

CHARRTS No.: HECCOI-01-001  
Hearing Date: July 28, 2015  
Committee: HECCOI  
Member: Congresswoman Brooks  
Witness: Dr. Hassell  
Question: #1

Worker Safety at Labs

Question: Are the workers at the labs that ship and receive the anthrax samples, those that verify the death certificates, provided with the anthrax vaccine ahead of time?

Answer: Yes, the anthrax vaccine is made available to all workers that work with anthrax.

CHARRTS No.: HECCOI-01-002

Hearing Date: July 28, 2015

Committee: HECCOI

Member: Congresswoman Brooks

Witness: Dr. Hassell

Question: #2

Worker Safety at Labs

Question: If workers are not provided the vaccine, why and when is there one readily available for use and distribution?

Answer: The anthrax vaccine is made available to all workers that work with anthrax.

CHARRTS No.: HECCOI-01-003  
Hearing Date: July 28, 2015  
Committee: HECCOI  
Member: Congresswoman Brooks  
Witness: Dr. Hassell  
Question: #3

Worker Safety at Labs

Question: What measures do these labs have in place for immediate response should a worker be exposed to live anthrax?

Answer: All laboratories that conduct research with Biological Select Agents and Toxins (BSAT) are required to maintain a site-specific Incident Response Plan and Occupational Health Plan to remain compliant with the Select Agent Regulations. The specific immediate response measures are addressed within the plans at each laboratory and include requirements for medical evaluation, treatment (if appropriate) and post-exposure management.

CHARRTS No.: HECCOI-01-004  
Hearing Date: July 28, 2015  
Committee: HECCOI  
Member: Congresswoman Brooks  
Witness: Dr. Hassell  
Question: #4

Worker Safety at Labs

Question: Do you consider these measures adequate?

Answer: Yes. The laboratory Incident Response Plans and Occupational Health Plans are adequate and compliant with the Select Agent Regulations and with DoD policy.

CHARRTS No.: HECCOI-01-005  
Hearing Date: July 28, 2015  
Committee: HECCOI  
Member: Congresswoman DeGette  
Witness: Dr. Hassell  
Question: #5

Culture of Safety

Question: Please describe to the Committee steps that DoD may take to increase the culture of safety at the labs that are part of the Federal Select Agent Program.

Answer: The DoD review team established immediately after the May 2015 incident identified several overarching recommendations: enhance quality assurance, establish a peer-review process, and improve program management. Each of these has specific recommendations within them that will be studied and implemented. The Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum on September 2, 2015, that designated the Secretary of the Army as the DoD Executive Agent for the DoD Biological Select Agent and Toxin (BSAT) Biosafety Program. In this role, the Secretary of the Army is responsible for the technical review, inspection, and harmonization of biosafety protocols and procedures across DoD laboratories that handle BSAT. The Army has established a working group that is identifying and comparing best practices in DoD, industry, and academia for enhancements to the DoD program. In addition, all DoD facilities that inactivate anthrax spores are under a moratorium for inactivation and shipping of inactivated anthrax until consistent and robust standards can be put in place.

CHARRTS No.: HECCOI-01-006  
Hearing Date: July 28, 2015  
Committee: HECCOI  
Member: Congresswoman DeGette  
Witness: Dr. Hassell  
Question: #6

Dugway Proving Ground

Question: Please provide additional detail as to why DoD believes that the problems discussed in this hearing took place in one specific lab, Dugway Proving Ground.

Answer: The Comprehensive Review Report, finalized on July 13, 2015, substantiated that DoD sent live anthrax to multiple labs that were expecting to receive inactivated anthrax. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that DPG failed to adequately inactivate anthrax spores and failed to validate that the inactivation was successful before creating samples that would be released from the facility. The Review Committee's key finding was a lack of specific validated standards to guide the development of protocols, processes, and quality assurance measures for the irradiation and viability testing of inactivated anthrax spores. It was confirmed through testing at other DoD laboratories that the only batches of inactivated anthrax which contained live anthrax came from DPG.

CHARRTS No.: HECCOI-01-007

Hearing Date: July 28, 2015

Committee: HECCOI

Member: Congressman Tonko

Witness: Dr. Hassell

Question: #7

Uniformed and Civilians at Dugway Proving Ground

Question: What percentage of uniformed versus civilian employees at Dugway Proving Ground?

Answer: The uniformed personnel assigned to Dugway are less than one percent of the overall workforce.

CHARRTS No.: HECCOI-01-008

Hearing Date: July 28, 2015

Committee: HECCOI

Member: Congressman Tonko

Witness: Dr. Hassell

Question: #8

Civilian Employees at Dugway Proving Ground

Question: What percentage of civilian employees at Dugway Proving Ground are unionized?

Answer: Eighty percent of the DoD civilian employees working at Dugway Proving Ground are represented by bargaining units.

CHARRTS No.: HECCOI-01-009  
Hearing Date: July 28, 2015  
Committee: HECCOI  
Member: Congresswoman Brooks  
Witness: Dr. Hassell  
Question: #9

Death Certificates

Question: Please provide a detailed explanation of how the process for death certificates work, including what information is required to be included in the certificate.

Answer: There is currently no DoD standardized process for creating death certificates after inactivation of biological material or standardized format for the information. The DPG death certificates currently list the name of the organism, place and date of sterilization, total dosage used to irradiate, procedure used to confirm inactivation, references, and the date of confirmation. The Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum on September 2, 2015, that designated the Secretary of the Army as the DoD Executive Agent for the DoD Biological Select Agent and Toxin (BSAT) Biosafety Program. In this role, the Secretary of the Army is responsible for the technical review, inspection, and harmonization of biosafety protocols and procedures across DoD laboratories that handle BSAT. The Army has established a working group that is identifying and comparing best practices in DoD, industry, and academia for enhancements to the DoD program, including use and format of death certificates.