
Karen S. Burrows



Executive Director, Naval Ordnance Safety and Security Activity

Deputy for Weapons Safety, Naval Sea Systems Command



Ms. Karen Burrows serves as the Executive Director of the Naval Ordnance Safety and Security Activity (NOSSA) and the Deputy for Weapons Safety, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEASYS). In this capacity, she provides executive and technical direction for all ordnance surety programs assigned to NOSSA and is the NAVSEASYSCOM Deputy Warranting Officer for Weapons Systems and Ordnance – Explosives Safety and Security. Ms. Burrows also serves as chair Department of the Navy's Weapon System Explosives Safety Review Board which provides system safety compliance of all Navy and Marine Corps munitions, ordnance items, weapons and combat systems prior to fielding to operating forces. Ms. Burrows co-chairs the Joint Weapon Safety Working Group which provides multi service reviews of joint munitions.

Ms. Burrows was appointed to the Senior Executive Service in April 2012 and has over 30 years of Service in the Department of Defense. From 2010 to 2012 Ms. Burrows concurrently held two positions at the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) as the Deputy Administrator and Chief Information Officer responsible for the operational provision of scientific and technical information.

Prior to her assignment at DTIC, from 2008 to 2010 she served as the Director of the Emerging Capabilities Division of the Rapid Reaction Technology Office in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Research and Engineering – DDR&E) where she was responsible for developing, maturing and transitioning technologies supporting border security, surveillance and maritime domain awareness missions through partnerships with the Services and other Federal departments.

In 2006 Ms. Burrows was assigned as the Special Assistant to the Office of the Director of Defense Research and Engineering, Department of Defense. While in DDR&E, she led the inaugural prize, Wearable Power, a public competition to award cash prizes to both traditional and non-traditional innovators to develop lightweight, long-endurance wearable power systems.

Ms. Burrows began her career at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head Division where she held several key technical and managerial positions to include: Project Engineer, Mine Countermeasures; Program Manager for Insensitive Munitions; Program Manager for Thermobaric Programs in support of Operation Enduring Freedom; and Director, Technology Division. Her experience spans the areas of energetic materials, insensitive munitions and weapons research, development, test and evaluation.

Ms. Burrows is the recipient of two Department of Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Awards, Navy Meritorious Unit award and is certified as a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt. She has authored numerous technical publications and is a member of the Acquisition Professional Community. Her professional affiliations include memberships with the International System Safety Society and the National Society of Black Engineers. Ms. Burrows holds a Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University.