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INTERNAL AUDIT DEPARTMENT

Audit Report
on

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Dwight Harris
Executive Director

Linda S. Reyes, PH.D.
Deputy Executive Director

Student Transportation

INTERNAL AUDIT DIRECTOR

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November 2005

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Student transportation Audit

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For additional copies of this report, please request 05-6



INTERNAL AUDIT DEPARTMENT

TO: Texas Youth Commission Board Members
Pete Alfaro, TYC Board Chair
Nicholas T. Serafy, Jr., TYC Board Vice Chair
Don Bethel, TYC Board Member
Gogi Dickson, Ph.D., TYC Board Member
Steve Fryar, TYC Board Member
Patsy Reed Guest, TYC Board Member
Bill Mahomes, Jr., TYC Board Member

FROM: Karin Hill, Internal Audit Director

DATE: November 17, 2005

RE: Results of Student Transportation Audit

Attached for your approval is our report on the Texas Youth Commission's (TYC) audit of Student Transportation. The objective of this audit was to determine whether the agency transports youth in a safe and efficient manner.

Transportation of youth is a frequent activity that is assigned to all TYC locations. TYC currently has vehicle fleets at each facility used to transport youth locally, between facilities and to other placements. Furthermore, the agency's Statewide Transportation Unit is responsible for safely moving youth to all placements until released on parole.

TYC has an efficient and effective transportation system in place. In fiscal year 2004, the Statewide Transportation Unit logged over 502,000 miles as its vans crisscrossed the state transporting more than 5,561 youth. The unit travels extensively and has a good safety record as demonstrated by the high number of miles and trips traveled without any injuries.

Even with a good safety record, additional measures can further improve safety. While the agency is currently standardizing cages and acquiring specialized vehicles for youth transportation, this is an expensive endeavor and will take time. By establishing a process that ensures that vehicles currently in use contain the required safety equipment and receive preventive maintenance in accordance with established schedules, management can better assure the reliability of the vans and know that safety equipment is available if needed.

Additionally, by establishing guidelines regarding how long employees can work or drive when transporting youth off-campus, management can improve the working conditions for those staff and reduce the risk associated with long trips.

Management concurs with the results of our work and has provided responses to the recommendations, which are included in the report. We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided to us during our work.

cc: Linda Reyes, Ph.D., Deputy Executive Director

This report presents the results of our audit of the Texas Youth Commission's (TYC) Student Transportation program. The objective of this audit was to determine whether the agency transports youth in a safe and efficient manner.

To accomplish the audit objective, we interviewed staff and managers and reviewed key documentation, policies, and procedures. We also reviewed the transportation process used by the statewide transportation program.

This audit was conducted in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* and with *Government Auditing Standards*.

Transportation of youth is a frequent activity that is assigned to all TYC locations. TYC currently has vehicle fleets within their facilities used to transport youth locally, between facilities and to other placements. Institutions, Halfway Houses, and some District Offices have vehicles assigned to transport youth locally for medical services, community services and level hearings.

Furthermore, TYC's Statewide Transportation Unit, a program within the Juvenile Corrections Division, is responsible for safely moving TYC youth to all placements until released on parole. The transportation unit operates a fleet of vans that can transport ten youth each and have transport staff assigned to five locations who are supervised by the Statewide Transportation Unit Administrator located at the Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex.

An efficient and effective youth transportation system is in place.

TYC's Statewide Transportation Unit is responsible for the safe and secure transport of youth. It provides transportation primarily between Institutions, Halfway Houses and Parole, but also provides courtesy transportation for interstate compact movements and some new commitments. The Statewide Transportation Unit employs 17 full-time transportation staff and has nine vans located at five institutions. The unit travels extensively and has a good safety record as demonstrated by the high number of miles and trips traveled without any injuries. In fiscal year 2004, the unit logged over 502,000 miles as its vans crisscrossed the state transporting more than 5,561 youth.

The student transportation system is efficient and effective despite the size of Texas and resulting complexities of transporting youth between facilities. TYC has developed a transportation system to effectively and efficiently prioritize, schedule, route, and coordinate youth transportation services. Each week, the transportation coordinator studies requests received from facilities and manages routes and schedules to maximize van capacity and minimize waiting time for youth to be transported. To increase efficiency, youth are transported to one of two hubs, the Ron Jackson Complex or the Marlin Orientation & Assessment Unit, from where they are moved to their assigned destinations. Each Thursday, vehicles from Marlin, Ron Jackson and the Evins Regional Juvenile Center meet at the San Antonio District Office to

exchange youth. This process increases efficiency by having fewer vehicles traveling between facilities.

