



**EAST LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER  
FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**DELAWARE COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012**

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**



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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE**  
**AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Marc Baron, President  
EAST LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Delaware County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the East Lansdowne 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, 2009 to December 31, 2012.

We conducted this compliance audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* applicable to performance audits, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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; and
2. To determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association received 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 East Lansdowne 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. In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the volunteer firefighters' relief association's internal controls as they relate to the association's compliance with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of the audit objectives, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2012, with the custodians of the funds, debtors, creditors, and financial institutions to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. Additionally, we performed procedures to provide a reasonable assurance of detecting instances of violations of legal and regulatory requirements or violations of provisions of contracts that are significant within the context of the audit objectives.

The results of our audit, for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2012, found the East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address three of the four contained in our prior audit report. However, the East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association failed to take appropriate corrective action to address the remaining findings contained in our prior audit report, as listed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Findings section of this report. In addition, the results of our audit found the East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, in all significant respects, received state aid and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the findings listed below and discussed in detail in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report. The results of our tests also indicated the East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2012, had a cash balance of \$30,111 and an investment balance with a fair of \$7,312.

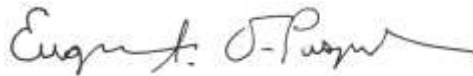
Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance with Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Inadequate Minutes of Meetings

Finding No. 2 – Failure to Maintain Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

Furthermore, a scope limitation on our audit exists, as detailed in the Observation section of this report.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report.

December 23, 2013

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene A. DePasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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 East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, herein referred to as the East Lansdowne 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 East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters’ Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
East Lansdowne Borough	Delaware	\$12,196	\$13,727	\$21,575	\$12,217

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

East Lansdowne Fire Company

EAST LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with three of the four prior audit findings and recommendations, as follows:

Unauthorized Expenditures

- By receiving reimbursement of \$1,439 from the affiliated fire company for the unauthorized expenditures made in the prior audit period.

Inadequate Signatory Authority For The Disbursement Of Funds

- By requiring more than one signature on all negotiable instruments.

Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

- By maintaining a cumulative inventory roster of all equipment owned.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with one of the four prior audit findings. This finding is noted below and discussed in detail in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Minutes Of Meetings.

We are concerned with the volunteer firefighters' relief association's failure to correct a previously reported audit finding. The association management should strive to implement the recommendation and corrective action noted in this audit report.



EAST LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 - Noncompliance With Prior audit Recommendation – Inadequate Minutes Of Meetings

Condition: As disclosed in the prior audit report, the relief association again, failed to maintain detailed minutes of meetings as required by Act 118. Specifically, the relief association's minutes did not address all of the financial-related transactions that occurred during the audit period.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(a) states, in part, that the relief association:

. . . must provide for taking and preserving minutes of all meetings and maintenance of such books of account as may be necessary and appropriate to afford a permanent record of its fiscal affairs.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials again, neglected to maintain minutes of meetings as required by Act 118.

Effect: Without detailed minutes of meetings, evidence that relief association business was presented before the membership for approval does not exist.

Recommendation: We again, recommend that the relief association maintain detailed minutes of meetings, evidencing the discussion and approval of all financial-related business conducted by 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 at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

EAST LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 - Failure to Maintain Surety (Fidelity) Bond Coverage

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the disbursing officer, as required by Act 118 for the entire audit period. The relief association maintained adequate bond coverage from January 1, 2009 through February 22, 2011. However, as of February 22, 2011, the relief association allowed the bond coverage to lapse and has not maintained required bond coverage on the disbursing officer. As of December 31, 2012, the relief association's cash assets totaled \$30,111.

Criteria: Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c)(4) states, in part, that:

. . . the disbursing officer, whether designated treasurer, comptroller, financial secretary or otherwise, shall be bonded by corporate surety for faithful performance of duty. The amount of the bond shall be at least as great as the maximum cash balance in current funds of the association at any time during the fiscal year, and the premium on the bond shall be a proper charge against the funds of the association.

Cause: Relief association officials were unaware of the Act 118 provision requiring the maintenance of Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer.

Effect: As a result of the authorized disbursing officer of the relief association not being bonded, the relief association's cash assets were not adequately safeguarded.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials obtain Surety (Fidelity) bond coverage on the relief association's authorized disbursing officer in an amount greater than the relief association's maximum cash balance, as required by Act 118. 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 at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

EAST LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
OBSERVATION

Observation – Scope Limitation

The East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association (VFRA) did not maintain canceled or imaged checks after September 2009. While the VFRA provided bank statements, the VFRA failed to provide copies of canceled or imaged checks. Without copies of canceled or imaged checks, we could not determine whether two VFRA officers authorized and signed the checks.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7415(c)(3) requires that the signatures of at least two officers, one of whom shall be the disbursing officer, shall be required to bind the association by formal contract or to issue a negotiable instrument.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418(a) provides that the Department of Auditor General shall have the power and its duty shall be to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association . . . as far as may be necessary to satisfy the Auditor General that the money received was or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this subchapter. Copies of all audits shall be furnished to the Governor.

Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) Section No. 6.56 states, "Auditors must obtain sufficient appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for their findings and conclusions." GAGAS Section No. 6.61(f) states, "Evidence obtained from a knowledgeable, credible, and unbiased third party is generally more reliable than evidence from management of the audited entity or others who have a direct interest in the audited entity."

Our inability to review canceled checks or imaged checks constitutes a scope limitation on our audit.

EAST LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012

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.

USES OF FUNDS:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 13,474
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 34,382
Equipment maintenance	3,177
Training expenses	6,504
Fire prevention materials	1,384
Total Fire Services	\$ 45,447
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 3,164

EAST LANSDOWNE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

East Lansdowne Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Marc Baron	President
Mr. Marc Baron	Vice President
Mr. Ryan TreDenick	Secretary
Mr. Larry Mellom,	Treasurer

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

Ms. Gerri DelPrato	Secretary
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This report is a matter of public record and is available online at [www.auditorgen.state.pa.us](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us). Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 231 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: [news@auditorgen.state.pa.us](mailto:news@auditorgen.state.pa.us).