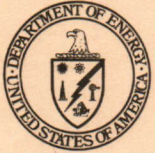


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U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Inspector General

Release Date:
April 3, 1995



Report on

**Audit of Transportation
Safeguards Division Couriers'
Work Schedules**



This report can be obtained from the
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

AUDIT OF TRANSPORTATION SAFEGUARDS DIVISION

COURIERS' WORK SCHEDULES

Report Number: WR-B-95-05
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Western Regional Audit Office
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87185

AUDIT OF TRANSPORTATION SAFEGUARDS DIVISION
COURIERS' WORK SCHEDULES

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF AUDIT OPERATIONS

AUDIT OF TRANSPORTATION SAFEGUARDS DIVISION
COURIERS' WORK SCHEDULES

Audit Report Number: WR-B-95-05

April 3, 1995

SUMMARY

The Albuquerque Operations Office's (Albuquerque) Transportation Safeguards Division, (TSD) is responsible for the safe, secure transport of nuclear weapons and special nuclear materials. To accomplish its responsibilities, the TSD employs nuclear material couriers to drive a fleet of armored tractors, trailers, and escort vehicles. The objective of the audit was to determine if TSD established couriers' work schedules to effectively and economically meet operating needs.

The nuclear material couriers worked a traditional 40-hour work schedule from Monday through Friday. However, the traditional work schedule did not fit the job requirements. As a result, the couriers received an average of 22 hours of regular pay for idle time each two-week pay period. In addition, the couriers received an average of 39 hours of overtime each pay period.

We recommended that Albuquerque implement a work schedule, such as a first-40 workweek, that more closely corresponds with the couriers' actual work requirements. A first-40 workweek schedule would allow management to establish the basic workweek without designating specific days and hours the couriers must work. With this schedule, the first 40 hours that couriers worked would be considered regularly scheduled work and any hours beyond 40 would be overtime. If Albuquerque adopted this schedule, we estimated they could save about \$1.2 million annually.

Albuquerque management partially concurred and acknowledged that cost savings may possibly be realized. However, they withheld concurrence on the estimated savings until they conducted a six-month study.

Office of Inspector General

PART I

APPROACH AND OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Safeguards Division (TSD), Albuquerque Operations Office (Albuquerque), was responsible for the safe, secure movement of nuclear explosives, Department of Energy (DOE) owned special nuclear materials, and other material as specified by DOE Orders. To accomplish this mission, TSD employed 282 nuclear material couriers (couriers) who drove a fleet of armored tractors, Safe Secure Trailers, and escort vehicles. The objective of the audit was to determine if TSD established couriers' work schedules to effectively and economically meet operating needs.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The audit team limited its review to couriers' work schedules during 14 pay periods between August 1993 and April 1994. We selected the pay periods that TSD management considered as the best available to make an analysis. Our universe included all couriers at the courier sections in Albuquerque, NM; Amarillo, TX; and Oak Ridge, TN. We conducted the audit from June 9, 1994, through September 28, 1994.

We examined the couriers' work schedules to see if the schedules effectively and efficiently met operating needs. As part of the examination, we completed a difference estimation sample, which is a form of variable sampling, from the 14 pay periods in the universe. The detailed sampling plan and methodology can be found in Appendix A.

We also reviewed applicable Federal regulations as well as DOE and Albuquerque Orders, interviewed TSD and Human Resources Division personnel, and observed courier activities at the courier locations. In addition, we reviewed reports prepared by the General Accounting Office, DOE Office of Inspector General, as well as other reports relating to TSD operations and DOE protective forces.

We relied on computer-processed data from the DOE's Payroll Operations to determine the dollar value of the universe. To test the reliability of this data, we computed the regular and overtime pay of the 232 couriers in our sample and compared our computations with the computer-processed data. We did not have any discrepancies.

The audit team conducted the audit in accordance with generally accepted Government auditing standards for performance audits and included tests of internal controls and compliance with laws and regulations to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objective. Because our review was limited, it would not necessarily have disclosed all internal control deficiencies that may have existed at the time of our audit.

