

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-285](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Within DHS, TSA is the federal agency with primary responsibility for preventing and defending against terrorist and other threats to domestic transportation systems. From fiscal years 2002 through August 2015, TSA obligated \$13.4 billion to acquire security-related technologies such as through the Electronic Baggage Screening Program and the Passenger Screening Program. However, GAO and the DHS Office of Inspector General have reported that TSA did not fully follow DHS policies in deploying Advanced Imaging Technology systems to screen passengers and in estimating costs to screen checked baggage, and faced challenges in managing inventory. Enacted in December 2014, TSARA specifies measures that TSA must take to improve transparency and accountability in acquiring security-related technologies.

TSARA contains a provision that GAO report to Congress on TSA's progress in implementing TSARA. This report examines TSA's actions taken toward addressing TSARA. GAO is not fully evaluating the extent to which TSA is implementing the act at this time because TSA has not undertaken an acquisition of security-related technology subject to the requirements of the act since its enactment. Pursuant to TSARA, GAO will report again on TSA's implementation of the act in approximately 3 years. TSA provided technical comments on a draft of this report which GAO incorporated as appropriate. DHS did not provide formal comments.

View [GAO-16-285](#). For more information, contact Jennifer Grover at (202) 512-7141 or groverj@gao.gov.

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TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

TSA Has Taken Actions to Address Transportation Security Acquisition Reform Act Requirements

What GAO Found

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has policies and procedures that generally address requirements of the December 2014 Transportation Security Acquisition Reform Act (TSARA). Specifically, TSA policy and procedures address TSARA requirements for justifying acquisitions, establishing baselines, managing inventory, and submitting plans, among other requirements.

Justifying Acquisitions

TSA had taken action toward addressing most TSARA requirements related to justifying acquisitions prior to TSARA's enactment because they were required by existing DHS and TSA acquisition policies. Consistent with TSARA, TSA amended its policies to notify Congress within 30 days of awarding contracts exceeding \$30 million for the acquisition of security-related technology. According to agency officials, TSA has not made any such new acquisitions since the enactment of TSARA.

Acquisition Baselines

TSA policies require that it prepare an acquisition program baseline, risk management plan, and staffing requirements before acquiring security-related technology. Consistent with TSARA, TSA established policies to notify Congress within 30 days of making a finding of performance failures, schedule delays, or cost overruns constituting a breach against acquisition program baselines. TSA reported that it had not experienced breaches in any existing acquisitions (i.e., those in place prior to December 2014) since the enactment of TSARA.

Managing Inventory

TSA's policies and procedures address TSARA requirements for using existing units before procuring more equipment; tracking the location, use, and quantity of security-related equipment in inventory; and using just-in-time delivery to avoid warehousing equipment.

Submitting Plans

TSA submitted its Technology Investment Plan and Small Business Report to Congress as required by TSARA. The Technology Investment Plan addresses required elements such as identifying security gaps and security-related technology needs and processes. The Small Business Report includes an action plan for integrating the concerns of small businesses into acquisition processes and increasing outreach to targeted small businesses.

DHS and TSA officials said that TSA has not yet identified any efficiencies, cost savings, or delays from its implementation of TSARA. They added that because many of the policies and procedures that meet the provisions of the act were in place prior to the enactment of TSARA, it was unlikely for TSARA to result in major efficiencies, cost savings, or delays. According to TSA officials, TSA has developed mechanisms to monitor various aspects of TSARA, such as tracking progress in implementing planned technology programs.