



**THE SENTRY VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY RELIEF
ASSOCIATION**

CLEARFIELD COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012

RELEASED FEBRUARY 2014

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

David Hughes, President
SENTRY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Clearfield County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Sentry 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, 2010 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 objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objective.

The objective of the audit was: 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 objective identified above.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Sentry 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 objective, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Sentry Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Sentry 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 objective. 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 objective.

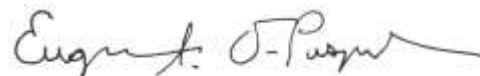
The results of our audit, for the period January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012, found the Sentry Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, in all significant respects, received state aid and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the findings listed below and discussed later in this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Sentry Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2012, had a cash balance of \$7,442 and no investments.

Finding No. 1 – Inappropriate Ownership of Rescue Vehicle

Finding No. 2 – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

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

August 9, 2013



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 Sentry Volunteer Fire Company Relief Association, herein referred to as Sentry 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 Sentry Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Bell Township	Clearfield	\$2,566	\$3,719	-
Burnside Borough	Clearfield	\$1,237	\$1,626	\$917
Burnside Township	Clearfield	\$1,532	\$2,222	-

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

Sentry Volunteer Fire Company

SENTRY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Inappropriate Ownership of Rescue Vehicle

Condition: On March 14, 2009, the relief association purchased a rescue vehicle, in the amount of \$6,500, to carry personnel and safeguard equipment; however, the title to the vehicle was inappropriately issued in the name of an affiliated fire company. During the prior audit period, an observation was given to the relief association because the Pennsylvania Department of Motor Vehicles sent back the paper work because the relief association needed to send in a copy of their PA Sales Tax Exemption Number, which they did not have. The paper work was then lost. As of our audit exit conference date of March 1, 2013, the relief association still does not have the vehicle titled in its name and the vehicle is out of service.

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: The relief association failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure that the rescue vehicle purchased was titled in the name of the relief association.

Effect: As a result of the rescue vehicle not being appropriately titled in the name of the relief association, this relief association asset was not properly safeguarded.

Recommendation: We recommend that the rescue vehicle 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 at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

SENTRY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

Finding No. 2 – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: The relief association officials did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. While a listing of relief association owned equipment was provided by officials, this roster was incomplete and did not accurately identify equipment owned by the relief association. Specifically, the list of equipment that was provided did not contain all dates of purchases, unit costs, name's of suppliers, serial numbers, or final dispositions of sold or damaged items. This roster was also commingled with the affiliated fire company owned equipment. During the current audit period, the relief association purchased \$2,795 of equipment that has not been properly accounted for on the relief association's equipment roster. In addition, there was no indication that a physical inventory of equipment was conducted on an annual basis, nor whether such inventory accounted for all of the relief association's owned equipment.

Criteria: Prudent business practice dictates 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 equipment. A cumulative equipment roster of all relief association equipment should include the following:

- Types of equipment purchased;
- Dates of purchase;
- Unit costs;
- Names of suppliers;
- Serial numbers, if applicable;
- Current locations of items;
- Final dispositions of sold or damaged equipment; and
- Evidence of the performance and results of an annual physical inventory

Cause: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures over equipment requiring the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster and the performance of an annual physical inventory of equipment

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 physical inventory of equipment prevents adequate accountability for, and safeguarding of, relief association equipment.

SENTRY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

Finding No. 2 – (Continued)

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials maintain a cumulative equipment roster of all relief association owned equipment. Furthermore, the relief association should ensure it performs an annual physical inventory of all operable equipment and that the completion of the inventory be sufficiently documented. 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.

SENTRY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2010 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.

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:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 8,711
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	219
Total Benefit Services	\$ 8,930
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 2,795
Equipment maintenance	1,319
Training expenses	200
Fire prevention materials	262
Total Fire Services	\$ 4,576
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 320
Total Administrative Services	\$ 320
Total Investments Purchased:	\$ 900

SENTRY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Sentry Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

David Hughes, President

Jon Huey, Vice President

Stephanie Check, Secretary

Michelle Berringer, Treasurer

The following municipalities allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association and received a copy of this report.

Barbara Kauffman, Secretary
Bell Township

Judith Nipps, Secretary
Burnside Borough

Diana Rorabaugh, Secretary
Burnside Township

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at 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.