



# **PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**Reviewing the Effectiveness of the State's  
Workplace Health and Safety Program**

## ***Executive Summary*** *with Conclusions and Recommendations*

**A Report to the Legislative Post Audit Committee  
By the Legislative Division of Post Audit  
State of Kansas  
January 1997**

# ***Legislative Post Audit Committee***

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## ***Legislative Division of Post Audit***

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LEGISLATURE OF KANSAS  
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January 7, 1997

To: Members of the Kansas Legislature

This executive summary contains the findings and conclusions, together with a summary of our recommendations and the agency response, from our completed performance audit, *Reviewing the Effectiveness of the State's Workplace Health and Safety Program*.

The report includes a number of recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the State's Workplace Health and Safety Program, including steps to ensure that the Program meets the requirements of State law and uses its limited staff in the most effective manner.

If you would like a copy of the full audit report, please call our office and we will send you one right away. We would be happy to discuss these recommendations or any other items in the report with you at your convenience.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara J. Hinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara J. Hinton  
Legislative Post Auditor



**Reviewing the Effectiveness of the State's  
Workplace Health and Safety Program**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
LEGISLATIVE DIVISION OF POST AUDIT**

**Question 1: Is the State's Current Workplace  
Health and Safety Program Effective at  
Providing Accident Prevention Training to  
State Employees and at Reducing Accidents?**

**Although we couldn't tell whether the Program was effective at reducing accidents, agency officials told us the training they received was useful and met their agencies' needs.** ..... page 8  
*The most comprehensive accident-prevention training provided through the Program has been the behavior-modification training. We determined that any impact from this training likely wouldn't show up yet in available accident or claims statistics because this training was fairly recent and was completed in only small sections of three agencies. Although more employees have received other kinds of training, their numbers within any one agency still are fairly small. The impact of this other training on small groups won't necessarily be noticeable because accident data are available on an agencywide basis only. Nonetheless, training directors in State agencies that have received training were very positive about the Program, but didn't know whether the training actually had reduced accidents.*

**The Program isn't very effective at providing training in areas with the greatest needs.** ..... page 12  
*Program officials' method of selecting agencies to train overlooked some agencies with high accident rates or a lot of workers' compensation claims. There's been little regular communication between Program officials in the Human Resources Unit and other staff in the Self-Insurance Fund Unit who are most knowledgeable about State agencies' accident claim histories. Program training also isn't targeted towards the types of accidents that are most costly or that occur most frequently. Because the Program is voluntary, State agencies can decide not to take part in any Program training. Finally, we found Kansas has a very limited number of training staff compared to other states and other self-insured employers.*

**The training and other activities provided through the Program haven't fulfilled the requirements of State law.** ..... page 17  
*Officials from the Division of Personnel Services told us the Program is meeting all the requirements of State law, primarily through its behavior-modification training process. However, to-date this training has been completed in only three of the approximately 125 State agencies. The Program could reach more agencies by developing a less intensive accident-prevention program, and by helping State agencies implement that program themselves.*

**Question 1 Conclusion:** *If the Workplace Health and Safety Program is to be effective, Program staff will need to do more to identify agencies that need training by looking at a broader range of data such as accident rates, claim rates, and causes of accidents. This will involve working more closely with staff in the Self-Insurance Unit and will require the Division of Personnel Services to train staff on how to use existing computer software to produce the kinds of management information needed. Staff also will need to develop training to address frequent causes of accidents, such as slips and falls, that aren't currently addressed in existing training packages.* ..... page 18

*Above all, the Division of Personnel Services will need to reassess its approach to accident prevention training. In three years of operations, parts of only three agencies have completed its comprehensive training designed to change behaviors that lead to accidents. At this rate, it will be years before trainers reach all agencies. Thus, it appears that unless significantly more resources are going to be allocated to the Program, it might be more beneficial for Program officials to develop training that State agencies can implement themselves on an ongoing basis, and hold training sessions to train the one or two people in each agency that will be responsible for implementing the program.*

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**Question 2: Are Unrelated Administrative Expenses Being Charged to the Self-Insurance Fund for the Workplace Health and Safety Program?**

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**It appears that significant amounts of Self-Insurance Fund moneys have been spent for salary costs unrelated to the Health and Safety Program.** *The two employees who have served in the Program's clerical position since December 1994 estimated that 70% to 99% (about \$21,000) of their time has been spent on duties not related to the Program. The current Unit Director generally agreed that the vast majority (70%-80%) of the clerical staff's times was spent on work unrelated to the Program. The Program's two professional employees told us that about \$18,000 worth of their time was spent on activities unrelated to the Program since December 1994. Division officials disagreed with the employees' estimates, and said those costs were offset by portions of salaries for other staff who worked on Program activities, but whose salaries weren't paid from the Self-Insurance Fund. Because employees in the Division don't complete detailed time records, we couldn't tell whose estimates were accurate.* ..... page 20

**We found no major problems with the use of Program equipment.** *Program equipment has been pooled with Human Resource Development Unit equipment, and non-Program staff use Program equipment. However, the cross-usage hasn't caused a major problem. We found one expenditure for equipment—a needs assessment software program purchased for \$360 with Self-Insurance Fund moneys—that Program staff told us they never used.* ..... page 22

**Question 2 Conclusion:** *With only two professional staff and one clerical person to serve more than 40,000 State employees, the staff* ..... page 22

resources available for accident prevention are very limited. Any use of those employees for non-program-related activities diminishes the Program's ability to be effective. Agency staff disagree about the amount of time professional staff spent on non-program activities, but agreed that clerical staff spent a significant amount of time on non-program-related activities. This suggests that the Program doesn't need a full-time clerical employee and the money spent to fund the clerical salary could be used to help pay for additional trainers or materials to supplement the Program. Although pooling staff and equipment from various functions may make good sense from an efficiency standpoint, it will be important for Department officials to ensure that the focus of this Program doesn't get lost in other functions of the agency.

**Recommendations:** A brief summary of the report's recommendations, together with a summary of applicable comments from the agency, is presented below. .... page 22

We made several recommendations to the Division of Personnel Services to improve the effectiveness of the Workplace Health and Safety Program and ensure the Program meets the requirements of State law. They include:

- ensuring Program staff are trained to use computer software to obtain management information regarding accidents and claims
- ensuring Program staff provide appropriate training to State agencies after reviewing claims and accident data and gathering input from Self-Insurance Fund claims adjustors
- developing policies and procedures that State agencies can use to address their own safety needs
- evaluating the effectiveness of the behavior-modification process to determine if its worth continuing

The Department of Administration should develop proposals for legislative consideration that would provide incentives to State agencies to participate in safety training.

Finally, we recommended the Division ensure Program resources are used effectively by discontinuing funding of a full-time clerical person and using the freed up moneys to pay for additional training staff, developing a system to account for time spent on Program activities, and assessing whether the Program has sufficient training resources.

The Department of Administration generally concurred with our recommendations. However, officials disagreed with some Program staff estimates of time spent on activities unrelated to the Program and stressed that other Division staff have spent time on Program activities but weren't paid with Self-Insurance Fund moneys.

**APPENDIX A: Agency Response** ..... page 25

This audit was conducted by Sharon Patnode, Allan Foster, and John McIntyre. If you need any additional information about the audit's findings, please contact Ms. Patnode at the Division's offices. Our address is: Legislative Division of Post Audit, 800 SW Jackson Street, Suite 1200, Topeka, Kansas 66612. You also may call (913) 296-3792, or contact us via the Internet at: [LPA@mail.ksleg.state.ks.us](mailto:LPA@mail.ksleg.state.ks.us).

