

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-25-107063](#), a report to congressional committees.

## Why GAO Did This Study

Criminal investigators at MCIOs investigate serious and complex crimes involving military service members and civilian personnel. An independent committee, established by the Army in response to the disappearance and murder of a Fort Hood, Texas, soldier, identified deficiencies in criminal investigators' experience and training to handle complex cases and accomplish investigative missions.

Senate Report 118-58, accompanying a bill for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, includes a provision for GAO to review criminal investigators' training. This report assesses the extent to which (1) MCIOs provide and track the completion of investigative training, (2) MCIOs evaluate investigative training effectiveness, and (3) DOD oversees criminal investigative training. GAO reviewed relevant policies, analyzed data and documents on MCIO training, and interviewed cognizant MCIO, DOD, and DHS officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making a total of nine recommendations, seven to DOD and two to DHS. They include developing and issuing guidance for MCIOs to track criminal investigative training completion; developing plans for program-wide training evaluations; and finalizing guidance designating DOD responsibilities for investigative training. DOD and DHS concurred with GAO's recommendations.

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## CRIMINAL INVESTIGATORS

### Program-Wide Evaluations and Clear Oversight Responsibilities Could Enhance Training Programs

## What GAO Found

Criminal investigators at military criminal investigative organizations (MCIO) must complete federal and service-specific criminal investigative training (see figure). MCIOs include the Department of the Army Criminal Investigation Division, Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and Air Force Office of Special Investigations—within the Department of Defense (DOD)—as well as the Coast Guard Investigative Service within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Training for Military Criminal Investigative Organizations' Criminal Investigators



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security information. | GAO-25-107063

MCIOs track the completion of some service-specific and advanced criminal investigative training to determine investigators' progress through training. However, MCIOs do not have guidance with requirements or procedures to track completion of criminal investigative training. As a result, MCIOs may not have full information on investigators' completed training. Tracking training completion ensures compliance with requirements and allows organizations to track progress consistent with identified goals and objectives. Without such information, MCIOs may not have complete information on the qualifications met or retained by their criminal investigators.

MCIOs evaluate their service-specific basic training courses through periodic course reviews and feedback collected from participants and their supervisors. However, MCIOs do not conduct program-wide evaluations to determine the effectiveness of their criminal investigative training. Plans for regular program-wide evaluation with time frames for review, measures of effectiveness, and documented results would provide MCIOs with the ability to demonstrate how their criminal investigative training programs develop criminal investigators and contribute to MCIOs' missions.

DOD has multiple offices with responsibilities for law enforcement and criminal investigative programs. However, DOD does not regularly monitor and evaluate criminal investigative training programs because responsibility for oversight remains unclear. Without final guidance designating DOD offices' responsibilities for criminal investigative training programs, DOD oversight of the MCIOs' investigative training programs may be incomplete, unclear, or delayed. This could limit DOD's ability to support MCIOs as they develop their programs to ensure criminal investigators are fully qualified to carry out their investigative missions.