

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106499](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

For fiscal year 2025, DOD has requested over \$15 billion for its military construction program, including projects ranging from child care centers to barracks and maintenance hangars. Proper planning of such projects is critical to avoid delays from errors that could increase costs. DOD relies on UFC in completing military construction projects. At the end of fiscal year 2023, DOD had 598 military construction projects under way.

The joint explanatory statement accompanying the NDAA for fiscal Year 2022 includes a provision for GAO to review the UFC program and implementation of standards. This report examines (1) how DOD manages the UFC program, including its incorporation of relevant fiscal year 2018–2022 NDAA provisions; and (2) the extent to which DOD monitors the execution of its military construction program and projects.

GAO selected a nongeneralizable sample of five working groups and eight military construction locations. GAO analyzed relevant laws, military construction reports, and policies and procedures; and interviewed officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making seven recommendations, including for DOD to issue guidance for reporting relevant project information, and for the Army and the Navy to develop guidance and training and improve processes for sharing lessons learned. DOD concurred with all of GAO's recommendations and stated that it is taking action to implement them.

View [GAO-24-106499](#). For more information, contact Alissa H. Czyz at (202) 512-3058 or [czyza@gao.gov](mailto:czyza@gao.gov).

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## MILITARY CONSTRUCTION

### Better Information Sharing Would Improve DOD's Oversight

#### What GAO Found

The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the military departments (Army, Navy, and Air Force) collectively manage the Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) program. UFC documents provide criteria for the planning, design, and construction, among other things, of Department of Defense (DOD) owned facilities. According to officials, DOD creates or updates UFC documents based on National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA), among other things. GAO found that DOD largely incorporated relevant fiscal year 2018–2022 NDAA provisions.

GAO found that DOD does not fully monitor the execution of its military construction program and projects. OSD, which is responsible for general program oversight, collects detailed information on two military construction portfolios including the Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility and two other high-profile projects. However, information OSD collects for all other construction projects is limited and OSD relies on Army and Navy construction agents for project monitoring. OSD officials told GAO the information they collect for these projects is for reporting purposes only and is not relevant for identifying trends, which can help inform a risk-based oversight approach. DOD's annual reports on military construction delays show that over the prior 5 fiscal years, poor initial planning contributed to about 25 percent of the projects delayed for at least a year. By issuing guidance to require reporting of more relevant information, such as the DOD construction agent responsible for each project and planning and design milestones, OSD would have better visibility into projects and could better identify and address individual and systemic issues.

Further, GAO found that Army and Navy construction agents do not consistently document and share lessons learned in their project monitoring. For example, one building was delayed for over 3 years due to design errors (e.g., incorrect roof design) and insufficient quality control oversight, according to Army documentation (see figure). Army construction agent officials said they were not using a lessons-learned system to share project observations, which may help prevent repeating past mistakes on future projects.

#### Example of a Delayed Military Construction Project

##### Special Operations Forces (SOF) Training Command Building



Location: Fort Liberty, NC

Construction start date: Mar. 2017

Original planned construction completion date: Feb. 2019

Actual construction completion date: July 2022

Original construction amount: Approximately \$38.7 million

Current obligation amount: Approximately \$54.3 million

Scope of project: A three-story facility that includes administrative and operations space, classrooms, and a library.

Reasons for schedule delays: Design errors (e.g., not including all roof loading), insufficient quality control, personnel turnover, and changing customer requirements.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (photo). | GAO-24-106499

Note: For more details, see figure 6 in GAO-24-106499.

Better guidance, training, and processes for sharing lessons learned could help prevent future mistakes, such as insufficient quality control, and save resources.