

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## Dingman Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association

Pike County, Pennsylvania

For the Period

January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2014

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November 2015



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Al Valente, President  
DINGMAN TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Pike County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, Act of April 9, 1929, (P.L. 343, No. 176), and mandated by the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010 (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2014.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior audit report.
2. To determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association received state aid and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures, including the safeguarding of assets. Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for complying with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures. It is our responsibility to perform procedures to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

Based on our audit procedures, we concluded that, for the period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2014:

- The Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior audit report.
- Because of the significance of the matter described in the finding below and discussed later in this report, the Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association did not, in all significant respects, receive state aid and expend state aid and accumulate relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures. Therefore, the Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association may be subject to the potential withholding of its upcoming state aid distribution, as discussed in the Potential Withhold of State Aid section of this report.

Finding – Inappropriate Ownership Of Rescue Vehicles

- The Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2014, had a cash balance of \$186,737 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$25,831.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their response has been included in the report. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.

October 21, 2015



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General

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## BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, Act of April 9, 1929, (P.L. 343, No. 176), and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010, (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, the Department of the Auditor General's duty is to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association to determine that funds received under the Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Distribution Law, Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (commonly referred to as Act 205), are properly expended.

The Dingman Township Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association, herein referred to as the Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, is a charitable organization that was formed primarily to afford financial protection to volunteer firefighters and to encourage individuals to participate in volunteer fire service.

Act 118 governs the overall operation of the volunteer firefighters' relief association. The relief association's bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which the volunteer firefighters' relief association conducts business. To fulfill its primary purpose, Act 118 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 118, it is the responsibility of the volunteer firefighters' relief association to choose investments in a proper and prudent manner.

Volunteer firefighters' relief associations receive public tax monies, and the association officers therefore have a responsibility to the public to conduct the association's financial affairs in a businesslike manner and to maintain sufficient financial records to support the propriety of all association transactions. Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are also responsible for ensuring that the association operates in accordance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.

Act 205 sets forth the computation of the Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Distribution paid to each applicable municipality throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The amount of the distribution is based upon the population of each municipality and the market value of real estate within the municipality. Upon receipt of this distribution, the municipality must allocate the funds to the volunteer firefighters' relief association of the fire service organization or fire service organizations, which is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

**BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

The Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters’ Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

| <u>Municipality</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>2012</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2014</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Dingman Township    | Pike          | \$61,885    | \$68,374    | \$64,546    |

The volunteer firefighters’ relief association and the affiliated fire service organization are separate, legal entities. The Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters’ Relief Association is affiliated with the following fire service organization:

Dingman Township Volunteer Fire Department

DINGMAN TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the prior audit findings and recommendations, as follows:

- Insufficient Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

By increasing the Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage to an amount greater than the balance of the relief association's cash assets.

- Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

By maintaining a cumulative inventory roster of all relief association owned equipment.

DINGMAN TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – Inappropriate Ownership Of Rescue Vehicles**

Condition: On April 10, 2012, the relief association purchased two rescue vehicles, in the amount of \$67,378, to carry personnel and safeguard equipment; however, the titles to the vehicles were inappropriately issued in the name of the fire company.

Criteria: Prudent business practice dictates that the relief association should maintain sole ownership of all equipment purchased by the relief association. As such, rescue vehicles purchased by the relief association are to be titled in the name of the relief association.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure that the rescue vehicles purchased were titled in the name of the relief association.

Effect: As a result of the rescue vehicles being inappropriately titled in the name of the fire company, the relief association assets were not properly safeguarded. Furthermore, the relief association's future state aid allocations may be withheld until the finding recommendation is complied with.

Recommendation: We recommend that the rescue vehicles be titled in the name of the relief association. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

Management's Response: Relief association management agreed with the finding as presented and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

Auditor's Conclusion: Due to the potential withhold of state aid, the relief association's compliance with the finding recommendation will be monitored subsequent to the release of the audit report and through our next audit of the relief association.



DINGMAN TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
POTENTIAL WITHHOLD OF STATE AID

A condition such as that reported by the finding contained in this audit report may lead to a total withholding of state aid in the future unless that finding is corrected. However, such action will not be considered if sufficient documentation is provided within 60 days to verify compliance with this department's recommendations. Such documentation should be submitted by the volunteer firefighters' relief association to: Department of the Auditor General, Bureau of Fire Relief Audits, Room 327 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

DINGMAN TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7412 states: a volunteer firefighters' relief association is an organization formed primarily for the purpose of affording financial protection to volunteer firefighters against the consequences of misfortune suffered as a result of their participation in the fire service. The organization may contain within its membership the members of one or more fire companies and may serve secondary purposes, as set forth in this subchapter, but only if adequate provisions have been first made to serve the primary purpose.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416 authorizes the investment of relief association funds and outlines the types of benefits and services that can be provided with volunteer firefighters' relief association funds.

Furthermore, all expenditures must be properly authorized as prescribed in the volunteer firefighters' relief association bylaws and approved at an association meeting.

USES OF FUNDS:

|                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Benefit Services:             |            |
| Relief benefits               | \$ 912     |
|                               |            |
| Fire Services:                |            |
| Equipment purchased           | \$ 182,863 |
| Equipment maintenance         | 14,803     |
| Training expenses             | 6,653      |
| Fire prevention materials     | 5,880      |
| Total Fire Services           | \$ 210,199 |
|                               |            |
| Administrative Services:      |            |
| Officer compensation          | \$ 6,000   |
| Other administrative expenses | 971        |
| Total Administrative Services | \$ 6,971   |

DINGMAN TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom W. Wolf  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Dingman Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Mr. Al Valente    | President      |
| Mr. Joseph DeMaio | Vice President |
| Ms. Joy Vierra    | Secretary      |
| Ms. Susan Mikulak | Treasurer      |

A report was also distributed to the following municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association:

|                                      |           |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Ms. Karen Kleist<br>Dingman Township | Secretary |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.PaAuditor.gov](http://www.PaAuditor.gov). Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: [news@PaAuditor.gov](mailto:news@PaAuditor.gov).