



Highlights of [GAO-09-927T](#), testimony before the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

## 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 needed to save lives, alleviate hardship or suffering, and minimize property damage. This testimony addresses GAO's preliminary observations on DOD's role in CBRNE consequence management efforts and addresses the extent to which (1) DOD's plans and capabilities are integrated with other federal government 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 to perform their mission; and (4) DOD has funding plans for the CCMRF 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 the Federal Emergency Management Agency. GAO also met with officials from the Undersecretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Army Forces Command, U.S. Army North, the National Guard Bureau, and some CCMRF units.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO has ongoing work on this issue and will report its complete evaluation along with any recommendations at a later date.

View [GAO-09-927T](#) or [key components](#). For more information, contact Davi D'Agostino at (202) 512-5431 or [dagostinod@gao.gov](mailto:dagostinod@gao.gov).

## HOMELAND DEFENSE

### Preliminary Observations on Defense Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives Consequence Management Plans and Preparedness

#### What GAO Found

DOD has its own CBRNE consequence management plans but has not integrated them with other federal government plans because all elements of the Integrated Planning System mandated by Presidential directive in December 2007 have not been completed. 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.

With a goal to respond to multiple, near-simultaneous, catastrophic CBRNE incidents, DOD has plans to provide the needed capabilities, but its planned 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 the CCMRF, and agreements between DOD and the states on the 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 to assist civil authorities to respond to multiple CBRNE incidents is at risk.

DOD has taken a number of actions in the past year to improve the readiness of units assigned to the 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 total program requirements have not been completed, and funding responsibilities have been assigned 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 existing funding which is also used for other missions. DOD lacks visibility over the mission's total funding requirements. Without an overarching approach to developing requirements and providing 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.