

# OVERVIEW

THE AUDITOR  
STATE OF HAWAII

## A Follow-Up Review of Security Staffing in the Department of Public Safety

### Summary

The Legislature requested this follow-up review of our Report No. 92-27, *A Review of a Formula for Security Staffing at the Department of Public Safety* because of a request by the Department of Public Safety to expand its correctional security staff by increasing its shift relief factor from 1.65 to 1.88. This would result in 152 additional staff at an annual cost exceeding \$4.1 million. The department said, however, that the additional staff would decrease overtime costs by \$6 million annually.

A shift relief factor is used in the correctional field to determine the number of security staff required to provide needed coverage for all security work positions. This is because certain positions need to be staffed seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The factor is commonly multiplied by the number of security work positions that must be staffed to determine how many security staff will be needed to fully cover all positions.

In our 1992 report, we found that the proposed shift relief factor was reasonable based upon then available information. However, we also concluded that a definitive shift relief factor could not be determined because some of the data underlying the calculation were questionable. We also found that Hawaii's correctional institutions lacked a sound management approach to security staffing. In addition, through a concurrent financial audit of the department, we found that the department was not exercising adequate control over leave time and overtime and that the use and costs of overtime were spiraling out of control.

We recommended that the department fix responsibility for security staffing at a senior management level. We also recommended that it strengthen the accuracy and reliability of its leave data and the soundness of its staffing base. In addition, we recommended that the department install a systematic management approach to security staffing based on a model. Finally, we recommended that the department establish appropriate control over lost time (for training, leaves, vacancies, etc.) and overtime.

In this follow-up review, we found that the department has made a good start toward implementing our various recommendations, but still has far to go. Due to administrative indecision, the department has not yet fixed responsibility for security staffing at a senior management level. The department's

proposed shift relief factor appears to be reasonable enough to warrant testing but remains only an estimate because of the lack of firm supporting data. Although the department has made good progress in developing post and position plans, it still lacks a fully reliable base on the total number of work positions needing coverage.

Control and training relating to the use of leave records have improved, but access to leave information remains difficult. The department has made uneven progress in its efforts to implement the model management approach. Appropriate management controls over leave time and overtime have yet to be established. Abuses of sick leave and overtime persist and overtime costs have continued to soar.

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## Recommendations and Response

We recommend that the Legislature authorize the department to test its proposed shift relief factor at the Oahu Community Correctional Center before implementing the factor at all correctional institutions. We also recommend that the department expedite the filling of the position of chief of security who will focus on security management in correctional institutions. We further recommend that the department give high priority to developing and implementing information and control systems that will produce reliable data for determining the shift relief factor. In addition, the department should continue to strengthen the base to which the shift relief factor is to be applied.

We recommend that the department proceed with its efforts to maintain accurate leave records and timesheets and to automate the process. We further recommend that the department mount a continuing effort to implement all elements of the model management approach. Finally, we recommend that the department fully implement its new sick leave policy and pursue its efforts to identify and stop patterns of abuse of sick leave and overtime.

The department responded that it feels this review was an accurate representation of what the department has been able to achieve during the past year. It generally agrees with our recommendations but disagrees that the proposed shift relief factor should be first tested at one site. It believes that the current inadequate factor of 1.65 is adversely affecting all of the institutions. We believe it would be useful to test a new shift relief factor at one institution to evaluate its impact on the department's operations and its chronic overtime problem.

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Marion M. Higa  
State Auditor  
State of Hawaii

Office of the Auditor  
465 South King Street, Room 500  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
(808) 587-0800  
FAX (808) 587-0830