

**AMO and Coast Guard  
Maritime Missions Are Not  
Duplicative, But Could  
Improve with Better  
Coordination**





# DHS OIG HIGHLIGHTS

## *AMO and Coast Guard Maritime Missions Are Not Duplicative, But Could Improve with Better Coordination*

October 14, 2016

### Why We Did This Audit

Within the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Air and Marine Operations (AMO) and the United States Coast Guard (Coast Guard) share responsibility for maritime security missions. At the request of Congress, we reviewed the maritime missions and responsibilities of AMO and the Coast Guard.

### What We Recommend

We made two recommendations to improve oversight and coordination of maritime operations.

#### **For Further Information:**

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202) 254-4100, or email us at [DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov](mailto:DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov)

### What We Found

We found that the two components' maritime missions and responsibilities are not duplicative; their efforts bolster the overall effectiveness of DHS maritime border security and improve the ability to prevent the illegal flow of contraband and people into the country. Given the large area of responsibility, different activities, and limited resources, eliminating the maritime law enforcement responsibilities of either agency — or combining them — could be harmful to border security. However, AMO and the Coast Guard could improve coordination in some areas, which could potentially increase effectiveness of maritime border security, result in potential efficiencies, and enhance unity of effort.

### DHS Response

DHS concurred with both recommendations and plans to improve operational coordination and update the 2011 Maritime Operations Coordination Plan. The Department is also pleased with the OIG's positive recognition of AMO's and the Coast Guard's efforts to bolster maritime border security and remains committed to exploring ways to further the progress in strengthening unity of effort in maritime security.



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Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / [www.oig.dhs.gov](http://www.oig.dhs.gov)


October 14, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Russell C. Deyo  
Under Secretary for Management  
Department of Homeland Security

The Honorable R. Gil Kerlikowske  
Commissioner  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

The Honorable Admiral Paul F. Zukunft  
Commandant  
United States Coast Guard

The Honorable Sarah R. Saldaña  
Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

FROM: John Roth   
Inspector General

SUBJECT: *AMO and Coast Guard Maritime Missions Are Not  
Duplicative, But Could Improve with Better Coordination*

Attached for your action is our final report, *AMO and Coast Guard Maritime Missions Are Not Duplicative, But Could Improve with Better Coordination*. We incorporated the formal comments from the Department of Homeland Security in the final report.

The report contains two recommendations aimed at improving Maritime Security Missions. DHS concurred with both recommendations. Based on information provided in your response to the draft report, we consider recommendations 1 and 2 open and resolved. Once your office has fully implemented the recommendations, please submit a formal closeout letter to us within 30 days so that we may close the recommendations. The memorandum should be accompanied by evidence of completion of agreed-upon corrective actions and of the disposition of any monetary amounts. Please send your closure request to [OIGAuditsFollowup@oig.dhs.gov](mailto:OIGAuditsFollowup@oig.dhs.gov).

Consistent with our responsibility under the *Inspector General Act*, we will provide copies of our report to congressional committees with oversight and appropriation responsibility over the Department of Homeland Security. We will post the report on our website for public dissemination.

Please call me with any questions, or your staff may contact Don Bumgardner, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits, at (202) 254-4100.

Attachment





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**Abbreviations**

AMO	Air and Marine Operations
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Coast Guard	United States Coast Guard
GAO	Government Accountability Office
JIATF-South	Joint Interagency Task Force - South
OIG	Office of Inspector General
plan	Maritime Operations Coordination Plan
strategy	National Strategy for Maritime Security



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## Background

The Department of Homeland Security is the lead Federal agency for combating maritime threats, including — but not limited to — drugs and people who are trying to enter the country illegally. Within DHS, U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) Air and Marine Operations (AMO) and the United States Coast Guard (Coast Guard) share responsibility for maritime security missions. The U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security requested this review of the maritime missions and responsibilities of AMO and the Coast Guard.

Illegal drug trafficking continues to threaten the safety, security, and public health of the Nation and place significant strain on the health care and criminal justice systems, costing taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars each year. The majority of drugs entering the United States pass from South America through a 6 million square-mile area called the Transit Zone. This area includes the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Although cartels use boats to move drugs into the United States, the vast majority of the drugs enter through the United States-Mexico land border. Figure 1 shows the primary paths for the flow of drugs into the United States.

**Figure 1: Primary Paths for the Flow of Drugs into the United States**



Source: U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, June 2015

Typically, vessels carrying multi-ton loads of cocaine depart Colombian and Ecuadorian ports for delivery points along the Central American or Mexican coasts. Once the vessels arrive in Central America, the drugs are broken down



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into smaller packages, and smugglers use small boats to transport them across the U.S. maritime borders.

