

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-107137](#), a testimony before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

Managing federal real property has been on GAO's High-Risk List for 20 years, due in part to threats to federal facilities. Several agencies play an important role in ensuring that federal facilities have countermeasures in place. The ISC—chaired by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)—is responsible for overseeing federal agency compliance with its policies and standards and the implementation of FPS-recommended countermeasures. Agencies are responsible for deciding whether to implement these countermeasures.

This statement discusses: (1) how the ISC assesses federal agency compliance with its policies and standards, (2) the implementation status of FPS-recommended countermeasures, and (3) actions the ISC is taking to assess the implementation of FPS-recommended countermeasures.

This statement is based primarily on GAO's [September 2022](#) and [May 2023](#) reports. In addition, this statement provides an update on actions the ISC has taken in response to GAO's recommendations.

What GAO Recommends

GAO made two recommendations in its May 2023 report, that DHS: (1) assess countermeasure implementation and (2) identify the acceptance of risk at facilities where recommended countermeasures are not implemented. DHS concurred with the recommendations. As of October 2023, DHS has not yet fully addressed these recommendations.

View [GAO-24-107137](#). For more information, contact David Marroni at (202) 512-2834 or MarroniD@gao.gov.

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FEDERAL FACILITIES

Continued Oversight of Security Recommendations Needed

What GAO Found

The Interagency Security Committee (ISC) establishes security policies and standards for non-military federal facilities. To assess compliance with these security policies and standards, the ISC reviews federal agencies' responses to an annual questionnaire. According to ISC officials, in fiscal year 2023, the ISC started to verify these self-reported responses to the questionnaire.

The Federal Protective Service (FPS) conducts security assessments and recommends countermeasures—such as security cameras—to help agencies address vulnerabilities at federal facilities. GAO found that federal agencies did not implement most of the 32,000 countermeasures FPS recommended from fiscal years 2017 through 2023. Specifically, FPS data indicate that agencies did not respond to more than half of FPS's security recommendations and implemented fewer than 1,800 recommendations during this period.

Security Camera, an Example of a Facility Countermeasure



Source: titikul_b/stock.adobe.com. | GAO-24-107137

As of October 2023, the ISC has taken some actions to assess whether agencies implemented FPS-recommended countermeasures at federal facilities—or whether they accepted risks for countermeasures not implemented—but has not yet fully addressed GAO's May 2023 recommendations to do so. Specifically, the ISC plans to update its annual questionnaire in 2024 to include the degree to which agencies have implemented countermeasures, including those recommended by FPS. In addition, as part of a fiscal year 2024 pilot, the ISC plans to verify the documentation of risk acceptance for countermeasures not implemented for 10 facilities.

Until the ISC completes its planned efforts to improve its assessment of agencies' and facilities' implementation of FPS recommendations, the implementation status of more than half of FPS's recommended countermeasures will remain unknown and the federal government may not have reasonable assurance that its facilities are secure.