The Director, Transportation Safeguards Division, waived an exit conference.

BACKGROUND

The couriers are responsible for the safe, secure movement of nuclear explosives, classified nuclear components, and DOE-owned special nuclear materials as outlined in DOE Order 5632.2A. In addition, they move joint test assemblies, limited life components, models and mockups of nuclear explosives, test residue, lost code pal devices, crypto documents and equipment, and other classified material.

In order to fulfill these responsibilities, the couriers must meet various requirements. The couriers must possess a DOE "Q" clearance. They must also meet high medical requirements for annual certification under the Personnel Assurance Program. On a quarterly basis, the couriers must meet physical fitness requirements and qualify with issued sidearms and other auxiliary armament. In addition, the couriers must meet yearly driver certification for tractors and trailers.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The couriers' work schedules allowed them to effectively meet operating needs. However, the work schedules were not as economical as they could have been. Our audit showed that Albuquerque established the traditional Monday to Friday basic workweek for the couriers. This workweek, however, allowed the couriers to earn overtime while also being paid for idle time.

Under current operating conditions, for example, couriers could report to the courier sections for a day or two when there were no assigned duties to perform. The couriers received regular pay for the idle time. During the same week that the couriers had the idle time, they could go on a trip and accumulate overtime.

A comparison of the traditional workweek with two alternative workweeks showed that Albuquerque could achieve savings by establishing a workweek that corresponded to the couriers' actual work requirements. We concluded, therefore,

that Albuquerque should establish a basic workweek for TSD couriers that better fits actual work requirements. By implementing an alternative workweek, we estimated that Albuquerque could save about \$1.2 million annually.

Our audit disclosed a material internal control weakness related to the lack of studying and implementing workweeks that fit the couriers actual work requirements. Management should consider this weakness when preparing its yearend assurance memorandum on management controls.

PART II

FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Couriers' Work Schedules

FINDING

Department policy is to establish work schedules to meet operating requirements in the most economical manner. However, Albuquerque's work schedule for TSD couriers allowed them to earn overtime while also paying the couriers for idle time. This occurred because management established the workweek without adequately studying alternatives. In addition, management believed that any change would be complex and difficult to implement. Albuquerque could save about \$1.2 million annually by selecting a work schedule that better fits actual work requirements.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend the Manager, Albuquerque Operations Office, establish a basic workweek, such as a first-40 schedule, for TSD couriers that corresponds with the couriers' actual work requirements.

MANAGEMENT REACTION

Management partially concurred with the finding and recommendation. Management also recognized that cost savings may possibly be realized. Part III, Management and Auditor Comments, more fully discusses management's partial concurrence.

DETAILS OF FINDING

The Government recognized that all employees do not have work requirements that fit the traditional basic workweek. According to the Code of Federal Regulations, the head of an agency should arrange an employee's regularly scheduled basic workweek so that it corresponds with the employee's work requirements. The Department also required that days and hours of work be established to meet operating needs in the most effective and economical manner. Generally, the operating needs can be met though the traditional 40-hour workweek scheduled Monday through Friday. However, if it is impractical to prescribe the traditional workweek or to assign a regular schedule of definite hours of duty for each workday, the head of a field element can change the tour of duty.

Two alternative workweeks, available for consideration, are a first-40 and permanent part-time workweek. The first-40 hour tour of duty is the basic workweek without the requirement for specific days and hours within the administrative workweek. All work performed by an employee within the first 40 hours is considered regularly scheduled work for premium pay and hours of duty purposes. Any hours beyond 40 are overtime.

Another alternative is the permanent part-time workweek. This workweek allows an employee to work 16 to 32 hours a week under a schedule consisting of an equal or varied number of hours per day. On a permanent part-time schedule, an employee receives overtime for more than 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week.

COURIERS' WORKWEEK

Albuquerque established a traditional workweek from Monday through Friday for the couriers. This traditional workweek schedule, however, did not fit the job requirements under current operating conditions. Even though the couriers had no assigned duties for 25 percent of their regular working hours, they earned an average of 39 hours of overtime every two-week pay period.

