



Highlights of [GAO-07-618](#), a report to congressional committees

DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

High-Level Leadership Commitment and Actions Are Needed to Address Corrosion Issues

Why GAO Did This Study

Corrosion can have a deleterious effect on military equipment and infrastructure in terms of cost, readiness, and safety. Recognizing this concern, the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2003 required the Department of Defense (DOD) to designate an official or organization to oversee and coordinate efforts to prevent and mitigate corrosion. Recently, the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2006 directed GAO to examine the effectiveness of DOD's corrosion prevention and mitigation programs. In addition, GAO evaluated the extent to which DOD has incorporated corrosion prevention planning in acquiring weapon systems. GAO reviewed strategy documents, reviewed corrosion prevention planning for 51 recent major weapon system acquisitions, and interviewed DOD and military service officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending that the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics ensure that actions designed to effectively implement DOD's corrosion prevention strategy are taken. In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD partially concurred with GAO's four recommendations. DOD's actions are generally responsive to the intent of GAO's recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-618.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact William Solis at (202) 512-8365 or solisw@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

DOD continues to have problems that hinder progress in implementing its corrosion prevention and mitigation strategy. While it has created a Corrosion Policy and Oversight Office, that office lacks the ability to oversee and coordinate its efforts throughout DOD, as envisioned by Congress. For example:

- DOD's office does not review all of the services' proposed funding requests for corrosion programs, even though it is required to do so, because DOD has not directed the services to provide such information and none of the services has a designated official or office to oversee and coordinate servicewide corrosion activities. Without comprehensive reviews of the services' corrosion-related programs and proposed funding requests, the office cannot fulfill its oversight and coordination role.
- DOD has made some progress in identifying corrosion cost impacts, but it has not identified readiness and safety impacts. It recently completed corrosion cost impact studies for Army ground vehicles and Navy ships, identifying an estimated \$4.5 billion in annual corrosion costs. Although the studies provided potentially useful data for reducing these costs, DOD has not developed an action plan to apply these data to developing corrosion prevention and mitigation strategies. Without an action plan, it could miss opportunities to achieve long-term cost savings.
- DOD has not yet developed results-oriented metrics, although GAO has previously recommended that it do so.

Without top DOD and service leadership commitment to address these issues, corrosion prevention and mitigation will remain elusive goals and opportunities to reduce costs, enhance readiness, and avoid safety problems will be lost.

Most of the weapon system acquisition programs GAO reviewed had not incorporated key elements of DOD corrosion prevention guidance. GAO found that only 14 of the 51 programs reviewed had both corrosion prevention plans and advisory teams, as encouraged in the DOD guidance. The primary reason most programs did not have these two elements is that they are not mandatory. As a result, these programs may be missing opportunities to prevent and mitigate corrosion.

Corrosion Prevention Planning for Major Acquisition Programs

	Programs that have a corrosion prevention and control plan			Programs that have a corrosion prevention advisory team		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Army	5	8	13	5	8	13
Air Force	4	9	13	5	8	13
Navy	11	14	25	8	17	25
Total	20	31	51	18	33	51

Source: GAO analysis of service data.