

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE BUDGET ASSISTANT
AUDIT DIVISION**

**PROPOSED PERFORMANCE AUDIT SCOPE STATEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY RADIO INTEROPERABILITY**

In January, 2014, the Fiscal Committee of the General Court adopted a joint Legislative Performance Audit and Oversight Committee recommendation to conduct a performance audit of the Department of Safety's (DOS) radio interoperability efforts. We held an entrance conference with the DOS management on March 18, 2014.

Background

Radio interoperability permits public safety officials, such as fire, police, or emergency medical services, to easily communicate across disciplines, across jurisdictions, and as needed during routine operations and in emergencies. Serious problems can arise when public safety officials cannot communicate with one another. Since disasters and major emergencies do not respect municipal, state, or national borders, it is important for New Hampshire to have a functional interoperable radio communications system to allow public safety officials to effectively communicate with all necessary parties.

In addition to its primary responsibility to patrol highways and enforce traffic and criminal laws, the Division of State Police (DSP) has assumed responsibility for operating and maintaining a Statewide Interoperable Communications System (System). The System is based on a very-high frequency two-way radio system with a network of repeaters connected by fiber optic lines to microwave retransmission stations throughout the State. The production System went live in 1997, and serves as the primary daily-use communications system for many State, county, and local public safety agencies. However, some State agencies and municipalities operate independent and, at times, incompatible radio systems.

In 2007, the DOS wrote a federally-required *Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan* (SCIP) to document the System's operation, provide strategic vision, and "[f]inalize the completion of the integration of the fractured, fragmented, and non-redundant voice information sharing system." Goals included codifying a governance structure, improving the System to achieve 95 percent coverage of the State with 95 percent reliability within three years, and adding public safety wireless broadband-related strategic goals. In our 2010 performance audit of the Field Operations Bureau, we recommended DOS management consider a strategy to integrate communications systems statewide, establish interoperability standards, assign an interoperability coordinator, and work with the Legislature to develop statutory and regulatory language to codify the interoperability function within DOS and provide it statewide authority, goals, and objectives to further the concept. Management concurred.

The System contains weaknesses and gaps in radio coverage which inhibit statewide radio operability and undermine the System's interoperability. In 2012, vehicle-mounted mobile radio coverage was "less than desirable" and "[p]ortable [radio] coverage [was] greatly lacking throughout the State."¹ The DOS released a request for proposal in February 2014, to obtain an in-depth study of the System, focusing on overall functionality, coverage capabilities, and points-

¹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *New Hampshire Radio System Review*, March 2012.

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of-weakness. The resulting report will propose improvements and identify options to meet or exceed the 95/95 statewide coverage standard.

While the DSP operates and maintains the System, statute does not charge the DSP with any specific duties or responsibilities related to statewide radio interoperability. Neither is there a formal statewide radio interoperability program or line item in the DOS budget; instead, an ad hoc mix of federal grants, and State general and capital funds is relied upon for funding. The only specific statutory language related to communications interoperability requires the Division of Emergency Services and Communications to consider developing a multi-purpose communications system for State and local government purposes. Statute does not require municipalities to integrate their radio communications systems into the State System. Local, county, and other State agencies are not required to participate in interoperability planning or development or comply with DOS policies. The DOS relied on voluntary participation by stakeholders, using a Statewide Radio Interoperability Planning Committee for system governance, standards development, and other functions, with DOS oversight.

Audit Scope

Our audit will be designed to answer the following question:

How efficient and effective has the Department of Safety been in achieving radio interoperability among New Hampshire's public safety agencies, including local and county governments, as of State fiscal year 2014?

To address this question, we plan to:

- review relevant State and federal statutes, administrative rules, policies, procedures, plans, and guidelines;
- interview key DOS management personnel and key stakeholders;
- review similar audits and evaluations from other states and the federal government;
- compare DOS practices to generally accepted practices; and
- examine the State's radio interoperability policy and strategy.

We anticipate completing this project in August 2014 and presenting the final report to the Fiscal Committee at its September or October 2014 meeting.

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PRE-SCOPING DOCUMENT – DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Audit Justification

Senator Reagan, on behalf of Senator Morse, requested this performance audit. Senator Morse's concerns focused on how efficiently and effectively the Department of Transportation (DOT) administers its vehicle and equipment fleet.

