



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

OIG-25-37

August 29, 2025

FINAL REPORT

The Secret Service's Counter Sniper Team Is Not Staffed to Meet Mission Requirements (REDACTED)





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 | www.oig.dhs.gov

August 29, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: Sean M. Curran
Director
United States Secret Service

FROM: Joseph V. Cuffari, Ph.D. **JOSEPH V CUFFARI** Digitally signed by
Inspector General JOSEPH V CUFFARI
Date: 2025.08.28
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SUBJECT: *The Secret Service's Counter Sniper Team Is Not Staffed to Meet
Mission Requirements – ~~For Official Use Only / Law Enforcement
Sensitive~~*

Attached for your action is our final report, *The Secret Service's Counter Sniper Team Is Not Staffed to Meet Mission Requirements*. We incorporated the formal comments provided by your office.

The report contains two recommendations aimed at improving Secret Service's Counter Sniper's staffing and training. Your office concurred with both recommendations. Based on information provided in your response to the draft report, we consider recommendation 2 open and unresolved. As prescribed by Department of Homeland Security Directive 077-01, *Follow-Up and Resolutions for the Office of Inspector General Report Recommendations*, within 90 days of the date of this memorandum, please provide our office with a written response that includes your (1) agreement or disagreement, (2) corrective action plan, and (3) target completion date for each recommendation. Also, please include responsible parties and any other supporting documentation necessary to inform us about the current status of the recommendation. Until your response is received and evaluated, the recommendations will be considered open and unresolved.

Based on information provided in your response to the draft report, we consider recommendation 1 open and resolved. Once your office has fully implemented the recommendations, please submit a formal closeout letter to us within 30 days so that we may close the recommendations. The memorandum should be accompanied by evidence of completion of agreed-upon corrective actions and of the disposition of any monetary amounts.

Please send your response or closure request OIGAuditsFollowup@oig.dhs.gov.

OIG Project No. 24-039-AUD-USSS

Consistent with our responsibility under the *Inspector General Act*, we will provide copies of our report to congressional committees with oversight and appropriation responsibility over the Department of Homeland Security. We will post a redacted version of the report on our website.

Please contact me with any questions, or your staff may contact Craig Adelman, Deputy Inspector General for Audits, at (202) 981-6000.

Attachment



DHS OIG HIGHLIGHTS

The Secret Service's Counter Sniper Team Is Not Staffed to Meet Mission Requirements

August 29, 2025

Why We Did This Review

On July 13, 2024, a Secret Service counter sniper shot and killed an individual who attempted to assassinate then-former President Trump at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. CS is a specialized unit within the Secret Service that is composed of highly trained, precision marksmen who provide long-range observation and tactical support during the Secret Service's protective operations.

We conducted this review to determine the extent to which the Secret Service's CS is prepared to respond to threats at events attended by protectees.

What We Recommend

We made two recommendations to improve the Secret Service's CS staffing and training.

For Further Information:

Contact Office of Public Affairs at (202) 981-6000 at: DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov.

What We Found

The United States Secret Service's (Secret Service) Counter Sniper Team (CS) is staffed 73 percent below the level necessary to meet mission requirements. Failure to appropriately staff CS could limit the Secret Service's ability to properly protect our Nation's most senior leaders, risking injury or assassination, and subsequent national-level harm to the country's sense of safety and security.

- CS employed between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] counter snipers annually from calendar years 2020 to 2024.
- A 2022 Secret Service staffing model determined that CS needed between [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] counter snipers to meet mission requirements; a 2025 update determined that CS needed [REDACTED] counter snipers.

Given its chronic understaffing, CS relied on overtime and leveraged personnel from other Department of Homeland Security components to meet mission requirements.

- From calendar years 2020 to 2024, counter snipers worked a total of 247,887 hours in overtime, approximately the equivalent of an additional 24 full-time employees per year.
- The Secret Service used snipers from other DHS components during the 2024 campaign season and 2025 Presidential inauguration; [REDACTED] snipers from other DHS components supported the inauguration.

Some counter snipers did not meet mandatory weapons requalification requirements. Counter snipers who missed mandatory weapons requalification sessions (i.e., retesting their ability to shoot accurately in the daytime and at night), nonetheless supported 47 of the 426 events (11 percent) attended by protectees in calendar year 2024.

Secret Service Response

Secret Service concurred with both recommendations.

