

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-25-106728](#), a report to the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The Navy maintains a fleet of large amphibious warfare ships that are used primarily for Marine Corps missions, such as amphibious assault and humanitarian response. There are currently 32 amphibious warfare ships in this fleet, one more than the minimum the Navy is statutorily required to maintain.

House Report 117-397 includes a provision for GAO to review plans for the amphibious warfare fleet. GAO's report examines the extent to which (1) the Navy and Marine Corps are addressing challenges with fleet availability; (2) the Navy is addressing maintenance challenges; and (3) the Navy is positioned to meet its fleet size requirements into the future.

GAO reviewed Navy and Marine Corps documentation and interviewed officials responsible for overseeing fleet availability, maintenance, and new ship acquisition plans. GAO also visited six ships and spoke with officers and crew about maintenance issues.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making 4 recommendations, including that the Navy use metrics to define amphibious ship availability goals, and updates its policy to clarify that it should not cancel maintenance when divesting ships before completing the waiver process. The Navy concurred with 3 of the 4 recommendations. The Navy partially concurred with updating its policy but noted actions it will take to address the recommendation. GAO maintains that documenting these actions is needed.

View [GAO-25-106728](#). For more information, contact Shelby S. Oakley at (202) 512-4841 or oakleys@gao.gov and Diana Maurer at (202) 512-9627 or maurerd@gao.gov.

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AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE FLEET

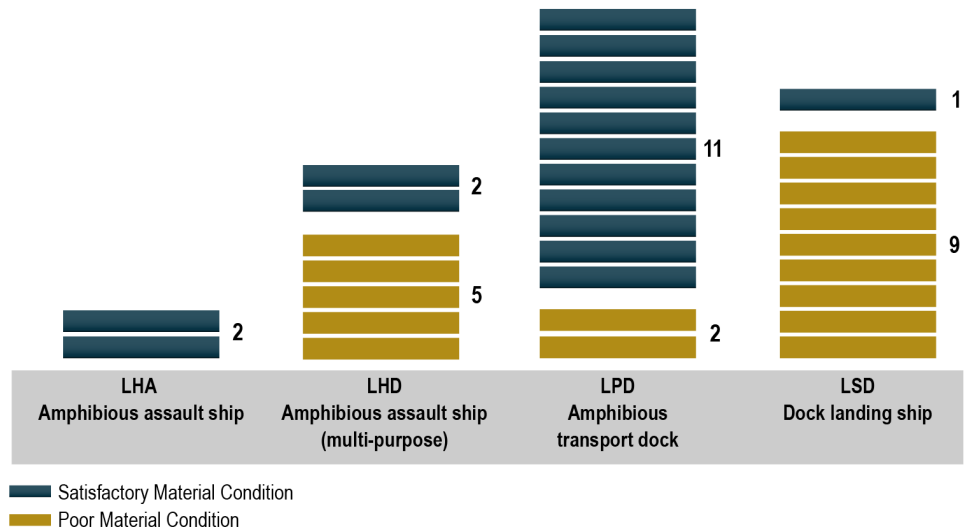
Navy Needs to Complete Key Efforts to Better Ensure Ships Are Available for Marines

What GAO Found

Amphibious warfare ships are critical for Marine Corps missions, but the Navy has struggled to ensure they are available for operations and training. In some cases, ships in the amphibious fleet have not been available for years at a time. The Navy and Marine Corps are working to agree on a ship availability goal but have yet to complete a metrics-based analysis to support such a goal. Until the Navy completes this analysis, it risks jeopardizing its ability to align amphibious ship schedules with the Marine Corps units that deploy on them.

As of March 2024, half of the amphibious fleet is in poor condition and these ships are not on track to meet their expected service lives.

Navy Assessment of the Condition of the Amphibious Warfare Fleet



Source: GAO analysis of Surface Maintenance Engineering Planning Program documentation. | GAO-25-106728

GAO identified factors that contributed to the fleet's poor condition and reduced its availability for Marine Corps' operations and training. For example, the Navy faces challenges with spare parts, reliability of ship systems, and canceled maintenance. GAO found that the Navy canceled maintenance for aging amphibious ships it planned to divest before completing the required waiver process. Navy officials said they no longer plan to cancel maintenance prior to completing the process, but the Navy has yet to update its maintenance policy to reflect that decision. Updating the policy would help ensure ships the Navy plans to divest do not miss maintenance if Congress restricts funds for divestment.

The Navy is likely to face difficulties meeting a statutory requirement to have at least 31 amphibious ships in the future given the age of many ships and other factors. The Navy is considering extending the service life for some ships to meet the 31-ship requirement. However, these efforts will require up to \$1 billion per ship, according to the Navy, with six ships needing service life extensions in the next 3 decades amid rising ship construction costs and maintenance backlogs.