No Assigned Duties

TSD officials acknowledged that there were times when the couriers were idle because they had no assigned duties. If the couriers were not involved in physical training, firearms range practice, or other training activities, they spent their idle time watching television, playing cards and games, or doing other non-work related activities. The couriers spent an average of 20 hours per two-week pay period with no assigned duties.

The couriers also averaged two hours of administrative leave per pay period, which was granted to them when they had no duties to perform and when additional hours were needed to complete a basic workday. The couriers received administrative leave when returning from a trip or when they arrived at a rest location while on a trip.

Overtime Accumulation

Once a trip started, the couriers were on duty continuously for up to 36 hours and received both regular and overtime pay. When the couriers reported to work on the day a trip started, they received regular pay for the first eight hours of duty and overtime pay for any additional duty hours during the day. If

they continued in duty status, the couriers would start over at midnight and receive regular pay for the first eight hours and overtime pay for any additional hours.

The traditional Monday through Friday, 40-hour workweek, was not an economical way of scheduling the couriers. This traditional workweek schedule resulted in Albuquerque's paying the couriers an average of 22 hours for unassigned time out of every 80 hours of regular pay each pay period. In addition, each courier averaged 39 hours of overtime each pay period.

ALTERNATIVE WORKWEEKS NOT STUDIED

This condition existed because TSD management had not adequately studied alternatives when establishing the basic workweek. Management also believed that changing the workweek would be very difficult due to TSD's mission. In addition, management believed that a change in the work schedule might hurt the couriers personally.

About 20 years ago, TSD had implemented a scheduling methodology that gave the couriers their days off on a rotating basis contingent on trip assignments. For example, an individual was scheduled for Friday and Saturday the first week and Thursday and Friday for the second week of the pay period. According to TSD management, this method worked well when TSD was small and operated a limited number of trips. However, as the Division grew in size and complexity, this method proved to be inefficient. In addition, it had a negative impact on TSD's ability to perform its mission.

TSD tested a second process in the late 1970s. For this process, TSD designated the driver of the vehicle as the only individual in a duty/pay status. However, this process was not advantageous to the Department because trips exceeded scheduled operating times by almost 100 percent and, thus, increased costs. TSD discontinued this system and adopted the regular workweek system.

Although TSD had tried different scheduling methodologies, TSD never studied a first-40 or permanent part-time workweek. As a result of not adequately studying alternatives, TSD adopted the traditional Monday through Friday workweek that did not correspond to the couriers' actual work requirements.

OTHER BASIC WORKWEEKS MORE COST EFFECTIVE

We compared the established workweek with two alternatives and found both alternatives to be more cost effective. In our first alternative, we recalculated the sample units as if the

couriers had worked a first-40 workweek. For our second alternative, we recalculated the sample units as if the couriers worked a permanent part-time workweek. We estimate that it cost TSD \$1.2 million more annually to have the couriers work the traditional workweek than it would have cost for the couriers to work either a first-40 or permanent part-time workweek.

The \$1.2 million cost savings resulted from a reduction of hours worked for either of the alternative schedules. A first-40 schedule would reduce overtime hours while a permanent part-time schedule would result in a reduction of both regular and overtime hours. The regular and overtime hours under each schedule are shown in the table below.

Sample of 232 Couriers

<u>Workweek</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Hours</u>	
		<u>Overtime</u>	<u>Total</u>
Current	18,549.0	9,114.7	27,663.7
First-40	18,549.0	7,258.4	25,807.4
Permanent Part-Time	16,364.4	8,730.7	25,095.1

Based on the sample, the total hours worked would decrease for either a first-40 or permanent part-time workweek. The overtime hours would drop about 20 percent if TSD established a first-40 workweek. Although the overtime hours would not drop as much (about 4 percent) on a permanent part-time workweek, the regular hours would drop almost 12 percent.

First-40 Basic Workweek

Since the first 40 hours worked in a first-40 basic workweek are regular hours, TSD could have the couriers report to work on the day a trip was scheduled. If a trip lasted at least 40 hours, TSD could release the couriers at the end of a trip regardless of when they returned to the courier section.