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Abbreviations

CBP	U.S. Customs Border Protection
CS	Counter Sniper Team
CY	calendar year
HSI	Homeland Security Investigations
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
OPO	Office of Protective Operations
Secret Service	United States Secret Service
U.S.C.	United States Code



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Background

Within the Department of Homeland Security, the United States Secret Service (Secret Service) is charged with two distinct missions: protecting the Nation's leaders and safeguarding the financial infrastructure of the United States.¹ With respect to its protective mission, the agency is responsible for protecting the President of the United States and his family, the Vice President and his family, former Presidents and their spouses, major Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates, and select foreign dignitaries.² The Secret Service also protects designated sites and National Special Security Events.³

In fiscal year 2024, the Secret Service employed 8,090 personnel. This included [REDACTED] personnel assigned to the Office of Protective Operations (OPO), which oversees ten protective divisions and the broader Uniformed Division. Those ten protective divisions are:

- Presidential Protective Division
- Vice-Presidential Protective Division
- Dignitary Protective Division
- Former Presidential Protective Divisions for William Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Joseph Biden
- Uniformed Division
- Special Operations Division
- Special Services Division

The Special Operations Division consists of specialized units,⁴ including the Counter Sniper Team (CS) providing targeted support for protective operations.

In FY 2024, the Secret Service was responsible for protecting 344 protectees and supported 5,141 protective visits (4,723 domestic, 337 foreign, and 81 U.S. territorial). To fund those activities, Congress appropriated approximately \$3.1 billion for the Secret Service's operations, of which approximately \$1.2 billion was allocated to OPO.

¹ The Secret Service has primary jurisdiction to investigate threats against protectees. It also investigates financial crimes, including counterfeiting of U.S. currency; forgery or theft of U.S. Treasury checks, bonds, or other securities; credit card fraud; telecommunications fraud; computer fraud; identify fraud; and certain other crimes affecting federally insured financial institutions.

² 18 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 3056, *Powers, authorities, and duties of United States Secret Service* (2022).

³ Sites include the White House, the U.S. Naval Observatory, domestic and foreign facilities visited by the President, facilities visited by the Vice President and foreign dignitaries, and other locations. National Special Security Events include, for example, the Presidential inauguration, the State of the Union Address, national political conventions, and state funerals.

⁴ Other specialized units include the Canine Explosive Detection Unit, Counter Assault Team, Emergency Response Team, and Hazardous Agent Mitigation and Medical Emergency Response Team.



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Counter Sniper Team

As of December 2024, CS consisted of █ highly trained marksmen assigned to protect locations and events attended by United States Secret Service protectees. These counter snipers⁵ are responsible for conducting long-range surveillance and threat detection. They identify potential hostile actors, monitor suspicious activity, and are prepared to neutralize threats from a distance. Figure 1 shows counter snipers standing post during different events.

Requesting Counter Sniper Support

When a protectee plans to attend an event, his or her office informs the respective protective division. The protective division assigns a lead advance agent who plans and implements security arrangements for the event. The lead advance agent works with the site agent, and they create a site security plan that identifies required resources and countermeasures. When the lead advance agent and site agent determine that counter snipers are needed, the respective protective division initiates a request to OPO's Staffing and Logistics office. According to OPO officials, the requests are communicated electronically and include supporting information, such as general site details, maps, and potential contingency options.

OPO Staffing and Logistics confirms the request with both the respective protective division and CS; it then reviews, evaluates, and processes the request. If the request is from the Presidential Protective Division, then CS automatically assigns counter sniper support. According to OPO policy, requests from other protective divisions are filled based on staffing availability, the nature of the event, and available credible intelligence.

If CS does not have the requested counter snipers available, it informs the protective division and OPO Staffing and Logistics, which informs the lead advance agent. The lead advance agent is then required to find

Figure 1. Counter Snipers Working



Source: Photos taken by DHS Office of Inspector General during site visits in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (top) and Wilmington, North Carolina (bottom)

⁵ A sniper is someone who shoots at another individual from a concealed location, and a counter sniper is tasked with locating and neutralizing enemy snipers.



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alternatives to CS support, including using state and local snipers. For National Special Security Events, OPO may ask other DHS components to provide sniper support for the event.

Ongoing Reviews of the Secret Service by DHS Office of Inspector General

Review of Secret Service's Process for Securing Former President Trump's July 13, 2024, Event. The objective is to review the Secret Service's process for securing then-former President Trump's July 13, 2024, campaign event.

Review of Secret Service Planning and Implementation Activities for Protective Operations. The objective is to determine the extent to which the Secret Service plans and implements protective activities to ensure the safety and security of designated protectees.

Review of Secret Service Management and Security of Mobile Devices. The objective is to determine whether the Secret Service manages and secures mobile devices used to conduct official Government business.

Evaluation of DHS Actions Related to Disseminating Intelligence Threat Information Regarding Then-Former President Trump, Including Intelligence Related to the July 13, 2024, Butler, Pennsylvania Rally. The objective is to determine the Department's posture and actions in receiving, identifying, and disseminating intelligence threat information related to then-former President Trump, including intelligence related to the July 13, 2024, Butler, Pennsylvania rally.

If CS has available counter snipers, it confirms availability with the requesting protective division and OPO Staffing and Logistics, then assigns a team lead to develop a protection plan. In the protection plan, the CS team lead documents long-range threats, line-of-sight concerns, the number of counter snipers needed, placement of those counter snipers, placement of snipers from other DHS components or local law enforcement (if applicable), communication plans, threat mitigation measures, and other areas of concerns. The protection plan is shared with the protective division lead site agent and incorporated into a site security plan.

