

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## LCVF Co. Fireman's Relief Association

Lycoming County, Pennsylvania  
For the Period  
January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2017

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January 2019



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Dean Temple, President  
LCVF Co. Fireman's Relief Association  
Lycoming County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the LCVF Co. Fireman's Relief Association (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, 2016 to December 31, 2017.

The objectives of the audit were:

1. To determine if the relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings contained in our prior audit report.
2. To determine if the relief association complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above and was not required to be and was not conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the 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. Relief association officers are responsible for complying with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures. It is our responsibility to perform procedures to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our conclusions.

Based on our audit procedures, we conclude that, for the period January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2017:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address two of the five findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the relief association failed to take appropriate corrective action to address the three remaining findings contained in our prior audit report, as listed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Findings section of this report.
- The relief association, in all significant respects, complied with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative procedures as they relate to the receipt of state aid and the expenditure of relief association funds, except as noted in the findings listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Signatory Authority For The Disbursement Of Funds

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

Finding No. 3 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

Finding No. 4 – Inadequate Minutes Of Meetings

Finding No. 5 – Failure To Secure Ownership Interest In Jointly Purchased Equipment

Three of the five audit findings contained in this report cite conditions that existed in the operation of the relief association during the prior audit period and were not corrected during the current audit period. We are concerned by the number of findings noted and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendations noted in this audit report.

The supplementary financial information contained in this report is presented for purposes of additional disclosure and analysis. We performed only limited procedures on the supplementary financial information and, accordingly, express no form of assurance on it.

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association and, where appropriate, their responses have been included in the report. We would like to thank the relief association officials for the cooperation extended to us during the conduct of the audit.



EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General

January 17, 2019

## CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Background .....	1
Status of Prior Findings .....	3
Findings and Recommendations:	
Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Signatory Authority For The Disbursement Of Funds .....	4
Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws .....	5
Finding No. 3 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster .....	6
Finding No. 4 – Inadequate Minutes Of Meetings .....	8
Finding No. 5 – Failure To Secure Ownership Interest In Jointly Purchased Vehicle .....	9
Supplementary Financial Information .....	10
Report Distribution List .....	12

## 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 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 volunteer firefighters' relief associations. Relief association bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which relief associations conduct 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 relief associations 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 that is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

**BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

The relief association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Franklin Township	Lycoming	\$5,519	\$5,498
Moreland Township	Lycoming	\$3,283	\$3,068
Penn Township	Lycoming	\$1,559	\$1,497

The volunteer firefighters’ relief association and the affiliated fire service organization are separate, legal entities. The relief association is affiliated with the following fire service organization:

Lairdsville Community Volunteer Fire Company

LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The relief association has complied with two of the five prior audit findings and recommendations, as follows:

- Inadequate Financial Record-Keeping System

By establishing and maintaining a financial record-keeping system that allows the membership to effectively monitor the relief association's financial operations.

- Failure To Maintain Minutes Of Meetings

By maintaining minutes of all relief association meetings held during the period.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The relief association has not complied with three of the five prior audit findings. These findings are noted below and discussed in detail in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- Inadequate Signatory Authority For Disbursement Of Funds

- Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

- Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Signatory Authority For The Disbursement Of Funds**

Condition: During the current audit engagement, we identified 2 checks out of 48 checks drawn on the relief association's checking account that only contained the signature of one officer, even though two signatures are required by Act 118 and the relief association bylaws. Issuing checks with the signature of only one officer negates the relief association's internal control over the disbursement process.

A similar condition was noted in our two prior audit reports.

Criteria: Section 7415(c)(3) of Act 118 states, in part:

The bylaws shall require that the signatures of at least two officers, one of whom shall be the disbursing officer, shall be required to bind the association by formal contract or to issue a negotiable instrument.

In addition, the relief association's bylaws at Article VII, Section 1 states:

The signatures of at least two officers, one of whom shall be the Treasurer, shall be required for the issuance of relief association checks, withdrawal from the association savings account, the redemption of any relief association investment or on any other negotiable instrument issued by the association.

Furthermore, prudent business practice dictates that the relief association has sufficient internal control procedures in place to ensure the signatures of at least two relief association officials are included on all negotiable instruments. Adequate internal control procedures require that checks be signed only after the propriety of the expenditure has been determined and the payee, date, and amount to be paid has been confirmed. Additionally, responsible relief association officers should compare this information with supporting documentation, such as invoices, contracts, etc., prior to approving the checks.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials again neglected to establish adequate internal control procedures that require the signatures of at least two officers on all negotiable instruments.

Effect: As a result of the relief association officer issuing checks with only one signature, assets were placed at greater risk as expenditures were being made without a second relief association officer having the opportunity to verify the propriety of the expenditures. The application of the second signature, after evaluating the propriety of the expenditure, reduces the risk of misappropriation and the risk of errors occurring and going undetected.



LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 1 – (Continued)**

Recommendation: We again recommend that the relief association officials establish adequate internal control procedures to ensure that the signatures of at least two officers, one of whom shall be the treasurer, are included on all relief association negotiable instruments as defined by Act 118. 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.

Auditor's Conclusion: We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendation noted in this audit report.

**Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws**

Condition: The existing bylaws of the relief association do not contain all of the provisions required by Section 7415(c) of Act 118. Specifically, the bylaws do not address procedures to be followed in electing relief association officers or the relief association officer positions available to be filled and the respective duties such officers are to perform.

A similar condition was noted in our two prior audit reports.

