



Highlights of [GAO-03-190](#), a report to Congressional Requesters

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Actions and Plans to Build a Results-Oriented Culture

Why GAO Did This Study

Never has a results-oriented focus been more critical than today, when the security of America's citizens depends on the outcomes of many federal programs. In response to the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Congress passed the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) that created the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and made it responsible for transportation security. ATSA requires TSA to implement specific practices that are intended to make it a results-oriented organization.

What GAO Recommends

GAO makes specific recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation and the Under Secretary of Transportation for Security to continue and augment TSA's progress in implementing ATSA's results-oriented practices. The adjacent table shows selected recommended next steps for TSA. We provided drafts of this report to officials from the Department of Transportation (DOT), including TSA, for their review and comment. TSA's Director of Strategic Management and Analysis provided oral comments on behalf of DOT and TSA generally agreeing with the contents, findings, and recommendations of the draft report.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-190.

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact J. Christopher Mihm, 202-512-6086, mihmj@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

In its first year, TSA has simultaneously started to build the infrastructure of a large organization as it focused primarily on meeting its aviation security deadlines. As TSA begins to take responsibility for security in the maritime and surface modes of transportation, its current and future challenge is to continue to build, sustain, and institutionalize the organizational capacity to help it achieve its current and future goals. In this regard, TSA has made an impressive start in implementing practices that can create a results-oriented culture. These practices—leadership commitment, strategic planning, performance management, collaboration and communication, and public reporting and customer service—are shown below. Such practices are especially important when TSA moves into the newly created Department of Homeland Security.

Selected ATSA requirements, TSA actions and plans, and recommended next steps for each results-oriented practice.

ATSA requirements	TSA actions and plans	Recommended next steps
Leadership commitment to creating a high-performing organization		
Performance agreements for head of TSA and executives.	Established standardized performance agreements for TSA executives.	Establish a performance agreement for the head of TSA and add expectations in performance agreements for top leadership to foster the culture of a high-performing organization.
Strategic planning to establish results-oriented goals and measures		
Planning and reporting requirements.	Articulated vision, mission, values, strategic goal, and performance goals and measures. Developed automated system to collect performance data.	Establish security performance goals and measures for all modes of transportation as part of a strategic planning process that involves stakeholders.
Performance management to promote accountability for results		
Performance management system and performance agreements.	Established an interim performance management system and created performance agreements that include organizational and individual goals and standards of performance.	Ensure the permanent system makes meaningful distinctions in performance. Involve employees in developing its permanent system.
Collaboration and communication to achieve national outcomes		
Work within and outside the government to accomplish its mission.	Established several offices to collaborate and communicate with stakeholders. Stated plans to use memorandums to formalize roles and responsibilities of TSA and other agencies in transportation security.	Define more clearly the collaboration and communication roles and responsibilities of TSA's various offices. Formalize roles and responsibilities among governmental entities for transportation security.
Public reporting and customer service to build citizen confidence		
A 180-day action plan and two progress reports within 6 months of enactment.	Submitted 180-day action plan and both progress reports within established time frames. Stated plans to develop customer satisfaction index.	Continue to develop and implement mechanisms, such as the customer satisfaction index, to gauge customer satisfaction and improve customer service.

Source: GAO.