

NATIONAL
ARCHIVES

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

**Management Letter No. 10-18:
Security at Archives I and II**

September 16, 2010



National Archives and Records Administration

Office of Inspector General

8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001

Date : September 16, 2010

Reply to : Office of Inspector General (OIG)

Subject : Management Letter #10-18, Security at Archives I and II

To : David S. Ferriero, Archivist (N)


This memorandum defines our concerns on the security offered to our staff, visitors and holdings at NARA's Archives I and II facilities. In light of events at the Holocaust Museum, and more recently at the Discovery Channel Building, a trained and professionally skilled security force is of utmost importance. During our ongoing fieldwork for the Audit of the Security Force Contract, we identified risk factors concerning NARA's contract security officers we believe warrant your immediate attention. These include:

1. The security officers have not met the firearm qualification requirements of the contract. Instead of using the services provided at no charge by the contractor, a majority of the officers are conducting their shooting with an independent contractor at their own expense. The Chief of NARA's Security Management Branch (NASS) reported this instructor uses his own course of fire, which differs from the one required by the contract. Neither NASS, nor the contractor, has verified or witnessed these qualifications. Further, the instructor refused an OIG request to be allowed to witness individual qualifications. Without such verification, NARA has no assurance officers are proficient enough with their weapons to perform their duties at Archives I and II.
2. Security officers may not have the physical capacity to perform all functions described in the contract; such as providing physical protection by stopping, apprehending and detaining suspects and violators. First, the contractor does not have a physical fitness program as required by the contract. Second, the physical fitness test applied through the contract is limited only to traveling specified routes in Archives I and II, the most physical part being climbing four stories. The tests do not evaluate nor replicate the capacity and capabilities needed to respond to the variety of emergency situations which could arise at our facilities.
3. Neither NASS, nor the contractor, have conducted any exercises to test the officers' response to different emergency situations. According to the NASS Chief, NARA would rely on local police or first-responders in the event of an emergency. However, there have been no drills or tests to coordinate responses with local first responders. Thus, not only are the contract security officers not trained to respond to threats to our facilities and persons, but there is no active engagement with first-responders to familiarize them with our buildings, layout and content of holdings. Without drills or tests, we lack confidence the security officers would be able to respond appropriately during an incident.

The risk factors identified above were directed to the Acting Assistant Archivist for Administration and the NASS Chief. The NASS Chief does not share our concerns related to firearms qualification.

Instead of holding the contractor to the requirements in the contract (the requirements NARA has been paying for), he initiated discussions with the Contracting Officer to modify the contract in order to remove the more rigorous NARA firearms qualifying course of fire. In addition, he did not believe that the guard force equates to a law enforcement presence warranting more stringent physical fitness standards and testing. Further, in lieu of active testing and drills for the security officers, and integration with local first-responders, NASS officials stated security officers are given binders of written directions (post orders) with instructions for specific emergencies, with which the officers are supposed to be familiar. Despite the terms of the contract (and thus the services NARA is paying for), NASS states they only expect the on-site officers to contact local first responders, and help guide them to the scene of any ongoing emergency once they arrive.

As this is a safety and security issue I have opted to compose this management letter so that you might consider immediate action to address the internal control weaknesses we have identified. Additional content will be provided in the ensuing audit report. Should you have any questions, please contact me on (301) 837-1532.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Brachfeld', written in a cursive style.

Paul Brachfeld
Inspector General