

Why GAO Did This Study

Despite the efforts of the SUPSHIPs and others to assure construction quality and contract execution, Navy shipbuilding results have regularly fallen short of program expectations. These results have raised questions about the Navy's ability to effectively oversee shipbuilder performance throughout the construction of new ships.

Congress included a provision in a Senate report for GAO to review the SUPSHIPs' oversight efforts. GAO examined, among other objectives, the SUPSHIPs' role in assuring shipbuilding quality and any challenges that limit their ability to help improve shipbuilding program results.

To do this work, GAO reviewed federal regulations as well as policy, guidance, and reporting related to the SUPSHIPs' oversight activities and results. GAO also interviewed DOD and Navy officials about shipbuilding oversight and the SUPSHIPs' role in the execution of shipbuilding programs.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making five recommendations to the Navy, including that it take steps to ensure regular use of its quality program standard in shipbuilding contracts; provide the SUPSHIPs with direct representation in evaluation and decision-making processes prior to contract awards; and require the SUPSHIPs to report on the quality and readiness of each ship prior to the Chief of Naval Operations' approval decisions for ship acceptance. The Navy agreed with all five recommendations.

View [GAO-22-104655](#). For more information, contact Shelby S. Oakley at (202) 512-4841 or oakleys@gao.gov.

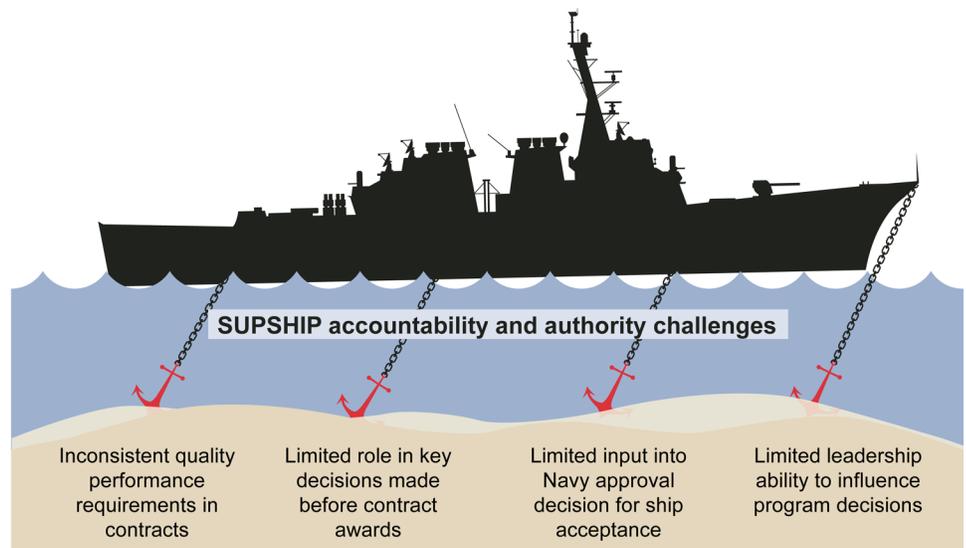
NAVY SHIPBUILDING

Increasing Supervisors of Shipbuilding Responsibility Could Help Improve Program Outcomes

What GAO Found

Over the past decade, GAO found that the U.S. Navy has faced significant challenges in meeting its shipbuilding goals, experiencing years of construction delays, billions of dollars in cost growth, and frequent quality and performance shortfalls. The Supervisors of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair (SUPSHIP) serve as the Navy's on-site technical, contractual, and business authority for the construction of Navy vessels at major private shipyards. The SUPSHIPs are responsible for evaluating the construction and business practices of Navy shipbuilders, but face challenges in improving shipbuilding results (see figure).

Factors Limiting the Ability of the Navy's Supervisors of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair (SUPSHIP) to Help Improve Shipbuilding Program Results



Source: GAO analysis of Navy information. | [GAO-22-104655](#)

These challenges impede the SUPSHIPs' effectiveness and accountability in a number of ways:

- Variation in quality requirements across Navy shipbuilding contracts hinders the SUPSHIPs' ability to provide consistent oversight of shipbuilding quality.
- Limited input from the SUPSHIPs prior to contract awards does not leverage their expertise to support well-informed decision-making.
- Omission of SUPSHIP reporting from the Navy's process for approving acceptance of ships from the shipbuilders reduces accountability and misses opportunities to ensure that independent SUPSHIP input on ship quality and readiness informs this key decision.
- The SUPSHIPs' position within the Naval Sea Systems Command and their accountability to different technical and acquisition organizations dilutes their ability to be a distinct, authoritative voice in decision-making for Navy shipbuilding programs. Congress passed legislation in December 2021 to establish a Deputy Commander dedicated to the SUPSHIPs, which should help improve their authority and accountability.