

A report to congressional committees

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What GAO Found

Joint military bases are installations with more than one military service. For example, at Joint Base San Antonio, the Air Force is the lead service, and the Army is the supported service. Eleven of the 12 joint bases received less funding in fiscal years 2018 through 2022 than the Department of Defense's (DOD) facility sustainment funding goal. However, DOD was unable to obtain data on how this funding was allocated to specific components on joint bases and therefore was unable to determine if the impact of funding below DOD's goal led to disparities in facility conditions between lead and supported military services on bases. Joint base senior leaders whom GAO surveyed stated that facility management offices do not receive sufficient funding to keep facilities in good working order. During site visits to five joint bases, GAO observed examples of facility degradation due to deferred maintenance (see fig.).

Broken Aircraft Hangar Roof Tiles on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam



Source: U.S. Air Force/Staff Sergeant Jacob Thompson. | GAO-26-106832

DOD has issued numerous guidance documents for joint base facility management, but senior joint base officials expressed confusion about how responsibilities for funding joint base facilities are allocated between the military services. Joint bases have multiple, ongoing cost-sharing disputes between the military services involving projects totaling over a billion dollars, and these disputes have not been resolved through DOD's formal oversight structure. In July 2025, DOD finalized a department instruction that adds more detail regarding facility funding responsibilities on joint bases and could improve officials' understanding of this issue. GAO found that all joint bases with available workforce data have facility management workforce shortages and that workforce requirements have not been reassessed to reflect increasing workloads as military units on joint bases have grown. Improving the availability of data on facility funding and reassessing workforce requirements could help DOD to address risks to unit missions from facility degradation on joint bases.

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD consolidated 26 installations into 12 joint bases over a decade ago to increase readiness, reduce duplication of efforts, and generate cost savings and efficiencies. However, DOD has faced challenges in sustaining its facilities on its 12 joint bases. On joint bases, the lead and supported military services share responsibility for managing facilities and supporting missions.

The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 includes a provision for GAO to assess sustainment of facilities on joint bases. This report addresses, among other things, the extent to which DOD (1) met its funding goal for joint base facility sustainment in fiscal years 2018 through 2022, (2) assessed funding levels for supported component facilities on joint bases, (3) provided guidance and oversight to facility management offices for joint base facility maintenance, and (4) determined whether joint base facility management offices have sufficient workforces to meet their responsibilities.

GAO conducted site visits to five joint bases, surveyed senior leaders at all 12 joint bases (with a 100 percent response rate), analyzed facility investment and workforce data, and reviewed applicable guidance.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making five recommendations specific to joint bases, including that DOD assess the risks to missions by not meeting its funding goal for facility sustainment, improve the quality of data on facility funding, and reevaluate the workforce levels for facility management offices. DOD generally concurred with GAO's recommendations and outlined actions it plans to take toward their implementation.