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## Washington State Patrol Performance Audit Report 99-4

This performance audit of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) responds to legislation passed in 1997 (ESSB 6061) that called for performance audits of state transportation agencies. This report focuses on selected subject areas and issues that are of interest to the legislature as reflected in advice from a Temporary Advisory Committee. The audit found the Washington State Patrol to be a forward-looking agency whose management and line staff put in considerable extra effort to assist in answering the audit questions and in meeting an aggressive timeline for this report. Findings in this report highlight many achievements of the Patrol and point to areas where additional changes can be of assistance to both the agency and the legislature. The audit produced 14 recommendations.

### Patrol Staffing, Allocation, and Scheduling

The audit examines WSP's staffing and deployment model, and recommends steps to address limitations due to model design as well as problems in the use of the model. The steps include making modifications to the model and pursuing a process of model validation. Another recommendation is that WSP should establish performance measures for the Patrol that are related to outputs or outcomes that can be affected by the agency itself.

- Paid overtime and compensatory time increase the average commissioned staff's pension by 14 percent.
- Commissioned staff approaching retirement work more overtime than other commissioned staff.
- Department of Transportation (DOT) contract overtime accounted for 35 percent of the overtime worked by patrol staff before retirement.

Two recommendations are aimed at strengthening agency controls on overtime.

### Compensation Issues

WSP is in compliance with statutes relating to its compensation and post-retirement hiring practices. Other findings, relating to specific questions posed to the audit team, include:

- WSP commissioned staff receive relatively more specialty or educational pay than other states' troopers, and trooper turnover is lower.

### Patrol Activities on County Roads

The Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC) has directed the Patrol to take certain actions to reduce its activities on county roads. The audit estimates that in FY 1998 there were the equivalent of 51 troopers devoted to such activities, at a cost of approximately \$3.7 million. Depending on the choice of alternative service levels, implementation of the LTC directive could make 14.8 to 22.6 FTE troopers available for other duties. The cost of these troopers annually is \$1.1 million to \$1.6 million,

respectively. There are no recommendations in this chapter.

### **Commercial Vehicle Division (CVD) Transition Planning**

The audit finds opportunities to scale back the number of positions in CVD that need to transition to fully commissioned officers. There are also opportunities for civilian or unarmed personnel to perform selected duties. A recommendation in this chapter is that the legislature and WSP should choose a transition option that takes advantage of these opportunities.

### **Technology**

WSP has generally applied proven technology in an efficient manner to meet critical public safety needs. However, state government has not made sufficient investments in public safety computer and communications infrastructures, and several key systems have become outdated. Two audit recommendations support future enhancements of the state Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and strategic planning of the Patrol's Mobile Computer Network.

### **Telecommunications**

WSP has been nationally recognized for its telecommunications system. The audit finds that WSP has efficiently applied proven technology to establish a reliable public safety communication system. However, to maintain the current high level of service, WSP should improve basic maintenance on its telecommunication towers. Two recommendations address opportunities for collocation of equipment with other public and private entities and the need for better coordination of radio communications among state and local jurisdictions.

### **Patrol Vehicle Replacement**

A model developed by JLARC, with WSP assistance, indicates that the increase of

WSP pursuit vehicle mileage from the current target of 100,000 miles to 110,000 miles has resulted in a small reduction (one cent per mile, or \$159,000 annually) in the total cost of ownership. The 110,000 mile replacement target saves \$660,000 annually over the former target of 75,000 miles.

A recommendation calls for WSP to continue use of the new model for pursuit vehicles and to extend its use for review of other categories of fleet vehicles as well. Another recommendation is to budget funds for vehicle purchase and operations into a segregated account with restrictions on the ability to transfer these funds for other purposes.

### **Collocation**

WSP is complying with the laws related to coordination of siting facilities. We also found that appropriate economic evaluations have been done on WSP projects by use of a JLARC-developed *lease vs. own* model. However, future projects would benefit from retrospective analysis of completed projects, since some economic benefits have been overstated (e.g., collocation of DOL vehicle licensing services in the Vancouver facility).

### **Indirect Cost Recoveries**

When providing services to other agencies, WSP is reimbursed for both its direct and indirect costs. In instances where it provides such services primarily on an overtime basis, its indirect cost recoveries may exceed actual expenses. These reimbursements are used by WSP to address agency priorities. Although WSP's practices are not inconsistent with applicable rules and regulations, there is little outside oversight of the distribution of these funds. The report recommends that the Office of Financial Management and the Patrol jointly review and resolve the issues concerning indirect cost recoveries detailed in the audit.