The first-40 would also guarantee the couriers 40 hours of pay each week. This would allow the couriers the time needed to complete physical training, range practice, and other training when they were not on trips. Since the couriers would be guaranteed 40 hours of pay each week, it would not necessarily eliminate all hours with no assigned duties; however, it would reduce the total hours that couriers were paid when they had no assigned duties.

During the sample period of 14 pay periods, the couriers received \$7,737,225 of regular and overtime pay. If the couriers had worked a first-40 schedule during those pay

periods, their regular and overtime pay would have totaled \$7,061,064, or \$676,161 less than what was actually paid. This equates to an 8.7 percent reduction in total pay. (See Appendix B for detailed sampling results.)

If similar operating conditions existed for 25 of 26 pay periods (one pay period eliminated for Christmas and New Year's), we estimate that TSD could reduce regular and overtime pay approximately \$1.2 million by changing to a first-40 basic workweek.

Permanent Part-Time Schedule

Since TSD couriers averaged over 20 hours per pay period with no assigned duties, TSD would also achieve savings if the couriers worked a permanent part-time schedule of 32 hours per week. On a permanent part-time schedule, the couriers would still receive overtime for more than 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week. During weeks when no trips were scheduled, TSD would only be obligated to pay the couriers for 32 hours. However, the couriers would still receive administrative leave to complete an 8 hour day at the end of a trip or at a rest overnight.

During our sample period, the couriers would have received \$7,064,898 for regular and overtime pay rather than the \$7,737,225 they were paid. This equates to a reduction of \$672,327, or about 8.7 percent of total pay, for the sample period. On an annualized basis, TSD would also save approximately \$1.2 million by changing to a permanent part-time workweek.

Since TSD could achieve similar savings on either a permanent part-time or first-40 workweek, we believe TSD should establish a first-40 workweek, or other full-time workweek that corresponds to actual work requirements, rather than the permanent part-time workweek. We believe a first-40 workweek provides more flexibility in scheduling. In addition, we believe a change to a permanent part-time workweek could create problems in hiring and retaining employees, who may prefer the guarantee of 80 hours of pay rather than 64 hours of pay each pay period.

Additional Savings Possible

We believe that TSD could achieve even greater savings by scheduling training to fit a first-40 or other alternative workweek. For our sample, we did not adjust training days to

fit the first-40 or permanent part-time schedules. As a result of not making the training adjustments, we believe our projected savings are very conservative.

PART III

Management and Auditor Comments

In responding to the Official Draft Report, the Assistant Manager, Office of National Defense Programs, partially concurred with the finding and recommendation. Some of management's comments are included in Part II. The recommendation, a summary of the remaining management comments, and our responses follow.

Recommendation. We recommend the Manager, Albuquerque Operations Office, establish a basic workweek, such as a first-40 schedule, for TSD couriers that corresponds with the couriers' actual work requirements.

Management Comments. Partially Concur. Albuquerque reserved the right to withhold concurrence that the economies identified by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) are accurate. To validate the viability of the recommendation, Albuquerque will conduct a six-month parallel study of the current system versus the first-40 system. Work schedules will be maintained and a comparative analysis documented for each trip completed. Once the data has been assimilated, an evaluation will be completed to determine what savings, if any, would have been generated. A programmatic management decision will then be formulated to adopt or not adopt the OIG recommendation. The decision will be based on the Albuquerque Manager's authority and responsibility to operate the Transportation Safeguards System in a manner that maximizes the overall efficiency of the program.

Albuquerque does not believe the recommendation took into consideration the realities of over-the-road operations. An element not addressed in the recommendation was allowing the courier to maintain some vestige of a normal family life which would include an expectation of having some weekends at home versus a different day off every week. Quality of life issues directly impact the operational efficiency of the organization.

Auditor Comments. We believe Albuquerque can validate the accuracy of the economies we identified by reviewing our sample or by conducting a statistical sample from the same universe we used.

In our opinion, a parallel study could be intentionally or unintentionally skewed. Nevertheless, we respect management's right to conduct their own tests. However, we reserve the right to review their methodology and results.

