



Highlights of [GAO-05-781](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

Training flight and cabin crew members to handle potential threats against domestic aircraft is an important element in securing our nation's aviation system. The responsibility for ensuring that crew members are prepared to handle these threats is a shared responsibility between the private sector—air carriers—and the federal government, primarily the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). This report addresses (1) actions TSA has taken to develop guidance and standards for flight and cabin crew member security training and to measure the effectiveness of the training, (2) how TSA ensures domestic air carriers comply with the training guidance and standards, and (3) efforts TSA has taken to develop and assess the effectiveness of its voluntary self-defense training program.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending that the Secretary of Homeland Security direct TSA to (1) establish strategic goals for crew security training, develop guidance and standards for air carriers to use to develop goals and measures for their training, and review air carriers' goals and measures, (2) develop written procedures for monitoring air carriers' crew security training, and (3) establish performance measures and a time frame for evaluating the effectiveness of the voluntary self-defense training. TSA reviewed a draft of this report and generally agreed with GAO's findings and recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-781.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Cathleen Berrick at (202) 512-8777 or berrickc@gao.gov.

AVIATION SECURITY

Flight and Cabin Crew Member Security Training Strengthened, but Better Planning and Internal Controls Needed

What GAO Found

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, TSA enhanced guidance and standards for flight and cabin crew member security training with input from stakeholders. Specifically, TSA revised the guidance and standards to include additional training elements required by law and to improve the organization and clarity of the guidance and standards. Some stakeholders we interviewed and our own review generally found that the revised guidance and standards improved upon previous versions in terms of organization and clarity of the information provided. However, some stakeholders identified concerns about, for example, the reasonableness of applying parts of the guidance and standards to both flight and cabin crew members and the difficulty in implementing some of the standards without additional information or training tools from TSA. Additionally, TSA has not established strategic goals and performance measures for assessing the effectiveness of the training because it considers its role in the training program as regulatory. In this regard, TSA views the individual air carriers as responsible for establishing performance goals and measures for their training programs, but has not required them to do so. Without goals and measures, TSA and air carriers will be limited in their ability to fully assess accomplishments and target associated improvements.

TSA recently took steps to strengthen its efforts to oversee air carriers' flight and cabin crew security training to ensure they are complying with the required guidance and standards. For example, in January 2005, TSA added staff with expertise in designing training programs to review air carriers' crew member security training curriculums and developed a standard form for staff to use to conduct their reviews. However, TSA lacks adequate controls for monitoring and reviewing air carriers' crew member security training, including written procedures for conducting and documenting these reviews. TSA plans to develop written procedures, but has not established a timeframe for completing this effort.

TSA has developed an advanced voluntary self-defense training program with input from stakeholders and implemented the program in December 2004, as required by law. However, stakeholders and our own analysis identified concerns about the training design and delivery, such as the lack of recurrent training and the lack of a realistic training environment. Also, TSA has not yet established performance measures for the program or established a time frame for evaluating the program's effectiveness.