

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-13-379](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Corrosion costs DOD billions of dollars annually by taking critical systems out of action and creating safety hazards. Recognizing the need for coordinated corrosion prevention and control efforts and planning, House Report 112-78 directed the military departments to develop corrosion prevention strategies that support the *DOD Corrosion Prevention and Mitigation Strategic Plan*. The House Report directed GAO to evaluate the long-term strategies developed by the Corrosion Executive of each military department and to report the findings to both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the House Armed Services Committee. GAO assessed the extent to which the military departments (1) coordinated with the Corrosion Office to ensure consistency of their strategic plans with DOD's overarching goals and objectives and conformity with DOD Instruction 5000.67; and (2) included characteristics of a comprehensive strategic plan in their respective plans. GAO reviewed relevant legislation, the corrosion prevention strategic plans of DOD and the military departments, and interviewed DOD corrosion officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making two recommendations to improve future updates of the military departments' strategic plans for corrosion prevention and control. DOD did not concur with the recommendations. DOD stated that the military departments' plans linked to overarching goals and objectives and disagreed with the criteria GAO used to assess the plans. GAO continues to believe that these recommendations are valid as discussed in the report.

View [GAO-13-379](#). For more information, contact Zina Merritt at (202) 512-5257 or merrittz@gao.gov.

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DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

Additional Information Needed to Improve Military Departments' Strategies for Corrosion Prevention and Control

What GAO Found

The military departments' Corrosion Control and Prevention Executives (Corrosion Executives) coordinated with the Department of Defense's (DOD) Corrosion Policy and Oversight Office (Corrosion Office) on reviews of their respective strategic plans. GAO's prior work has found that linking the goals of component organizations to departmental strategic goals is a practice that, if consistently applied, should improve the usefulness of plans to decision makers. However, the military departments varied in the extent that their strategic plans show clear linkage to the 10 goals and objectives included in the *DOD Corrosion Prevention and Mitigation Strategic Plan*. The Army's strategic plan showed clear linkage to all 10 of the goals and objectives. The Air Force's plan clearly linked to half of the goals and objectives and the Navy's plan clearly linked to 3 of the goals and objectives. GAO's review of the military departments' strategic plans found no inconsistencies with DOD Instruction 5000.67, which establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides guidance for managing programs to prevent or mitigate corrosion. Without consistency or a clear linkage between the strategic plans of the military departments and the overarching goals and objectives in DOD's strategic plan, the military departments' strategies may not ensure that DOD achieves its overarching goals and objectives.

The military departments' strategic plans included or partially included the 6 key characteristics that aid in the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan, but the military departments' plans do not fully include some associated elements for comprehensive strategic plans—such as performance measures. In prior work, GAO identified 6 characteristics and 31 associated elements that comprehensive strategic plans should include. The Army plan fully included 2 of the 6 characteristics related to problem definition and risk assessment—problems and threats the strategy is directed towards—and also integration of the strategy (i.e., how a strategy relates to other strategies). The Navy plan fully included 1 of the 6 characteristics related to the problem definition and risk assessment. The Air Force partially included all 6 of the characteristics. For example, the Air Force plan described some, but not all, aspects of the characteristic on organizational roles, responsibilities, and coordination—who will be implementing the strategy, what their roles will be compared to others, and mechanisms for them to coordinate their efforts. However, none of the military departments' plans included the elements on outcome-related performance measures used to gauge results or the limitations on performance measures. Of the 31 associated elements, the Army fully included 24 elements in its strategic plan; the Air Force, 8; and the Navy, 9. By relying on strategic plans that do not fully include the elements—such as performance measures—the military departments may not identify and communicate important information to corrosion stakeholders and decision makers to monitor and assess the departments' progress in preventing and mitigating corrosion.