

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-15-543](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The attacks at Fort Hood, Texas, on November 5, 2009, and at the Washington Navy Yard, D.C., on September 16, 2013, drew nationwide attention to insider threats at DOD installations. DOD defines an insider threat as the threat that an insider will use her or his authorized access, wittingly or unwittingly, to do harm to the security of the United States.

House report 113-446 included a provision that GAO review DOD's antiterrorism and force protection efforts to address insider threats. This report evaluates the extent to which DOD has (1) reflected insider threat considerations in its force protection policies and other guidance, (2) shared actions that U.S. installations have taken to protect against insider threats, and (3) implemented recommendations from the official reviews of the 2009 Fort Hood and 2013 Washington Navy Yard shootings. GAO reviewed official reviews from the shootings, DOD force protection-related policies, interviewed agency officials, and visited eight nongeneralizable U.S. installations representing all four military services, a joint base, and different geographic locations.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD consistently use existing mechanisms to share information about actions taken to protect against threats, and take steps to improve the consistency of reporting and monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations from the 2009 Fort Hood review. DOD concurred with GAO's recommendations and cited related actions planned or under way.

View [GAO-15-543](#). For more information, contact Joseph W. Kirschbaum at 202-512-9971 or kirschbaumj@gao.gov.

July 2015

INSIDER THREATS

DOD Should Improve Information Sharing and Oversight to Protect U.S. Installations

What GAO Found

Since the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, the Department of Defense (DOD) has made efforts to update 7 of 10 key force protection-related policy and guidance documents and is taking steps to revise the remaining 3 to incorporate insider threat considerations. DOD's Fort Hood independent review recommended that the department develop policy and procedures to integrate disparate efforts to protect DOD resources and people against internal threats. GAO also found that DOD does not have a policy for when it would be appropriate for DOD military and contractor personnel to report to DOD base security officials when an individual is observed carrying a weapon on an installation, especially into a work environment. Senior DOD officials acknowledged this policy gap and agreed to take steps to address the issue.

Officials from the eight U.S. installations GAO visited identified actions taken to protect against insider threats. However, DOD has not consistently shared information across the department about the actions it has taken. DOD has issued guidance and recommendations addressing the 2009 Fort Hood shooting stating that DOD should identify and share leading practices to enhance the department's ability to protect the force. For example, installation officials have trained response personnel on active shooter training and piloted a workplace violence risk assessment program. However, DOD is not sharing all the information about such actions because DOD officials are not consistently using existing mechanisms to share information, such as lessons-learned information systems and antiterrorism web portals. Unless the military services consistently use existing mechanisms to share information on insider threats, U.S. installations may miss opportunities to enhance the department's ability to protect the force against such threats.

DOD has taken actions to implement the recommendations from the official reviews of the 2009 Fort Hood and 2013 Washington Navy Yard shootings. However, GAO was unable to identify the number of the 79 Fort Hood recommendations that were fully implemented because DOD has received inconsistent information from the military services and has conducted limited monitoring of recommendation implementation. For example, DOD and military service officials provided differing responses to a questionnaire on the implementation status of some Fort Hood recommendations. In addition, officials from three military services stated that they generally do not monitor the implementation of the recommendations from the Fort Hood independent review at the installation level. Until DOD and the military services improve the consistency of reporting and monitoring of the implementation of recommendations, DOD will be unable to know whether the deficiencies identified in the official review of the 2009 Fort Hood shooting have been addressed. With regard to the official reviews from the 2013 Washington Navy Yard shooting, DOD has taken initial actions towards implementing the four recommendations prioritized by the Secretary of Defense. For example, DOD issued an implementation plan that identifies milestones, timelines, and resource requirements needed to address the four recommendations.