

Why GAO Did This Study

U.S. government facilities have been the target of foreign and domestic terrorists. Government facilities are one of 18 critical infrastructure sectors designated under Homeland Security Presidential Directive 7 (HSPD-7). The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is responsible for identifying, prioritizing, and coordinating the protection of critical infrastructure that, if destroyed, could have a debilitating impact on governance, the economy, national morale, or public health and safety. DHS defines critical infrastructure sector responsibilities in the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) and the Federal Protective Service (FPS) is the lead agency for the government facilities sector. As such, FPS is to develop and implement a government facilities sector-specific plan, which was first issued in 2007 and updated in 2010, in coordination with governmental partners. In this report, GAO assesses FPS's efforts as the lead agency for the government facilities sector. To do this, GAO reviewed HSPD-7, the NIPP, the 2010 plan and other related documents to compare FPS's actions and the goals for the sector. GAO also interviewed DHS agency officials and 16 selected sector partners about activities for, and coordination with, the sector.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of DHS direct FPS, in partnership with others, to develop and publish an action plan that identifies sector priorities and resource requirements, and addresses steps needed to implement a risk management approach and develop effective partnerships. DHS concurred with the recommendation.

View [GAO-12-852](#). For more information, contact Mark Goldstein at (202) 512-2834 or goldsteinm@gao.gov.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

DHS Needs to Refocus Its Efforts to Lead the Government Facilities Sector

What GAO Found

The Federal Protective Service (FPS) has not been effective as the lead agency for the government facilities sector, which includes facilities at the federal, state, local, tribal and territorial level. Under the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) and the 2010 sector-specific plan, FPS is responsible for establishing a risk management approach and developing effective partnerships for the sector. However, FPS has not implemented a risk management approach. According to FPS, it has not identified or obtained data on facilities at the federal, state, local, tribal and territorial level, which are fundamental for employing a risk management approach. In addition, despite providing information on the principles of threat, vulnerability, and consequence, FPS has not coordinated or assessed risk across government facilities, another key element of risk management. FPS also lacks effective metrics and performance data to track progress toward implementing a risk management approach and for the overall resilience or protection of government facilities. Consequently, FPS does not have a risk management approach for prioritizing and safeguarding critical government facilities. Furthermore, FPS has not built effective partnerships across different levels of government. While FPS chairs the Government Coordinating Council (the Council)—a mechanism intended to help share activities and policy across different levels of government—the Council's membership lacks a full spectrum of sector partners, particularly non-federal. All five state and local government and non-governmental members of the Council that GAO contacted were unaware of, or did not consider themselves to be part of, the Council. FPS also has not leveraged the State, Local, Tribal and Territorial Government Coordinating Council, an existing mechanism to coordinate with non-federal government organizations, although FPS officials reported recent efforts aimed at enhancing this partnership.

As the lead agency for the sector, FPS faces challenges associated with funding and its lack of an action plan. According to FPS officials, FPS has no dedicated line of funding for its activities as the lead agency and resource constraints hinder FPS's capacity to lead this large and diverse sector, which is comprised of more than 900,000 federal assets, as well as assets from 56 states and territories; over 3,000 counties; 17,000 local governments; and 564 federally recognized tribal nations. FPS's use of fee-based revenue to perform homeland security activities not directly related to federal facility protection is inconsistent with the Homeland Security Act of 2002. FPS does not have a full understanding of the resource requirements for serving as the lead agency, because it has not completed a cost estimate or an action plan to guide implementation of the 2010 plan. According to DHS officials, HSPD-7 will be updated, which may result in structural changes to the sector that could affect the lead agency's responsibilities and available resources. An action plan could serve as a valuable tool for FPS and DHS to identify priorities that can be feasibly achieved and the resources required, in tandem with any potential structural changes.