



Highlights of [GAO-09-416T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

In 1995, the Department of Defense (DOD) began an effort to implement a standard departmentwide travel system—the Defense Travel System (DTS). As part of its ongoing monitoring, GAO's April 2008 testimony before this subcommittee highlighted challenges confronted by the department in its implementation efforts. GAO's testimony today is based on its current follow-up work conducted at the request of this subcommittee, as well as the Subcommittee on Readiness. GAO's testimony today focuses on the actions DOD has taken to (1) implement previous GAO recommendations regarding implementation of DTS and related travel policies, (2) phase out legacy travel systems and their associated costs, and (3) implement electronic travel voucher processing. To address these objectives, GAO (1) analyzed specific documentation, such as test documentation, travel policies, and budget data, and (2) interviewed appropriate DOD travel personnel.

What GAO Recommends

Subsequent to this testimony, GAO plans to issue a report on the status of DOD's actions on GAO's previous recommendations, which will include any further recommendations needed to improve the department's implementation of DTS and ensure its success in the future.

View [GAO-09-416T](#) or key components.

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DOD BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Status of DOD's Actions on Previous Recommendations for the Defense Travel System

What GAO Found

GAO has made 14 recommendations aimed at improving DOD's management oversight and implementation of DTS and related travel policies to make DTS the standard departmentwide travel system. GAO considers 7 of the 14 recommendations closed and the remaining 7 recommendations as being open. The 7 closed recommendations pertained to premium-class travel, unused airline tickets, use of restricted airfare, proper testing of system interfaces, and streamlining of certain travel processes, such as the process for approving travel voucher expenses. GAO's analysis of the 7 closed recommendations found that the actions taken by the department responded to the intent of the recommendations. Of the 7 open recommendations, 3 related to the adequacy of DTS's requirements management and system testing, 3 to DTS underutilization, and 1 to developing an approach that will permit the use of automated methods to reduce the need for hard copy receipts to substantiate travel expenses. In the area of requirements management and testing, GAO found that while DTS's requirements management and testing process has improved, problems still persist. The problems were generally related to missing documentation, the limited scope of requirements testing performed, or both. In the area of DTS utilization, GAO found that the department still does not have in place the metrics to determine the number of manual travel vouchers that should have been processed through DTS.

Further, DOD does not have accurate and complete information on the number of legacy travel systems that are still in use by the military services. Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) data indicates that there are 23 legacy travel systems, but military services' data identify 12—10 of which are on the DTMO list. In addition, GAO found that the department lacks visibility of the cost to operate and maintain these legacy systems. The DTMO and the military services could only provide limited cost data for each identified legacy travel system and the department's fiscal year 2009 information technology budget contained cost data for only 3 of the 23 systems on the DTMO list. According to the military services, some of the legacy systems will be needed even after DTS has been deployed to all intended locations because DTS will not include certain functionality, such as the processing of civilian permanent duty travel. Without a valid inventory of legacy travel systems, it is unlikely that DOD management or the Congress will receive reliable reports regarding when duplicative systems are likely to be eliminated and the annual savings available from avoiding the associated operating and maintenance costs.

Finally, GAO found that there is a significant difference between the costs of processing a travel voucher manually and electronically. Based upon departmental data, the fee charged to process a travel voucher manually is about 15 times greater than electronic voucher processing—approximately \$37 manually and \$2.50 electronically. Shutting down legacy travel systems, which require manual processing, would provide cost savings to the department related to the processing of travel vouchers.