

**TAMPA FIRE RESCUE
OPERATIONS DIVISION
AUDIT 14-13
JANUARY 16, 2015**



CITY OF TAMPA

Bob Buckhorn, Mayor

Internal Audit Department

Christine Glover, Internal Audit Director

January 16, 2015

Honorable Bob Buckhorn
Mayor, City of Tampa
1 City Hall Plaza
Tampa, Florida

RE: Operations Division, Audit 14-13

Dear Mayor Buckhorn:

Attached is the Internal Audit Department's report on Operations Division.

We thank the management and staff of the Tampa Fire Rescue for their cooperation and assistance during this audit.

Sincerely,

/s/ Christine Glover

Christine Glover
Internal Audit Director

cc: Dennis Rogero, Chief of Staff
Sonya Little, Chief Financial Officer
Tom Forward, Fire Chief
Nick LoCicero, Assistant Fire Chief - Operations

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/s/ Stephen Mhere

Auditor

/s/ Christine Glover

Audit Director

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BACKGROUND

Tampa Fire Rescue Department (TFR) is responsible for providing fire prevention, protection, and suppression services to an estimated 353,000 people in the City of Tampa (COT). TFR carries out these activities through the Operations Division. The division is organized into four fire districts serving the City and an Airport Division that provides Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) services for Tampa International Airport. Three fire districts, namely Districts 1, 2, and 3, have five fire stations each while District 4 has six and the Airport Division has one. TFR's coverage is about 113 square miles.

TFR operates on three rotating, 24-hour shifts, each of which is headed by a district chief. District chiefs report to shift commanders and shift commanders, together with the airport division chief, report to the Assistant Fire Chief-Operations. In addition to conventional firefighting, TFR also handles hazardous materials, marine, and aircraft emergencies.

To effectively respond to all types of emergencies, TFR utilizes a variety of apparatus, including fire and paramedic engines, specialized ARFF vehicles, boats, foam units, etc. It also has Haz-Mat, mass casualty, and mobile canteen units, as well as a reserve fleet of 10 rescue vehicles, nine engines, and two trucks. As of August 2014, TFR had a staff of 675, of whom 462 were sworn employees assigned to Operations Division.

TFR responds to thousands of emergency calls every year. For example, in FY 2013 alone, it responded to 72,144 calls, most of which were medical emergencies. Although fire-related emergencies are fewer – there were 16,414 between FY 2013 and 2014 – timely response is critical to public safety and preservation of property.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

This audit was conducted in accordance with the Internal Audit Department's FY 2014 Audit Agenda. Audit objectives were as follows:

1. To evaluate if TFR Operations complied with the policy restricting employees from working for more than 48 hours consecutively.
2. To determine if TFR was achieving its total response time goal of eight minutes or less for at least 80% of the calls made to structure fires.
3. To determine whether manufacturer or TFR recommendations for cleaning and maintenance of firefighting gear were being followed and that supervisors were inspecting firefighters' protective clothing according to policy.

STATEMENT OF SCOPE

The audit covered fiscal years FY 2013 and 2014. It focused on TFR Operations Division's core functions of fire suppression and related activities. Documentation relating to internal policies, standard operating guidelines, contracts, and procedure manuals that might have been originated prior to the audit period but were operational during that period, were also included. The audit did not include functions under the purview of TFR's Rescue Division, which focused on medical emergency services already reviewed in a previous audit.

STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY

The audit involved reviewing TFR Operations Division's Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs), rules and regulations governing the performance of firefighting activities, Code of Federal Regulations relating to airport firefighting, Florida statutes regarding training, and other eligibility requirements for firefighters. Although TFR had not adopted National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) codes, it used some of them as a guideline. So those codes were also reviewed in this audit.

This audit also involved a tour of fire stations, including the Airport Fire Division (Fire Station 2), as well as Fire Stations 6 and 19. Interviews were held with firefighters in these stations to gather information relating to their successes, challenges, and concerns.

A staffing analysis was performed using TFR's staffing records as well as staff attendance records obtained from COT's Payroll Division. Response time analysis was accomplished using data from the Computer Aided Dispatch, a system used to record emergency response milestones including the time a fire emergency was called in, dispatch time, time when responding units set out to the emergency, and when they arrived at the scene. In this analysis, all records of emergency responses made to structure fires were utilized. Evaluation of maintenance of personal protective gear was accomplished through inspection. Manufacturers' fire gear maintenance guidelines and equipment specifications were reviewed, as were TFR's internal reports on its inspection of personally protective equipment.

To achieve one of the audit objectives, reliance was placed on computer-processed data contained in the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. CAD system data was assessed and determined to be reliable.

STATEMENT OF AUDITING STANDARDS

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Providing the public with fire protection and rescue services is a challenge that calls for not only courage but also maximum preparedness. The following achievements demonstrated TFR's readiness to fulfill its objectives:

1. During the audit period, the TFR was fully accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). Accreditation is bestowed on a fire department after a rigorous peer review process and on-site assessment, and is valid for five years. According to CFAI, accreditation is a demonstration that a fire department strives to improve its service delivery by examining its service levels and internal performance against industry best practices.
2. As of September 2014, the Airport Division was certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as an Index E aircraft rescue and firefighting agency. Index E is the highest designation an airport fire department/fire station can get. It means the fire station satisfies FAA requirements in terms of appropriate fire apparatus/equipment as well as personnel training. The FAA deems a fire station with this rating to be able to adequately respond to fire emergencies at airports that handle the longest aircraft as well as high average daily departures of air carrier aircraft.
3. TFR continues to upgrade and replace fire stations to modernize them in terms of design as well as to place them in locations that would optimize the ability to respond to emergencies faster and more efficiently.

AUDIT CONCLUSIONS

Our conclusions, based upon a review of documented policies and fieldwork performed are as follows:

1. TFR Operations Division complied with its policy restricting employees from working for more than 48 hours consecutively.
2. For the two years FY 2013 and 2014, TFR achieved its total response time goal of eight minutes or less for at least 80% of calls for structure fire emergencies.
3. Manufacturer or TFR recommendations for cleaning and maintenance of gear and protective clothing were followed. Also, protective clothing was inspected in compliance with established policies.