RSA 21-L established the DOT in 1985 to plan, develop, and maintain a State transportation network. The system was meant to provide safe and convenient movement of people and goods throughout the State. Statute establishes the DOT's four divisions.

Division Of Project Development

Project Development conducts engineering planning and design, materials research and testing, property acquisition, and supervises the DOT's construction projects except air navigation facilities. It consists of seven bureaus: Bridge Design, Construction, Environment, Highway Design, Materials and Research, Planning and Community Assistance, and Right-of-Way.

The Highway Design Bureau develops plans for constructing and rehabilitating roadways, while the Bridge Design Bureau is responsible for designing and preparing plans for bridge rehabilitation. Bridge Design also inspects and rates the condition of public bridges. The Construction Bureau oversees highway-related projects throughout the State, conducts inspections, and tests completed work, while the Bureau of Environment evaluates the impact construction projects have on natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources. The other Bureaus perform functions related to materials testing and acceptance, assessing the condition of bridge decks and structural steel coatings, providing technical and financial assistance to regional planning commissions and municipalities, and acquiring property rights to expand or improve existing transportation systems.

Division Of Operations

Operations maintains and supervises the State transportation network, maintains DOT equipment, and issues applicable permits, registrations, and licenses. The Division of Operations is divided into the Bureaus of Highway Maintenance, Bridge Maintenance, Mechanical Services, Traffic, and Turnpikes.

The Bridge Maintenance Bureau oversees bridge repairs and rehabilitation; Mechanical Services maintains the DOT's vehicles and equipment fleet; and Traffic maintains signs, traffic signals, and pavement markings on highways and bridges. The Bureau of Turnpikes oversees all aspects of the F.E. Everett Turnpike, Spaulding Turnpike, Blue Star Turnpike, and ten toll plazas. The Turnpike System consists of approximately 655 lane miles.

The Highway Maintenance Bureau is responsible for maintaining the State's Highway System including snow and ice control, guardrail repair, road repair, mowing, litter and debris removal, fuel distribution, and the Sponsor-A-Highway Program. In addition to maintenance, the Bureau oversees the applications for driveway access, encroachment, excavation, and parades. The Bureau's activities encompass approximately 8,710 lane miles, but exclude maintenance on the Turnpike System. The Bureau's operations are split among six district offices located in Lancaster, Enfield, Gilford, Swanzey, Bedford, and Durham. The Bureau maintains 91 patrol sheds throughout the State, with each district containing between 14 and 19 sheds. Patrol shed staff also provide support to other DOT Bureaus, including Bridge Maintenance, Bridge Design, Traffic, Construction, and the Traffic Management Center.

Division Of Aeronautics, Rail, And Transit

The Division is responsible for constructing and maintaining air navigation facilities; coordinating aircraft search and rescue missions; assisting in civil aircraft incident investigations; assisting municipalities in planning, acquiring, constructing, maintaining, operating, and improving safety at facilities; planning designing, and facilitating construction; and servicing rail and transit facilities. The Division is divided into two bureaus.

The Aeronautics Bureau oversees the State's 25 airports, as well as the 82 heliports and seaplane bases located across the State. Aeronautics also works with the federal government to maintain a safe air transportation system. The Rail and Transit Bureau manages the State's 459 miles of active railroad, conducts rail safety inspections, and oversees the public transportation consisting of 11 local bus systems, as well as bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

Division Of Finance And Contracts

The Division is responsible for DOT-wide financial management and budgetary control, bonding, accounts payable and receivable, federal billing, purchasing, contracts and grant management, and inventory. The Division oversees vehicle and equipment purchasing, invitations to bid on DOT projects, and administers contracts.

Proposed Audit Scope

To address Senator Morse's concerns, a performance audit could focus on how efficiently and effectively the DOT is managing its vehicle and equipment fleet. The audit could focus on:

- whether the size of the DOT's vehicle and equipment fleet is appropriate for its responsibilities,
- how much the DOT's vehicle and equipment fleet has changed over a ten-year period,
- if construction equipment is efficiently utilized,
- if vehicle acquisition and use are consistent with business needs, and
- whether opportunities exist to improve vehicle and equipment fleet utilization.