



Highlights of [GAO-12-434](#), a report to the Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives.

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Protective Service (FPS) protects over 9,000 federal facilities under the custody and control of the General Services Administration (GSA). In 2007, FPS adopted an inspector-based workforce approach and indicated it would increase its reliance on state and local law enforcement agencies to respond to incidents at these facilities. These facilities range from facilities of proprietary or concurrent jurisdiction—where authority is shared by federal and state and local police—to facilities of exclusive jurisdiction, where only federal law enforcement has authority. As requested, this report assesses FPS's efforts to collaborate with state and local law enforcement for assistance in responding to incidents at these federal facilities. GAO reviewed documents on collaboration, GSA and FPS facility data, and GAO's work on key collaboration practices and internal control standards. GAO also contacted 73 selected state and local law enforcement agencies from geographic jurisdictions of varying population sizes and FPS buildings throughout the United States and interviewed FPS and GSA officials.

What GAO Recommends

In conjunction with the revised MOU that is being developed between GSA and FPS, GAO recommends the administrator of GSA ensure that efforts to identify the jurisdictions of all GSA buildings are completed and that these data are provided to FPS. GSA concurred with the recommendation.

View [GAO-12-434](#). For more information, contact Mark L. Goldstein at (202) 512-2834 or goldsteinm@gao.gov.

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FEDERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE

Better Data on Facility Jurisdictions Needed to Enhance Collaboration with State and Local Law Enforcement

What GAO Found

To collaborate with state and local law enforcement, the Federal Protective Service (FPS) uses memorandums of understanding (MOU), long-standing working relationships, written guidance to FPS staff, joint operations, and other initiatives. For example, FPS has MOUs ranging from sharing radio frequency usage in Alabama, to a mutual aid agreement with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority in Georgia. In some jurisdictions, such as the suburbs of the District of Columbia, FPS has no MOUs but has regular contact and long-standing mutual aid relationships with state and local law enforcement. To collaborate with state and local law enforcement, FPS has guidance that addresses issues such as the scope of law enforcement authorities on federal property and information sharing among jurisdictions. FPS established regional staff positions intended to improve collaboration with other organizations and has engaged in joint operations with state and local law enforcement. By comparison, other federal organizations with law enforcement responsibilities similar to FPS also use a variety of methods, ranging from the Department of Veterans Affairs' policy to seek MOUs with state and local law enforcement to the Smithsonian Institution's established relationships with the Metropolitan D.C. Police and others.

GAO found that state and local law enforcement organizations it contacted are generally willing to assist with incidents at federal facilities. For example, 48 of 52 respondents from state and local law enforcement agencies GAO contacted about this issue said that they would respond to a call at a federally owned facility; 27 said they had done so since 2007. Overall, the variety of efforts FPS has under way is consistent with the key collaboration practices GAO has previously identified and reflects a reasonable approach to collaboration, especially when combined with the willingness of state and local law enforcement to assist.

Although FPS has a reasonable approach to state and local collaboration, GAO found issues related to the quality of data exchanged between GSA and FPS on buildings and their locations. Through working groups, GSA is working with FPS to address these data inconsistency issues and is establishing a permanent GSA liaison at FPS's headquarters to improve data coordination. But as of the end of GAO's review, FPS still lacked complete data from GSA on the jurisdiction of about one third of the buildings it protects. GSA officials informed GAO that they are making progress with identifying building jurisdictions but were not yet in a position to provide complete information to FPS. These data are important because state and local law enforcement generally has no authority to enforce state and local law on properties of exclusive federal jurisdiction. An additional effect of not having these data is that FPS lacks assurance that in relying on state and local law enforcement to respond to incidents at federal facilities, it is not creating a situation where these entities may be exercising police authority where they lack such authority. As a result, incomplete jurisdictional data leaves FPS and state and local law enforcement less equipped to define and agree to respective roles and responsibilities when there are incidents at federal facilities.