

## EXECUTIVE DIGEST

### FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION

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**INTRODUCTION** This report contains the results of our performance audit of the Fire Marshal Division (FMD), Michigan Department of State Police (MSP), for the period October 1, 1993 through July 31, 1995.

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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** FMD is composed of three main sections: Code Administration, Field Operations, and Support Services. FMD also provides support staff for the State Fire Safety Board and the Fire Fighters Training Council.

FMD's mission is to provide direct services to residents of the State and assist local fire and law enforcement agencies in protecting life and property from fire, explosions, and hazardous materials. FMD programs include fire safety rule development and enforcement through plan review and inspection; fire investigation; fire and arson data collection

and analysis; response to hazardous materials emergencies; and fire safety training and education.

As of June 30, 1995, FMD staff consisted of 48 central office and 54 field staff (37 civilian and 65 enlisted). Total expenditures for the fiscal year ended September 30, 1994 were approximately \$11 million.

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**AUDIT OBJECTIVES,  
CONCLUSIONS, AND  
NOTEWORTHY  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**Audit Objective:** To assess the effectiveness of FMD programs in protecting life and property from fire, explosions, and hazardous materials.

**Conclusion:** Based on our analysis of available data, we concluded that FMD programs were generally effective in protecting life and property from fire, explosions, and hazardous materials. However, FMD could enhance its program effectiveness in the areas of program evaluation (Finding 1), fire safety programs (Finding 2), and the Aboveground Storage Tank Program (Finding 3).

**Noteworthy Accomplishments:** FMD is in the process of updating current computer systems with the intent of improving their capabilities for program monitoring. FMD developed a strategic plan identifying its program goals and objectives as required by MSP management. This plan provides direction for FMD efforts in accomplishing its overall mission. We also noted that the Fire Fighters Training Council adopted the International Fire Service Training Association curriculum package for fire fighters and rewrote the six Michigan specific companion program courses. This new curriculum was implemented on October 1, 1994.

**Audit Objective:** To assess the efficiency of FMD's plan review, inspection, investigation, and training functions.

**Conclusion:** Based on our analysis, we concluded that FMD's plan review, inspection, investigation, and training functions were generally efficient. However, FMD could improve efficiency in its use of resources (Finding 4).

**Noteworthy Accomplishments:** FMD implemented new computer software to assist field staff in the completion of inspection reports. FMD personnel stated that this new software has reduced report preparation time. Also, the Fire Fighters Training Council has obtained funding for and is in the preliminary stages of developing an automated recordkeeping system which is intended to improve the efficiency of its operations.

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**AUDIT SCOPE  
AND  
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Fire Marshal Division for the period October 1, 1993 through July 31, 1995. 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 a preliminary survey of FMD operations. This included interviewing various personnel and reviewing applicable statutes, rules, policies and procedures, reports, and other reference materials to gain an understanding of FMD central office and field unit activities.

We reviewed the methods used by FMD to measure and evaluate its overall performance. We also reviewed available personnel activity data with respect to various operations as well as fire statistics generated by FMD via the Michigan Fire Incident Reporting System. In addition, we surveyed users of FMD services to obtain information regarding FMD's effectiveness and efficiency in performing these services. Summaries of the survey responses are presented as supplemental information.

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

Our audit report contains 4 findings and 4 corresponding recommendations. The agency's preliminary response indicated that MSP agreed with all 4 recommendations and has initiated steps to implement the recommendations.

FMD had not complied with the prior audit recommendation included within the scope of our current audit.