In the Caribbean, high-speed vessels haul as much as two metric tons of cocaine at a time. Smugglers also use submersible vessels to move large shipments of cocaine.

In addition to drug smuggling, citizens from other countries use the sea as a way to enter the United States illegally. For example, in fiscal year 2015 the Coast Guard interdicted individuals trying to enter the country illegally from China, India, and the Czech Republic. People attempted to enter the United States from Mexico, Cuba, and the Bahamas.

Within DHS, AMO and the Coast Guard are responsible for maritime operations to interdict drugs and individuals trying to enter the country illegally before they reach our shores. AMO and the Coast Guard share coastal security responsibilities in Florida, Puerto Rico, the Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes, Pacific Northwest, and southern California.



**Figure 2:** A Coast Guard boat crew interdicts 117 Dominicans near San Juan, Puerto Rico. An AMO aircraft detected this vessel.  
*Source:* AMO

### AMO

Within CBP, AMO's primary mission is law enforcement in the air, land, and sea. It is responsible for interdicting illegal drugs, smugglers, and aliens through four primary means:

- Interdiction — efforts to intercept, apprehend, or disrupt threats as they move toward or across U.S. borders.
- Investigations — using the expertise of agents in the air and at sea to defeat criminal networks.
- Domain Awareness — the effective understanding of the environment and information associated with the various domains (air, land, and maritime) that could affect safety, security, the economy, or the environment.



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- Contingency Operations and National Tasking Missions — disaster relief, contingency of operations, humanitarian operations, enforcement relocation, search and rescue, and national special security events.

**Coast Guard**

The Coast Guard has 11 statutory missions that include drug and migrant interdiction. Its other responsibilities include non-law enforcement missions such as search and rescue, boating safety, and ice breaking operations. Table 1 shows the Coast Guard’s programs and missions.

**Table 1: Coast Guard Operating Programs and Missions**

<b>Coast Guard Operating Programs</b>	<b>Homeland Security Act (2002) Missions</b>
Maritime Security Operations Maritime Response and Prevention	1. Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security
	2. Marine Safety
	3. Search and Rescue
	4. Marine Environmental Protection
Defense Operations	5. Defense Readiness
Marine Transportation Systems Management	6. Aids to Navigation
	7. Ice Operations
Maritime Law Enforcement	8. Living Marine Resources
	9. Other Law Enforcement
	10. Migrant Interdiction
	11. Drug Interdiction

Source: The Coast Guard’s FY 2014 Performance Report

The U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security requested this audit to determine whether there is unnecessary duplication of the maritime missions and responsibilities of AMO and the Coast Guard. In addition, we assessed:

- alignment of aircraft and vessel acquisition and logistics;
- use of force policies and the degree that difference has on mission effectiveness, safety, and accountability; and
- operational coordination and opportunities for co-location.



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**Results of Audit**

The maritime missions and responsibilities of AMO and the Coast Guard are not duplicative. Their efforts to interdict drugs and people bolster the overall effectiveness of DHS’ maritime border security. The agencies contribute to the national strategy of layered maritime security and conduct different activities, which leads to more interdictions. However, AMO and the Coast Guard could improve coordination and communication in some areas.

**Layered Security Strengthens Maritime Border Protection**

AMO and the Coast Guard contribute to the national strategy of layered maritime security. They have common goals of preventing the illegal flow of contraband and people in a shared area and complementary missions. Each conducts different activities and provides different capabilities to achieve those goals. As a result, the agencies do not duplicate drug and migrant interdiction efforts; they increase the overall effectiveness of DHS’ maritime border security.

National Strategy for Maritime Security

In 2005, the White House released the National Strategy for Maritime Security (strategy) outlining a comprehensive national effort to promote global economic stability, protect legitimate activities, mitigate the effects of natural disasters, and prevent hostile and illegal acts affecting the maritime environment.

According to the strategy, responding to maritime threats requires teamwork and is dependent on the capabilities of governments and commercial interests throughout the world. The strategy emphasized maritime security is contingent upon a layered security system.

DHS’ Layered Maritime Security

DHS maritime security begins overseas where the Coast Guard visits international ports<sup>1</sup> to assess security measures and determine whether U.S.-bound vessels from those ports should be subject to additional screening.

*Diverse and complementary measures of the public and private sectors acting in concert can prevent terrorist attacks and criminal acts better than relying on a single layer of security.*

The National Strategy for Maritime Security

<sup>1</sup> CBP also conducts operations in foreign ports through its Container Security Initiative.





