
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

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News for Immediate Release

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Auditor General DeFoor: Four Volunteer Firefighter Relief Associations Could Not Account for Nearly \$77,000 in State Funds

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Timothy L. DeFoor recently released audits of Volunteer Firefighter Relief Associations (VFRAs) from Columbia, Dauphin Delaware and York counties that demonstrate the importance of internal controls and proper accounting of state funding.

“These VRFA’s couldn’t account for a combined \$76,611 that was meant to support local firefighters,” Auditor General DeFoor said. “Our auditors found significant issues with each of these VFRAs that could lead to the possible future withholding of funds. They still have the opportunity to correct these errors and implement our audit recommendations to make sure they do not lose funding.”

The Department of the Auditor General [distributes aid](#) for VFRAs and audits how they use the funds, which are generated by a 2 percent tax on fire insurance policies sold in Pennsylvania by out-of-state companies. In 2022, \$66.7 million went to 2,514 municipalities for distribution to VFRAs to provide training, purchase equipment and insurance, and pay for death benefits for volunteer firefighters.

VFRAs may have future state aid withheld if they do not comply with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures. Relief associations are separate legal entities from the fire departments they support.

The department is required by law to audit volunteer fire relief associations and municipal pension plans that receive state aid through the department; liquid fuels tax usage by municipalities; various county offices and numerous other state government entities.

Review the latest audit reports for the listed VFRAs and learn more about the Department of the Auditor General online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Our updated VFRA guidelines are posted on our website at [Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General -VRFA Resources \(pauditor.gov\)](#).

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Editor's Note: The following is a summary of the audit findings:

Columbia County

[Montour Twp. Firefighter's Relief Association](#) spent \$7,373 in undocumented expenditures. The association was unable to provide supporting documentation to validate the spending. This audit report also found:

- Noncompliance with prior audit recommendation: Failure to conduct annual physical equipment inventories and failure to maintain a complete and accurate equipment roster;
- Failure to maintain a complete and accurate equipment roster;
- Unauthorized expenditures;
- Untimely deposit of state aid;
- Failure to maintain surety (fidelity) bond coverage;
- Failure to adhere to relief association bylaws;
- Inadequate minutes of meetings;
- Failure to disclose related party transaction;
- Failure to maintain a debit card policy;
- Inadequate internal controls; and
- Inadequate financial record-keeping system.

Dauphin County

[The Liberty Hose Company No. 1 Firemen's Relief Association](#) – spent \$44,024 in undocumented expenditures. The association was unable to provide supporting documentation to validate the spending. This audit report also found:

- Noncompliance with prior audit recommendation;
- Inadequate administration of mortgage;
- Noncompliance with prior audit recommendation;
- Failure to maintain a complete and accurate equipment roster;
- Noncompliance with prior audit recommendation;
- Failure to maintain a Pennsylvania sales tax exemption number;
- Noncompliance with prior audit recommendation;
- Failure to maintain minutes of meetings; and
- Inadequate financial record-keeping system.

Delaware County

[Darby Township Firemen's Relief Association Inc. of Darby Township](#) – spent \$15,379 in undocumented expenditures. The association was unable to provide supporting documentation to validate the spending. This audit report also found:

- Noncompliance with prior audit recommendation;
- Failure to adhere to relief association bylaws;
- Noncompliance with prior audit recommendation;
- Failure to maintain a complete and accurate equipment roster;
- Improper deposit of relief association funds; and
- Failure to maintain a complete and accurate membership roster.

York County

[Voluntary Relief Association of Community Fire Company, No. 1 of York New Salem, Pennsylvania](#) – spent \$9,835 in undocumented expenditures. The association was unable to provide supporting documentation to validate the spending. This audit report also found:

- Unauthorized expenditures;
- Failure to maintain surety (fidelity) bond coverage;
- Inadequate financial record-keeping system;
- Failure to maintain a Pennsylvania sales tax exemption number;
- Untimely receipt and deposit of state aid;
- Failure to conduct annual physical equipment inventories;
- Failure to maintain a complete and accurate membership roster; and
- Inadequate signatory authority for the disbursement of funds.