

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

MOTOR CARRIER DIVISION

INTRODUCTION This report contains the results of our performance audit of the Motor Carrier Division (MCD), Michigan Department of State Police, for the period October 1, 1993 through November 30, 1995.

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 operates weigh stations, road patrol units, temporary operations for directed and selective enforcement efforts, and the self-inspection program. MCD enforces the Motor Vehicle Code and other laws that pertain to motor carriers.

The code includes regulations directed at motor carriers who transport commodities by truck and trailer and school buses.

For fiscal year 1994-95, MCD was appropriated approximately \$13.7 million. As of October 31, 1995, MCD had 177 employees.

**AUDIT OBJECTIVE,
CONCLUSION, AND
NOTEWORTHY
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Motor Carrier Division 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: In general, MCD was effective and efficient in meeting its mission; however, our assessment disclosed two material conditions*:

- MCD did not routinely evaluate essential data that would assist management in utilizing MCD's resources in the most effective and efficient manner (Finding 2).

MCD agreed with this finding and informed us that it has either taken or will take action to comply with the recommendation.

- MCD could improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Bus Inspection Unit by prioritizing inspections, improving the monitoring of inspections, and notifying school boards and the public of the inspection results (Finding 3).

MCD agreed with this finding and informed us that it has initiated action to comply with the recommendations.

We noted reportable conditions* concerning MCD's development of quantified goals* and objectives*, road patrol enforcement activities, the City of Detroit's weight enforcement, and the calibration of weigh-in-motion scales at permanent weigh stations (Findings 1, 4, 5 and 6).

Noteworthy Accomplishments: MCD has participated in a pilot project to electronically clear vehicles which have an excellent compliance rating; thus, allowing vehicles to bypass permanent weigh stations. Therefore, enforcement personnel focus their attention on vehicles more likely to be in violation.

MCD played an active role in developing a statutory structure which automatically adopts updated federal motor carrier safety regulations. This legislation helps ensure consistency between Michigan and federal size, weight and safety laws, rules, and regulations.

MCD, in conjunction with the Michigan Department of Transportation, has begun utilizing sites which allow officers to directly obtain vehicle weight information via lap-top computer.

**AUDIT SCOPE
AND
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Motor Carrier Division for the period October 1, 1993 through November 30, 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.

To accomplish our objective, we gained an understanding of MCD operations by conducting a preliminary survey; reviewing goals, objectives, and action plans; and interviewing agency staff. We also used a questionnaire which asked 150 holders of commercial drivers licenses about their experiences and perceptions concerning MCD. We performed detailed reviews of MCD's 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 which have a history of safety violations. We analyzed the results of school bus inspections and prepared schedules which compare Michigan's weight limits and fine structure with other states.

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

Our audit report includes 6 findings and 9 corresponding recommendations. MCD's preliminary response indicated that it agreed with all our recommendations.

MCD had complied with 7 of 10 prior audit recommendations included within the scope of our current audit. Of the 3 prior audit recommendations that were not complied with, 2 were repeated in Findings 1 and 6 of this audit, and 1 was incorporated into Finding 2, although the prior recommendation was not repeated.