DHS OIG Reviews of the Secret Service

On July 13, 2024, a would-be assassin fired eight shots at then-former President Trump at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, grazing Mr. Trump and killing one spectator. A Secret Service counter sniper returned fire within seconds, killing the shooter. Immediately after the shooting and in the following months, we announced this and four other reviews examining not only the planning for the rally, but also the Secret Service's protective operations in general. We are issuing this review as the first in our body of work on the Secret Service.⁶

⁶ While conducting this review, we studied various reports examining the Secret Service's protection of then-former President Trump including the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Examination of U.S. Secret Service Planning and Security Failures Related to the July 13, 2024, Assassination Attempt: Interim Joint Report*, September 25, 2024; the Independent Review Panel, *The Report of the Independent Review Panel on the July 13, 2024, Assassination Attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania*, October 15, 2024; and the United States Secret Service, *Mission Assurance: U.S. Secret Service Inquiry into the Events of July 13, 2024*, November 1, 2024.



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We performed this review to determine the extent to which the Secret Service's CS is prepared to respond to threats at events attended by protectees.⁷

Results of Review

The Secret Service's CS is staffed 73 percent below the level necessary to meet mission requirements. This is a result of the Secret Service not having an effective process to hire counter snipers to meet its operational needs. To meet the demand for counter snipers, CS relied on overtime and personnel from other DHS components. Additionally, while counter snipers must maintain their ability to shoot accurately in the daytime and at night by requalifying (i.e., retesting), in FY 2024 not all counter snipers met mandatory weapons requalification requirements. This occurred because CS does not have a documented process for monitoring the counter snipers' requalification before assignments.

The Counter Sniper Team Is Not Staffed to Meet Mission Requirements

CS has been chronically understaffed. The Uniformed Division, in consultation with CS and OPO officials, currently authorizes CS to hire up to [REDACTED] counter snipers. OPO and the Uniformed Division officials stated that they allocate the available positions to CS based not only on needs, but also on current constraints such as the time required to train a counter sniper, the availability of training courses, and the availability of eligible applicants.

Although CS is authorized to hire up to [REDACTED] counter snipers, from calendar years 2020 to 2024, the Secret Service only employed between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (78 percent to 82 percent) counter snipers annually who supported a total of 1,152 events (see Figure 2). Comparing CYs 2020 and 2024,⁸ the number of events that CS supported increased by 151 percent (170 to 426 events), while staffing increased by only 5 percent ([REDACTED] to [REDACTED] counter snipers).

⁷ This review does not address the circumstances or specifics of the counter sniper actions that took place on July 13, 2024, as these are the subject of a separate OIG review of the Secret Service's process for securing then-former President Trump's July 13, 2024, event.

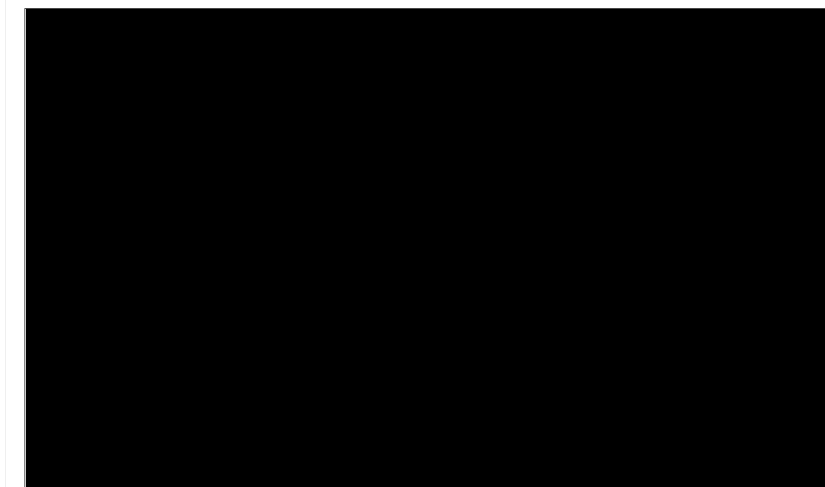
⁸ Although CY 2020 and CY 2024 were both election years, protectees held fewer events during CY 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Figure 2. Counter Snipers Available to Support Events, CYs 2020–2024



Source: DHS OIG analysis of Secret Service protectee events and staffing information
Note: Counter snipers employed as of the final pay period each calendar year.

The 2022 Secret Service’s Office of Strategy, Planning, and Innovation staffing model determined that CS needed between ■ to ■ counter snipers to meet mission requirements. At that time, the Secret Service employed ■ counter snipers (30 percent to 54 percent below operational needs). Variables that planners considered while developing the staffing model included counter snipers’ time and attendance data (e.g., hours worked, leave taken), the number of counter snipers needed for protective operations (e.g., supporting events or protecting designated sites such as the White House), training requirements, and the number of protectees, among others.

