



Politics

Trump administration fires and then tries to rehire nuclear weapons workers in DOGE reversal

February 17, 2025 / 9:33 AM EST / AP

Add CBS News on Google

The Trump administration has paused the firings of hundreds of federal employees working at risk.

Late Thursday, the Department of Security...

This is the largest stockpile, up to 350,000. The email even says Friday morning of anony...

One of the most sensitive clearance...

Review and Manage Your Cookie Settings

If you consent, we and our 304 partners can store and access personal information on your device to provide a more personalised browsing experience. This is accomplished through processing personal data collected from browsing data stored in cookies. You can provide/withdraw consent and object to processing based on a legitimate interest at any time by clicking on the 'Manage' button.

For more information refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

We and our partners process data to provide:

Store and/or access information on a device. Use limited data to select advertising. Create Profiles for personalized advertising. Use Profiles to select personalized advertising. Measure advertising performance. Create profiles to personalize content. Use profiles to select personalized content. Measure content performance. Understand audiences through statistics or combinations of data from different sources. Develop and improve services. Use limited data to select content.

Accept

Reject

Manage

Manage Cookies

The hundreds let go at NNSA were part of a DOGE purge across the Department of Energy that targeted about 2,000 employees.

"The DOGE people are coming in with absolutely no knowledge of what these departments are responsible for," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, referencing Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency team. "They don't seem to realize that it's actually the department of nuclear weapons more than it is the Department of Energy."

By late Friday night, the agency's acting director, Teresa Robbins, issued a memo rescinding the firings for all but 28 of those hundreds of fired staff members.

"This letter serves as formal notification that the termination decision issued to you on Feb. 13, 2025 has been rescinded, effective immediately," said the memo, which was obtained by the AP.

Review and Manage Your Cookie Settings

If you consent, we and our 304 partners can store and access personal information on your device to provide a more personalised browsing experience. This is accomplished through processing personal data collected from browsing data stored in cookies. You can provide/withdraw consent and object to processing based on a legitimate interest at any time by clicking on the 'Manage' button.

For more information refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

We and our partners process data to provide:

Store and/or access information on a device. Use limited data to select advertising. Create Profiles for personalized advertising. Use Profiles to select personalized advertising. Measure advertising performance. Create profiles to personalize content. Use profiles to select personalized content. Measure content performance. Understand audiences through statistics or combinations of data from different sources. Develop and improve services. Use limited data to select content.

The acco
Departme
Administ
employee

But that v
warning a

"This is a
on the wo
our nation

e

st a

o leading
at secure

"Cutting the federal workforce responsible for these functions may be seen as reckless at best and adversarially opportunistic at worst."

While some of the Energy Department employees who were fired dealt with energy efficiency and the effects of climate change, issues not seen as priorities by the Trump administration, many others dealt with nuclear issues, even if they didn't directly work on weapons programs. This included managing massive radioactive waste sites and ensuring the material there doesn't further contaminate nearby communities.

Review and Manage Your Cookie Settings

If you consent, we and our 304 partners can store and access personal information on your device to provide a more personalised browsing experience. This is accomplished through processing personal data collected from browsing data stored in cookies. You can provide/withdraw consent and object to processing based on a legitimate interest at any time by clicking on the 'Manage' button.

For more information refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

We and our partners process data to provide:

Store and/or access information on a device. Use limited data to select advertising. Create Profiles for personalized advertising. Use Profiles to select personalized advertising. Measure advertising performance. Create profiles to personalize content. Use profiles to select personalized content. Measure content performance. Understand audiences through statistics or combinations of data from different sources. Develop and improve services. Use limited data to select content.

But it's now in the midst of a major \$750 billion nuclear weapons modernization effort – including new land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, new stealth bombers and new submarine-launched warheads. In response, the labs have aggressively hired over the past few years: In 2023, 60% of the workforce had been there five years or less.

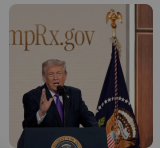
Edwin Lyman, director of nuclear power safety at the Union of Concerned Scientists, said the firings could disrupt the day-to-day workings of the agency and create a sense of instability over the nuclear program both at home and abroad.

"I think the signal to U.S. adversaries is pretty clear: throw a monkey wrench in the whole national security apparatus and cause disarray," he said. "That can only benefit the adversaries of this country."

More from CBS News

CBS POLITICS

2 more drug companies to officially launch on TrumpRx



CBS TEXAS

Dallas past

CBS DETROIT

Michigan c

CBS ATLANTA

Georgia G

Go deeper

THE FREEPRESS

Elon Musk

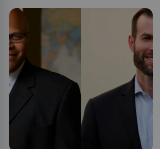
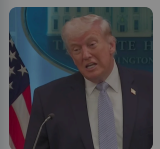
Review and Manage Your Cookie Settings

If you consent, we and our 304 partners can store and access personal information on your device to provide a more personalised browsing experience. This is accomplished through processing personal data collected from browsing data stored in cookies. You can provide/withdraw consent and object to processing based on a legitimate interest at any time by clicking on the 'Manage' button.

For more information refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

We and our partners process data to provide:

Store and/or access information on a device. Use limited data to select advertising. Create Profiles for personalized advertising. Use Profiles to select personalized advertising. Measure advertising performance. Create profiles to personalize content. Use profiles to select personalized content. Measure content performance. Understand audiences through statistics or combinations of data from different sources. Develop and improve services. Use limited data to select content.





How Elon Musk Unleashed Chaos Inside the NIH



In: [Elon Musk](#) [Nuclear Weapons](#) [Donald Trump](#) [Politics](#) [Trump Administration](#)

© 2025 The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.



Featured

[Iran War Coverage](#)

[Artemis II](#)

[Masters 2026 Field](#)

[College Basketball Transfer Portal](#)

Follow Us

[YouTube](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[X](#)

Privacy

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Manage Cookies](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

More from

[Newsletters](#)

[Podcasts](#)

[Download](#)

Review and Manage Your Cookie Settings

If you consent, we and our 304 partners can store and access personal information on your device to provide a more personalised browsing experience. This is accomplished through processing personal data collected from browsing data stored in cookies. You can provide/withdraw consent and object to processing based on a legitimate interest at any time by clicking on the 'Manage' button.

For more information refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

We and our partners process data to provide:

Store and/or access information on a device. Use limited data to select advertising. Create Profiles for personalized advertising. Use Profiles to select personalized advertising. Measure advertising performance. Create profiles to personalize content. Use profiles to select personalized content. Measure content performance. Understand audiences through statistics or combinations of data from different sources. Develop and improve services. Use limited data to select content.

Brand Studio
Watch CBS News

Sitemap

Company

About Paramount

Advertise With Paramount

Join Our Talent Community

Help

Feedback

Contact the Ombudsman

Copyright ©2026 CBS Interactive Inc. All rights reserved.

Review and Manage Your Cookie Settings

If you consent, we and our 304 partners can store and access personal information on your device to provide a more personalised browsing experience. This is accomplished through processing personal data collected from browsing data stored in cookies. You can provide/withdraw consent and object to processing based on a legitimate interest at any time by clicking on the 'Manage' button.

For more information refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

We and our partners process data to provide:

Store and/or access information on a device. Use limited data to select advertising. Create Profiles for personalized advertising. Use Profiles to select personalized advertising. Measure advertising performance. Create profiles to personalize content. Use profiles to select personalized content. Measure content performance. Understand audiences through statistics or combinations of data from different sources. Develop and improve services. Use limited data to select content.