Albuquerque seems to envision a loss of weekends at home if the couriers worked a first-40 workweek. During the audit, TSD officials informed us that weekend travel was minimized. Therefore, we anticipated that TSD would continue with this policy no matter what workweek was used. Furthermore, a first-40 workweek could give the couriers more than just weekend days off. This additional time off would occur in weeks when the couriers completed 40 hours of work in less than five days.

In our opinion, the loss of weekends off would primarily be caused by TSD's scheduling, weather, and road conditions, but under no circumstances be caused by changing to a first-40 schedule. Furthermore, a first-40 schedule should increase the quality of life since it could permit the couriers to spend more time at home rather than reporting to the courier section when they had no assigned duties.

Management Comments. The OIG model makes the assumption that all trips operate as scheduled. Issues not addressed are mid-week departures that are canceled at the last minute due to conditions outside the couriers' control. There are numerous situations when a courier, through no fault of his own, will not be able to satisfy the 40-hour workweek due to last minute schedule adjustments. The courier would have to be granted administrative leave to compensate for lost time. This could be counter productive and would result in employees being compensated for work not performed.

Auditor Comments. We used actual trips in making our analyses. We believe the first-40 workweek is more cost effective because trip departures vary. We agree that a last minute cancellation of a mid-week departure could create a problem. However, we believe this can be resolved in a policy describing the method of payment when trips are cancelled. Finally, we see no difference between compensating employees for work not performed in this situation than in the current situation of compensating employees for work not performed when they have no assigned duties but report to the courier section for an eight hour day. With good scheduling, we believe last minute trip cancellations should be rare.

Management Comments. Albuquerque concurred that potential existed for savings, but does not concur that the amount the OIG identified is accurate. Albuquerque believes the \$1.2 million may not accurately depict the current and future mission of TSD. Once a six month side-by-side analysis is completed, Albuquerque will be able to validate if a savings is possible.

Auditor Comments. We believe our estimate of savings was conservative because we recalculated the savings without

adjusting the scheduled training. If Albuquerque scheduled the training to better fit a first-40 workweek, we believe additional savings could be achieved. We recognize that future trip itineraries will change from those in the sample period and the amount of savings could vary based on the scheduling, length of trips, etc. With good scheduling of trips and training, we believe that the amount of annual savings could be greater than our projection.

PART IV

SAMPLING PLAN AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

We surveyed one month's activities at the Pantex Courier Section. Our survey disclosed that the couriers spent about 19 percent of their time with no assigned duties.

Based on the results of our survey, we wanted to sample the universe to determine the total hours that couriers had no assigned duties. In addition, we wanted to determine if TSD could achieve savings by changing the couriers' basic workweek.

SPECIFIC SAMPLING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the sample were to:

- (1) estimate the total hours that couriers had no assigned duties, and
- (2) estimate the savings that could be achieved by changing the regularly scheduled basic workweek to a first 40-hour or permanent part-time workweek.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Sampling Technique - Difference Estimation

Difference estimation sampling deals with sample units that are measured in dollars, pounds, days, hours, etc. The difference method is applied by determining the audited value for each sample unit and obtaining the average difference between the audited value and the recorded value for the sample. This average difference is then multiplied by the number of items in the population to obtain the total estimated difference and is added to (or subtracted from) the recorded value to obtain a restated total value.

Recorded Value and Audited Value

For the first sampling objective, the recorded value was the 80 hours of regular work in a pay period and the audited value was the time with assigned duties or leave. The

difference between the total recorded value and the total audited value was the hours with no assigned duties, including administrative leave.

For the second sampling objective, the recorded value was the total amount of regular and overtime paid to the courier for a pay period and the audited value was the amount that would have been paid under a first-40 workweek or a permanent part-time workweek. The difference between the total recorded value and the total audited value was the savings from switching to a first-40 or part-time workweek.

Audit Universe

We decided to use each courier pay period as one sample unit. We reviewed all hours paid during each pay period sampled.