In October 2024, Congress enacted the *Enhanced Presidential Security Act of 2024*, which directed the Secret Service “to apply the same standards for determining the number of agents required to protect Presidents, Vice Presidents, and major Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates.”⁹ Before this law, the Secret Service had authority to protect major Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates,¹⁰ but as CS officials explained to us, because resources were limited, requests for counter

*CS staffing is
73 percent below
operational needs.*

⁹ See Public Law No. 118-91, 138 Stat. 1560 (2024).

¹⁰ According to 18 U.S.C. § 3056(a)(7), “under the direction of the Secretary of Homeland Security, the United States Secret Service is authorized to protect ... Major Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates and, within 120 days of the general Presidential election, the spouses of such candidates.” Also see 18 U.S.C. § 3056A(a)(12) *Powers, authorities, and duties of United States Secret Service Uniformed Division*, “Major Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates and, within 120 days of the general Presidential election, the spouses of such candidates.”



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snipers from the Presidential Protective Division (i.e., the sitting President) had always been given priority over other requests.¹¹

To determine the number of counter snipers needed after the enactment of the *Enhanced Presidential Security Act of 2024*, the Office of Strategy, Planning, and Innovation updated its staffing model in March 2025; the updated model showed that CS would need [REDACTED] counter snipers to meet its operational needs. To reach this goal, CS would need to increase the number of authorized positions and recruit, hire, and retain [REDACTED] additional counter snipers.

Uniformed Division officials, who authorize CS staffing positions, stated that providing CS with [REDACTED] positions at one time is unrealistic given Secret Service's approach to recruiting and training officers to become counter snipers. Uniformed Division officials stated that they are adding training classes and plan to grow the CS team to [REDACTED] counter snipers by 2026. The officials added that the plan is not formally documented within any memorandum and that it was verbally discussed within leadership and agreed upon as the initial target to reach.

The Secret Service Does Not Have an Effective Process to Hire Counter Snipers

Although the Office of Strategy, Planning, and Innovation's staffing model demonstrates that CS needs more counter snipers, the Secret Service's approach does not allow for timely hiring, training, and deployment of a counter sniper to CS. For example, instead of recruiting directly from a larger pool of candidates such as former military counter snipers or personnel from other Federal agencies, CS officials stated that they restrict eligibility to officers already serving in the Secret Service's Uniformed Division. This is a self-imposed requirement that, according to CS officials, ensures that potential counter snipers already have a foundational understanding of protective operations.

Before March 2024, it took almost 3 years for a Uniformed Division officer to become a counter sniper (see Figure 3) under the Secret Service's approach. When an officer is hired into the Uniformed Division, he or she must attend a 13-week police training and a 16-week Uniformed Division training. Uniformed Division officials, in consultation with CS, determined that a potential counter sniper candidate must work in the Uniformed Division for at least 2 years before being eligible to apply to CS. Once eligible, the potential counter sniper goes through a 1-week selection process and, if selected, attends a 10-week counter sniper-specific training.

¹¹ Secret Service Directive SOD-08, *Counter Sniper Team Overview, Responsibilities, and Qualifications* (December 9, 2024), describes CS responsibilities. In 2024, before the enactment of the *Enhanced Presidential Security Act*, CS responsibilities did not list major Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates. Rather, the directive stated, "CS also provides over watch and site protection for all ... other events/locations when directed by the Office of Protective Operations or the Special Agent in Charge of the Special Operations Division." SOD-08 was revised in December 2024, and the responsibilities listed "major Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates as authorized by OPO."



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Figure 3. Time to Become a Secret Service Counter Sniper



* Timeline could be longer if training courses are not run consecutively.

Source: DHS OIG analysis of counter sniper training process

In March 2024, CS revised its recruitment strategy and reduced the time before a candidate can serve as a counter sniper.¹² The revised approach allowed candidates to apply for counter sniper-specific positions rather than to a general Uniformed Division position. Officers must still serve as an officer in the Uniformed Division, but the timeframe was reduced from 24 to 18 months before they are eligible to transition to CS. According to human resources officials, the direct hire initiative yielded only five potential new employees for CS between March 2024 to March 2025. Assuming all candidates pass required training, the earliest they would be expected to become part of the CS team would be in CY 2026.

The Secret Service Relied on Overtime to Meet Counter Sniper Operational Needs

As a result of low staffing, the Secret Service relied on overtime pay to meet the demand for counter sniper support for protectees attending events. Under 5 U.S.C. § 5542, overtime pay applies to work officially ordered or approved more than 8 hours in a day or 40 hours in an administrative workweek. Generally, the overtime rate of pay is 1.5 times an employee's regular hourly wage.¹³

From CYs 2020 to 2024, counter snipers worked a total of 247,887 hours in overtime.

