

RESPONSE TO KHON INQUIRY 5-18-2017:

The Multi-Skilled Worker (MSW) program was meant to provide the Highways Division, Oahu District more versatility in responding to needed work and repairs while maintaining the same amount of staff.

Prior to establishing the MSW program the hierarchical structure of our crews only allowed us to respond/perform one job per crew regardless of the size. For example, a 10 person landscaping crew with General Laborers, Light Truck Drivers and Equipment Operators could only respond to one location because the different positions act like a puzzle that when fit together creates a picture. As such, the work we do that day is determined by the skilled labor available. Another example, is in the structures crew where there is one mason. If he is not available, no masonry work can be done.

With the MSW program, if concrete work is scheduled and the mason is not available, others in the structures crew are capable of doing the work and repairs are completed faster. Regarding the landscaping crew example, we can take the same 10 person team and make two 5 person crews that can respond to two separate areas and perform landscaping, in addition to concrete repairs, asphalt paving repairs, fence repairs, sign repairs, guardrail repairs and other necessary improvements. Since everyone is the same and with generally the same expanded skill sets, we are no longer limited to who is available, which allows us to accomplish more and is easier to manage.

Another positive highlight of the program benefits was during the tsunami warning and severe weather responses over the past few years. Everyone in the MSW program must have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). In the past, we would have to wait for the CDL drivers to arrive before we could move the heavy vehicles and equipment. With the MSW program, as soon as people arrive we are able to immediately start mobilizing our equipment and vehicles to high ground or staging areas. Before what could take 5-6 hours to complete, now takes us less than half the time.

Employees benefit from the opportunity to expand and acquire skill sets and earn additional pay. The State benefits via increased productivity, added efficiency and a more versatile work force. Both sides enjoy the boosted morale brought about by the higher pay and the pride in learning additional skills.

It should be noted it is not bonus pay. Employees are given a temporary incentive differential based on their current level of pay and the amount of training completed. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes what each member must accomplish in order to obtain a certain pay level within the MSW program. No one can obtain their incentive pay without obtaining or already possessing the required prerequisites within the MOU.

The workers exempt from the program are those whose pay is already higher or the same as the highest paid MSW position (which is a BC-10, so i.e. Bridge Crew - BC11, Electrical Crew - BC11, Motor Pool - BC11). The only three positions not afforded the opportunity were in the Motor Pool: the Mechanical Repair Work (BC09), the Auto Service Utility Worker (BC05) and the Auto Mechanic Helper (BC05). They were not

included, because the premise of the MSW program was to perform field maintenance work more effectively and included skills such as masonry, carpentry, sign repair, guardrail repair, fence repair, pothole repairs, heavy vehicle and equipment operation, none of which are in the Motor Pool function, which is a support unit.

Any other employees who are not in the program opted out as the program is voluntary. There are fewer than 10 employees who voluntarily opted out of the program for personal reasons or because they did not choose to obtain their CDL's, which is required for the program.

Follow up response to an additional inquiry:

There are more than 1,150 lane miles of state roadways on Oahu alone and there are only 101 MSW employees responsible for the bulk of the maintenance work, including such necessities as pothole patching, road striping, street lighting, landscaping, tree-trimming, street sweeping, drain cleaning, highway lighting, guardrails and road signage, among others duties. In addition to routine maintenance, work is added to the repair list every day when there is a traffic accident or damage to the highway system.

There is so much work hiring private contractors is not doubling up services, it is ensuring all the necessary work is completed. It is not possible for our current workforce to upkeep the system to the level of repair and maintenance that is required by federal and state standards, as well as expectations of the public, without supplementing with contractors. However, MSW allows us to do a lot more than we could previously.