



Highlights of [GAO-08-418](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Navy faces affordability challenges as it supports a high pace of operations and increasing ship procurement costs. The Navy has used multiple crews on some submarines and surface ships and has shown it to increase a ship's operational availability. GAO was asked to evaluate the extent to which the Navy, for ship rotational crewing, has (1) employed a comprehensive management approach, (2) developed and implemented guidance, (3) systematically collected, analyzed data, and reported findings, and (4) systematically collected and used lessons learned. To conduct this work, GAO analyzed Department of Defense (DOD) and Navy documentation and best practices for transformation, conducted focus groups, and interviewed DOD and Navy officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD take several actions, including assigning leadership; establishing an implementation team; promulgating guidance; developing a systematic data-collection and analysis plan; assessing crewing options in analyses of alternatives; and developing guidance for rotational crewing lessons learned. DOD partially agreed with three recommendations but disagreed with five others. To facilitate transformation of the Navy's ship crewing culture, GAO included a matter for congressional consideration that would require DOD to establish clear leadership; an implementation team; and overarching guidance.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-418](#). For more information, contact Janet St. Laurent at (202) 512-4402 or stlaurentj@gao.gov.

FORCE STRUCTURE

Ship Rotational Crewing Initiatives Would Benefit from Top-Level Leadership, Navy-wide Guidance, Comprehensive Analysis, and Improved Lessons-Learned Sharing

What GAO Found

Rotational crewing represents a transformational cultural change for the Navy. While the Navy has provided leadership in some rotational crewing programs, the Navy has not fully established a comprehensive management approach to coordinate and integrate rotational crewing efforts across the department and among various types of ships. GAO's prior work showed that sound management practices for implementing transformational programs include ensuring top leadership drives the change and dedicating an implementation team. The Navy has not assigned clear leadership and accountability for rotational crewing or designated an implementation team to ensure that rotational crewing receives the attention necessary to be effective. Without a comprehensive management approach, the Navy may not be able to lead a successful transformation of its crewing culture.

The Navy has promulgated crew exchange instructions for some types of ships that have provided some specific guidance and increased accountability. However, the Navy has not developed an overarching instruction that provides high-level guidance for rotational crewing initiatives and it has not consistently addressed rotational crewing in individual ship-class concepts of operations. Defense best practices hold that key aspects of a concept of operations include how a set of capabilities may be employed to achieve objectives and identifies by whom, where, and how it is to be accomplished.

The Navy has conducted some analyses of rotational crewing; however, it has not developed a systematic method for analyzing, assessing and reporting findings on the potential for rotational crewing on current and future ships. Despite using a comprehensive data-collection and analysis plan in the Atlantic Fleet Guided Missile Destroyer Sea Swap, the Navy has not developed a standardized data-collection plan that would be used to analyze all types of rotational crewing, and life-cycle costs of rotational crewing alternatives have not been evaluated. The Navy has also not adequately assessed rotational crewing options for future ships. As new ships are in development, DOD guidance requires that an analysis of alternatives be completed. These analyses generally include an evaluation of the operational effectiveness and estimated costs of alternatives. In recent surface ship acquisitions, the Navy has not consistently assessed rotational crewing options. In the absence of this, cost-effective force structure assessments are incomplete and the Navy does not have a complete picture of the number of ships it needs to acquire.

The Navy has collected and disseminated lessons learned from some rotational crewing experiences; however, some ship communities have relied on informal processes. The Atlantic Sea Swap initiative used a systematic process to capture lessons learned. However, in other ship communities the actions were not systematic and did not use the Navy Lessons Learned System. By not systematically recording and sharing lessons learned from rotational crewing efforts, the Navy risks repeating mistakes and could miss opportunities to more effectively implement crew rotations.