Other youth transportation needs are managed locally. In addition to placement; Institutions, Halfway Houses, and District Offices have a responsibility to transport youth for off-site medical visits, community services, and level hearings. Furthermore, each institution has vehicles assigned to transport youth inside the campus to security or the infirmary. These transportation needs must be met as the need arises and therefore, other than agency policies and procedures for general transportation, specific schedules cannot be established.

While TYC is moving toward acquiring specialized vehicles for youth transportation, additional attention is needed to ensure vehicles currently used are safe.

The safety of transporting youth is largely dependent on the condition and configuration of the vehicles being used. Youth are transported in secure vehicles, both on- and off-campus, for reasons ranging from being taken to the security unit to transfers between institutions to Parole moving them for Level I Hearings. The vehicles used range from vans, customized with slide-in metal cages, for secure transport to Parole Officers' personal vehicles.

The agency has begun standardizing the vans used for secure transport. Due to the lack of a prototype when the agency first identified a need for secure vans, the cages in the vehicles were designed and installed by TYC staff. As a result, the design of the cages vary across the state.

Security vans used for on-campus transport have metal benches, without seatbelts, for youth to sit on. While these vehicles travel at low speeds, a sudden stop or turn not anticipated by the youth in the cage could result in injury. Youth being taken to the security unit are handcuffed and can be combative, adding to the possibility of losing their balance. While injury to youth being transported to security is not a common occurrence, the agency should continue to stress the importance of safety in these vehicles.

The vans used by the Statewide Transportation Unit, those used to transport youth for medical appointments, and one van at each of four District Offices are also fit with metal cages, however vary from the campus security vans in that they have bench seats, with seatbelts. While staff are trained to ensure youth put the seatbelts on prior to departure, situations occur where youth take them off once the trip begins. Even though State law requires seatbelts be worn at all times, ensuring youth keep them on would require frequent stops and extend individual trips. Unless a youth is disruptive during transport, staff should focus on arriving safely at their destination.

To increase the safety of vans used for transporting youth, management has ordered standardized cages, from the Texas Correction Industries, to be installed in the secure vehicles used on the campuses. These cages have been designed so more than one youth can be transported safely, potentially allowing Security staff to remove multiple youth at a time from a situation. In addition to new cages, the agency has conducted extensive research into a modular prison

transport box and chassis, which is specifically designed to safely and securely transport prisoners, to eventually replace the 12- and 15-passenger vans currently used by the Statewide Transportation Unit. However, at a cost of more than \$48,000 each, it could take several years to fully replace the fleet used for statewide transportation.

Youth are also transported in non-secure vehicles. Parole, Quality Assurance, and Halfway House staff transport youth with agency vans and as required, with their personal vehicles. Youth are transported by these staff for such reasons as community service, level hearings, and school. While every effort is made to use secure vehicles when needed, there is not always one available. As possible field staff work with the Statewide Transportation Unit to arrange transportation, but sometimes must move the youth in non-secure vehicles. Management should regularly monitor transport activity to ensure that locations not assigned a secure vehicle are able to safely move youth and that secure vehicles are available as needed.

Safety equipment in vehicles is not always properly maintained. TYC has established minimum requirements for safety equipment in vehicles to ensure emergencies can be handled as quickly as possible. Specifically, the vans used for statewide transportation are required to have working seatbelts and a first aid kit. However, inspection of 17 vans at four institutions identified that nine had non-operational or missing seatbelts and/or did not have a properly maintained First Aid kit. Additionally, there is an unwritten expectation that all transport vehicles also have a fire extinguisher. While 15 of the 17 vans inspected had fire extinguishers, the inspection sticker/tag was outdated or missing on six of them. As discussed earlier, these vans transported more than 5,561 youth over 502,000 miles in 2004. This represents a sizeable responsibility of the agency with the unnecessary risk of potential injury to youth and/or staff or not being prepared for an emergency.

