



**OIG**

**Office of Inspector General**

U.S. Department of State • Broadcasting Board of Governors

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Office of Inspections

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# **Compliance Follow-Up Review: Armored Vehicle Training**

DOMESTIC OPERATIONS AND SPECIAL REPORTS

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## Summary of Review

OIG conducted a compliance follow-up review (CFR) of the Department of State's (Department) implementation of the recommendation in the July 2016 *Management Assistance Report: Armored Vehicle Training* (ISP-16-17). That report found that from January 2010 through September 2015, operators of armored vehicles at U.S. missions overseas were involved in 773 mishaps, almost 60 percent of which were deemed preventable.<sup>1</sup> Twelve of the mishaps resulted in 13 fatalities. Mishap reports prepared by the embassies recommended driver training in 10 of the 12 mishaps involving fatalities. The Department provides specialized operator training that includes handling armored vehicle dynamics but, at the time of the 2016 report, required it only for drivers of chiefs of mission and principal officers, none of whom were involved in the 12 fatal mishaps. To address this training gap, OIG recommended that the Department establish a mandatory training requirement on armored vehicle safe-driving techniques for all overseas professional chauffeurs and incidental (self-drive) operators of such vehicles.

To address OIG's recommendation, the Department in 2017 implemented the Armored Vehicle Familiarization Course to train all drivers under Chief of Mission authority on safe armored vehicle driving. The Department anticipates training all armored vehicle operators within the next 2.5 years. In addition, the Department plans to revise the training requirements in 12 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 389. In this compliance follow-up review, OIG determined that the Department's actions met the intent of the original report's recommendation. As a result, the status of the recommendation, which OIG closed in November 2017, remains unchanged.

## BACKGROUND

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According to the Department, armored vehicle dynamics (i.e., how the vehicle behaves in motion) were a contributing cause in 83 percent of the fatal mishaps between January 2010 and September 2015. The Department also concluded that these mishaps might have been prevented had the drivers received proper training. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security's (DS) Armored Vehicle Program Guidebook recognizes that safe operation of an armored vehicle requires addressing safety concerns stemming from their increased weight. For example, armored vehicles cannot stop as quickly as unarmored vehicles, so braking distances must be increased to a minimum of four car lengths, even at low speeds. Drivers must also factor in longer reaction time for turning and maneuvering and should avoid hard or unnecessary turns. Finally, tires must be of the correct load range and properly inflated.

## ARMORED VEHICLE TRAINING REQUIREMENT ESTABLISHED

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In August 2016, the Department told OIG that it was exploring options for providing armored vehicle training to drivers of these vehicles at U.S. missions overseas. At that time, however, the

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<sup>1</sup> The Department's Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program for Overseas Posts defines a preventable mishap as one involving an official vehicle where the vehicle operator, regardless of fault, failed to exercise every reasonable precaution to prevent the mishap.

recommendation was an unfunded mandate and could not be fully implemented. OIG accepted the management decision and considered the recommendation resolved.

In January 2017, citing the nature of the recommendation, the Department requested that OIG transfer implementation responsibility for the recommendation from the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation to DS, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO). OIG agreed to this request. DS funded the training requirement in June 2017 and, in coordination with OBO, conducted a pilot Armored Vehicle Familiarization course in August 2017 for Smith System instructors.<sup>2</sup> Based on the favorable results of the pilot, DS and OBO agreed that same month that Smith System instructors would deliver armored vehicle training overseas for all drivers who operate armored vehicles in any capacity.

DS trained 16 Smith System instructors at its Armored Vehicle Familiarization courses in West Virginia in October and November 2017. And, also in November 2017, OIG closed its recommendation after receiving documentation that the training process had been initiated. After the 16 Smith System instructors were trained, the bureau then authorized these instructors to conduct the training at their assigned overseas locations, including Tunis, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, and Nairobi, among others. As of this review in early 2018, these Smith System instructors had delivered armored vehicle training to 15 drivers. DS planned additional Armored Vehicle Familiarization courses for March 2018 in Madrid and Mexico City, with 19 Smith System instructors from Lima, San Salvador, Berlin, Ankara, and Brussels, among others, scheduled to attend. According to the Department, training priority is being given to locations with the greatest number of armored vehicles. However, the Department anticipates every armored vehicle driver will have completed the Armored Vehicle Familiarization course within 2.5 years.