- CY 2020 – 48,627 overtime hours worked
- CY 2021 – 41,553 overtime hours worked
- CY 2022 – 47,217 overtime hours worked
- CY 2023 – 50,662 overtime hours worked
- CY 2024 – 59,828 overtime hours worked

¹² In an April 2025 job announcement for counter snipers, the Secret Service removed the requirement to have previously served as a Uniformed Division officer.

¹³ See 5 U.S.C. § 5542, *Overtime rates; computation*.

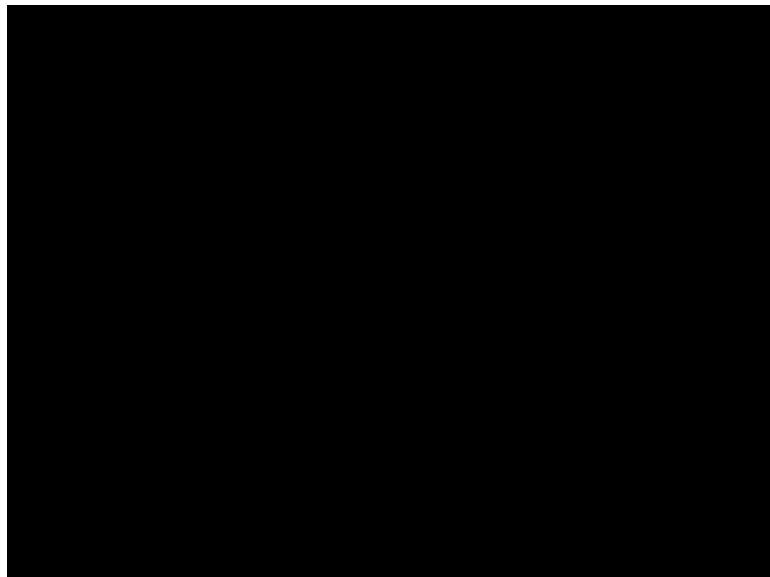


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A full-time Federal employee typically works 2,080 hours per year. Accordingly, the 247,887 overtime hours worked is equivalent to the regular hours worked by approximately 24 full-time employees per year. For example, the overtime hours worked in CY 2020 equaled the work of 23.4 full-time employees. This means that the [REDACTED] counter snipers employed that year worked the equivalent of [REDACTED] full-time employees. Figure 4 shows the number of counter snipers employed and the full-time employee equivalent of the overtime hours worked in CYs 2020 through 2024.

Figure 4. Counter Snipers and Full-Time Employee Equivalent of Overtime Hours, CYs 2020–2024



Source: DHS OIG analysis of overtime hours from the Secret Service

None of the 28 counter snipers we spoke with identified the amount of overtime worked as a challenge despite data showing that in 2024, one counter sniper worked 1,403 hours in overtime (67 percent more than a standard number of hours worked in a year). Moreover, the amount of overtime worked did not appear to impact CS' ability to retain its counter snipers. According to Secret Service's time and attendance data, CS average attrition rate has stood at less than 4 percent for the last 5 years.

The Secret Service Used Other DHS Components to Meet Operational Needs

The Secret Service used personnel from U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Border Patrol Tactical Unit and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) to augment its counter sniper staffing during the 2024 campaign season and 2025 Presidential inauguration (a designated National Special Security Event):



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- **2024 Campaign Season.** In an August 5, 2024, letter to the ICE Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Deputy Director, OPO's Assistant Director asked for [REDACTED] (42 percent staffing increase) HSI Special Response Team personnel to be embedded with CS during the 2024 campaign season. According to CS officials, the Secret Service primarily used snipers to guard protectees' residences in Palm Beach, Florida; Wilmington, Delaware; and Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. CS officials stated that using ICE snipers to guard the residences allowed them to redistribute CS' counter snipers to support protectees attending events.
- **2025 Presidential Inauguration.** In letters to the CBP Official Performing the Duties of the Commissioner and ICE Executive Associate Director for HSI, OPO's Assistant Director asked for [REDACTED] (50 percent staffing increase) trained and equipped snipers "to observe, locate, identify, and defend sniper threats" at the inauguration. CBP and ICE provided a total of [REDACTED] counter snipers to support the inauguration.

In the above-mentioned letters, the Secret Service also requested other types of staffing and equipment from CBP and ICE for the 2024 campaign season and 2025 Presidential inauguration, including:

- [REDACTED] HSI Special Response Team personnel to be embedded with the Counter Assault Teams during the campaign season;
- [REDACTED] HSI special agents (per 21-day rotation) to stand post at candidate events or provide security at candidates' permanent residences during the campaign season;
- "trained operators capable of defending against and responding to organized assaults within the inner, middle, and outer perimeters of [the Presidential inauguration's] defined venues;" and
- assets, including large-scale non-intrusive inspection systems, radiation detection systems, and aircraft for the inauguration.

