

REPORT BY THE
AUDITOR GENERAL
OF CALIFORNIA

**A REVIEW OF THE VEHICLE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS
AND THE AVAILABILITY OF TWO-WAY RADIOS
AT TWO STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS**



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January 22, 1990

P-918

Honorable Elihu M. Harris, Chairman
Members, Joint Legislative
Audit Committee
State Capitol, Room 2148
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members:

We reviewed vehicle maintenance programs at the California Institution for Men (CIM) at Chino and the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC) at Norco. We also determined the availability of two-way radios for critical staff at these institutions.

According to our review, the automobile maintenance records at the CIM are often incomplete. In the automobile maintenance records at the CRC, we found a small number of inaccuracies or omissions. In addition, at the CIM, the maintenance supervisors are not routinely reviewing the accuracy of the work performed by clerks who maintain the records, and institution personnel do not always take the vehicles to the garages for required periodic maintenance. As a result of these conditions, the institutions may be reducing the service life of their vehicles or risking an avoidable vehicle malfunction. The CIM and the CRC are taking action to correct the deficiencies identified in our review.

We determined that the number of hand-held, two-way radios at the CIM and the CRC is adequate for the communication needs identified by each institution. Although the radios used at the institutions are functional, the Department of Corrections (department) has determined that newer radios would provide improved communications and is in the process of replacing the radio systems at all of the State's correctional institutions. The department's deadline for the completion of the new radio system at the CIM and the CRC is March 1990.

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Background

Both the CIM and the CRC have written vehicle policies for their institutions that include preventive maintenance procedures. Their policies are based on standards included in the State Administrative Manual. In addition, the CRC requires periodic safety inspections of its vehicles through the institution's vocational automotive technology program.

In 1986, in cooperation with the Telecommunications Division of the Department of General Services, the department analyzed its radio communication requirements and determined that the existing institutional radio systems did not meet all of its communication needs. Although the department had allowed each correctional institution to independently purchase and operate a radio communication system, the study concluded that the department should install a comprehensive radio system that would improve the communications capabilities of all institutions. According to the department's deputy director for planning and construction, the department is now installing this new, comprehensive system.

Scope and Methodology

The purpose of this audit was to determine if the CIM and the CRC are adequately maintaining their fleet of vehicles and to determine if the institutions have enough radios available to meet the needs of the critical staff identified by the institutions.

To evaluate vehicle maintenance at the CIM and the CRC, we tested their maintenance policy and procedures for compliance with the State Administrative Manual guidelines for maintaining state vehicles. We selected a judgment sample from the vehicle inventory at each institution and for each vehicle reviewed the automobile maintenance record for January 1989 through September 1989. We also reviewed vehicle maintenance files, which contain work orders for work performed on the vehicles, to determine what kind of maintenance was performed on the vehicle. At the CRC, we also reviewed the vocational automotive technology production reports to determine if the vehicles in our sample received the scheduled safety inspections the CRC requires. Finally, we contacted the San Bernardino area inspector for the Department of General Services, Fleet Administration Division, regarding the application of the State's maintenance guidelines to special purpose vehicles.

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To determine whether enough radios are available to meet the communications needs of the critical staff identified by the institutions, we obtained a radio inventory at the CIM and the CRC and validated the institutions' inventory of radios. At each institution we verified the existence of every radio by serial number and location. As part of our verification, we determined if the radios were serviceable, and we located and counted the radios, including radios assigned to correctional officers who were away on official business (if we were provided documentation to show the radio serial numbers and location). Finally, we prepared an audited inventory list of radios and compared the number of radios with the requirement for the critical staff identified by each institution.

Vehicle Maintenance Records Are Inaccurate

The maintenance records at the CIM were incomplete and, in some instances, did not agree with vehicle files that contain work orders for completed maintenance on each vehicle. At the CRC, we found a small number of similar errors.