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The next layer — in international waters — is offshore, including the Transit Zone, where Coast Guard deploys its major vessels (Cutters), patrol aircraft, and personnel.<sup>2</sup> AMO also deploys surveillance aircraft in these waters. In the Transit Zone, both agencies contribute to the Joint Interagency Task Force - South (JIATF-South), which conducts detection and monitoring operations to interdict drug smuggling vessels. JIATF-South, led by the Department of Defense, coordinates activities in this area. According to officials at JIATF-S, interdiction resources (boats and aircraft) are limited in the Transit Zone, which affects interdiction efforts. Further, according to the 2015 National Security Strategy, the Department of Defense redirected some of its resources from the Transit Zone to Asia and the Pacific. This makes the next layer of maritime security — in “customs waters” — critical.

Customs waters, the layer closest to the U.S. coastline, extend 12 nautical miles from shore. In these waters, AMO and the Coast Guard share responsibility to detect and intercept illegal drugs, smugglers, and individuals trying to enter the country illegally on the last leg of their transit to U.S. shores. There are 206 combined locations where AMO and the Coast Guard conduct operations in customs waters. Of the 206, there are 17 locations (8 percent) where AMO and the Coast Guard have similar capabilities and an overlapping area of responsibility. According to AMO and the Coast Guard, many of these locations have a high concentration of drug and migrant flow. Figure 3 shows the overlapping locations. These layers of security in customs waters are necessary, and they bolster maritime border security.

**Figure 3: 17 Overlapping AMO and Coast Guard Locations**



Source: DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG)

<sup>2</sup> The Coast Guard deploys law enforcement detachments, which are teams of law enforcement personnel that operate from U.S. Navy and allied naval ships transiting or operating in areas frequently used by illegal drug traffickers.



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### Activities, Capabilities, and Overall Effectiveness

Having both agencies as layers of security increases the overall effectiveness of DHS' border security because they each engage in different activities. In addition, each has capabilities that the other cannot provide.

AMO's primary mission is law enforcement. Its agents gather intelligence, conduct investigations, and assist other Federal agencies in their investigations to identify illegal activity. In FY 2015, at the 17 overlapping locations, all of AMO's drug seizures occurred on land or in customs waters, where marine units primarily conduct operations.

The Coast Guard is a multi-mission agency, including law enforcement that operates in both customs and international waters. In contrast to AMO, Coast Guard personnel assigned to drug and migrant interdiction do not conduct investigative or land operations. In FY 2015, 93 percent of Coast Guard drug seizures occurred in international waters (Transit Zone). AMO only deploys aircraft in this area; it does not have the vessels to operate in these waters.<sup>3</sup>

In the overlapping locations, 84 percent of reported drug seizures were from AMO operations. These seizures occurred, in part, because of the different activities of each agency. For example, while some of AMO operations were intelligence based, the Coast Guard conducts routine patrols looking for illegal activity. Although Coast Guard patrols are not as effective as intelligence-based operations, they show a presence and can deter illegal activity.

Table 2 shows the FY 2015 AMO and Coast Guard drug seizures<sup>4</sup> from the 17 overlapping locations.

*Duplication occurs when two or more agencies or programs are engaged in the same activities or provide the same services to the same beneficiaries.*

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(GAO) 15 49SP

<sup>3</sup> AMO deploys aircraft in this area and reported it contributed to 198 events that resulted in interdiction of a total of 206,500 pounds of cocaine in FY 2015.

<sup>4</sup> AMO and the Coast Guard each reported other seizures for that year. Appendix C shows all FY 2015 seizures for both agencies.



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**Table 2: FY 2015 Drug Seizures from the 17 Overlapping Locations**

Agency	Customs Waters (Drugs in Pounds)	Percent
AMO	28,707	84
Coast Guard	5,602	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,309</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: OIG analysis of AMO and Coast Guard seizure data

Limited Resources

The resources AMO and the Coast Guard dedicate to maritime drug and migrant interdiction operations are small for each agency.<sup>5</sup> In FY 2015, at the 17 overlapping locations, AMO and the Coast Guard devoted less than 5 percent of their budgets and less than 12 percent of the total personnel to maritime interdiction efforts. Table 3 shows the agencies' budgets compared to the amount spent at the overlapping stations and table 4 shows the personnel information.