From bi-weekly pay periods ending August 7, 1993 through April 16, 1994, we selected the pay periods ending between August 7, 1993, and December 11, 1993, and between March 5, 1994, and April 16, 1994. We selected these pay periods because they represented the best available operating conditions for an analysis according to TSD officials.

For the pay periods included in our sample, there were 3,933 units in the universe. The recorded value in hours of the sample was the universe (3,933) times 80 hours or 314,640 hours. The recorded dollar value of the universe was the amount paid according to the PAY/PERS system which totaled \$7,737,225.

Sample Size 232

Selection of Sample Units

We used the random number generator in the sampling program to randomly select the individual units.

Methodology

For each sample unit, we reviewed the actual hours reported for regular and overtime pay on time and attendance reports. To verify how the couriers utilized their time, we reviewed Courier Assignment Logs, trip reports, and training records.

We allowed various times for quarterly test preparations

and other training. For example, we allowed eight hours for range qualifications and two hours for each running qualification. For training that lasted at least six hours in a day, we counted the whole day as training. Also, if a courier was in a rehabilitation program, we considered all their time as training.

The time and attendance reports showed the number of quarters of travel each day. We verified the travel days with trip reports and training records and updated the Courier Assignment Logs as necessary.

When we completed our update of the Courier Assignment Logs, we determined the number of hours with no assigned duties. We transferred this information to the time and attendance reports.

On the time and attendance reports, we totaled the:

- a. number of hours with assigned duties;
- b. number of hours with no assigned duties;
- c. number of hours of administrative leave; and
- d. number of hours of overtime.

This data was transferred to a spreadsheet that included each couriers' grade/step, hourly rate, and overtime rate. The spreadsheet program computed the regular, overtime, and total pay for the couriers.

To verify the accuracy of our computations and to test the reliability of the computer-processed data, we compared our computations of regular and overtime pay with the amounts shown on the printout obtained from DOE's Payroll Operations. We did not have any discrepancies.

Using the information on the Courier Assignment Logs and time and attendance reports, we recalculated the time as if the courier worked a first-40 and a permanent part-time administrative workweek. This information was transferred to spreadsheets to compute regular, overtime, and total pay.

The audit team used the U.S. Army Audit Agency Statistical Sampling System to determine the amount of the universe for a first-40 and a permanent part-time administrative workweek. In addition, the audit team determined the time with no assigned duties, administrative leave, and the total idle time for the universe.

SAMPLE RESULTSIDLE HOURS (No Assigned Duties + Administrative Leave)

From the sample, we estimate that the actual work time was 229,074 hours rather than the 314,640 hours of regular time during the sample period. This left 85,566 hours of idle time. Of the total idle time, the couriers had no assigned duties for 78,440 hours and administrative leave for 7,127 hours. With a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percent, we are 95 percent confident that the idle time ranged from 77,447 to 93,686 hours.

Our statistical sample included 14 pay periods. If these 14 pay periods represent current operations, we estimate that the couriers could be idle for 152,796 hours per year. Our estimate was made by projecting sample results from the 14 pay periods to an entire year.

FIRST-40 BASIC WORKWEEK

Based on our sample of 232 items from the universe of 3,933 items, we estimate that the total recorded value of \$7,737,225 for the 14 pay periods was \$676,161 in excess of what TSD would have paid if the first-40 basic workweek was in effect. The estimated value for a first-40 workweek was \$7,061,064. The sampling error was plus or minus 1.2 percent. We are 95 percent confident that the first-40 universe value is between \$6,976,554 and \$7,145,574.

Annualized based on 25 pay periods, TSD could save about \$1.2 million per year.

PERMANENT PART-TIME BASIC WORKWEEK

Using the same sample and universe, we estimate that the recorded value of \$7,737,225 for the 14 pay periods was \$672,327 in excess of what TSD would have paid if the permanent part-time basic workweek was in effect. The estimated value for a permanent part-time workweek was \$7,064,898. The sampling error was plus or minus 0.8 percent. As a result, we are 95 percent confident the permanent part-time universe value was between \$7,008,667 and \$7,121,128.

If the couriers worked a permanent part-time workweek, TSD could save about \$1.2 million annually.

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