



Highlights of [GAO-05-49](#), a report to the Chairman, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives

HOMELAND SECURITY

Further Actions Needed to Coordinate Federal Agencies' Facility Protection Efforts and Promote Key Practices

Why GAO Did This Study

The war on terrorism has made physical security for federal facilities a governmentwide concern. The Interagency Security Committee (ISC), which is chaired by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is tasked with coordinating federal agencies' facility protection efforts, developing protection standards, and overseeing implementation. GAO's objectives were to (1) assess ISC's progress in fulfilling its responsibilities and (2) identify key practices in protecting federal facilities and any related implementation obstacles.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is recommending that DHS direct ISC to develop an action plan that identifies resource needs, goals, and time frames for meeting its responsibilities; and proposes strategies for addressing the challenges it faces. Furthermore, GAO recommends that the Chair of ISC, with input from ISC member agencies and considering GAO's work as a starting point, establish a set of key practices that could guide agencies' efforts in the facility protection area. This initiative could be used to evaluate agency actions, identify lessons learned, and develop strategies for overcoming challenges. DHS concurred with the recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-05-49.

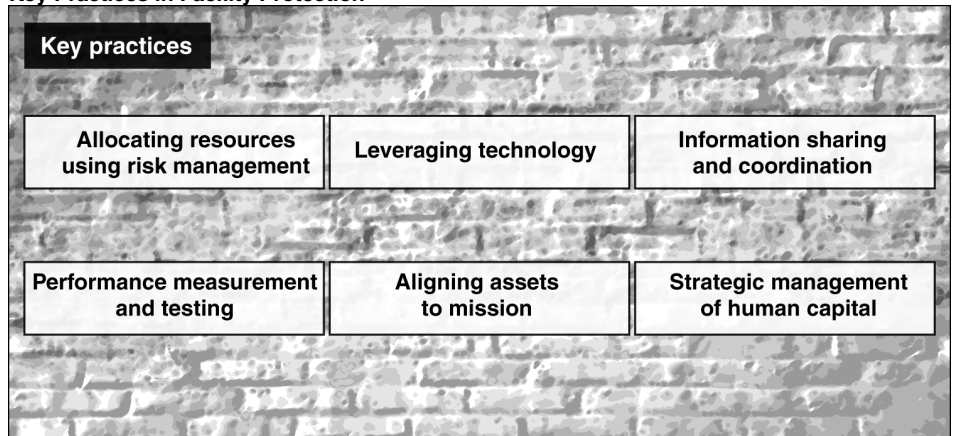
To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Mark L. Goldstein at (202) 512-2834 or goldsteinm@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

ISC has made progress in coordinating the government's facility protection efforts. In recent years, ISC has taken several actions to develop policies and guidance for facility protection and to share related information. Although its actions to ensure compliance with security standards and oversee implementation have been limited, in July 2004, ISC became responsible for reviewing federal agencies' physical security plans for the administration. ISC, however, lacks an action plan that could be used to provide DHS and other stakeholders with information on, and a rationale for, its resource needs; garner and maintain the support of ISC member agencies, DHS management, Office of Management and Budget, and Congress; identify implementation goals and measures for gauging progress; and propose strategies for addressing various challenges it faces, such as resource constraints. Without an action plan, ISC's strategy and time line for implementing its responsibilities remain unclear.

As ISC and agencies have paid greater attention to facility protection in recent years, several key practices have emerged that, collectively, could provide a framework for guiding agencies' efforts. These include allocating resources using risk management; leveraging security technology; coordinating protection efforts and sharing information; measuring program performance and testing security initiatives; realigning real property assets to mission, thereby reducing vulnerabilities; and, implementing strategic human capital management, to ensure that agencies are well equipped to recruit and retain high-performing security professionals. GAO also noted several obstacles to implementation, such as developing quality data for risk management and performance measurement, and ensuring that technology will perform as expected.

Key Practices in Facility Protection



Source: GAO.