



# **UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

## **Assessment of the United States Capitol Police Advanced Law Enforcement Response Team**

**Report Number OIG-2018-10**

**April 2018**

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*UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE*  
*WASHINGTON, DC 20003*



*OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL*

**PREFACE**

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) prepared this report pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. It is one of a series of audits, reviews, and investigative and special reports OIG prepares periodically as part of its oversight responsibility with respect to the United States Capitol Police (USCP) to identify and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office or function under review. Our work was based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

We developed our recommendations based on the best knowledge available to OIG and discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that the recommendations will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations.

I express my appreciation to those contributing to the preparation of this report.

Michael A. Bolton  
Acting Inspector General

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

Advanced Law Enforcement Response Team	ALERT
Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear	CBRN
Fiscal Year	FY
Hazardous Incident Response Division	HIRD
Hazardous Materials Response Team	HMRT
Office of Inspector General	OIG
Occupational Safety, Health & Environmental Division	OSHE
Respiratory Protection Management System	RPMS
Training Management System	TMS
Training Services Bureau	TSB
Uniformed Services Bureau	USB
United States Capitol Police	USCP or the Department



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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According to the United States Capitol Police (USCP or the Department) Directive [REDACTED] dated April 25, 2016, the goal of the USCP Hazardous Materials Response Program is to provide a high level of hazardous materials response capability for the congressional community. The program primarily consists of the Hazardous Materials Response Team (HMRT) from the Hazardous Incident Response Division's (HIRD) and is full-time assignment for civilian employees. By contrast, the Advanced Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT) is a collateral duty assignment for sworn officers and provides the Department with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In accordance with our annual plan, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an assessment to determine if the Department (1) established adequate processes for ensuring efficient and effective operations and (2) complied with applicable guidance. Our scope included internal controls, processes, and operations during Fiscal Years (FYs) 2016 and 2017.

Overall, the Department established adequate internal controls and processes for staffing, training, and officer eligibility for ALERT. USCP Directive [REDACTED] provides the guidance for ALERT activation, command and control, staffing, training, and officer eligibility. The Directive states when activated, ALERT officers receive instruction on where to respond for assignments and equipment. According to Department officials, USCP did not conduct activation drills on the Capitol Complex. We believe that conducting drills in an actual work environment should enhance efficiency and effectiveness of ALERT in responding to major incidents.

The Department complied with policies and procedures related to ALERT. All of the [REDACTED] sworn officers assigned to ALERT for all or a portion of FY 2016 and FY 2017 met the eligibility requirements listed in Directive [REDACTED]. No instances of non-compliance with guidance existed.

Overall, the Department had adequate internal controls for ALERT and complied with its policies and procedures. We did not make any recommendations, but we do encourage the Department to conduct drills on the Capitol Complex allowing officers to train in the environment in which they will be responding to an event. In addition, training at the Capitol Complex as opposed to Cheltenham, MD would provide the Department a base line in response time to a hazardous materials event.

## BACKGROUND

According to the United States Capitol Police (USCP or the Department) Directive [REDACTED], dated April 25, 2016, the Hazardous Materials Response Program primarily consists Hazardous Materials Response Team (HMRT) from the Hazardous Incident Response Division (HIRD), which is a full-time assignment for civilian employees. By contrast, the Advanced Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT) is a collateral duty assignment for sworn officers.

The goal of the Department's Hazardous Materials Response Program is to provide a high level of hazardous materials response capability for the congressional community. [REDACTED]

The Department's Occupational Safety, Health & Environmental Division (OSHE) is responsible for the oversight of USCP occupational and safety programs. The Department established OSHE in response to the *Congressional Accountability Act of 1995*, Public Law 104—requirement that the legislative branch comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Act (1970) and “its standards requiring that the workplace be free of recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or serious injury.”



The Department's Uniformed Services Bureau (USB) consists of its Capitol Division, Senate Division, House Division, and Library Division. USB's responsibilities include providing police services and security for the Capitol Building and grounds, Senate Office Buildings, House Office Buildings, and the Library of Congress.

The USCP Training Services Bureau (TSB) is responsible for planning, developing, and implementing Department-wide training programs. TSB is also responsible for maintaining records in the Department's Training Management System (TMS). TMS is a computerized database the Department uses for documenting and scheduling in-service training.

### OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

In accordance with our annual plan, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an assessment of ALERT. Our objectives were to assess whether the Department (1) established adequate internal controls and processes for ensuring ALERT is organized, trained, and equipped to respond safely, effectively, and efficiently to major incidents and (2) complied with applicable policies and procedures as well as applicable laws, regulations and best practices. Our scope included internal controls, processes, and operations during FY 2016 and FY 2017.

To accomplish our objectives, we interviewed pertinent Department officials to gain an understanding of the following areas:

- ALERT processes as well as related policies, procedures, and best practices
- Organizational and functional structure of ALERT
- Issues related to and/or ways the Department could improve ALERT

We reviewed available guidance related to ALERT. We also reviewed staffing and organizational information. Furthermore, we reviewed lesson plans for ALERT training as well as data for ALERT activations and equipment. To determine compliance, we reviewed Directive [REDACTED]. During FY 2016 and FY 2017, the Department had [REDACTED] officers assigned to ALERT for all or a portion of the period. We reviewed records HMRT, OSHE, and TSB provided to determine if all of the [REDACTED] officers met the eligibility requirements listed in applicable guidance.

