



**DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES
SAFETY BOARD**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004-2901

**OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

September 24, 2019

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Bruce Hamilton

FROM: Dr. Brett M. Baker */RA/*
Assistant Inspector General for Audits

SUBJECT: STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS: AUDIT OF DNFSB'S
ISSUE AND COMMITMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IACTS)
AND ITS RELATED PROCESSES (DNFSB-19-A-02)

REFERENCE: CHAIRMAN, DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY
BOARD, CORRESPONDENCE DATED
MAY 31, 2019

Attached is the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) analysis and status of recommendations as discussed in DNFSB's response dated May 31, 2019. Based on this response, recommendations 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8 are open and resolved. Recommendations 3,4, and 6 are now closed.

Please provide an updated status of each of the resolved recommendations by January 31, 2020.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at (301) 415-5915 or Paul Rades, Team Leader, at (301) 415-6228.

cc: G. Sklar, OGM
R. Howard, OGM

Audit Report

AUDIT OF DNFSB'S ISSUE AND COMMITMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IACTS) AND ITS RELATED PROCESSES

DNFSB-19-A-02

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Provide training for the agency, including Board members, focusing on effective communication and trust in the workplace.

Agency Response Dated
May 31, 2019: Agree.

The Board members have met with facilitators from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) to build better communication and trust within the Board. The Board members plan to have a joint session with the agency's Senior Executive Service members.

DNFSB has created and will execute an Employee Engagement Plan that includes a diverse set of trainings designed for all levels of the agency's staff. We anticipate that DNFSB employees and Board members will be trained on effective communication and trust in the workplace by Q4 FY 2020.

OIG Analysis: The proposed action meets the intent of the recommendation. The recommendation will be closed when OIG verifies the creation of the Employee Engagement Plan and that DNFSB Board members and staff have been trained on effective communication and trust in the workplace.

Status: Open: Resolved.

Audit Report

AUDIT OF DNFSB'S ISSUE AND COMMITMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IACTS) AND ITS RELATED PROCESSES

DNFSB-19-A-02

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 2: Develop a set of principles/values, with input from staff, to help provide the agency a more unified direction relative to DOE safety oversight.

Agency Response Dated
May 31, 2019: Agree.

DNFSB recently contracted with NAPA to work with the Agency on the development of a new Strategic Plan. Our goal is to complete the Strategic Plan in November 2019. The Strategic Plan development process will involve participation of all levels of the organization. Both the process and the product will serve as the direction for the agency on safety oversight—coupled with our annual processes for prioritization and work planning.

OIG Analysis: The proposed action meets the intent of the recommendation. The recommendation will be closed when OIG verifies the completion of DNFSB's Strategic Plan.

Status: Open: Resolved.

Audit Report

AUDIT OF DNFSB'S ISSUE AND COMMITMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IACTS) AND ITS RELATED PROCESSES

DNFSB-19-A-02

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 3: Clarify and update IACTS procedures.

Agency Response Dated
May 31, 2019: Agree.

The Chairman has directed the Technical Director to clarify and update OTD's IACTS Procedures. The Technical Director expects the update to be completed by September 1, 2019.

OIG Analysis: On September 10th, 2019, DNFSB sent an update on this recommendation. DNFSB stated, "The updated version of I-550.1, Commitment Tracking, was signed and issued on August 28, 2019 and has been posted to the Directives Homepage on the Board's intranet. The staff clarified and updated the IACTS procedure by incorporating the applicable streamlined requirements from Technical Director Standing Order 18-02 into I-550.1, Commitment Tracking. The revision also removed outdated and over-cumbersome requirements for tracking commitments. We request closure of this recommendation based on the supporting documentation provided above."

OIG has reviewed I-550.1, *Commitment Tracking*, and verified the changes made to the IACTS procedures. Therefore, this recommendation is now closed.

Status: Closed.

Audit Report

AUDIT OF DNFSB'S ISSUE AND COMMITMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IACTS) AND ITS RELATED PROCESSES

DNFSB-19-A-02

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 4: Clarify and update RFBA procedures.

Agency Response Dated
May 31, 2019: Disagree.

The Board has discussed and concludes the current RFBA process outlined in the Board Procedures is sufficiently clear and adequately meets the Board Members' needs. Accordingly, no revision is necessary at this time.

OIG Analysis: The proposed action does not meet the intent of the recommendation. At the October 19, 2018, exit conference, the Board indicated verbal agreement with this recommendation. Additionally, the Board did not provide any formal comments to the report that would indicate disagreement with the finding and respective recommendation. As such, the final published report states that OIG and DNFSB are in agreement with all recommendations.