**Table 3: FY 2015 Comparison of AMO and Coast Guard Budgets to the Amount Spent at the 17 Overlapping Areas**

Component	FY 2015 Budget	Amount Spent on Drug and Migrant Interdiction at the Overlapping Stations (millions)	Percent of Component Budget
AMO	\$750 million	\$36	4.8
Coast Guard	\$8.38 billion	\$29	0.3

Source: OIG analysis of AMO and Coast Guard budget data

**Table 4: AMO and Coast Guard Total Operational Personnel and Personnel Assigned to the 17 Overlapping Areas**

Component	Personnel	Personnel for Maritime Drug and Migrant Operations	Percent of Personnel
AMO	1,665	200	12
Coast Guard	41,700	715	2

Source: OIG analysis of AMO and Coast Guard personnel data

<sup>5</sup> AMO and the Coast Guard each have responsibilities in addition to maritime drug and migrant interdictions. For example, AMO is responsible for air operations on the Southwest and Northern borders, and the Coast Guard has nine other missions, such as search and rescue, ports, waterways, coastal security, and ice operations.



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### Limited Detection Capabilities

AMO and the Coast Guard are limited in their ability to detect threats as they approach the U.S. shore lines. Detecting illicit activity is a key component of an active, layered maritime defense strategy called “Maritime Domain Awareness.” Figure 4 illustrates where AMO and the Coast Guard maintain maritime awareness. AMO and the Coast Guard gain awareness in the following ways:

- **Intelligence:** Both agencies have separate intelligence centers that provide information related to illicit activity and increase awareness of events in the maritime domain. AMO also gathers intelligence through investigations.
- **Air Surveillance:** Coast Guard and AMO both have aircraft with radar that provide surveillance. However, not all aircraft are capable of conducting maritime surveillance missions, and the availability of aircraft and personnel is limited.
- **Ground Radar:** According to the Coast Guard and a Sheriff’s office, fixed radar systems are more constant, but they are unavailable in most areas and were only used in parts of Florida and the Pacific Northwest.



**Figure 4:** The green shaded area shows the area where AMO and the Coast Guard maintain awareness.  
*Source:* AMO

According to the National Strategy for Maritime Security, “Achieving awareness of the maritime domain is challenging. The vastness of the oceans, the great length of shorelines, and the size of port areas provide both concealment and numerous access points to land.” In addition, maritime awareness is heavily dependent on information sharing and requires cooperation between components.

### **AMO and the Coast Guard Need to Enhance Communication and Coordination**

AMO and the Coast Guard took steps to coordinate maritime activities, but they could improve coordination at the 17 overlapping locations. In 2011, AMO and the Coast Guard issued the Maritime Operations Coordination Plan (plan)<sup>6</sup> to coordinate, share information, improve effectiveness, and prevent duplication of efforts. The plan also requires AMO and the Coast Guard to train together so that each understands the different rules of engagement. The plan created a framework for regional coordination of operations and joint training.

<sup>6</sup> DHS’ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement also contributed to developing this plan.





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According to the plan, “Unity of effort is essential at the regional level in order to counter maritime threats (terrorism, national security, and criminal)...” Although AMO and the Coast Guard coordinate at the regional level, coordination and unity of effort do not always occur at the local level.

We visited 11 of the 17 overlapping AMO and Coast Guard locations to determine the extent of the coordination of their operations. According to our analysis, AMO and the Coast Guard reported:

- 5 of 11 (45 percent) locations did not coordinate operations or activities; and
- 8 of 11 (73 percent) locations did not train together.

The plan required DHS to monitor operational performance, coordination efforts, and information sharing. In response, DHS established a senior steering group and working group to oversee coordination efforts. According to DHS, the steering and working groups were discontinued in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

The ideas in the plan are not new, and attempts to coordinate interdiction efforts began much earlier than 2011. For example, in 1988 the Coast Guard and the U.S. Customs Service<sup>7</sup> agreed that coordination is necessary to:

- use all assets in the most efficient and effective manner possible;
- promote safety; and
- enhance the “team” concept.

In addition, in the 11 areas we visited, AMO and the Coast Guard were not co-located, but they shared dock space in 6 of those locations. In four locations AMO was already located with the U.S. Navy, CBP’s Office of Border Patrol, or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations. However, in one area, AMO had its boats in a private dock space even though a nearby Coast Guard boat station had extra space.

### **DHS Implemented Asset Acquisition and Logistics Oversight**

The similar missions of AMO and the Coast Guard resulted in each component acquiring aircraft and boats. The Department has taken steps to oversee aircraft and vessel acquisition and logistics, and it established three oversight mechanisms. The oversight mechanisms and their responsibilities are:

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<sup>7</sup> The creation of DHS divided the responsibilities and assets of the U.S. Customs Service among CBP and U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement.



