

Management Assistance Report: Improvements Needed in Procedures for Emergency Action Planning at Selected Department of State Domestic Facilities, AUD-SI-22-27, April 2022

Summary of Review

The Bureau of Administration's Office of Emergency Management (OEM), in accordance with the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM), administers the Department of State's (Department) Domestic Emergency Management Program.¹ The program helps ensure that the Department is prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies that impact its ability to accomplish its domestic mission.² Additionally, the program assists the Department's domestic facilities in developing several types of plans, including a facility emergency action plan (FEAP).³ FEAPs provide guidance to the domestic facility's occupants on evacuation or shelter-in-place procedures to prevent or minimize injury, loss of life, and property damage.⁴ Facilities are required to prepare the type of FEAP appropriate for the number of personnel in the facility. Specifically, Long FEAPs apply to facilities with 10 or more Department personnel, and Short FEAPs apply to facilities with fewer than 10 Department personnel. The Long FEAP requires extensive information, while the Short FEAP includes only points of contact and information about the facility occupants.⁵

During an audit of domestic emergency action plans, which is currently underway, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that 8 (6 percent) of 133 domestic facilities used by the Department as of October 2021 did not have a FEAP. This deficiency occurred, in part, because OEM did not have formal, documented standard operating procedures to identify facilities that require a FEAP. When OIG brought this deficiency to the attention of management, OEM took prompt action. Specifically, five of the eight facilities have since developed a FEAP, and three facilities, as of January 2022, were working to finalize their FEAPs. Because FEAPs provide guidance to a facility's occupants to prevent or minimize injury, loss of life, and property damage,⁶ Department personnel working at these eight facilities were at increased risk in the event of an emergency without the guidance provided by a FEAP. It is therefore imperative that OEM develop and implement formal, documented standard operating procedures to identify facilities that require a FEAP to help ensure that this deficiency does not reoccur.

In addition, OIG found that 4 (22 percent) of 18 facilities with Short FEAPs housed 10 or more Department personnel and therefore should have had Long FEAPs. One reason for this deficiency is that OEM's annual facility personnel count verification process did not trigger the need for a Long FEAP in accordance with OEM guidance. As a result, the four facilities

¹ 6 FAM 417, "Program Administration."

² 6 FAM 411(a), "Purpose."

³ 6 FAM 418.1, "Domestic Emergency Action Plans."

⁴ 6 FAM 418.1(3).

⁵ The Bureau of Administration, Office of Emergency Management, Policy and Planning Division's FEAP Standard Operating Procedures, October 2021, 3 and FEAP template.

⁶ 6 FAM 418.1(3).

with Short FEAPs rather than Long FEAPs did not have the required amount of documented information meant to guide Department personnel through specific actions and responses during emergencies.

OIG made nine recommendations that are intended to address the deficiencies identified in this report. On the basis of OEM's response to a draft of this report, OIG considers seven recommendations implemented and closed, one recommendation resolved pending further action, and one recommendation involving the personnel verification process unresolved. Both open recommendations will be monitored for implementation during the audit compliance process. A synopsis of OEM's responses to the recommendations offered and OIG's reply follow each recommendation in the Results section of this report. OEM's response to a draft of this report is included in its entirety in Appendix A.