



Highlights of [GAO-12-739](#), a report to the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

FPS provides security and law enforcement services to over 9,000 federal facilities under the custody and control of the General Services Administration (GSA). GAO has reported that FPS faces challenges providing security services, particularly completing FSAs and managing its contract guard program. To address these challenges, FPS spent about \$35 million and 4 years developing RAMP—essentially a risk assessment and contract guard oversight tool. However, RAMP ultimately could not be used because of system problems.

GAO was asked to examine (1) the extent to which FPS is completing risk assessments; (2) the status of FPS's efforts to develop an FSA tool; and (3) FPS's efforts to manage its contract guard workforce. GAO reviewed FPS documents, conducted site visits at 3 of FPS's 11 regions, and interviewed FPS officials and inspectors, guard companies, and 4 risk management experts.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that FPS incorporate *NIPP*'s risk management framework in any future risk assessment tool; coordinate with federal agencies to reduce any unnecessary duplication in FPS's assessments; address limitations with its interim tool to better assess federal facilities; develop and implement a comprehensive and reliable contract guard oversight system; and independently verify that its contract guards are current on all training and certification requirements. DHS concurred with GAO's recommendations.

View [GAO-12-739](#). For more information, contact Mark L. Goldstein at (202) 512-2834 or goldsteinm@gao.gov.

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FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE

Actions Needed to Assess Risk and Better Manage Contract Guards at Federal Facilities

What GAO Found

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Protective Service (FPS) is not assessing risks at federal facilities in a manner consistent with standards such as the *National Infrastructure Protection Plan's (NIPP)* risk management framework, as FPS originally planned. Instead of conducting risk assessments, since September 2011, FPS's inspectors have collected information, such as the location, purpose, agency contacts, and current countermeasures (e.g., perimeter security, access controls, and closed-circuit television systems). This information notwithstanding, FPS has a backlog of federal facilities that have not been assessed for several years. According to FPS's data, more than 5,000 facilities were to be assessed in fiscal years 2010 through 2012. However, GAO was unable to determine the extent of FPS's facility security assessment (FSA) backlog because the data were unreliable. Multiple agencies have expended resources to conduct risk assessments, even though the agencies also already pay FPS for this service. FPS received \$236 million in basic security fees from agencies to conduct FSAs and other security services in fiscal year 2011. Beyond not having a reliable tool for conducting assessments, FPS continues to lack reliable data, which has hampered the agency's ability to manage its FSA program.

FPS has an interim vulnerability assessment tool, referred to as the Modified Infrastructure Survey Tool (MIST), which it plans to use to assess federal facilities until it develops a longer-term solution. According to FPS, once implemented, MIST will allow it to resume assessing federal facilities' vulnerabilities and recommend countermeasures—something FPS has not done consistently for several years. Furthermore, in developing MIST, FPS generally followed GAO's project management best practices, such as conducting user acceptance testing. However, MIST has some limitations. Most notably, MIST does not estimate the consequences of an undesirable event occurring at a facility. Three of the four risk assessment experts GAO spoke with generally agreed that a tool that does not estimate consequences does not allow an agency to fully assess risks. FPS officials stated that they did not include consequence information in MIST because it was not part of the original design and thus requires more time to validate. MIST also was not designed to compare risks across federal facilities. Thus, FPS has limited assurance that critical risks at federal facilities are being prioritized and mitigated.

FPS continues to face challenges in overseeing its approximately 12,500 contract guards. FPS developed the Risk Assessment and Management Program (RAMP) to help it oversee its contract guard workforce by (1) verifying that guards are trained and certified, and (2) conducting guard post inspections. However, FPS faced challenges using RAMP, such as verifying guard training and certification information, for either purpose and has recently determined that it would no longer use RAMP. Without a comprehensive system, it is more difficult for FPS to oversee its contract guard workforce. FPS is verifying guard certification and training information by conducting monthly audits of guard contractor training and certification information. However, FPS does not independently verify the contractor's information. Additionally, according to FPS officials, FPS recently decided to deploy a new interim method to record post inspections to replace RAMP.