

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD has spent \$2.6 billion since 2017 addressing PFAS releases. PFAS are a large group of chemicals developed decades ago that can persist in the environment and cause adverse health effects. DOD's use of certain firefighting agents and other activities, such as metal plating, have led to PFAS releases from DOD installations, potentially exposing service members, their families, and surrounding communities. Investigating and cleaning up PFAS releases is an endeavor that could take DOD decades and billions of dollars to complete.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 includes a provision for GAO to review DOD's efforts to test and remediate PFAS contamination. This report (1) describes the status of DOD's efforts, and (2) assesses DOD's pace, thoroughness, and cost of its efforts, among other things. GAO analyzed DOD's PFAS-related reports to Congress, reviewed DOD and Environmental Protection Agency guidance and regulations, and interviewed officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD provide additional information to Congress on total fiscal exposure related to PFAS investigation and cleanup and a detailed explanation and examples of changing key cost drivers. DOD partially concurred and GAO modified the recommendation based on DOD's feedback.

View [GAO-25-107401](#). For more information, contact Alissa Czyz, 202-512-4300 or CzyzA@gao.gov.

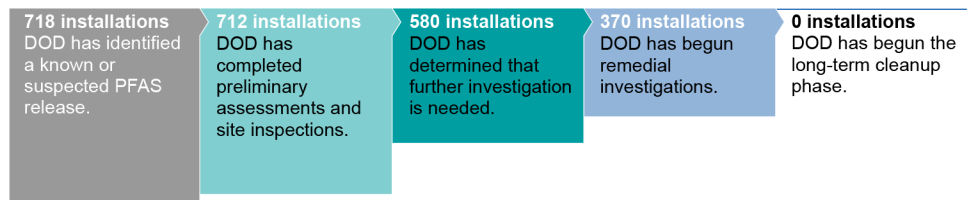
PERSISTENT CHEMICALS

DOD Needs to Provide Congress More Information on Costs Associated with Addressing PFAS

What GAO Found

As of June 2024, the Department of Defense (DOD) had completed preliminary assessments and site inspections for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at nearly all 718 installations identified to have a potential PFAS release and had proceeded to the next step of the cleanup process at more than half. No locations have entered the long-term cleanup phases.

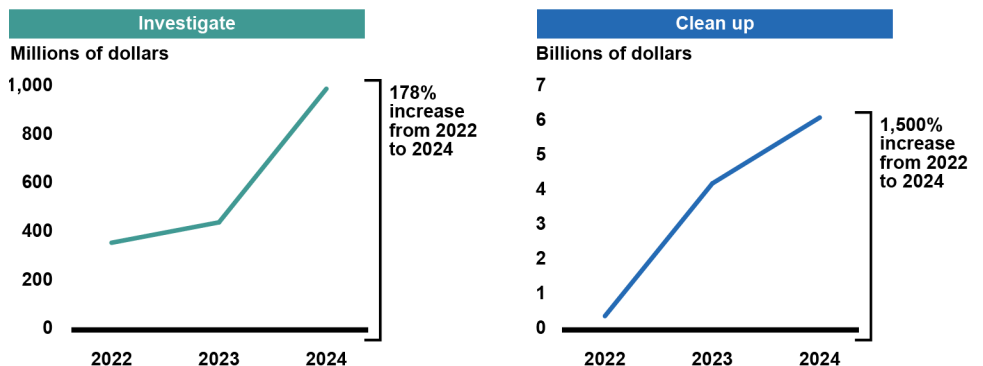
Department of Defense (DOD) Actions Related to Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) at Current or Former Military Installations, as of June 2024



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-25-107401

DOD efforts to investigate its PFAS releases have generally been thorough, and the department reports on the pace and cost of its efforts to Congress. DOD estimates that its future PFAS investigation and cleanup costs will total more than \$9.3 billion in fiscal year 2025 and beyond. DOD's estimated future PFAS investigation and cleanup costs have more than tripled since 2022. GAO found that costs will continue to increase as DOD learns more about the extent of its PFAS releases—including the breadth and depth—through remedial investigations and determines what cleanup actions are required.

Department of Defense (DOD) Estimated Future Costs for the Investigation and Cleanup of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) by Fiscal Year



Source: GAO analysis of DOD PFAS Reports to Congress. | GAO-25-107401

DOD has not communicated to Congress the full range of cost variables for future PFAS cleanup, referred to as total fiscal exposure. By including a detailed explanation and examples of changing key cost drivers for PFAS investigation and cleanup in its semi-annual cost report to Congress or other congressional reporting mechanism, Congress will be better equipped to make decisions regarding future funding for PFAS investigation and cleanup activities.