A best practice identified during our review was having a step stool in the vans. Five vans had a step stool for youth to use entering the vehicle while shackled. This reduces the risk of youth being hurt by shortening the size of the step required to enter the van and should be considered as a requirement in all vans used to transport shackled youth.

Long travel hours put both youth and staff at risk.

Institutions, Halfway Houses, and District Offices are responsible for transporting youth locally for medical services, community services and level hearings. TYC contracts for medical services with the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) and the Texas Tech University Health Science Center (Texas Tech) and is often required to transport youth to medical appointments.

Long travel hours for medical services increases the agency's risk for an accident. Youth are transported for medical services in secure vehicles and escorted by two staff. Due to the vastness of Texas, travel time from the facility to the service provider can be more than six hours each way. This travel time combined with waiting for the youth appointments has resulted in up to 19 hours for a single trip, leaving early in the morning and returning late at night. Long travel

hours such as this, and policy prohibiting staff from sleeping while on duty, presents a substantial responsibility with a high risk for an accident.

Since January 1998, facilities have been monitoring medical related travel requirements and costs through the use of a travel log and submitting the information to the Finance Division in the Central Office. However, review of medical service travel logs identified that three out of four institutions visited quit maintaining these logs due to misinterpretation of a memorandum from Finance, sent via email, discontinuing the requirement to submit the logs to Central Office. Not having this information constrains management's ability to analyze travel data related to medical services and make decisions as necessary.

Other factors increase the travel hours and put youth and staff at risk. Agency policy allows for an overnight stay in an institution as a Temporary Assignment (TA) when youth are transported between facilities that require extensive travel. The use of TA spaces allows both the youth and staff to rest so that youth can get out of the van and stretch and staff can remain vigilant throughout the trip. Five institutions are assigned TA spaces in the security unit specifically for the Statewide Transportation Unit, the number of spaces depending on security unit capacity. To plan for using TA space, the Statewide Transportation Unit Administrator sends notification emails informing institutions of upcoming space needs at the beginning of each week. While not a common occurrence, because TA availability is contingent on security unit space, there are not always beds available for these youth when they arrive. This requires staff to continue traveling, increasing the length of the trip and the risk associated with it. A process of notifying the State Transportation Unit Administrator that space is not available as planned would allow the Administrator time to redirect the transporters to another institution.

Opportunities exist for improving tracking and oversight of the maintenance of vehicles

As a result of the Fleet Management audit published in May 2004, the Facility and Fleet Management Support Division established a preventive maintenance schedule, to be followed in the event that vehicle owner's manuals are not available, and developed Personnel Policy (PRS).43.17, State Vehicle Usage Requirements to reflect agency expectations for vehicle maintenance. This schedule was distributed, via email, in December 2004 with the expectation of its implementation and the policy was formally adopted in July 2005.

Preventive maintenance schedules are not always followed. Preventive maintenance is important to help ensure the safe and continued operation of vehicles, but is even more essential for TYC's vehicles due to the extreme environments in which they operate as well as the added liability of transporting youth. Vehicles used by the Statewide Transportation Unit are driven tens of thousands of miles each year and those used closer to or on the institutions are often driven short distances at low speeds, both in extreme environmental conditions such as excessive heat and blowing dust. Conditions such as these further increase the importance of timely preventive maintenance to extend the service time of the vehicles. The Statewide Transportation Unit has incorporated time to maintain the vehicles by setting Mondays as day the vehicles do not travel.

A review of maintenance logs for a sample of vehicles at four institutions identified that preventive maintenance is not always completed as required. While oil changes were often being completed according to the schedule, other equally important services, such as tire rotations, cooling system inspections, and transmission fluid and filter replacement, were not. This puts the vehicles at a higher risk of breaking down or otherwise being unsafe, and therefore increases the risk to the staff and youth traveling in them.

Increased use of management information could improve monitoring and tracking of preventive maintenance, thereby better enforcing maintenance schedules. Business Services has delegated responsibility for properly maintaining agency vehicles to the Vehicle Control Officer (VCO) at each location. The responsibilities of the VCO include ensuring that each vehicle assigned is properly cared for and maintained in good working order. In addition, the VCO submits monthly reports to the Fleet Manager. These reports include the mileage as of the end of the previous month, as well as any maintenance or repairs the vehicle has had or needs.

