



**RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008**



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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, Act of June 11, 1968, (P.L. 149, No. 84), as amended, 53 P.S. § 8501 et seq. (commonly referred to as Act 84), 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 Renton 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 84 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 84 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 84, 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. The Renton Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Plum Borough	Allegheny	\$39,714	\$39,710	\$40,714

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Renton Volunteer Fire Department

Ms. Anita Maydak, President  
RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Allegheny County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Renton 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, Act of June 11, 1968, (P.L. 149, No. 84), as amended, 53 P.S. § 8501 *et seq.* (commonly referred to as Act 84), for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008.

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 Renton Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's administration of state aid and accumulated 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 Renton Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Renton Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2008, 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, 2006 to December 31, 2008, found, in all significant respects, the Renton Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association received and expended funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the following findings discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Renton Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2008, had a cash balance of \$22,005 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$45,032.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain Minutes of Meetings

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Unauthorized Expenditures

Finding No. 3 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Undocumented Expenditures

Finding No. 4 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

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

April 10, 2009

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Renton Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit findings and recommendations:

- Inappropriate Presigning of Blank Checks

By prohibiting the presigning of blank checks.

- 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 Membership Roster

By maintaining a comprehensive listing of the relief association membership.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Renton Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with various prior audit findings. These issues are further discussed in the following findings noted in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure to Maintain Minutes of Meetings
- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Unauthorized Expenditures

While the relief association received reimbursement in the amount of \$5,153 from the affiliated fire department for the unauthorized expenditures made in the prior audit period, they again made unauthorized expenditures in the current audit period, as discussed in Finding No. 2 of this report.

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Undocumented Expenditures

While the relief association received reimbursement in the amount of \$4,640 from the affiliated fire department for the undocumented expenditures made in the prior audit period, they again neglected to maintain adequate supporting documentation for all current period expenditures, as discussed in Finding No. 3 of this report.

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
(Continued)

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

We are concerned with the volunteer firefighters' relief association's failure to correct these previously reported audit findings. The association management should strive to implement the recommendations and corrective actions noted in this audit report.

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain Minutes of Meetings

Condition: As cited in the prior three audit reports, the relief association did not maintain minutes of meetings as required by Act 84.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505(a) states, in part, that the relief association:

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

Cause: While notified of this condition in the prior three audit reports, relief association officials neglected to maintain minutes of meetings as required by Act 84.

Effect: The failure to maintain minutes of meetings prevented the verification as to whether relief association business was presented before the membership for approval.

Recommendation: We again recommend relief association officials maintain a permanent record of all relief association meetings as required by Act 84. The minutes should include an adequate record 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.

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Unauthorized Expenditures

Condition: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association again neglected to ensure relief association funds were used to pay for authorized expenditures. Specifically, during the current audit period, the relief association expended funds for the following items that are not authorized by Act 84:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
06/27/07	1073	Court costs for fire department	\$ 360
06/27/07	1074	Court costs for fire department	240
12/17/07	1092	Messenger service for fire department	50
Total			<u>\$ 650</u>

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e)(1) states:

The funds of any volunteer firefighters' relief association may be spent:

- (1) To pay for such normal and reasonable running expenses as may be appropriate to the businesslike conduct of its affairs including legal fees and including but not by way of limitation the rental or purchase of offices, the payment of reasonable compensation of any needed employees, and the purchase of office equipment and supplies.

Because the Department of the Auditor General is legislatively prohibited from giving pre-audit advice, an interagency agreement with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) had been established whereby the DCED provided interpretation of Act 84 of 1968, the "Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act." Administrative costs related to the operations of the fire department have been deemed by DCED to not qualify as allowable expenses since the services do not directly benefit the volunteer firefighters; consequently, these disbursements are not authorized under Act 84.

Cause: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials again neglected to ensure that all expenditures paid from the relief association's account were authorized by Act 84.

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – (Continued)

Effect: As a result of these improper expenditures, relief association funds were not available for investment purposes or to pay for expenditures authorized by Act 84.