The OPO Assistant Director's letter to ICE stated that the Secret Service would provide virtual training for HSI special agents. In the request letter to CBP, the Assistant Director asked for "trained operators" but did not mention how or if the Secret Service training would be provided.

We noted that although Secret Service routinely relied on external law enforcement counter snipers during the campaign season and Presidential inauguration, these personnel were not subject to the typical prerequisite of serving 18 months with Uniformed Division before performing counter sniper duties.



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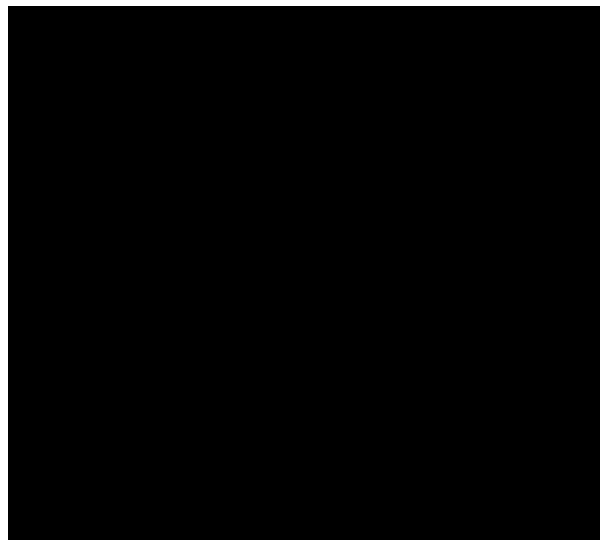
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Some Counter Snipers Did Not Meet Mandatory Weapons Requalification Requirements

Counter snipers must maintain their ability to shoot accurately during the daytime and at night, according to Secret Service Directive SOD-08, *Counter Sniper Team Overview, Responsibilities, and Qualifications* (December 9, 2024). This entails periodic requalification (i.e., retesting). Per the directive, counter snipers must use their Government-issued weapons to hit a target in a prescribed area while standing, sitting, kneeling, and prone (i.e., laying horizontal). The 2024 directive¹⁴ required counter snipers to requalify quarterly for daytime shooting and annually for nighttime shooting.

In FY 2024, training records show that all [REDACTED] counter snipers met the annual nighttime requalification requirement. With respect to daytime requalification, [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] (17 percent) counter snipers did not requalify in Quarter 1, and none of the [REDACTED] counter snipers requalified in Quarter 2 (see Figure 5). Additionally, none of the counter snipers who missed mandatory requalification sessions submitted Form 4438, *Failure to Attend Firearms Qualification*, detailing the circumstances that prevented them from attending to their supervisor as Secret Service guidance requires.¹⁵

Figure 5. Counter Snipers Who Did Not Meet Daytime Weapons Requalification Requirements in FY 2024



Source: DHS OIG analysis of counter sniper training requalification data

¹⁴ Secret Service subsequently updated Directive SOD-08, on July 1, 2025. The directive now requires counter snipers to requalify quarterly on a prescribed course (whether it be during the day or night) for all issued precision rifles.

¹⁵ See Secret Service Directive RTC-05-08, *Firearms Qualification and Training Requirements*, July 13, 2022.



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Those counter snipers who did not requalify supported 47 of the 426 events (11 percent) that protectees attended in CY 2024. The events that these counter snipers supported included then President Biden:

- attending the wake of a Congresswoman in Dallas, Texas, on January 8, 2024;
- participating in campaign receptions in New York, New York, on February 7, 2024; and
- delivering remarks in Manchester, New Hampshire, on March 11, 2024.

These deficiencies occurred because CS lacks a formal process to ensure that counter snipers requalify in accordance with policy. Currently, when a counter sniper attends a daytime or nighttime requalification course, a CS instructor records the requalification in Secret Service's Enterprise Person and Performance and Learning Management System. However, before assigning counter snipers to support an event, one CS official stated that he did not always check the system to verify that the counter snipers completed their mandatory requalification sessions. Another CS official stated that even when he is aware that individuals missed requalification sessions, the decision to deploy a counter sniper is based on mission needs.

Additionally, counter snipers stated they did not requalify on a daytime course in Quarter 2 because they thought that they could substitute their annual nighttime requalification to meet the quarterly daytime requalification requirement. It is unclear why the counter snipers believed the substitution was allowed. The counter snipers also stated that the firing range was not always available when they needed it and that conflicts with schedules, inclement weather, and a high operational tempo prevented them from going to the firing range and requalifying.

Conclusion

The Secret Service CS faces critical staffing shortages, which deepened after the enactment of the *Enhanced Presidential Security Act of 2024*. CS will need to quickly hire and train substantially more counter snipers to meet growing operational demands and be prepared for the 2028 Presidential election cycle and beyond. CS will also need to ensure that counter snipers maintain their weapons skills. Failure to ensure appropriate staffing and training could result in injuries to or the assassination of our Nation's most senior leaders and affect the entire country's sense of safety.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: We recommend the Assistant Director of the Office of Protective Operations, in coordination with the Chief Human Capital Officer, develop a strategy and implementation plan that enables the Secret Service to achieve full staffing to meet CS mission requirements.



