

## Tampa Fire Rescue (TFR)

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[www.tampagov.net/dept\\_Fire](http://www.tampagov.net/dept_Fire)

### Key Public Service Areas

Tampa Fire Rescue's mission is to protect the lives and property of the citizens of Tampa from fire hazards and other emergency conditions.

### Critical Issues and Areas of Concern

- Additional Equipment and Staffing
- Communication Enhancements to the TFR System
- Strategy to Upgrade and Restructure TFR's Rescue Division
- Enhancements to Support the Fire Prevention Bureau
- Fire Boat
- Imaging Systems
- Thermal Imagers
- Automatic Vehicle Locator
- Mobile Computers
- Personnel Issues
- Airport Division Staffing
- In-Service Training
- Health Benefits
- Service Division

### Scope of Department Operations

Tampa Fire Rescue (TFR) Department has 611 employees (547 sworn and 64 civilian) with an annual budget of \$43.4 million. TFR saves lives and protect the property of Tampa citizens through fire prevention, public education, emergency medical services, and professional fire suppression services. The Combat, Rescue, Fire Prevention, Signal and Administration Divisions carry out these mission objectives. The Department has a fleet of 122 sedans, trucks, boats, fire engines, and ambulances. Firefighters are assigned to 21 fire stations throughout the City and 2 stations at Tampa International Airport. Tampa Fire Rescue's average response time is 5.20 minutes for fire incidence and 5.32 for medical emergencies.

### Status Report

**Additional Equipment and Staffing.** The Tampa Fire Rescue Department needs to purchase a heavy rescue vehicle to maintain and improve service delivery. Technological improvements, such as the acquisition and installation of computers on fire trucks, would help in improving response times. A cooperative effort is underway between Tampa Fire Rescue and Tampa Port Authority to purchase a Fireboat; however, funding is needed to accomplish this goal. In addition, staffing levels need to be increased in order to comply with National Fire Protection Association 1710 standards. The Tampa Fire Rescue's Rapid Intervention Teams should also be augmented to ensure Firefighter Safety. A strategic management and funding strategy needs to be developed. A study should be undertaken to determine workflow and staff needed to accomplish similar work load and performance levels. [[CR-55](#) & [CR-67](#)]

**Communication Enhancements to the TFR System.** Responding to fires and calls for emergency rescue services requires a quick and reliable telecommunications network. Telephones and radios are now being replaced by computers and GPS systems and digital communications networks. The Tampa Fire Rescue Department needs these systems to attain the best possible response time. For example, the Department needs to install computers on fire trucks with enhanced computer options. Right now, these computers can only track time at the scene. Field communication capabilities are limited. The Department needs to upgrade GPS and field communication technology and equipment. Software to support automated dispatching would enhance service delivery. Existing radios are becoming obsolete due to technological advancements and will need to be upgraded/replaced in the near future.

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## Tampa Fire Rescue (TFR) Status Report (continued)

GIS capabilities are primitive and will likely need augmentation to improve response time and service delivery. In addition, manpower retention and shortage issues affect service delivery and overburdens existing dispatch staff. A strategy needs to be put in place that will enable the Tampa Fire Rescue Department to upgrade and modernize its communications infrastructure.

**Strategy to Upgrade and Restructure TFR's Rescue Division.** Tampa Fire Rescue has recommended a strategy to respond to new Federal and State mandates and a need to upgrade existing systems. This strategy calls for increased staffing, training, organizational restructuring and upgrading equipment. For example, Quality Improvement mandated by F.S. 401 and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1710) makes necessary the recruitment of a full-time EMS Coordinator and the reinstatement of three (3) EMS Supervisors to set benchmarks and provide follow-up with crews. The EMS Reporting System would be replaced, and existing reporting technologies upgraded, as well as the incorporating the use of PDA technologies. The installation of an Insurance Interface would allow easier billing for EMS services. Currently, 47% of Tampa Fire Rescue personnel are Paramedic certified. The long-term goal is to reach 100%. The restructuring of the Division also calls for reduce the number of Districts from 4 to 3 and possibly incorporating different shift schedule. The strategy needs a funding and implementation schedule.

