



Highlights of [GAO-09-1047T](#), a testimony to Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Why GAO Did This Study

To accomplish its mission of protecting federal facilities, the Federal Protective Services (FPS), within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), currently has a budget of about \$1 billion, about 1,200 full-time employees, and about 15,000 contract security guards.

This testimony is based on completed and ongoing work for this Subcommittee and discusses: (1) challenges FPS faces in protecting federal facilities and (2) how FPS's actions address these challenges. To perform this work, GAO visited FPS's 11 regions, analyzed FPS data, and interviewed FPS officials, guards, and contractors. GAO also conducted covert testing at 10 judgmentally selected level IV facilities in four cities. Because of the sensitivity of some of the information, GAO cannot identify the specific locations of incidents discussed. A level IV facility has over 450 employees and a high volume of public contact.

What GAO Recommends

GAO has ongoing work on FPS and plans to report its complete evaluation along with any recommendations at a later date.

View [GAO-09-1047T](#) or [key components](#). For more information, contact Mark Goldstein at (202) 512-2834 or goldsteinm@gao.gov.

HOMELAND SECURITY

Federal Protective Service Has Taken Some Initial Steps to Address Its Challenges, but Vulnerabilities Still Exist

What GAO Found

FPS faces challenges that hamper its ability to protect government employees and members of the public who work in and visit federal facilities. First, as we reported in our June 2008 report, FPS does not have a risk management framework that links threats and vulnerabilities to resource requirements. Without such a framework, FPS has little assurance that its programs will be prioritized and resources will be allocated to address changing conditions. Second, as discussed in our July 2009 report, FPS lacks a strategic human capital plan to guide its current and future workforce planning efforts. FPS does not collect data on its workforce's knowledge, skills, and abilities and therefore cannot determine its optimal staffing levels or identify gaps in its workforce and determine how to fill these gaps. Third, as we testified at a July 2009 congressional hearing, FPS's ability to protect federal facilities is hampered by weaknesses in its contract security guard program. GAO found that many FPS guards do not have the training and certifications required to stand post at federal facilities in some regions. For example, in one region, FPS has not provided the required 8 hours of X-ray or magnetometer training to its 1,500 guards since 2004. GAO also found that FPS does not have a fully reliable system for monitoring and verifying whether guards have the training and certifications required to stand post at federal facilities. In addition, FPS has limited assurance that guards perform assigned responsibilities (post orders). Because guards were not properly trained and did not comply with post orders, GAO investigators with the components for an improvised explosive device concealed on their persons, passed undetected through access points controlled by FPS guards at 10 of 10 level IV facilities in four major cities where GAO conducted covert tests.

FPS has taken some actions to better protect federal facilities, but it is difficult to determine the extent to which these actions address these challenges because many of the actions are recent and have not been fully implemented. Furthermore, FPS has not fully implemented several recommendations that GAO has made over the last couple of years to address FPS's operational and funding challenges, despite the Department of Homeland Security's concurrence with the recommendations. In addition, most of FPS's actions focus on improving oversight of the contract guard program and do not address the need to develop a risk management framework or a human capital plan. To enhance oversight of its contract guard program FPS is requiring its regions to conduct more guard inspections at level IV facilities and provide more x-ray and magnetometer training to inspectors and guards. However, several factors make these actions difficult to implement and sustain. For example, FPS does not have a reliable system to track whether its 11 regions are completing these new requirements. Thus, FPS cannot say with certainty that the requirements are being implemented. FPS is also developing a new information system to help it better protect federal facilities. However, FPS plans to transfer data from several of its legacy systems, which GAO found were not fully reliable or accurate, into the new system.