



# CALIFORNIA STATE AUDITOR

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# FACT SHEET

Date: **September 20, 2007**

Report: **I2007-2**

**The California State Auditor released the following report today:**  
**Investigations of Improper Activities by State Employees:**  
*February 2007 Through June 2007*

## BACKGROUND

Since July 1993 the state auditor has identified improper governmental activities totaling \$25.1 million. The state auditor has broad authority to perform independent investigations into complaints that state employees have engaged in improper conduct in accordance with the California Whistleblower Protection Act (whistleblower act). The whistleblower act defines an “improper governmental activity” as any action by a state agency or employee during the performance of official duties that violates any state or federal law or regulation; that is economically wasteful; or that involves gross misconduct, incompetence, or inefficiency.

## KEY FINDINGS

Between February 1, 2007 and June 30, 2007, the state auditor:

- ◆ Received 1,278 allegations from the hotline, mail, Web site, or individuals who visited the office.
- ◆ Opened 232 new cases after careful review while it continued to analyze or investigate 99 other cases.
- ◆ Substantiated or jointly substantiated with other state agencies, nine investigations and reported that state employees and departments engaged in improper activities, including the following:
  - The California Highway Patrol wasted \$881,565 in state funds and lost interest earnings of more than \$90,000 by purchasing 51 vans more than two years ago that it has yet to use.
  - The Department of Mental Health, Coalinga State Hospital, violated state law by purchasing law enforcement vehicles and using them for non-law enforcement purposes. The vehicles were first assigned to its general motor pool and later to three hospital officials. Further, the hospital did not maintain required mileage logs.
  - An employee from the Employment Development Department used state resources, with her supervisor’s knowledge and assistance, to conduct a private catering business.
  - Several employees misused state resources:
    - A university official viewed Internet sites containing pornographic material using two university computers—nearly 1,400 pornographic images were viewed during several weeks in 2006 and four months in 2007.
    - A state employee accessed inappropriate Internet sites and spent more than three hours per day accessing the Internet on nine separate days.

This report also summarizes corrective action taken on 11 previously reported cases—state departments must report to the state auditor any corrective action taken in response to an investigative report no later than 30 days after the state auditor issues a report or monthly until corrective action is completed.