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- Joint Requirements Council — oversees DHS capability needs and prioritizes funding recommendations to mitigate redundant capabilities, fill capability gaps, drive unity of effort, and harmonize capabilities requirements across DHS.
- Boat Forces Governance Board — coordinates leadership and oversight of DHS boats while addressing joint policy, business processes, strategy, standards, and other opportunities to align with a “One-DHS” vision for boat forces.
- Aviation Governance Board — provides strategic guidance and oversight to ensure efficient and effective management of its aviation fleet. The Aviation Board plans, supports, and enables aviation opportunities without having command and control authority over operations.

These groups align aircraft and vessel acquisition and logistics for DHS components. These groups are new to DHS and need time to achieve their goals.

### **Use of Force Policies Differ without Affecting Mission Effectiveness**

There are differences between AMO and Coast Guard use of force policies, but those differences do not affect mission effectiveness, safety, and accountability. According to the DHS Office of General Counsel, there are three principle differences: 1) the area where each component is authorized to operate; 2) the approval authority for using force; and 3) guidance on the use of force when migrants are involved.

#### Areas of Operation

The areas of operation in which the Coast Guard regularly operates are much broader than AMO’s areas of operation. The Coast Guard routinely conducts operations within customs waters, within internal waters, in international waters, and in other nations’ territorial seas with coastal state consent. AMO operates primarily within the customs waters, but it maintains the authority to pursue vessels fleeing the customs waters or hovering outside those waters as a means of avoiding AMO jurisdiction. According to the DHS Office of General Counsel, the Coast Guard is most likely to employ use of force in international waters, and AMO is most likely to employ use of force in the customs waters.



**Figure 5:** Coast Guard marksman taking aim at boat engines.  
*Source:* Coast Guard



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#### Approval for Employing Use of Force

Coast Guard crews must receive approval from the appropriate official in the chain of command, typically an Admiral, before using force to stop noncompliant vessels.<sup>8</sup> According to the Coast Guard, the approval time can take from 10 minutes to several hours depending on the case. In contrast, AMO policy reflects a more traditional law enforcement approach and allows its agents to make use of force decisions.

According to the Coast Guard, it needs a use of force policy to cover a vast range of mission sets across a legally and jurisdictionally complex operating environment. Although the approval process has some level of risk mitigation, the Coast Guard designed the process to relieve on-scene officers of the need to assess U.S. jurisdiction and legal authority to employ force against a noncompliant vessel, and allows those officers to focus on executing the tactics and procedures to safely and effectively employ that force.

We participated in use of force demonstrations for noncompliant vessels with both components and experienced the delay in the Coast Guard's approval process. Although there are potential safety concerns for Coast Guard boat crews during a pursuit, the Coast Guard stated that it updated its law enforcement manual to "refine and streamline the process in every way possible" to reduce the time lapse from when the Coast Guard vessel is "overt" (known by the suspected vessel to be following) to when the necessary actions (use of force) are completed.

#### Guidance When Migrants Are Present

Both components' policies provide for additional considerations when migrants are present. According to the DHS Office of General Counsel, the Coast Guard's policy permits vessel-to-vessel use of force in migrant cases, provided that the vessel is subject to U.S. jurisdiction, the vessel has exposed outdrives or an outboard engine, and there is probable cause to believe there is a violation of U.S. immigration law. In addition, according to the Coast Guard, it uses a "significant degree of restraint" in exercising force in migrant cases.

AMO's policy also permits vessel-to-vessel use of force when "objectively reasonable" and the level of force reflects the totality of circumstances including the severity of the crime and presence of imminent danger to the agent or others. The policy restricts the use of air-to-vessel force against noncompliant vessels where the sole violation appears to be illegal alien smuggling. The exception to this general prohibition in the AMO policy is where

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<sup>8</sup> Coast Guard personnel can use force in self defense and other security missions without additional approval.



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the vessel is suspected of a crime(s) in addition to the smuggling of aliens. In these cases, the AMO agents maintain the discretion to employ use of force. In other words, the mere presence of migrants on a vessel does not prevent AMO agents from using force if they suspect a separate crime and the potential benefit of employing force is not outweighed by the potential danger posed to personnel, other law enforcement personnel, or the public.

### **Conclusion**

The maritime missions and responsibilities of AMO and the Coast Guard are not duplicative, and it is necessary for both to interdict drugs and people trying to enter the country illegally. Although they have common goals of preventing the illegal flow of contraband and people in a shared area, they contribute in different ways, and each provides capabilities that the other cannot. Having both agencies bolsters the overall effectiveness of maritime border security and meets the national goals for layered maritime security. Given the vast area of responsibility, different activities, and limited resources, eliminating the maritime law enforcement responsibilities of either agency — or combining them — could be harmful to border security. However, AMO and the Coast Guard could improve coordination in some areas.