To reduce hazards to life and property, the costs of repair, and the loss of service or vehicle life due to mechanical failure, the State Administrative Manual requires state agencies to maintain minimum standards of preventive maintenance for vehicles. These minimum standards include periodic checks of vehicle fluids and periodic mechanical inspections. Specifically, oil service and checks of vehicle fluids are required every 4,000 miles or 90 days, and mechanical inspections are required every 12,000 miles or 12 months. To document the history of lubrication service, mechanical repairs, and inspections, state agencies must maintain an automobile maintenance record for each vehicle. Each entry in the maintenance record is to include the date, the mileage at the time of service, and the specific maintenance performed on the vehicle. According to the State's guidelines, the maintenance record reflects the general condition of the vehicle. For this review, we concluded that vehicle maintenance and repair were adequate if they were documented and performed within the State's guidelines.

The CRC vehicle maintenance policy includes the additional requirement that each vehicle periodically receive a safety inspection carried out by the institution's vocational automotive technology program. The vocational instructor publishes a monthly inspection schedule and should report to the business manager each week those scheduled vehicles not appearing for safety inspections.

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At the CIM, we reviewed the records for 26 of its 171 vehicles. According to the maintenance records, 20 vehicles exceeded the 90-day servicing requirement. When we reviewed the vehicle files, we found work orders showing that three of these vehicles had been serviced. For the remaining 17 vehicles, there was no documentation to show that they had been serviced in compliance with the state requirement. For example, in one instance, the vehicle file contained only documents for the purchase of the vehicle in July 1988. According to the maintenance record, it had neither been serviced nor inspected since the date of purchase. As of August 3, 1989, the vehicle had been driven over 6,300 miles. Thus, the vehicle exceeded the State's time and mileage requirements for both servicing and inspection. We located this vehicle and observed a vehicle maintenance supervisor inspecting it for basic servicing. The inspection included looking at and noting the condition of the vehicle's fluids, such as the oil, coolants, and brake fluid, and checking the condition of the battery cables and the battery terminals. The supervisor checked the engine oil and stated that the oil was dirty and had lost its lubricating qualities. We also located 16 other vehicles in our sample, including 8 of the vehicles for which there was no documentation of service, and observed the same inspection. Each of these vehicles appeared properly serviced.

In addition, 6 of the maintenance records were incomplete; entries did not note required mileage data, and 4 did not contain documentation for completed work on the vehicle. In all, our review revealed at least one error in the maintenance records for 25 of the 26 vehicles.

Without complete data, the CIM maintenance records do not accurately reflect the general condition of its vehicles. Also, without the mileage data, the CIM vehicle maintenance staff may overlook inspections or service required on a mileage basis. As a result, the service life of the vehicle may be reduced or malfunctions may occur.

At the CRC, we reviewed the maintenance records for 19 of its 116 vehicles and found two incomplete records. The vehicles had been serviced or repaired and no appropriate entry was made in the maintenance record. In addition, according to the records that we reviewed, one vehicle in use at the institution's fire station did not meet the State's servicing criteria. The maintenance record showed that the vehicle had accumulated less than 4,000 miles annually during a two-year period and was serviced only once each year. We contacted the area inspector for the Department of General Services, Fleet Administration Division, to determine if vehicles driven less than

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4,000 miles annually still require servicing every 90 days. According to the inspector, it is important for vehicles driven infrequently to have the engine oil changed periodically, regardless of the mileage accrued. He stated that the engine collects condensation and dirt while sitting idle and that changing the engine oil prevents engine damage.

Without accurate and complete documentation of all vehicle servicing or maintenance, the maintenance record is not an accurate representation of a vehicle's condition.

In addition, the CRC is not complying with its policy requiring vehicle safety inspections through its vocational automotive technology program. We reviewed the safety inspection schedules and the automotive technology production reports for June through September 1989, which document the work accomplished each month in the automotive technology program. Safety inspection schedules included 10 of the 19 vehicles in our sample during the review period. For the four-month period, 3 of these vehicles appeared on the schedules twice, 3 vehicles appeared three times, 3 vehicles appeared four times, and one vehicle appeared five times. However, none of these vehicles appeared on the production reports. Thus, we conclude that the vehicles in our sample are not receiving scheduled safety inspections.