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- The strategy should evaluate the feasibility of recruiting counter snipers from external law enforcement or military services and reevaluate whether the prerequisite to serve 18 months in the Uniformed Division should remain a requirement to join the Counter Sniper Team.
- The implementation plan should establish actionable steps toward obtaining full counter sniper staffing, as identified by Secret Service's staffing model, including establishing targets and completion dates.

Recommendation 2: We recommend the Assistant Director of the Office of Protective Operations develop and implement a process to ensure that the Counter Sniper Team meet weapons requalification as required by policy, and that Counter Sniper Team officials regularly review and document compliance.

Management Comments and OIG Analysis

The Secret Service provided management comments on a draft of this report. The Secret Service concurred with both recommendations. Appendix B contains a copy of the Secret Service's response in its entirety. The Secret Service also provided technical comments to our draft report. We incorporated these comments in our report, as appropriate. A summary of the Secret Service's response to the recommendations and our analysis follows.

Secret Service Response to Recommendation 1: Concur. Through coordination and collaboration among the Office of Protective Operations, the Office of Training, the Office of Human Resources, and the Office of Strategy, Planning, and Innovation, the Secret Service has developed and implemented a recruitment initiative for the Counter Sniper Team. In May 2024, the initiative included targeted job announcements. Following the July 13, 2024, Butler incident, the recruitment initiative was strengthened to include recruitment incentives beginning in November 2024, and retention bonuses beginning in December 2024. In March 2025, the Office of Strategy, Planning, and Innovation developed a new staffing model that further addressed the feasibility of recruiting counter snipers from external law enforcement and military services, as well as the prerequisites for serving in the Uniformed Division. Estimated Completion Date: August 2026.

OIG Analysis: We consider these actions responsive to the recommendation, which we consider open and resolved. We will close the recommendation when Secret Service provides documentation supporting its statements along with documentation that they created a recruitment strategy and an implementation plan for counter snipers.

Secret Service Response to Recommendation 2: Concur. There is currently a process in place to ensure that the Secret Service Counter Sniper Team meets the weapons qualifications required by policy. Recognizing prior versions of SOD-08 included ambiguous qualification requirements, Counter Sniper personnel consistently conducted qualifications based on the



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Secret Service's intent and interpretation of its own policy. On July 1, 2025, the Secret Service updated SOD-08 to clarify qualification requirements - specifically, that Counter Sniper personnel are required to qualify quarterly on one prescribed qualification (day or night) with all issued precision rifles. Secret Service requests that the OIG consider this recommendation closed and resolved, as implemented.

OIG Analysis: Although Secret Service concurred with the recommendation, we consider the recommendation open and unresolved. This is because Secret Service did not address the deficiency we found, namely, counter snipers who did not meet their weapon requalification and were assigned to protective operations. We will close the recommendation when Secret Service provides documentation supporting that Counter Sniper Team officials regularly review and document compliance with weapons requalification policy.



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Appendix A: Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General was established by the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-296) by amendment to the Inspector General Act of 1978.

The objective of our review was to determine the extent to which the Secret Service's CS is prepared to respond to threats at events attended by protectees.

To answer our objective, we reviewed Federal, and Secret Service policies and procedures related to CS operations. We reviewed prior audits and reports examining the Secret Service's counter sniper operations and those examining the support CS provided on July 13, 2024, in Butler, Pennsylvania. We reviewed directives and internal operating procedures for determining counter sniper assignments and CS' composition. We observed operations at three events:

- A September 10, 2024, debate between former Vice President Kamala Harris and then-former President Donald Trump;
- A September 21, 2024, campaign rally attended by then-former President Trump in Wilmington, North Carolina; and
- An October 24, 2024, campaign rally attended by then-Senator J.D. Vance in Detroit, Michigan.

To gain an overall understanding of CS' operations, we interviewed its leadership and 28 of the [REDACTED] counter snipers employed by the Secret Service at the time of our review. We also interviewed counter sniper instructors at the Rowley Training Center in Laurel, Maryland and toured the facility. We interviewed officials from Secret Service offices including at:

- OPO
 - Staffing and Logistics
 - Uniformed Division
 - Counter Assault Team within the Special Operations Division
- Office of Technical Development and Mission Support
- Office of the Chief Information Officer
- Office of Human Resources
 - Benefits and Payroll
- Office of Strategy, Planning, and Innovation

To determine the number (and type) of events that CS supported, we extracted data from the Secret Service's Events Management system. The data extracted included events and sites, counter snipers assigned, protectees, and dates of arrival and departure. We also extracted time



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and attendance data from the Enterprise Personnel system to determine the hours the counter snipers worked each calendar year. To assess the reliability of Enterprise Personnel System data, we performed electronic testing of the data and determined it was sufficiently reliable to support the findings and conclusions in this report.