DHS and maritime border security could benefit from Department monitoring and improved coordination. Oversight and coordination could potentially lead to using resources more effectively, such as saving money through co-location of personnel. This could not only save money but also help with communication, coordination, and alignment with the “One-DHS” vision.

### **Recommendations**

**Recommendation #1:** We recommend that the DHS Under Secretary for Management reestablish an oversight mechanism at the DHS level to ensure that AMO and the Coast Guard coordinate operations.

**Recommendation #2:** We recommend that the Coast Guard Commandant, CBP Commissioner, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director revise the Maritime Operations Coordination Plan to include requirements for coordination and information sharing at all levels, especially the local level.





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### Management Comments and OIG Analysis

DHS concurred with our recommendations and provided comments to the draft report. We have included a copy of the Department's management comments in their entirety in appendix B. DHS also provided technical comments to our report, which we incorporated, as appropriate.

**Recommendation #1:** DHS concurred. The Department recognizes that it can improve coordination of maritime operations and maritime security at the Department level. To address the recommendation, the Under Secretary for Management will charter and lead a Maritime Security Coordination Working Group that includes key leaders from applicable DHS Operational and Headquarters Components. The Working Group will ensure DHS implements oversight mechanisms to coordinate AMO, Coast Guard, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations on a sustained basis. Additionally, the Working Group will review how the principles and goals outlined in the Maritime Operations Coordination Plan, together with suitable means of oversight, can be incorporated into recently established coordination forums at both the Department and field levels. The estimated completion date is December 29, 2017.

**OIG Analysis:** The Department's planned actions are responsive to this recommendation. This recommendation is resolved but will remain open until DHS fully implements the corrective actions.

**Recommendation #2:** DHS concurs. The Working Group will apply lessons learned from the implementation of the 2011 Maritime Operations Coordination Plan and revise the plan to address current operational structures and lines of effort. In accordance with DHS Under Secretary for Management tasking, the Working Group will review these new practices and submit recommendations to enhance joint training, situational awareness, intelligence sharing, and operational coordination at all levels. The estimated completion date is June 29, 2018.

**OIG Analysis:** The Department's corrective action is responsive to the recommendation. This recommendation is resolved, but it will remain open until DHS provides a copy of the revised plan and demonstrates how it implemented the new practices.



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### **Appendix A**

#### **Objective, Scope, and Methodology**

The Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General was established by the *Homeland Security Act of 2002* (Public Law 107-296) by amendment to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*.

This review was a request from the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security. Our audit objective was to determine whether there is unnecessary duplication or fragmentation of the maritime missions and responsibilities of AMO and the Coast Guard to identify operational, mission, and cost efficiencies that DHS might realize. The U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security requested this audit to determine whether there is unnecessary duplication of the maritime missions and responsibilities of AMO and the Coast Guard. In addition, we assessed:

- alignment of aircraft and vessel acquisition and logistics;
- use of force policies and the degree that differences had on mission effectiveness, safety, and accountability; and
- operational coordination and opportunities for co-location.

To answer our objective, we:

- Consulted GAO and used its guidance to determine whether fragmentation, overlap, and duplication exist in AMO and Coast Guard maritime operations. To make the determination of whether there is unnecessary duplication, we identified and analyzed the activities, capabilities, and jurisdictions of AMO and the Coast Guard. We analyzed the:
  - intention of having layers of maritime security;
  - positive and negative impacts;
  - cost;
  - level of coordination;
  - size of areas of responsibility;
  - number of personnel; and
  - outcomes and results of AMO and Coast Guard efforts.
- Analyzed the National Strategy for Maritime Security and its supporting plans and assessed how AMO and the Coast Guard provide layered maritime security. We also interviewed DHS officials to determine



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whether the principles of the strategy expressed in 2005 remain part of the current National and Homeland Security plan.

