

Report Highlights

PA State Police Cost to Provide Safety on Public Highways

This review of Motor License Fund support for the Pennsylvania State Police was conducted pursuant to House Resolution 2015-622. The resolution directed the LB&FC to examine State Police funding in light of constitutional provision that funding provided to the State Police from the Motor License Fund must relate to highway safety.

We found:

- **“Safety on public highways and bridges” is not defined.** According to the PA Constitution, all proceeds from the Motor License Fund are to be used solely for construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and repair of and safety on public highways and bridges. The term “safety on public highways and bridges” is not defined by the Constitution.
- **Less than 50 percent of the total Trooper complement is available for patrol duty.** Many factors—such as new statutory mandates, increasing traffic volume, and increasing incidents that require police response—have expanded State Police workload and demands. These demands have resulted in Troopers being drawn away from highway patrol duties.
- **On average, just over half of a patrol Trooper’s time is “unobligated,” which is the time Troopers have available for proactive patrol work.** According to State Police records, 51 percent of a patrol Trooper’s time is unobligated and 49 percent is obligated. Obligated time is that spent on activities that take Troopers away from patrol, e.g., responding to incidents, paperwork, and appearing in court. Of the obligated time, 47 percent was related to incidents related to highway safety. The amount of obligated and unobligated time a patrol Trooper spends on highway safety was a key factor in determining overall PSP highway safety costs.
- **Based on FY 2015-16 expenditures, we calculated the “appropriate and justifiable” amount of funding from the Motor License Fund to be \$532.8 million.** This figure was derived, in large part, from calculating how much time patrol Troopers (excluding the Turnpike’s Troop T) spend on highway safety functions and translating those figures into full-time equivalent

Troopers. We also took into account those field Troopers in staff and specialty patrol functions, whose time on highway safety varies from 10 to 85 percent. We used the resulting average (58 percent) to allocate the expenditures of those headquarter functions that we determined spend a significant portion of their time on highway safety. In some cases, the allocation factor was either 0 or 100 percent, depending on the nature of the division’s functions. The table below summarizes our calculations.

PSP Cost for Safety on Highways and Bridges in FY 2015-16			
(\$ in millions)			
	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Allocation Percentage</u>	<u>Highway Safety Expenditures</u>
Field Operations .	\$ 714.0	58%	\$414.1
Troop T.....	43.5	0	0
Headquarters.....	377.4	32	118.7
Total.....	\$1,135.0	47%	\$532.8

- **Had the PSP been allocated only \$532.8 million from the Motor License Fund in FY 2015-16, rather than \$755 million, it would have increased the amount available in the Motor License Fund by \$222.2 million.** This would have been sufficient to resurface about 1,111 lane miles of roadway or design, replace, and maintain 138 bridges for the next 25 years.
- **The ratio of funds expended on highway patrol, administration, training, liquor code enforcement, and gambling enforcement has remained stable over the past five years.** Although overall State Police expenditures have increased over the past five years, the ratio of expenditures to overall spending in each category has remained relatively stable.