



Highlights of [GAO-10-614T](#) a testimony before the Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

To accomplish its mission of protecting about 9,000 federal facilities, the Federal Protective Service (FPS) currently has a budget of about \$1 billion, about 1,225 full-time employees, and about 15,000 contract security guards. FPS obligated \$659 million for guard services in fiscal year 2009.

This testimony is based on our report issued on April 13, 2010, and discusses challenges FPS continues to face in (1) managing its guard contractors and (2) overseeing guards deployed at federal facilities, and (3) the actions FPS has taken to address these challenges. To address these objectives, GAO conducted site visits at 6 of FPS's 11 regions; interviewed FPS officials, guards, and contractors, and analyzed FPS's contract files. GAO also reviewed new contract guard program guidance issued since our July 2009 report and observed guard inspections and penetration testing done by FPS.

What GAO Recommends

In GAO's report related to this testimony, GAO recommended, among other things, that FPS identify other approaches that would be cost-beneficial to protecting federal facilities. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) concurred with seven of GAO's eight recommendations. DHS did not fully concur with GAO's recommendation to issue a standardized record-keeping format to ensure that contract files have required documentation.

View [GAO-10-614T](#) or key components. For more information, contact Mark Goldstein at (202) 512-2834 or goldsteinm@gao.gov.

HOMELAND SECURITY

Federal Protective Service's Use of Contract Guards Requires Reassessment and More Oversight

What GAO Found

FPS faces a number of challenges in managing its guard contractors that hamper its ability to protect federal facilities. FPS requires contractors to provide guards who have met training and certification requirements. FPS's guard contract also states that a contractor who does not comply with the contract is subject to enforcement action. GAO reviewed the official contract files for the seven contractors who, as GAO testified in July 2009, had guards performing on contracts with expired certification and training requirements to determine what action, if any, FPS had taken against these contractors for contract noncompliance. These contractors had been awarded several multiyear contracts totaling \$406 million to provide guards at federal facilities in 13 states and Washington, D.C. FPS did not take any enforcement actions against these seven contractors for noncompliance. In fact, FPS exercised the option to extend their contracts. FPS also did not comply with its requirement that a performance evaluation of each contractor be completed annually and that these evaluations and other performance-related data be included in the contract file. FPS plans to provide additional training and hold staff responsible for completing these evaluations more accountable.

FPS also faces challenges in ensuring that many of the 15,000 guards have the required training and certification to be deployed at a federal facility. In July 2009, GAO reported that since 2004, FPS had not provided X-ray and magnetometer training to about 1,500 guards in 1 region. As of January 2010, these guards had not received this training and continued to work at federal facilities in this region. X-ray and magnetometer training is important because guards control access points at federal facilities. FPS currently does not have a fully reliable system for monitoring and verifying whether its 15,000 guards have the certifications and training to stand post at federal facilities. FPS developed a new Risk Assessment and Program Management system to help monitor and track guard certifications and training. However, FPS is experiencing difficulties with this system and has suspended its use. In addition, once guards are deployed to a federal facility, they are not always complying with assigned responsibilities (post orders). Since July 2009, FPS has conducted 53 penetration tests in the 6 regions we visited, and in over half of these tests some guards did not identify prohibited items, such as guns and knives.

In response to GAO's July 2009 testimony, FPS has taken a number of actions that, once fully implemented, could help address challenges it faces in managing its contract guard program. For example, FPS has increased the number of guard inspections at federal facilities in some metropolitan areas. FPS also revised its X-ray and magnetometer training; however, all guards will not be fully trained until the end of 2010, although they are deployed at federal facilities. Despite FPS's recent actions, it continues to face challenges in ensuring that its \$659 million guard program is effective in protecting federal facilities. Thus, among other things, FPS needs to reassess how it protects federal facilities and rigorously enforce the terms of the contracts.