Recommendation: We again recommend the relief association be reimbursed \$650 for the unauthorized expenditures and that relief association officials become familiar with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e) to aid them in determining the propriety of future expenditures. 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.

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 3 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Undocumented Expenditures

Condition: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association again neglected to maintain adequate supporting documentation for all relief association expenditures. Specifically, during the current audit period, the relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for the following expenditures:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
05/11/06	1030	Disbursement to association member	\$ 60
03/21/07	1065	Office supply store	296
Total			<u>\$ 356</u>

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8507(a) states, in part:

The Department of the Auditor General shall have the power, and its duty shall be, to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association receiving any money under Chapter 7 of the Act of December 18, 1984 (P.L. 1005, No 205), known as the "Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act," as amended, as far as may be necessary to satisfy the department that the money received was expended or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this act.

Without adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices, this department is unable to determine if the relief association funds were expended for purposes authorized by Act 84. Furthermore, good business practices would require that supporting documentation be maintained to verify the propriety of all financial transactions.

Cause: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials neglected to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure supporting documentation is maintained for all expenditures.

Effect: Lack of supporting documentation, such as invoices and detailed minutes of meetings, made it impossible to determine if the expenditures were made in accordance with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e). In addition, the failure to maintain adequate documentation for relief association expenditures can lead to an increased risk of errors occurring and funds being misappropriated.

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 3 – (Continued)

Recommendation: We again recommend the relief association provide this department with adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices, to determine the validity of the expenditures or that the relief association be reimbursed \$356 for the undocumented expenditures. We also recommend that the relief association officials maintain supporting documentation for all future expenditures. 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.

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 4 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association officials did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. Specifically, the relief association has not provided an updated roster which includes the equipment items purchased in the prior and current audit periods. In addition, there was no indication that an annual inventory of the equipment was performed to account for the relief association's fixed assets.

Criteria: The relief association should establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster of all items purchased by the relief association in order to provide an effective accounting control over the relief association's fixed assets. A cumulative roster of all relief association equipment should include the following:

- Type of equipment purchased.
- Date of purchase.
- Unit cost.
- Name of supplier.
- Serial number, if applicable.
- Current location of item.
- Final disposition of sold or damaged equipment.
- Notation of the annual inventory.

Cause: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials neglected to establish adequate internal control procedures over fixed assets to include the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster and the performance of an annual equipment inventory.

Effect: The failure to properly record equipment purchases in a detailed equipment roster prevents officials from effectively monitoring the relief association's equipment purchases. In addition, the failure to maintain a detailed equipment roster and perform an annual equipment inventory prevents adequate accountability and safeguarding of relief association assets.

Recommendation: We again recommend the relief association officials maintain a cumulative roster of all relief association owned equipment. Furthermore, the relief association should ensure it performs an annual inventory of all operable equipment and that the inventory be sufficiently documented. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 4 – (Continued)

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.

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8502(1) states, in part, that:

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. Such an association may also serve other purposes, . . . provided only that adequate provisions be first made to serve its primary purpose. . . .

Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506, 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. 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:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 328
Relief benefits	1,860
Total Benefit Services	\$ 2,188
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 141,442
Equipment maintenance	4,118
Training expenses	1,452
Fire prevention materials	509
Total Fire Services	\$ 147,521
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 9,900
Other administrative expenses	23,210
Total Administrative Services	\$ 33,110
Other Expenditures:	
Principal payments on loan	\$ 4,455
Interest payments on loan	1,268
Undocumented expenditures	356
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 6,079

RENTON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Renton Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Ms. Anita Maydak, President

Mr. Andrew Kropelak, Secretary

Mr. Paul Shamrock, Treasurer

Reports were also distributed to each municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association.

Ms. Maria Gingery, Secretary  
Plum Borough

This report is a matter of public record. Copies of this report may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 318 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. If you have any questions regarding this report or any other matter, you may contact the Department of the Auditor General by accessing our website at [www.auditorgen.state.pa.us](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).