Reasons for Deficiencies in the Preventive Maintenance Program

We discussed the reasons for the incomplete vehicle records with the vehicle maintenance supervisors at both institutions. Both supervisors stated that they rely on assigned inmate clerks to maintain the vehicle maintenance records but do not routinely monitor their work. In addition, the CIM maintenance supervisor stated that vehicle operators do not bring their vehicles to the garage for required preventive maintenance, and he has no authority to force them to do so. According to the CRC supervisor of vocational instruction, CRC staff did not take vehicles to the vocational automotive class for the required inspections. Also, the automotive instructors did not report to the institution business manager those vehicles not appearing for their scheduled inspections as required by CRC policy.

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Corrective Action

The CIM chief deputy warden advised us that he would change the CIM vehicle maintenance policy to correct the deficiencies identified in our review. Facility administrators will be responsible for ensuring that the staff under their jurisdiction comply with the requirements for vehicle maintenance instead of relying on individual drivers. He acknowledged that the garage personnel do not consistently report instances of noncompliance with the CIM maintenance policy. To correct this deficiency, the policy will require garage personnel to track and monitor the maintenance of vehicles. In addition, instances of noncompliance will be reported monthly to the respective administrators through the chief deputy wardens.

At the CRC, the associate warden for business services stated that all vehicles assigned to the fire station will comply with the requirement for an engine oil change every 90 days. Additionally, the vocational instruction supervisor advised us that vocational automotive instructors will report to the business manager those vehicles not appearing for scheduled safety inspections.

An Adequate Number of Two-way Radios Are Available

In 1986, the department issued Administrative Bulletin 86/15 affirming its commitment to establish a comprehensive, coordinated radio system. Among other things, the department identified the critical staff positions that require hand-held portable radios at correctional institutions. These staff must either report or respond to critical or emergency situations or direct personnel in these situations.

As early as 1985, the department determined that existing radio systems did not meet institutions' operating needs; they were antiquated and breaking down. The radios allowed only one transmission at a time, and inmates could monitor the transmissions on their personal radios. According to the department's deputy director for planning and construction, the department is now installing a comprehensive radio system that will meet the communication needs of all the institutions. The department's scheduled completion date for the new radio system at the CIM and the CRC is March 1990.

The CIM identified 90 critical staff positions that require radios. We verified that at least 119 serviceable radios are available to CIM staff. Included in this total are 10 radios on loan from the

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Department of General Services until the completion of the new radio system. However, the inventory list of radios that the CIM provided to us to verify was incomplete and inaccurate. During our review, we found radios not included on the inventory list.

The CRC identified 91 critical staff positions that require radios. We verified that at least 109 serviceable radios are available at the CRC. The CRC purchased new radios and had them delivered in April and June 1989. As at the CIM, the CRC radio inventory list was incomplete. The list included radios the institution could not locate, and some radios were not included on the inventory list.

We conclude that the two institutions have enough radios to meet their identified critical needs until the department's new radio system is implemented. Although each institution provided us with an inventory list specifying the location of their radios and their serial numbers, the lists were incomplete and inaccurate. Thus, each institution lacks a system for controlling and accounting for their radios, and, as a result, may lose valuable equipment or jeopardize the security of their new communications system.

Conclusion

Vehicle maintenance records at the California Institution for Men are often incomplete. The records do not always include data required to validate the completion of preventive maintenance or to identify vehicles that require periodic preventive maintenance. In the maintenance records at the California Rehabilitation Center, we found a small number of similar inaccuracies or omissions. This condition occurs because the maintenance supervisors are not reviewing the accuracy of the work performed by inmate clerks. Also, at the CIM, personnel do not always take vehicles to the vehicle maintenance garage for preventive maintenance. As a result of incomplete records and a lack of procedures to ensure that all vehicles receive required preventive maintenance, the institutions may be reducing the service life of their vehicles or risking avoidable vehicle malfunctions.

Our inventory of radios at the California Institution for Men and the California Rehabilitation Center revealed that the institutions have an adequate number of two-way radios to meet the critical staff requirements identified by these institutions. Although these radios are functional, the department has determined that newer radios would provide improved communications and is in the process of replacing the communication systems at all correctional institutions. The

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department's scheduled completion date for the new system at the CIM and the CRC is March 1990. However, the institutions' lack of an adequate system for controlling and accounting for the radios may jeopardize the security of their new communications system and allow unauthorized persons to obtain an institution radio.

