HOMELAND SECURITY

Addressing Weaknesses with Facility Security Committees Would Enhance Protection of Federal Facilities

What GAO Found

Since 2007, we have reported that FPS faces significant challenges with protecting federal facilities, and in response FPS has recently started to take steps to address some of them. In 2008, we reported that FPS does not use a risk management approach that links threats and vulnerabilities to resource requirements. Without a risk management approach that identifies threats and vulnerabilities and the resources required to achieve FPS’s security goals, there is limited assurance that programs will be prioritized and resources will be allocated to address existing and potential security threats in an efficient and effective manner. FPS recently began implementing a new system referred to as the Risk Assessment Management Program (RAMP). This system is designed to be a central database for capturing and managing facility security information, including the risks posed to federal facilities and the countermeasures that are in place to mitigate risk. FPS expects that RAMP will enhance its approach to assessing risk, managing human capital, and measuring performance. Our July 2009 report on FPS’s contract guard program also identified a number of challenges that the agency faces in managing its contract guard program, including ensuring that the 15,000 guards that are responsible for helping to protect federal facilities have the required training and certification to be deployed at a federal facility. In response to our report, FPS took a number of immediate actions with respect to contract guard management. For example, FPS has increased the number of guard inspections it conducts at federal facilities in some metropolitan areas and revised its guard training. We have not reviewed whether these actions are sufficient to fulfill our recommendations. Another area of continuing concern is that FPS continues to operate without a human capital plan and does not have an accurate estimate of its current and future workforce needs. In our July 2009 report, we recommended that FPS develop a human capital plan to guide its current and future workforce planning efforts. While FPS agreed with this recommendation, it has not yet fully developed or implemented a human capital plan.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of DHS direct the Director of FPS to work in consultation with other representatives of the FSC to develop and implement procedures that, among other things, outline the committees’ organization structure, operations, and accountability. DHS concurred with GAO’s recommendation.

View GAO-10-901 or key components. For more information, contact Mark Goldstein at (202) 512-2834 or goldsteinm@gao.gov.