

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-513](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Corrosion negatively affects DOD equipment and infrastructure and can lead to reduced asset availability, deterioration in performance, and increasing weapon system and infrastructure costs. According to a study contracted by DOD, the cost impact of corrosion to DOD in fiscal year 2016 was \$20.6 billion.

Senate Armed Services Committee Report 115-262 accompanying a bill for the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 included a provision for GAO to review aspects of the DOD Corrosion Office. This report examines (1) how the restructuring within the Office of the Secretary of Defense has affected DOD's Corrosion Office, including its performance of its statutory roles and responsibilities; and (2) what actions, if any, DOD has taken or has planned to implement recommendations GAO made from calendar years 2003 through 2018 related to corrosion management.

GAO analyzed DOD documents, such as guidance and required reports provided to Congress, and interviewed DOD officials to address these objectives. GAO also assessed DOD's actions against its prior recommendations to determine the extent to which DOD had addressed the recommendations or has actions underway to address those recommendations.

View [GAO-19-513](#). For more information, contact Diana Maurer (202) 512-9627 or maurerd@gao.gov.

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DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

Observations on Changes to the Reporting Structure for DOD's Corrosion Office and Its Implementation of GAO Recommendations

What GAO Found

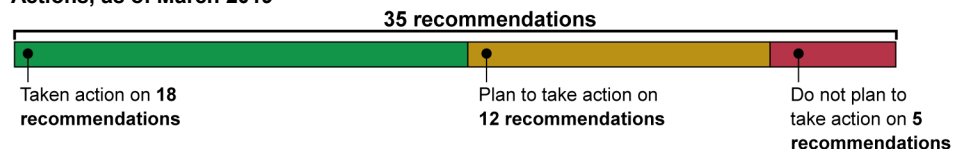
The Department of Defense (DOD) relocated the Office of Corrosion Policy and Oversight (Corrosion Office) within the restructured acquisition and sustainment organization in fiscal year 2018. Prior to the restructure, the Corrosion Office reported directly to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. As part of the restructure, DOD relocated the Corrosion Office within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, where it reports to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Materiel Readiness. It continues to perform its statutory roles and responsibilities under the new oversight organization. For instance, it is continuing to

- develop and recommend corrosion policy guidance;
- develop and implement a long-term strategy to reduce corrosion;
- review corrosion programs and funding levels proposed by the military departments, and submit related recommendations to the Secretary of Defense; and
- monitor and ensure that corrosion prevention and mitigation are incorporated into acquisition and maintenance processes.

DOD is also making or planning changes to the operation of the Corrosion Office, specifically planning to increase corrosion advocacy throughout DOD, oversight of the Corrosion Office, corrosion accountability of the military departments, and corrosion transparency and its alignment with materiel readiness.

DOD's Corrosion Office has taken or planned actions to implement most recommendations GAO made in calendar years 2003 through 2018 related to corrosion management. Specifically, GAO made 35 recommendations to the Corrosion Office in 11 corrosion-related products on topics such as strategic planning, performance management, and mandatory oversight reports. In comments on these products, DOD concurred with 16 of those recommendations, partially concurred with eight, and non-concurred with 11. As of March 2019, DOD had taken action or planned to take action on most of GAO's prior recommendations (see figure).

Prior GAO Report Recommendations to Corrosion Office and Department of Defense (DOD) Actions, as of March 2019



Source: GAO. | GAO-19-513

Specifically, DOD's Corrosion Office had taken action on 18 recommendations. Corrosion Office officials also described to GAO their plans to take action to implement 12 additional recommendations. These planned actions include, among other actions, updating existing guidance and developing new policy or processes. DOD stated that the Corrosion Office does not plan to take action on the remaining five recommendations. GAO continues to believe that its recommendations are valid.