Each location has been provided a copy of the *Fleet Focus* program, developed by the Texas Building and Procurement Commission, as well as initial training on its use. *Fleet Focus* is a database program designed to collect and report data on state-owned vehicles. However, for various reasons, this program is not being used at all locations. While some locations enter information into *Fleet Focus*, others complete the monthly reports by using an Excel spreadsheet designed by the Fleet Manager. Monthly report information submitted in Excel must be entered into the *Fleet Focus* database by Fleet Management staff. This results in two data entry points, which increases the chance of errors, and creates delays in reporting capabilities in the event that the Facilities and Fleet Management Support Division is unable to enter the information immediately upon receipt. If used to its fullest capacity, each VCO could use *Fleet Focus* to enter mileage information and track preventive maintenance schedules, by vehicle, to ensure requirements are met. In addition, since this application is on an agency network, the Fleet Manager could then run exception reports to identify vehicles which are not being maintained according to schedule. This would streamline data entry and provide a means to efficiently and effectively provide feedback to management on vehicle maintenance.

Audit of Student Transportation

RECOMMENDATION	MGT RESPONSE CURRENT STATUS PROJ. COMPLETION DATE
<p>1. To ensure youth are transported in the safest and most appropriate manner possible, the Assistant Deputy Executive Directors for Juvenile Corrections and Financial Services should develop and implement a plan to replace the vans used for statewide transportation with vehicles designed for use by correction organizations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONCUR UNDERWAY August 1, 2006</p> <p>A plan will be developed to replace the vans used for statewide service with vehicles specially designed for correctional security transportation.</p>
<p>2. To ensure all transport vehicles have the required safety equipment, the Fleet Manager should work with the Director of Risk Management to develop a procedure that requires inspection of vehicles to ensure mandated safety equipment is in the vehicle and in working order on a routine basis.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONCUR UNDERWAY January 31, 2006</p> <p>Vehicles used for statewide transportation, the highest priority vehicles in the TYC system, will be assessed immediately for safety equipment compliance. A procedure will be developed for monitoring and enforcement of vehicle inspections to ensure the readiness of required safety equipment in all youth transport vehicles, including statewide transports as well as vehicles used for local transportation.</p>
<p>3. To enhance youth and staff safety, management should research and establish standards for transporting youth long distances on extended work hours.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONCUR UNDERWAY March 1, 2006</p> <p>Juvenile Corrections and Risk Management will research and establish standards for transporting youth long distances on extended work hours.</p>
<p>4. To ensure information concerning travel activity and cost related to medical services is available for analysis and decisions, the Assistant Deputy Executive Director, Juvenile Corrections should require all facilities to reinstate the medical trip log.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONCUR IMPLEMENTED November 8, 2005</p> <p>A memo was distributed to all facilities directing them to maintain information related to travel activity and associated costs for medical services for analysis and decision making.</p>

PLANNED: Management concurs with the recommendation but actual implementation of the recommendation has not begun.

UNDERWAY: The implementation process of the recommendation has been started.

IMPLEMENTED: All new procedures, policies, systems, processes, related documents, and other elements relevant to the audit recommendation have been prepared, approved, and put into operation.

UNABLE TO IMPLEMENT: Management concurs with the recommendation; however, due to resource constraints and competing priorities is not able to implement or can only partially implement the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION	MGT RESPONSE CURRENT STATUS PROJ. COMPLETION DATE
<p>5. To ensure that TYC vehicles are maintained in accordance with policy, the Fleet Manager should utilize the <i>Fleet Focus</i> system to monitor and report on maintenance activities.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONCUR UNDERWAY January 15, 2006</p> <p>Vehicles will be maintained in accordance with policy through the Fleet Manager's use of the Fleet Focus system to monitor and report on maintenance activities.</p>

PLANNED: Management concurs with the recommendation but actual implementation of the recommendation has not begun.

UNDERWAY: The implementation process of the recommendation has been started.

IMPLEMENTED: All new procedures, policies, systems, processes, related documents, and other elements relevant to the audit recommendation have been prepared, approved, and put into operation.

UNABLE TO IMPLEMENT: Management concurs with the recommendation; however, due to resource constraints and competing priorities is not able to implement or can only partially implement the recommendation.