**Enhancements to Support the Fire Prevention Bureau.** The Fire Prevention Bureau has identified several enhancement that would improve the safety and prevent fires. These include: upgrading clerical positions to facilitate implementation and long-term development of the Inspections database; adding inspectors to improve service delivery in the Existing Construction Division; providing basic infrastructure for use of computers; making software enhancements (ASTRA) within the Arson Investigation, Plans Examiners and Existing Building Inspections divisions; and reorganizing the Public Information Officer, Public Education/Outreach and Firefighter's Museum into one coordinated function.

**Fire Boat.** The Fire Boat is a planned replacement of TFR's old Fire Boat, which has a limited water pumping capacity. The new boat is anticipated to cost between \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000.

**Imaging Systems.** Imaging systems are available to assist TFR in recording information for incidents (arson), etc. These systems can speed the transfer of information and improve the reliability of records. In 2002, TFR sought funding for this system. No funding was obtained; therefore, no progress has been made on acquiring and/or installing this system.

**Thermal Imagers.** The TFR is seeking funding for six new Thermal Imagers (\$10,000-15,000 each). The imager is a tool that firefighters use when in a structure to detect humans, animals and objects that generate heat. This tool significantly helps in saving lives, both of persons in a fire, as well as, firefighters providing fire services and entering the structure, which may have an unknown item that is highly explosive or structurally threatening.

**Automatic Vehicle Locator.** One tool to assist in emergency responses is the Department's Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) System. This equipment enables the Department to display the location and status of all Tampa Fire Rescue vehicles. Installation began in fall 2002, however, additional AVL's are needed in order to equip the entire fleet.

## **Tampa Fire Rescue (TFR)** **Status Report** (continued)

**Mobile Computers.** The objective is to install mobile computers in TFR's vehicles. In 2002, TFR no funding was obtained; therefore, no progress in acquiring and/or installing this system was made.

**Personnel Issues.** Tampa Fire Rescue has submitted numerous recommendations related to increases in manpower. The Administration should examine technological alternatives that would allow similar performance results through the use of better equipment and technology.

