

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-15-271](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

FPS's primary mission is to protect the almost 9,000 federal facilities that are held or leased by the General Services Administration. FPS also manages the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) delegations of authority (delegations) program, which involves, among other things, reviewing requests by agencies to protect their own facilities instead of FPS and making recommendations to DHS about whether to grant, renew, or rescind such delegations. In response to direction in the conference report accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012, FPS prepared its *Interim Plan* that outlines FPS's process for reviewing existing and newly requested delegations.

GAO was asked to review FPS's management of this program. This report covers (1) the extent to which FPS's delegations program meets select federal standards and (2) whether FPS has followed its *Interim Plan* in reviewing delegations. GAO reviewed FPS's 2012 *Interim Plan* and data on delegations; compared FPS's *Interim Plan* to federal standards; and analyzed the six requests for new or renewed delegations FPS reviewed from June 2012 through March 2014.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of DHS direct FPS (1) to improve the accuracy of its delegation data, (2) update its cost estimation model to align with leading practices, and (3) establish management controls to ensure that its staff conducts the required cost and capability analyses. DHS concurred with the recommendations.

View [GAO-15-271](#). For more information, contact Mark L. Goldstein at (202) 512-2834 or goldsteim@gao.gov

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FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE

More Effective Management Needed in Delegating Security Authority to Agencies

What GAO Found

The Federal Protective Service's (FPS) delegations of authority program does not fully meet applicable federal standards GAO identified for effective program management.

- FPS lacks reliable data, as called for by federal *Standards for Internal Control*, to accurately identify all the delegations FPS is responsible for managing and overseeing to ensure the protection of federal facilities. Specifically, of the 62 delegations of authority that FPS officials said were verified as active, GAO found that 12 had either expired or been rescinded. *Standards for Internal Control* state that federal agencies should have relevant, reliable, and timely information for decision-making and external-reporting purposes. FPS officials stated that poor recordkeeping contributed to the data's unreliability, but FPS has not established procedures to ensure data reliability. Without reliable data on delegations of authority, FPS will face challenges effectively managing this program.
- FPS's model for estimating the costs associated with a delegation—set forth in its 2012 *Interim Plan*—does not fully align with the relevant leading practices outlined in GAO's *Cost Estimating and Assessment Guide*. These leading practices help ensure reliable cost estimates that are comprehensive, well documented, accurate, and credible. GAO found that FPS's cost estimation model partially aligned with practices for producing comprehensive estimates and minimally aligned with those for producing well-documented and accurate estimates. Furthermore, the model does not align with practices for producing credible cost estimates because, among other things, it does not include a sensitivity analysis, which identifies a range of possible costs based on varying assumptions. Without fully aligning the cost model with leading practices, FPS faces limitations developing reliable cost estimates that support its delegations of authority recommendations.

For five of the six agency requests for new or renewed delegations of authority that GAO analyzed, FPS did not conduct the required cost and security-capabilities analyses before making its recommendation to grant, renew, or rescind the delegation. The *Interim Plan* calls for these analyses to form the basis of FPS's recommendations. Specifically, FPS conducted the required analyses for only the delegation involving the Social Security Administration and did not conduct these analyses for the other five delegations involving facilities of the Departments of Commerce, Interior, and State; the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; and the Federal Trade Commission. According to FPS officials, they were not always able to obtain, from the agency requesting a delegation, comparable cost data to complete the cost model. FPS officials also acknowledged that FPS has yet to establish management controls to ensure that required analyses are conducted. Without these analyses, FPS does not have a sound basis to determine whether cost or security considerations support its delegations of authority recommendations.