- Reviewed the 2011 Maritime Operations Coordination Plan and used its requirements to determine whether AMO and the Coast Guard have coordinated efforts.
- Examined AMO and Coast Guard activities to determine the extent to which the components implemented the coordination plan, evidenced by the level of cooperation, coordination, and communication between the two agencies. During these site visits, we analyzed schedule sharing information, joint trainings, and coordination efforts to ensure that AMO and the Coast Guard coordinated and trained together. We also corroborated testimonial evidence in the areas where AMO and the Coast Guard were not coordinating or conducting joint training. We visited locations in:
  - San Diego, California;
  - Atlantic Beach, Fort Pierce, Jacksonville, Key Largo, Key West, Marathon Key, Miami, and West Palm Beach, Florida;
  - Grand Isle and Houma, Louisiana;
  - Detroit, Gibraltar, Mount Clemens, Port Huron, and Selfridge, Michigan;
  - Gulfport, Mississippi;
  - Cleveland, Clinton, and Marblehead, Ohio;
  - Erie, Pennsylvania;
  - Aguadilla and San Juan, Puerto Rico;
  - Corpus Christi, McAllen, Port Aransas, Port Isabel, and South Padre Island, Texas; and
  - Bellingham, Port Angeles, and Seattle, Washington.
- Analyzed seizure data for AMO and the Coast Guard. We performed data reliability testing on drug seizure information and determined it was sufficiently reliable for the purposes of our audit.
- Calculated FY 2015 operating costs for the overlapping AMO and Coast Guard locations to estimate operating costs. The operating costs included facility leases, boat dock leases, operations and maintenance, and salary expenses. We used this information to provide context, and it did not result in a finding or have an effect on the overall conclusion and recommendations.
- Received a demonstration of a radar system in the Pacific Northwest and interviewed AMO to gain an understanding of the system. We also interviewed officials from the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office, AMO, and the Coast Guard to determine where other radar systems are available and which maritime border security agencies have access to them.



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- Reviewed use of force policies for the Coast Guard and AMO to determine the impact on safety and effectiveness. We also observed use of force demonstrations from AMO and the Coast Guard to understand how differences in policies affect the execution of use of force in San Diego, California; Miami and Key West, Florida; and San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- Interviewed officials at AMO and the Coast Guard in Washington, DC, to gain an understanding of the maritime missions and obtain program statistics and cost information.
- Interviewed officials from the Office of the Chief Readiness Officer to gain an understanding of the oversight roles of the Joint Requirements Council, Aviation Governance Board, and the Boat Forces Governing Board.
- Toured CBP's Air and Marine Operations Center and the Coast Guard's Maritime Intelligence Fusion Center in California to gain an understanding of intelligence operations.
- Observed AMO aerial surveillance training in San Diego, California, and Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, and a Coast Guard maritime law enforcement patrol in the Straits of Florida to understand the different activities and capabilities of AMO and the Coast Guard.
- Compared authorities and mandates for AMO and the Coast Guard to determine jurisdictions, roles, and responsibilities.
- Confirmed our findings with AMO, the Coast Guard, and other stakeholders.

We conducted this performance audit between October 2015 and June 2016 pursuant to the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, and according to generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based upon our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based upon our audit objectives.





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**Appendix B**  
**DHS Comments to the Draft Report**


U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland  
Security**

September 16, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: John Roth  
Inspector General

FROM: Jim H. Crumacker, CIA, CFE   
Director  
Departmental GAO-OIG Liaison Office

SUBJECT: (U) Management's Response to OIG Draft Report: "AMO and Coast Guard Maritime Missions Are Not Duplicative, but Could Improve with Better Coordination"  
(Project No. OIG-16-001-AUD-CBP)

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appreciates the work of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in planning and conducting its review and issuing this report.

The Department is pleased to note OIG's positive recognition that:

- a. the maritime missions and responsibilities of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Air and Marine Operations Directorate (AMO) and the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard) are not duplicative,
- b. their efforts to interdict drugs and people bolster the overall effectiveness of DHS's maritime border security, and
- c. the two agencies contribute to the national strategy of layered maritime security and conduct different activities, which leads to more interdictions.

The Department remains committed to exploring ways to further the progress we have made in strengthening our unity of effort in maritime security. The OIG report provides a testament to the valuable work being done by AMO and Coast Guard at both the Department and Component levels. It also points out some areas where DHS can improve coordination, communications, and operational effectiveness across this dynamic and vast area of joint responsibility.

The Department recognizes that the mechanisms established in the Maritime Operations Coordination Plan of 2011 are still relevant and need to be considered as we refine:



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- a. the coordination mechanisms between Operational Components and Headquarters, both for regions where geographic Joint Task Forces (JTFs) are currently in place and regions where JTFs have not yet been implemented, and
- b. the operational coordination mechanisms between field units at the regional level and local level, particularly in those locations where overlapping units are remote from the regional command and control entities.

An example of DHS-level recognition is the enhancements being implemented in multi-Component operational coordination with our interagency and international partners along the Northern border. These enhancements include creation of a Cross Border Law Enforcement Advisory Committee (Committee). The Committee members (i.e., CBP, Canada Border Service Agency, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Coast Guard) provide executive-level guidance to cross-border law enforcement initiatives that rely on partnerships between U.S. and Canadian law enforcement agencies. The Department will continue to look for additional ways to increase our collaboration with mission partners and boost our operational effectiveness along our Nation's air, land, and sea borders.

