Why GAO Did This Study

A 2014 government report predicted that the rate of violent domestic extremist incidents would increase. In recent years, some high-profile incidents have occurred on federal lands, such as the armed occupation of a FWS wildlife refuge in 2016. Federal land management agencies manage nearly 700 million acres of federal lands and have law enforcement divisions that protect their employees and secure their facilities.

GAO was asked to review how land management agencies protect their employees and secure their facilities. For the four federal land management agencies, this report examines, among other things, (1) what is known about the number of threats and assaults against their employees and (2) the extent to which agencies met federal facility security assessment requirements. GAO analyzed available government data on threats and assaults; examined agencies’ policies, procedures, and documentation on facility security assessments; compared the agencies’ methodologies against ISC requirements; and interviewed land management agency, ISC, and FBI officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making six recommendations: that BLM, the Forest Service, and the Park Service develop a plan for completing facility security assessments and that BLM, FWS, and the Park Service take action to ensure their facility security assessment methodologies comply with ISC requirements. The agencies generally concurred with the recommendations.