



**PLAINS VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**PLAINS TOWNSHIP AMBULANCE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF  
ASSOCIATION**

**LUZERNE 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 Plains Township Ambulance 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 Plains Township Ambulance 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>
Plains Township	Luzerne	\$25,193	\$25,158	\$21,482

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Plains Volunteer Ambulance Association

Mr. Michael Daigeaun, President  
PLAINS TOWNSHIP AMBULANCE VOLUNTEER  
FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Luzerne County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Plains Township Ambulance 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 finding 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 Plains Township Ambulance 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 applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures significant within the context of the audit objectives. We also tested transactions, confirmed the Plains Township Ambulance Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash balance as of December 31, 2008, with the custodian of the funds, and interviewed selected officials to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives.

The results of our audit for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008, found, in all significant respects, the Plains Township Ambulance 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 Plains Township Ambulance Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2008, had a cash balance of \$25,277 and no investments.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Undocumented Expenditure

Finding No. 2 – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

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

February 9, 2009

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

PLAINS TOWNSHIP AMBULANCE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Plains Township Ambulance Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with the prior audit finding. This issue is further discussed in the following finding noted in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Undocumented Expenditure

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

PLAINS TOWNSHIP AMBULANCE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Undocumented Expenditure

Condition: As noted in the prior audit, the relief association was unable to provide adequate supporting documentation for a \$1,058 expenditure on April 16, 2003.

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 an invoice, 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 an invoice and detailed minutes of relief association meetings, made it impossible to determine if the expenditure was made in accordance with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e).

However, subsequent to the audit period, on January 30, 2009, the relief association received reimbursement for the undocumented expenditure from the Plains Volunteer Ambulance Association.

Recommendation: We recommend 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.

PLAINS TOWNSHIP AMBULANCE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

Condition: The volunteer firefighters' relief association did not deposit the 2006 state aid allocation it received from Plains Township. Plains Township distributed the state aid, in the amount of \$25,193, to the relief association on October 18, 2006. The relief association deposited \$19,193 on January 5, 2007, and the remaining \$6,000 on September 27, 2007.

Criteria: The foreign fire insurance tax allocation was distributed to the municipal treasurer, who forwarded this state aid to the volunteer firefighters' relief association on October 18, 2006, which is within 60 days of receipt, as required by Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205). Upon receipt of the state aid allocation, the relief association should ensure the funds are deposited in a timely manner.

Cause: The relief association treasurer indicated the state aid was erroneously deposited in the Plains Volunteer Ambulance Association's account. He also indicated he mistakenly transferred the wrong amount of \$19,193 on January 5, 2007, and corrected the mistake by transferring the remaining balance of \$6,000 on September 27, 2007.

Effect: As a result of the untimely deposit, funds were not available to pay general operating expenses or for investment purposes. In addition, an untimely deposit of receipts can lead to a greater risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials adopt internal control procedures to ensure the timely deposit of all income received. 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.

PLAINS TOWNSHIP AMBULANCE 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	\$ 225
Total Benefit Services	\$ 225
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 6,945
Equipment maintenance	2,684
Total Fire Services	\$ 9,629
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 2,687
Total Administrative Services	\$ 2,687
Other Expenditures:	
Principal payments on lease-financing	\$ 43,633
Interest payments on lease-financing	15,280
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 58,913

PLAINS TOWNSHIP AMBULANCE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Plains Township Ambulance Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Michael Daigeaun, President

Ms. Lisa Mulvey, Secretary

Mr. Paul A. Zabriski, Treasurer

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

Ms. Patricia Sluhocki, Secretary  
Plains Township

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).