

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

MOTOR CARRIER DIVISION

INTRODUCTION

This report, issued in August 2001, contains the results of our performance audit* of the Motor Carrier Division (MCD), Michigan Department of State Police.

AUDIT PURPOSE

This performance audit was conducted as part of the constitutional responsibility of the Office of the Auditor General. Performance audits are conducted on a priority basis related to the potential for improving effectiveness* and efficiency*.

BACKGROUND

The mission* of MCD is to provide the public with a safe motoring environment and protect the highway infrastructure by promoting compliance with commercial vehicle laws through education and enforcement. MCD enforces the Michigan Vehicle Code, the Pupil Transportation Act, and other laws that pertain to motor carriers which transport commodities by truck and trailer and school buses.

Michigan is divided into eight MCD districts. Each district manages the operation of the weigh stations and road patrols within the district.

For fiscal year 1999-2000, MCD was appropriated approximately \$16.3 million and received additional contingency transfers of \$1.9 million. As of June 30, 2000, MCD had 172 employees.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE,
CONCLUSION, AND
NOTEWORTHY
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of MCD in meeting its mission to provide the public with a safe motoring environment and protect the highway infrastructure by promoting compliance with commercial vehicle laws through education and enforcement.

Conclusion: We concluded that MCD was generally effective and efficient in meeting its mission. However, we noted reportable conditions* related to effectiveness of operations, the continuous quality improvement* process, recruiting efforts, and the Bus Inspection Unit (Findings 1 through 4).

Noteworthy Accomplishments: MCD is a pilot state in developing the federally sponsored Commercial Vehicle Information Systems Network (CVISN). CVISN will provide for the networking of several State agencies involved in furnishing credentials and supplying enforcement pertaining to commercial vehicles. CVISN will provide the industry with "one-stop shopping" and will facilitate deployment of Intelligent Transportation Systems in Michigan.

MCD has developed and implemented a commercial vehicle fatal crash causation study (F.A.C.T.). This program, implemented in 1996, is the first of its kind and serves as a model for other states.

MCD has been proactive in the training of local law enforcement officers in commercial vehicle enforcement. MCD trained 593 local officers during 1998 and an additional 127 officers in 1999. To keep local officers up-to-date on changes in laws and regulations, MCD began

publishing a quarterly commercial enforcement bulletin in January 2000.

MCD designed and constructed a unique cargo tank training trailer. The trailer, consisting of cargo tanks with working valves designed to transport various types of hazardous materials, has been used to train firefighters, law enforcement officers, and other emergency responders throughout Michigan.

MCD has implemented advanced automation systems. Each weigh station and patrol vehicle is equipped with a computer used for recording and reporting vehicle safety inspection data. Software is under development that will enable patrol officers to complete commercial vehicle law citations and the officers' daily log on a computer at the roadside and to electronically transmit this data to courts and the central office. Field supervisors will be able to retrieve data from remote sites.

**AUDIT SCOPE AND
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Motor Carrier Division. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

Our methodology included the testing of records primarily covering the period October 1, 1997 through June 30, 2000. We conducted a preliminary survey of MCD operations to gain an understanding of the activities and to form a basis for selecting certain operations for audit. This included discussions with staff regarding their functions and responsibilities and reviews of program records and annual reports.

We examined program activity data and methodology for assigning weigh station, road patrol, and Specialized Transportation Enforcement Team staff. We reviewed weighing and inspection activities during field visits and summarized and analyzed reports of these Statewide activities. We reviewed the process of identifying companies and school districts that have a history of safety violations, and we analyzed the results of school bus inspections. Also, we conducted surveys (see supplemental information) requesting feedback from holders of commercial driver licenses and from school districts about their experiences and satisfaction with MCD activities.

**AGENCY RESPONSES
AND PRIOR AUDIT
FOLLOW-UP**

Our audit report includes 4 findings and 4 corresponding recommendations. MCD's preliminary responses indicated that MCD agrees with all 4 recommendations.

MCD complied with 4 of the 9 prior audit recommendations included within the scope of our current audit. The other 5 recommendations were rewritten for inclusion in this report.