We also reviewed guidance from the Government Accountability Office and *Occupational Safety and Health Standards*.<sup>1</sup> As a legislative branch entity, many laws and regulations that apply to executive branch agencies do not apply to USCP. We believe, however, that those laws and regulations represent appropriate guidance and industry best practices for USCP.

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<sup>1</sup> 29 C.F.R. 1910. (2013)

OIG conducted this work in Washington, D.C., from January 2018 through March 2018. We did not conduct an audit, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion on Department programs. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. OIG did not conduct this work in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Had we conducted an audit and followed such standards, other matters might have come to our attention. This report is intended solely for the information and use of OIG, the Department, USCP Board, and USCP Oversight Committees and should not be used by anyone other than the specified party.

## RESULTS

Overall, the Department had adequate internal controls for ALERT and complied with its policies and procedures. The Department did not, however, conduct ALERT activation drills on the Capitol Complex. We believe that conducting activation drills in an actual work environment should enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of ALERT in responding to major incidents.

### Adequate Internal Control Procedures and Processes

The Department had adequate internal controls and processes for ALERT staffing, training, and safety. In accordance with Directive [REDACTED], the Department documented ALERT internal controls and processes. According to that directive, the HMRT Commander is responsible for evaluating ALERT staffing levels, training, and has command and control of activated ALERT officers during an incident or special event.

The Department had a process for staffing ALERT. For operational purposes, the Department prohibits officers from certain USCP assignments<sup>2</sup> from being ALERT officers. As a result, the Department staffs ALERT with officers from USB. According to officials, the Department's staffing goal for ALERT is [REDACTED] officers. During FY 2016 and FY 2017, the Department had [REDACTED] different officers assigned to ALERT for all or a portion of the period.

The Department may activate ALERT for both planned and unplanned events. For planned events, the HMRT Commander submits a request through the chain of command for a specific number of ALERT officers. For unplanned events, any HIRD official can activate ALERT officers through the Department's Command Center. [REDACTED]. In FY 2016, the Department activated ALERT for one planned and one unplanned event. As shown in Table 1, the Department activated ALERT for one planned and one unplanned event in FY 2017.

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<sup>2</sup> Prohibited assignments include the Containment Emergency Response Team, K-9, Dignitary Protection Division, Command Center, and Off-Site Delivery Center.



***Table 1 - FY 2016 and FY 2017 ALERT Activations***

<b><i>Fiscal Year</i></b>	<b><i>Activation Event</i></b>		<b><i>Total</i></b>
	<b><i>Planned</i></b>	<b><i>Unplanned</i></b>	
2016	1	1	2
2017	1	1	2
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: Generated from data provided by HMRT.



Department officials stated USCP did not conduct ALERT drills on the Capitol Complex but rather at Cheltenham, MD. Conducting drills at an actual work environment should enhance ALERT's efficiency and effectiveness in responding to major incidents.



[REDACTED] To ensure compliance with Department guidance, the directive requires that OSHE notify and coordinate annual medical physicals and fit tests as well as provide a list each month to the HMRT Commander on the status of medical and fit tests for ALERT officers. OSHE uses an in-house, web-based program called the Respiratory Protection Management System (RPMS) to monitor and schedule the annual medical physicals and fit tests. RPMS provides the HMRT Commander with a weekly update on the status of medical and fit tests for ALERT officers. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Depending on requirements such as age and other factors, the cost of the physical is approximately \$300 to \$500 per officer. [REDACTED]

The Department also provides for the safety for ALERT officers. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Directive prohibits officers with any type of shaving waiver from being ALERT officers for safety reasons.<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusions

The Department had adequate controls and processes for staffing, training, and equipping ALERT officers. We believe, however, that activation training drills on the Capitol Complex should enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the ALERT program.

## Compliance with Policies and Procedures

The Department complied with policies and procedures related to ALERT. We reviewed records HMRT, OSHE, and TSB provided to determine if all of the [REDACTED] officers assigned to ALERT for all or a portion of FY 2016 and FY 2017 met the eligibility requirements listed in Directive [REDACTED]

<sup>3</sup> 29 C.F.R. 1910.134(b) defines a fit test as the use of a protocol to qualitatively or quantitatively evaluate the fit of a respirator on an individual.

<sup>4</sup> USCP Directive [REDACTED], various dates, permits sworn officers to have beards upon the submission of medical certification from a licensed physician identifying a condition that prevents the officer from shaving. 29 C.F.R. 1910.134(g)(1)(i)(B) states an employer cannot permit respirators with tight-fitting facepieces to be worn by employees who have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the facepiece and the face.



Our review of the documentation included whether:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- USCP removed officers from ALERT when transferred into prohibited assignments.
- USCP removed officers from ALERT that had received shaving waivers.

No instances of non-compliance with guidance existed.

### Conclusions

USCP complied with its policies and procedures for ALERT. All of the [REDACTED] officers assigned to ALERT for all or a portion of FY 2016 and FY 2017 met the eligibility requirements identified in the Directive.

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*Washington, DC 20510*



Or visit us – we are located at:  
*499 South Capitol Street, SW, Suite 345*  
*Washington, DC 20003*



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