

## EXECUTIVE DIGEST

# RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

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### INTRODUCTION

This report, issued in July 2001, contains the results of our performance audit\* of the Radiological Protection and Environmental Health Programs, Drinking Water and Radiological Protection Division (DWRPD), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

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### 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\*.

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### BACKGROUND

This audit addresses three programs within DWRPD.

The Radiological Protection Section monitors radioactive material sources to protect patients, employees, and the public from unnecessary exposure to ionizing radiation. DWRPD expended approximately \$1.4 million and employed 15 staff to operate the Radiological Protection Section in the fiscal year ended September 30, 2000.

The Medical Waste Regulatory Program registers certain producers of medical waste and regulates the handling

and disposal of medical waste. DWRPD collected approximately \$246,600 from registered producers of medical waste, expended approximately \$189,700, and employed 2 staff in the fiscal year ended September 30, 2000.

The Dry Cleaning Program licenses, inspects, and regulates dry cleaning establishments to protect workers, the public, and the environment from overexposure to dry cleaning chemicals. DWRPD collected approximately \$320,000 from approximately 1,120 dry cleaning establishments, expended approximately \$228,800 to implement this regulatory program, and employed 5 staff in the fiscal year ended September 30, 2000.

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AUDIT OBJECTIVE,  
CONCLUSION, AND  
NOTEWORTHY  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Audit Objective:** To assess DWRPD's effectiveness in protecting the public through the regulation of users of radioactive materials, producers of medical waste, and operators of dry cleaning establishments.

**Conclusion:** We concluded that DWRPD was generally effective in protecting the public through the regulation of users of radioactive materials, producers of medical waste, and operators of dry cleaning establishments. However, our assessment disclosed reportable conditions\* related to inspection of registered users of radioactive materials, the Indoor Radon Program, the Medical Waste Regulatory Program, and inspection of dry cleaning establishments (Findings 1 through 4).

**Noteworthy Accomplishments:** DWRPD revised radiological assessment procedures to address nuclear power reactor accidents to improve emergency preparedness. These changes, which focus on delivering

prompt and prudent public protection, were positively recognized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in July 2000.

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**AUDIT SCOPE AND  
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Radiological Protection Section and the Environmental Health Section of the Drinking Water and Radiological Protection Division, Department of Environmental Quality. 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.

We examined DWRPD records and activities for the period October 1, 1997 through September 30, 2000.

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

Our audit report contains 4 findings and 4 corresponding recommendations. The agency preliminary response indicates that DEQ agrees with 2 recommendations and that DEQ does not agree with 2 recommendations. The agency preliminary response also indicates that DEQ did not agree with part of Finding 4.

DWRPD complied with the one prior audit recommendation that was included within the scope of our current audit.