Rejecting a recommendation following stated agreement and issuance of the final report is out of process and is not an acceptable manner to address concerns with audit findings and/or associated recommendations. DNFSB's refusal to address the recommendation raises concerns regarding the Board's intention to participate in the audit process in a forthright and transparent manner. Additionally, by refusing to accept and implement this recommendation, Board members are not addressing the primary issue of poor communication within DNFSB that results in frustrated management and staff, inefficient work processes, and low employee morale. These are longstanding and pervasive issues that were noted in several independent assessments of DNFSB, including the 2018 National Academy of Public Administration report, the 2015 - 2018 Federal Employment Viewpoint Surveys, and the 2014 Logistics Management Institute Report.

Audit Report

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DNFSB-19-A-02

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 4 (cont.):

The Board's refusal to address the recommendation in question will be reported in the upcoming Semiannual Report to Congress, as well as factored into the development of the upcoming Fiscal Year 2020 Management and Performance Challenges and Annual Plan. As an ongoing measure, OIG will continue to monitor the Board's approach to communication with management and staff in future audit work to facilitate improvement to the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of agency operations.

Status: Closed.

Audit Report

AUDIT OF DNFSB'S ISSUE AND COMMITMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IACS) AND ITS RELATED PROCESSES

DNFSB-19-A-02

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 5: Create and implement a policy to consistently track RFBA's through a tracking mechanism or through IACS.

Agency Response Dated
May 31, 2019: Agree.

The Agency has an employment announcement for a Supervisory GS-15 that the Board members expect to perform a number of functions for the Board. One of the functions will include development and management of a tracking process for Board actions. The Board expects this to be completed by January 2020.

OIG Analysis: The proposed action meets the intent of the recommendation. The recommendation will be closed when OIG verifies the creation and implementation of the RFBA tracking process.

Status: Open: Resolved.

Audit Report

AUDIT OF DNFSB'S ISSUE AND COMMITMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IACTS) AND ITS RELATED PROCESSES

DNFSB-19-A-02

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 6: Implement a policy for Board members to communicate to staff the basis for their RFBA submissions, votes on technical items that oppose staff opinion, and voting abstentions or non-participation.

Agency Response Dated
May 31, 2019:

Disagree.

Consistent with the Board's current procedures, Board member votes, and where provided, associated comments are communicated by public posting them on the agency's public website. The Board's communication and transparency to staff comes from the act of each member voting and the subsequent publishing of the vote results and any comments. While Board Members generally agree that good communications, including making comments associated with votes, is a best practice of a high-performing organization, they are political appointees and they cannot be compelled to do so.

OIG Analysis:

See OIG's response to Recommendation 4.

Status:

Closed.

Audit Report

AUDIT OF DNFSB'S ISSUE AND COMMITMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IACTS) AND ITS RELATED PROCESSES

DNFSB-19-A-02

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 7: Create and implement a policy to conduct self-assessments for common Board member processes (e.g. RFBAs, notational voting, Yellow Folder process, etc.) to determine how these processes could be improved.

Agency Response Dated
May 31, 2019:

Agree.

The Board's procedures already require a bi-annual review. Specifically, section 1.C. states, "The Executive Secretary shall initiate a review at least every two years to incorporate any organizational updates, consider changes for improving efficiency and effectiveness, and address conformance with any applicable legal requirements and Board policies." As with Recommendation 5, the Agency has an announcement for a Supervisory GS-15 that the Board members expect to perform this function that is already required in the Board's procedures. The Board expects this to be completed by January 2020.

OIG Analysis: The proposed action meets the intent of the recommendation. The recommendation will be closed when OIG verifies the hiring of the supervisory GS-15 and the GS-15's documented responsibilities regarding assessments of Board member processes.

Status: Open: Resolved.

Audit Report

AUDIT OF DNFSB'S ISSUE AND COMMITMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (IACTS) AND ITS RELATED PROCESSES

DNFSB-19-A-02

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 8: Examine and update the Board Procedures to ensure greater communication and coordination within the Board.

Agency Response Dated
May 31, 2019: Agree.

See response to Recommendation 7.

OIG Analysis: The proposed action meets the intent of the recommendation. The recommendation will be closed when OIG verifies the hiring of the supervisory GS-15 and the GS-15's documented responsibilities regarding the examination and updating of the Board Procedures.

Status: Open: Resolved.