



**SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**ARMSTRONG COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007**



## CONTENTS

Background .....	1
Letter From the Auditor General .....	3
Status of Prior Finding .....	5
Findings and Recommendations:	
Finding No. 1 – Undocumented Expenditures.....	6
Finding No. 2 – Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage .....	8
Accompanying Expenditure Information .....	9
Report Distribution List .....	11



## 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 Sugarcreek 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 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.

### BACKGROUND (Continued)

The Sugarcreek Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Brady Bend Township	Armstrong	\$2,499	\$2,534	\$2,591
Sugarcreek Township	Armstrong	\$8,192	\$8,302	\$8,390

Brady Bend Township did not distribute the 2007 state aid until January 2008. As a result, the Sugarcreek Township Volunteer Firefighter's Relief Association did not deposit this 2007 state aid until January 2008.

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

Sugarcreek Township Volunteer Fire Department and Ladies Auxiliary

Mr. Richard A. Olcus, President  
SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER  
FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Armstrong County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Sugarcreek 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, 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, 2005 to December 31, 2007. The audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* applicable to performance audits, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

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 Sugarcreek Township 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 Sugarcreek Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash balance as of December 31, 2007, 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, 2005 to December 31, 2007, found, in all significant respects, the Sugarcreek Township 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 Sugarcreek Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$39,620 and no investments.

Finding No. 1 – Undocumented Expenditures

Finding No. 2 – Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

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

April 9, 2008

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General



SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association did not have sufficient bond coverage on the disbursing officer as required by Act 84. During the current audit period, the relief association's bond coverage was not increased and the relief association was without sufficient bond coverage throughout the audit period.

However, the Sugarcreek Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the prior audit finding and recommendation, subsequent to the period under review, on April 1, 2008, by increasing its officer's bond coverage to \$50,000. The relief association officials should monitor the cash balance to ensure that the disbursing officer remains adequately covered by a faithful performance bond, as required by Act 84. This is discussed in detail in Finding No. 2 contained in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report.

SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Undocumented Expenditures

Condition: 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>
01/03/05	291	Firefighters' association	\$ 25
01/03/05	292	Fire chief's association	25
03/02/05	293	Community college	300
06/30/05	297	Firemen's association	345
01/31/06	301	Fire chief's association	25
01/31/06	302	Firefighters' association	25
06/19/06	305	Firemen's association	325
02/05/07	311	Firefighters' association	25
Total			<u>\$ 1,095</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 and/or training certificates, 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: Relief association officials failed to establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure supporting documentation is maintained for all expenditures.

Effect: Lack of supporting documentation, such as invoices and/or training certificates, made it impossible to determine the expenditures were made in accordance with Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8506(e).

SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – (Continued)

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association provide this department with adequate supporting documentation, such as invoices and/or training certificates, to determine the validity of the expenditures or that the relief association be reimbursed \$1,095 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.

## SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Finding No. 2 – Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

Condition: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association failed to maintain sufficient bond coverage on the association's disbursing officer, as required by Act 84. During the current audit period, the relief association's bond coverage was again not maintained in a sufficient amount to cover the maximum balance of cash assets. The relief association's bond coverage was \$25,000; however, as of December 31, 2007, the cash assets totaled \$39,620.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505(c) states, in part, that:

. . . the disbursing officer, whether designated treasurer, comptroller, financial secretary, or otherwise, shall be bonded by corporate surety for the faithful performance of his duties. The amount of such 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 such bond shall be a proper charge against the funds of the association.

Cause: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials failed to increase their officer's bond coverage during the audit period under review.

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

However, subsequent to the period under review, on April 1, 2008, the relief association increased its bond coverage to \$50,000.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials ensure that the disbursing officer remains adequately covered by a faithful performance bond, as required by Act 84. Relief association officials should monitor the cash balance to ensure that unexpected events affecting current funds do not again result in an insufficient officer's bond. 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.

SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2005 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

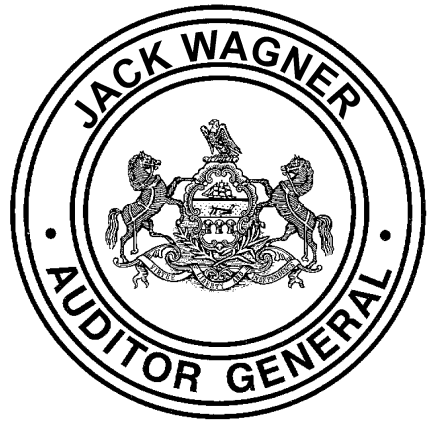
Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8502(1) states, in part, that:

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	\$ 4,155
Death benefits	200
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 4,355</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 9,741
Equipment maintenance	3,406
Training expenses	1,171
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 14,318</u>
Other Expenditures:	
Undocumented expenditures	\$ 1,095
Total Other Expenditures	<u>\$ 1,095</u>



SUGARCREEK TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Sugarcreek Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Richard A. Olcus, President

Mr. Jon A. DeVore, Secretary

Mr. David J. Heck, Treasurer

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

Mr. Chris R. Henderson, Secretary  
Brady Bend Township

Mr. Vincent L. King, Secretary  
Sugarcreek 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).