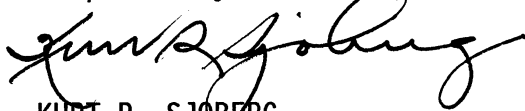
Recommendations

To ensure an effective vehicle maintenance program, the department should direct wardens of all of the State's correctional institutions to see that vehicle maintenance programs comply with state standards, that vehicle records are accurate and complete, and that vehicles receive periodic maintenance.

To ensure adequate control over and accounting of communications equipment, the department should direct wardens at all institutions to implement a system to track all radio equipment issued to staff or to review existing systems, and to ensure that the institution has enough radios for the critical staff.

We conducted this review under the authority vested in the auditor general by Section 10500 et seq. of the California Government Code and according to generally accepted auditing standards. We limited our review to those areas specified in the audit scope section of the report.

Respectfully submitted,



KURT R. SJOBERG
Acting Auditor General

Youth and Adult Correctional Agency's response to this report

YOUTH AND ADULT CORRECTIONAL AGENCY**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

1100 11TH Street, Suite 400
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January 12, 1990

Mr. Kurt R. Sjoberg
Acting Auditor General
Office of the Auditor General
660 J Street, Suite 300
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Dear Mr. Sjoberg:

This is in response to the January 1990 Auditor General's review of the vehicle maintenance programs and availability of two-way radios at the California Institution for Men (CIM), and the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC). The Department of Corrections is in general agreement with the findings and recommendations in the report. Following is a brief description of actions planned regarding the recommendation.

Vehicle Maintenance

It was noted in the report that the vehicle maintenance records at both CIM and CRC were inaccurate, contained omissions and were incomplete. Further, at CIM, vehicles were not receiving required preventive maintenance, and supervisors were not routinely reviewing the accuracy of the work performed by their inmate clerks who were maintaining vehicle maintenance records.

As indicated in the report, administrative staff at both CIM and CRC have initiated processes to see that institution vehicles are properly serviced and maintained, and that documentation will accurately reflect the maintenance records of all vehicles. These monitoring systems will be in place by January 31, to ensure that vehicles are routinely serviced as required in the State Administrative Manual.

Two-Way Radios

As indicated in the findings of the audit, the inventory of radios at CIM and CRC revealed that the institutions have an adequate number of two-way radios to meet the critical staff requirements identified by these institutions. However, it was also pointed out that there is not an adequate system in place at either

Mr. Kurt R. Sjoberg
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institution for controlling/accounting for the radios. To address this shortcoming, each institution has established an operational procedure which incorporates a system of accountability for radios. In addition, the institution will be reevaluating and reissuing radios to all critical staff positions. This completed inventory will be accomplished by January 31, 1990.

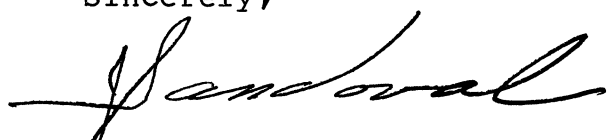
Also noted was the fact that while these radios are functional, newer radios would provide improved communications and, in fact, the Department of Corrections is in the process of replacing the communications system at all correctional institutions. It should be noted that the new full system will not be in place until late 1990 at the earliest. An interim system will be in place at CIM and CRC by March 1990.

In conclusion, the deficiencies identified in this report are of concern to the Department of Corrections. Accordingly, a memorandum will be issued to all Wardens by January 31, informing them of the findings of the review and instructing them to evaluate/correct their individual operational procedures regarding vehicle maintenance and radio equipment inventory controls.

As an additional step, the Department's Peer Review Program, which is an ongoing process to review business services practices at each institution, will be enhanced to assure vehicle maintenance programs are evaluated during those reviews.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact Richard L. Burrows, Assistant Deputy Director, Financial Management and Support Services, at 3-0218.

Sincerely,



JOE G. SANDOVAL
Agency Secretary