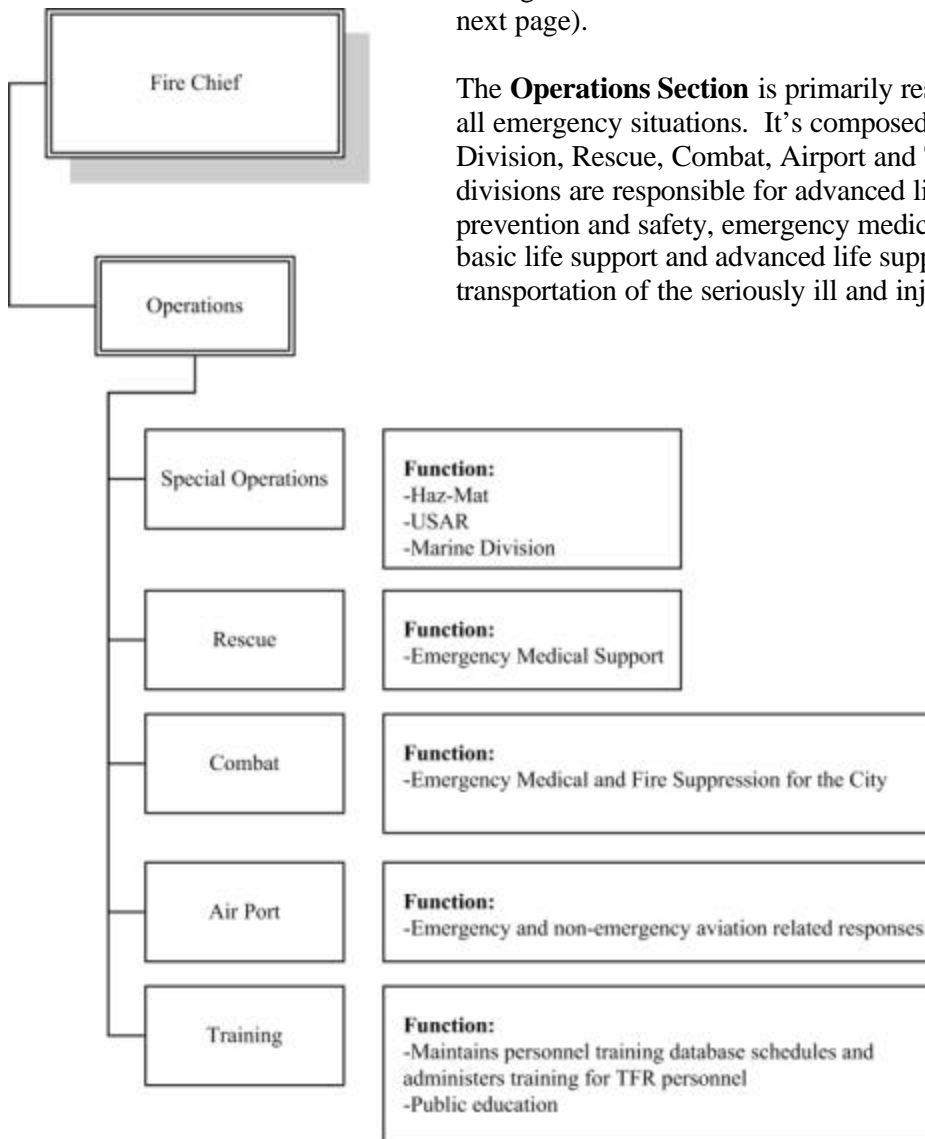
**Airport Division Staffing.** Due to the consolidation of fire services into one main facility, additional clerical staff (division has to borrow clerical staff from other stations) is needed. Whenever there is a need for additional personnel to perform assignments, the division is forced to borrow staff from other stations. This situation is for all types of staff (clerical, fire fighters, EMS, etc.).

**In-Service Training.** A Consultant is preparing a study, which should be ready by end of 2002 that will examine alternatives for providing an in-service training program through Leary-Erwin VoTech, HCC and other certified educational training centers. Once this study is completed, a budget and implementation program should be established.

**Health Benefits.** Provide more funding to allow extension of health services to other city departments' employees as part of the Occupational Health Program Expansion.

**Service Division.** Quality Improvement mandated by F.S. 401 and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 1710) makes necessary the certification of maintenance mechanics that serve Tampa Fire Rescue vehicles. A funding and training strategy needs to be developed so staff can earn the required certifications.