The draft report contained two recommendations with which the Department concurs. As a result of these recommendations, DHS will reestablish an entity to provide department-wide oversight of the maritime security mission arena. Coordination will be facilitated by building on the foundational principles and goals outlined in the Maritime Operations Coordination Plan of 2011 and incorporating them into more recently developed guidance. Attached find our detailed response to each recommendation.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. Technical comments were previously provided under separate cover. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Attachment



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**Attachment: DHS Management Response to Recommendations  
Contained in Project No. OIG-16-001-AUD-CBP**

**Recommendation 1:** We recommend that the DHS Under Secretary for Management reestablish an oversight mechanism at the DHS level to ensure that AMO and the Coast Guard coordinate operations.

**Response:** Concur. Although the Secretary of Homeland Security implemented the Senior Leadership Council and the Deputy’s Management Action Group, the Department recognizes that coordination on maritime operations/maritime security at the Department level can still be improved. Therefore, the Under Secretary for Management (USM) will charter a Maritime Security Coordination Working Group (Working Group). This Working Group will be led by the Deputy USM and include key leaders from the applicable Operational and Headquarters Components. The Working Group will:

- a. ensure oversight mechanisms are implemented to coordinate AMO, Coast Guard, and ICE operations on a sustained basis, taking into account the JTFs and current organizational structures. and
- b. review how the principles and goals outlined in the Maritime Operations Coordination Plan of 2011, together with suitable means of oversight, are to be incorporated into recently established coordination forums at both the Department and field levels.

<b>The Working Group will complete its tasking in two phases. Phase I will focus on Department-level coordination/integration and Phase II will focus on field-level coordination/integration. Estimated Phase I activities milestone and completion dates are listed below:</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
Department-Level Maritime Security Coordination Working Group Standup	November 30, 2016
Department-Level Maritime Security Coordination Working Group, Phase I Analysis Complete and Recommendations Submitted	March 31, 2017
Under Secretary for Management’s Direction to Implement Approved Phase I Recommendations	June 30, 2017
Maritime Security Coordination Working Group Phase I Recommendations, in Sustainment	December 29, 2017



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**Recommendation 2:** We recommend that the Coast Guard Commandant, CBP Commissioner, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director revise the Maritime Operations Coordination Plan to include requirements for coordination and information sharing at all levels, especially the local level.

**Response:** Concur. The Working Group will apply lessons learned from the implementation of the Maritime Operations Coordination Plan of 2011 and revise the plan to address current operational structures and lines of effort. In accordance with USM tasking, the Working Group will review these new practices and build on them in Phase II. The Working Group will submit recommendations to enhance joint training, situational awareness, intelligence sharing, and operational coordination that reaches the local level.

<b>Estimated Phase II activities and milestone completion dates are listed below:</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
Department-Level Maritime Security Coordination Working Group Standup	November 30, 2016
Department-Level Maritime Security Coordination Working Group, Phase II Analysis Complete and Recommendations Submitted	May 31, 2017
Under Secretary for Management's Direction to Implement Approved Phase II Recommendations	August 31, 2017
Development of Coordination Plans(s) & Implementation Guidance	December 29, 2017
Phase II Recommendations, Coordination Plan(s), in Sustainment	June 29, 2018





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**Appendix C**  
**AMO and Coast Guard FY 2015 Total Seizure Statistics**

<b>Totals</b>	<b>ALL AMO</b>	<b>ALL Coast Guard</b>	<b>17 Overlapping AMO Units</b>	<b>17 Overlapping Coast Guard Units</b>
Total Drugs (lbs.)	966,886	257,723	46,201*	5,602
Cocaine	243,387	199,749	4,610	2,633
Marijuana	719,180	57,855	41,481	2,914
Ecstasy	477	0	74	0
Heroin	627	0	11	0
Methamphetamine	3,191	0	25	0
Other Drugs**	24	119	0	55
Currency (millions)	\$50.1	0	\$5.5	0
Weapons	1,427	0	71	0
Aircraft	35	0	2	0
Vehicles	788	0	67	0
Vessels	113	146	62	4

Source: AMO and Coast Guard FY 2015 Total Seizure Statistics

\* This figure differs from the number in the report because this includes all seizures from land and maritime operations.

\*\* The Coast Guard includes ecstasy, heroin, methamphetamine, and currency in the Other Drugs category.





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**Appendix D**  
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