



Highlights of [GAO-10-123](#), a report to congressional requesters

## Why GAO Did This Study

DOD plays a support role in managing Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives (CBRNE) incidents, including providing capabilities to save lives, alleviate hardship or suffering, and minimize property damage. This report addresses the extent to which (1) DOD's CBRNE consequence management plans and capabilities are integrated with other federal plans; (2) DOD has planned for and structured its force to provide CBRNE consequence management assistance; (3) DOD's CBRNE Consequence Management Response Forces (CCMRF) are prepared for their mission; and (4) DOD has CCMRF funding plans that are linked to requirements for specialized CBRNE capabilities. GAO reviewed DOD's plans for CBRNE consequence management and documents from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and FEMA. GAO also met with officials from the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, U.S. Northern Command, the military services, the National Guard Bureau, and some CCMRF units.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making recommendations to DOD to improve the link between DOD and other federal plans, match capabilities with requirements, increase readiness, and improve oversight of CCMRF funding and resourcing. DOD agreed or partially agreed with the recommendations and cited ongoing or planned actions to implement them.

[View GAO-10-123 or key components.](#)  
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## HOMELAND DEFENSE

### Planning, Resourcing, and Training Issues Challenge DOD's Response to Domestic Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosive Incidents

#### What GAO Found

DOD has its own CBRNE consequence management plans but has not integrated them with other federal plans because those federal entities have not completed all elements of the Integrated Planning System mandated by Presidential directive in December 2007. The system is to develop and link planning documents at the federal, state, and local levels. While the system's framework is established, the CBRNE concept and strategic plans that provide further guidance are incomplete. DOD has had operational plans in place and revises these plans regularly. However, until the Integrated Planning System and its associated plans are complete, DOD's plans and those of other federal and state entities will not be integrated, and it will remain unclear whether DOD's CCMRF will address potential gaps in capabilities. We previously recommended and DHS agreed that FEMA should develop a program management plan and schedule to complete the planning system.

With a goal to respond to multiple, near-simultaneous, catastrophic CBRNE incidents, DOD has plans to provide needed capabilities, but its response times may not meet incident requirements, it may lack sufficient capacity in some capabilities, and it faces challenges to its strategy for sourcing all three CCMRFs with available units. Without assigned units and plans that integrate the active and reserve portions of CCMRF, and agreements between DOD and the states on availability of National Guard units and the duty status in which they would respond to an incident requiring federal forces, DOD's ability to train and deploy forces in a timely manner is at risk.

DOD has taken a number of actions in the past year to improve the readiness of units assigned to the first CCMRF, increasing both individual and collective training focused on the mission and identifying the mission as high priority. However, the CCMRF has not conducted realistic full force field training to confirm units' readiness to assume the mission or to deploy rapidly. Competing demands of overseas missions may distract from a unit's focus on the domestic mission, and some CCMRF units rotate more frequently than stated goals. These training and force rotation problems have prevented DOD from providing the kind of stability to the force that would allow units to build cohesiveness.

DOD is making progress in identifying and providing funding and equipment to meet CCMRF mission requirements; however, its efforts to identify all requirements have not been completed, and funding responsibilities are spread across the department and are not subject to central oversight. When the CCMRF mission priority increased in the spring of 2008, more funding was provided. However, units did not have dedicated funding and thus purchased equipment with funding also used for other missions. DOD lacks visibility over total funding requirements. Without an overarching approach to requirements and funding and a centralized focal point to ensure that all requirements have been identified and funded, DOD's ability to ensure that its forces are prepared to carry out this high-priority mission remains challenged.