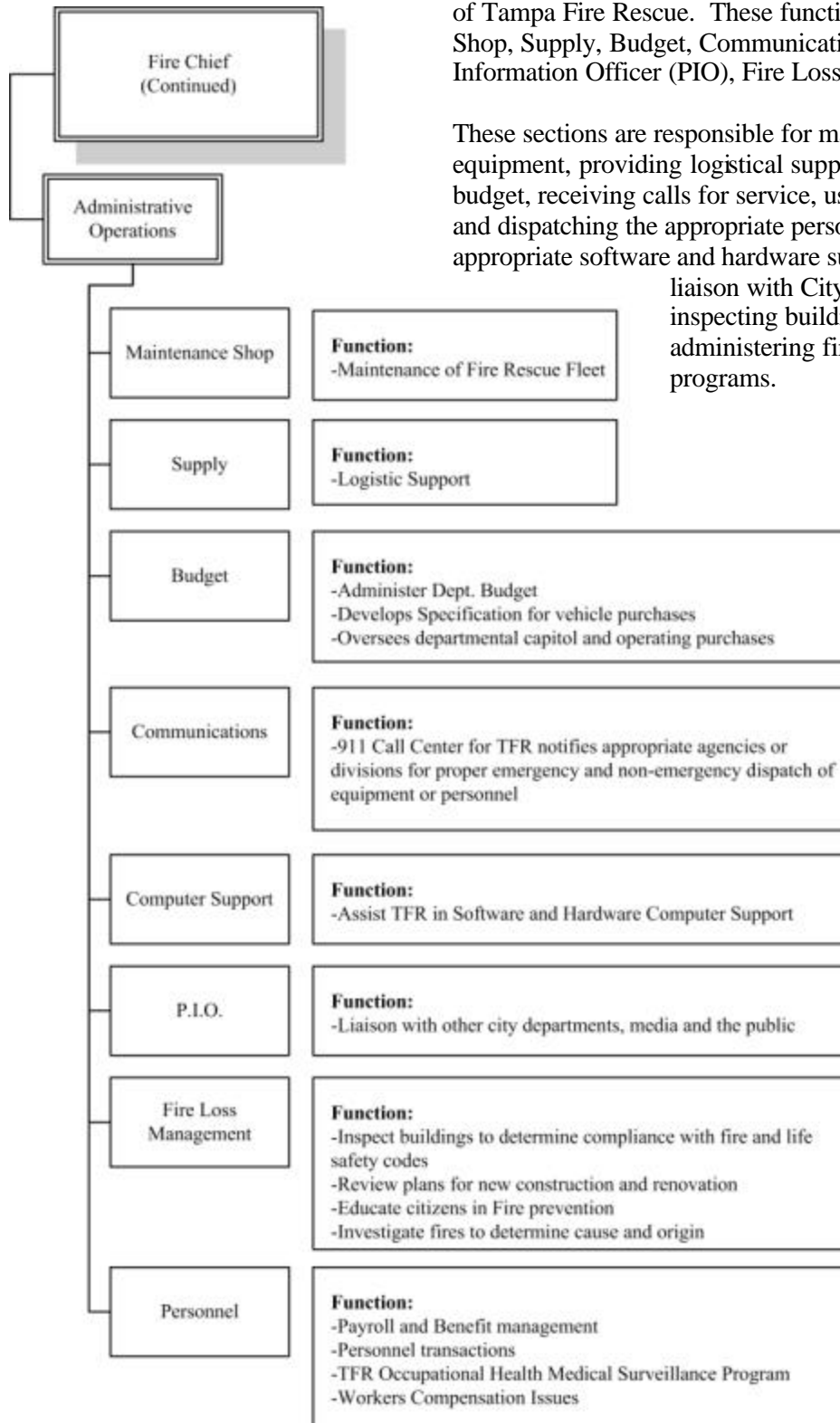
## Tampa Fire Rescue (TFR) Organization Chart



The Fire Rescue Department is organized functionally by the operations and administrative activities of the department. In the operations area, the functions are broken down into five areas. There are eight functions under the Administrative Operations Section (see next page).

The **Operations Section** is primarily responsible for first response to all emergency situations. It's composed of the Special Operations Division, Rescue, Combat, Airport and Training Divisions. These divisions are responsible for advanced life support services, fire prevention and safety, emergency medical and fire suppression duties, basic life support and advanced life support medical care and transportation of the seriously ill and injured and specialized training.

## Tampa Fire Rescue (TFR) Organization Chart (continued)



The **Administrative Operations** oversees the day-to-day activities of Tampa Fire Rescue. These functions include the Maintenance Shop, Supply, Budget, Communications, Computer Support, Public Information Officer (PIO), Fire Loss Management and Personnel.

These sections are responsible for maintaining TFR vehicles and equipment, providing logistical support, developing the department's budget, receiving calls for service, using the Police/Fire 911 system and dispatching the appropriate personnel and equipment, making appropriate software and hardware support decisions, providing liaison with City Departments and the public, inspecting buildings and code compliance and administering fire safety and loss management programs.