

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106589](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Safety from sexual harassment and other harmful behaviors such as sexual assault helps ensure the effectiveness, retention, and morale of the federal workforce, according to federal government research. DOD and other federal agencies have taken steps to address such behaviors, but data show that sexual harassment persists and is underreported.

The James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 includes a provision for GAO to review sexual harassment prevention training at DOD and other federal agencies. This report examines (1) the extent to which selected DOD components and federal agencies have incorporated management practices to enhance the effectiveness of their required sexual harassment prevention training for federal civilian employees, and (2) the extent to which DOD conducted oversight of such training. GAO selected seven DOD components and six federal agencies and assessed their training, reviewed guidance, and interviewed relevant officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making 14 recommendations, including that selected DOD components and federal agencies develop and implement training evaluation plans and DOD develop and implement a plan to conduct oversight of training. DOD and other federal agencies generally concurred with the recommendations and noted actions that they planned to take.

View [GAO-24-106589](#). For more information, contact Brenda S. Farrell at (202) 512-3604 or farrellb@gao.gov.

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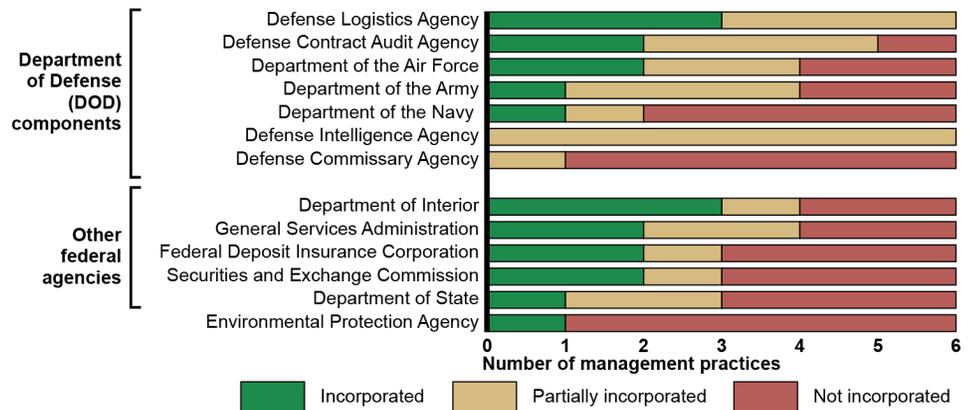
SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Actions Needed to Improve Prevention Training for Federal Civilian Employees

What GAO Found

Selected Department of Defense (DOD) components and other federal agencies vary in the extent to which they have incorporated management practices to enhance the effectiveness of the sexual harassment prevention training they require their federal civilian employees to complete. All seven DOD components and six other federal agencies in this review require their employees to complete some sexual harassment prevention training. However, none of them have fully incorporated GAO and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission management practices to enhance the effectiveness of their training content and the implementation of such training (see figure). They also do not know if their training needs improvements because they have not developed and implemented plans to evaluate its effectiveness. Without training evaluation plans to identify needed improvements, they may be missing opportunities to foster a climate free from harassment.

Number of Management Practices Selected DOD Components and Federal Agencies Incorporated to Enhance Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Implementation as of October 2023



Source: GAO analysis of selected agencies' training materials. | GAO-24-106589

DOD conducts limited oversight of required sexual harassment prevention training for federal civilian employees. For example, DOD's Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion requested that components self-assess their compliance with anti-harassment training programs. However, it does not routinely review civilian sexual harassment prevention training, as required by DOD policy, or have plans to do so. Developing and implementing a plan to oversee sexual harassment prevention training could help DOD to better ensure that it is consistent with DOD's requirements.