DS also told OIG that that in addition to offering this course, OBO will, wherever possible, include armored vehicle training as a supplement to the initial Smith System instructor training course and to the Smith System recertification course, which drivers must complete every 2 years. Finally, OIG found that the Department was in the process of revising its guidance on armored vehicle training in 12 FAM 389 to reflect the new training requirement. Based on the Department's completed and planned actions to address the original recommendation, OIG concluded that the recommendation should remain closed.

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<sup>2</sup> The Smith System is a comprehensive, week-long safe driver program offered at various locations overseas. Embassy employees who complete the course are certified by OBO's Office of Safety Health and Environmental Management as Smith System instructors to train motor vehicle operators in safe driving techniques and behaviors.

## APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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This compliance follow-up review (CFR) was conducted between January 2 and February 16, 2018, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2012 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by OIG for the Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of Broadcasting Board of Governors, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors. CFRs assess the inspected entities' compliance with recommendations made in previous inspection reports and verify whether agreed-upon corrective actions were fully and properly implemented.

During the course of this CFR, OIG reviewed recommendations issued in the original inspection report; collected and reviewed documentation on reported corrective actions; conducted four interviews to substantiate reported corrective actions; and shared the substance of this report with offices and individuals affected by the review.

Alexandra Vega and Stephen Dodson conducted this CFR.

## APPENDIX B: STATUS OF MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE REPORT RECOMMENDATION

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**Recommendation 1:** The Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should establish a mandatory training requirement on armored vehicle safe-driving techniques for all overseas professional chauffeurs and incidental drivers who operate such vehicles. (Action: M/PRI, in coordination with OBO and DS)

**Pre-CFR Status:** Closed

**CFR Status:** Closed

## APPENDIX C: INSPECTION TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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**Compliance Response:** A written response from the action office to which a recommendation has been assigned for action, informing OIG of agreement or disagreement with the recommendation. Comments indicating agreement shall include planned corrective actions and, where appropriate, the actual or proposed target dates for achieving these actions. The reasons for any disagreement with a recommendation must be explained fully. Where disagreement is based on interpretation of law, regulation, or the authority of officials to take or not take action, the response must include the legal basis.

**Final Action:** The completion of all actions that the management of an action office, in its management decision, has concluded is necessary to address the findings and recommendations in OIG reports.

**Finding:** A conclusion drawn from facts and information about the propriety, efficiency, effectiveness, or economy of operation of a post, unit, or activity.

**Management Decision:** When the management of an action office for an OIG recommendation informs OIG of its intended course of action in response to a recommendation. If OIG accepts the management decision, the recommendation is considered resolved. If OIG does not accept the management decision and the issue cannot be resolved after a reasonable effort to achieve agreement, the Inspector General may choose to take it to impasse.

**Open Recommendation:** An open recommendation is either resolved or unresolved (see definitions of recommendation status below).

**Recommendation:** A statement in an OIG report requiring action by the addressee organizations or officials to correct a deficiency or need for change or improvement identified in the report.

### Recommendation Status:

- **Resolved:** Resolution of a recommendation occurs when:
  - The action office concurs with the recommendation (a management decision has been accepted by OIG), but the action office has not presented satisfactory evidence that it has implemented the recommendation or some alternative course of action acceptable to OIG;
  - The action office informs OIG that it disagrees with all or part of the recommendation, and OIG agrees to accept partial compliance or noncompliance; or
  - Impasse procedures have led to a positive or negative final management decision.
- **Unresolved:** An unresolved recommendation occurs when the action office:
  - Has not responded to OIG;
  - Has failed to address the recommendation in a manner satisfactory to OIG;

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- Disagrees with the recommendation and did not suggest an alternative acceptable to OIG; or
  - Requests OIG refer the matter to impasse, and the impasse official has not yet issued a decision.
- **Closed:** A recommendation is closed when one of the following situations applies:
    - OIG formally notifies the action office that satisfactory evidence of final action (i.e., information provided by the action office that confirms or attests to implementation) on an OIG recommendation has been accepted. The closing of a recommendation from an OIG report does not relieve the responsible manager of the obligation to report to OIG any changed circumstances substantially affecting the problem areas addressed in the recommendation or report and the effectiveness of agreed actions to correct these problems;
    - OIG acknowledges to the action office that an alternative course of action to the action proposed in the recommendation will satisfy the intent of the recommendation and satisfactory evidence showing that the alternative action has been completed is provided to OIG;
    - OIG agrees partial implementation is acceptable and has been completed; or
    - OIG agrees that noncompliance is acceptable.

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