2014 and March 2017 at Pantex, located in Amarillo, Texas. The evaluation was conducted under Office of Inspector General project number S14IS015.

### **METHODOLOGY**

To accomplish the objective, we:

- Reviewed the complaint material, documents, and information;
- Reviewed applicable Department orders and other guidance, and the Pantex Plant Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan;
- Visited Pantex and Y-12 and interviewed Federal and contract personnel responsible for the management and operations of the Emergency Management Program;
- Reviewed documents, reports, correspondence, and emails relating to the Emergency Management Program; and
- Reviewed Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board information and documents, and certain correspondence relating to Pantex's Emergency Management Program.

An exit conference was held with NNSA Headquarters personnel and NNSA Production Office management on March 9, 2017.

## **FEEDBACK**

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