To determine whether counter snipers completed required requalification of their skills, we obtained training records for FYs 2020 to 2024 from the Secret Service's Enterprise Person and Performance and Learning Management System databases. To assess the reliability of the training records, we identified the personnel assigned to the team during FY 2024 and compared the requalification data to determine if qualification requirements were met. We found both roster data and training data to be reliable. Lastly, we reviewed complaints received by the DHS OIG Hotline to inform our work.

We conducted this review in conjunction with four other DHS OIG reviews that we announced after the attempted assassination of then-former President Donald Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13, 2024. Those reviews are listed in the background section of this report. We coordinated our data collection methodology and analyses across review teams.

We conducted this review from July 2024 to August 2025 under the authority of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, 5 U.S.C. §§ 401–424, and according to the *Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations*, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

DHS OIG's Access to DHS Information

During this review, the Secret Service provided timely responses to our requests for information and did not delay or deny access to information we requested.



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Appendix B:

Secret Service Comments on the Draft Report



U.S. Department of Homeland Security
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20223

BY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

August 20, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: Joseph V. Cuffari, Ph.D.
Inspector General

FROM: Sean M. Curran
Director
United States Secret Service

SUBJECT: Management Response to Draft Report: "The Secret Service's
Counter Sniper Team is Not Staffed to Meet Mission
Requirements" (Project No. 24-039-AUD-USSS)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft report. The U.S. Secret Service (Secret Service) appreciates the work of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in planning and conducting its review and issuing this report.

Secret Service leadership is pleased to note OIG's recognition of the importance of the Secret Service Counter Sniper Team as a specialized unit within the Secret Service that is composed of highly trained, precision marksmen who provide long-range observation and tactical support during the Secret Service's protective operations as well as the need to ensure adequate staffing for this protective function. The Secret Service remains committed to both adequately staffing this function and strengthening processes to ensure the Counter Sniper Team consistently meets training qualification and requalification requirements, providing a secure environment for our Nation's leaders on every assignment.

The draft report contained two recommendations with which the Secret Service concurs. Attached find our detailed response to each recommendation. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security previously submitted technical comments addressing several accuracy, contextual and other issues under a separate cover for OIG's consideration, as appropriate.



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Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Curran".

Sean M. Curran
Director
United States Secret Service

Attachment



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Attachment: Management Response to Recommendations Contained in OIG 24-039-AUD-USSS

OIG recommended that the Assistant Director of the Office of Protective Operations:

Recommendation 1: Develop a strategy and implementation plan that enables the Secret Service to achieve full staffing to meet [Counter Sniper Team] mission requirements.

- The strategy should evaluate the feasibility of recruiting counter snipers from external law enforcement or military services and reevaluate whether the prerequisite to serve 18 months in the Uniformed Division should remain a requirement to join the Counter Sniper Team.
- The implementation plan should establish actionable steps towards obtaining full counter sniper staffing as identified by Secret Service's staffing model including establishing targets, and completion dates.

Response: Concur. Through coordination and collaboration among the Office of Protective Operations, the Office of Training, the Office of Human Resources, and the Office of Strategy, Planning, and Innovation, the Secret Service has developed and implemented a recruitment initiative for the Counter Sniper Team. In May 2024 the initiative included targeted job announcements. Following the July 13, 2024, Butler incident, the recruitment initiative was strengthened to include recruitment incentives beginning in November 2024, and retention bonuses beginning in December 2024. In March 2025, the Office of Strategy, Planning, and Innovation developed a new staffing model that further addressed the feasibility of recruiting counter snipers from external law enforcement and military services, as well as the prerequisites for serving in the Uniformed Division. Throughout field work the Secret Service provided the OIG with information regarding these efforts.

Estimated Completion Date: The Counter Sniper recruitment initiative is in place. We will continue to assess staffing levels, enhance the initiative as necessary, and provide the OIG with an update on the staffing levels in August 2026.

Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a process to ensure that the Counter Sniper Team meet weapons qualifications as required by policy, and that Counter Sniper Team officials regularly review compliance.

Response: Concur. There is currently a process in place to ensure that the Secret Service Counter Sniper Team meets the weapons qualifications required by policy¹. Recognizing prior versions of SOD-08 included ambiguous qualification requirements, Counter Sniper personnel consistently conducted qualifications based on the Secret

¹ SOD-08 "Counter Sniper Team Overview, Responsibilities, and Qualifications" dated July 2025.



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Service's intent and interpretation of its own policy. On July 1, 2025, the Secret Service updated SOD-08 to clarify qualification requirements – specifically, that Counter Sniper personnel are required to qualify quarterly on one prescribed qualification (day OR night) with all issued precision rifles. Secret Service provided the OIG with documentation of these efforts on August 12, 2025.

We request that the OIG consider this recommendation resolved and closed, as implemented.



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**Appendix C:
Report Distribution**

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