Criteria: Section 7415(c) of Act 118 states, that the relief association's bylaws shall:

- (5) State the procedure to be followed in nominating and in electing officers, trustees, directors, and members of the executive committee, according to the provisions which have been made for establishment of those positions.

Furthermore, the relief association bylaws should authorize and clearly specify the criteria to be met before receiving death or relief benefits and the amount of any benefit payments. In addition, the bylaws should address the authorization of compensation to relief association officers.

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials again neglected to amend the relief association bylaws to meet the bylaw provisions required by Act 118.

LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 2 – (Continued)**

Effect: As a result of the mandatory provisions not being included in the bylaws, the relief association may have conducted its affairs without proper authorization.

Recommendation: We again recommend that the relief association officials review and update the bylaws governing their organization so that the bylaws meet the requirements set forth in Act 118 and properly authorize the operating procedures 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.

Auditor's Conclusion: We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendation noted in this audit report.

**Finding No. 3 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To Maintain  
A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster**

Condition: The relief association failed to maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. Although a listing of relief association owned equipment was provided during the current audit period, it was incomplete because it did not contain the names of suppliers (vendors) and cost of equipment to accurately identify equipment owned by the relief association. As such, it was impossible to determine if all equipment purchased during the audit period in the amount of \$10,352 was recorded. In addition, there was no indication that a physical inventory of equipment was conducted on an annual basis to account for the equipment owned by the relief association.

A similar condition was noted in our two prior audit reports.

LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 3 – (Continued)**

Criteria: Prudent business practice dictates that 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 all of 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
- Evidence of the performance and results of an annual physical inventory

Cause: Even though notified of this condition during our prior audit, relief association officials again failed to establish adequate internal control procedures over equipment by requiring the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster and the performance of an annual physical inventory of equipment.

Effect: The continued 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.

Recommendation: We again recommend that the relief association officials maintain a cumulative equipment roster of all equipment owned by the relief association. 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.

LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 3 – (Continued)**

Auditor's Conclusion: We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding and strongly encourage timely implementation of the recommendation noted in this audit report.

**Finding No. 4 – Inadequate Minutes Of Meetings**

Condition: The relief association provided meeting minutes for the current audit period however; the relief association failed to maintain detailed minutes of meetings as required by Act 118. Specifically, the relief association's minutes did not address all of the financial-related transactions that occurred during the audit period and the minutes were not signed by the recording officer.

Criteria: Section 7415(a) of Act 118 states, in part, that the relief association:

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

In addition, the relief association's bylaws at Article V, Section 1 states, in part:

All expenditures must be approved by a majority vote at an association meeting and duly recorded in the minutes.

Cause: Even though notified of a similar condition during our prior audit, relief association officials neglected to maintain detailed minutes of meetings as required by Act 118.

Effect: Without detailed minutes of meetings, evidence that relief association business was presented before the membership for approval does not exist.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials maintain detailed minutes of meetings, evidencing the discussion and approval 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.

Auditor's Conclusion: Compliance will be subject to verification through our next audit.

LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding No. 5 – Failure To Secure Ownership Interest In Jointly Purchased Equipment**

Condition: As cited as a verbal observation in our prior audit, on November 5, 2012, the relief association expended \$3,500 towards the purchase of equipment that cost a total of \$8,000 for the purpose of jointly purchasing equipment with the affiliated fire company. However, the relief association did not adequately secure its ownership interest in this jointly purchased equipment.

Criteria: Section 7418(a) of Act 118 states:

The Office of Auditor General shall have the power and its duty shall be to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association receiving 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 far as may be necessary to satisfy the Auditor General that the money received was or is being expended for no purpose other than that authorized by this subchapter. Copies of all audits shall be furnished to the Governor.

Prudent business practice dictates that the relief association should secure its proportional ownership interest in the jointly purchased equipment by executing a formal written agreement that enumerates the relief association's proportional share of financing. Such agreement shall specify that the relief association shall receive its prorated share of the proceeds upon sale of the equipment, in the event the equipment is ever sold.

Cause: Relief association officials failed to adequately secure its proportional ownership interest in the jointly purchased equipment.

Effect: The failure to adequately secure the proportional share of ownership interest in the jointly purchased equipment places the relief association's ownership interest at greater risk.

Recommendation: We recommend that the relief association officials execute a formal written agreement with the fire company that enumerates the relief association's proportional ownership interest in the jointly purchased equipment as well as stipulating that the proportionate sales proceeds shall revert to the relief association in the event the equipment is ever sold. If such action is not taken, we recommend that the relief association be reimbursed \$3,500. 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.

Auditor's Conclusion: Compliance will be subject to verification through our next audit.

LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
CASH AND INVESTMENT BALANCES  
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017

Cash	\$ 20,330
Fair Value of Investments	<u>24,107</u>
Total Cash and Investments	<u><u>\$ 44,437</u></u>

LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
 SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2016 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 4,358
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 10,352
Equipment maintenance	4,286
Training expenses	3,746
Fire prevention materials	799
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 19,183</u>
Administrative Services:	
Other administrative expenses	\$ 1,002
Bond premiums	250
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 1,252</u>
Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 24,793</u></u>

LCVF CO. FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Tom W. Wolf**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

LCVF Co. Fireman's Relief Association Governing Body:

**Mr. Dean Temple**  
President

**Ms. Cynthia Shaner**  
Secretary

**Ms. Sandra Peterman**  
Treasurer

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

**Ms. Raine K. Ohnmeiss**  
Secretary  
Franklin Township

**Ms. Susan J. Liuzza**  
Secretary  
Moreland Township

**Ms. Brenda Dorman**  
Secretary  
Penn Township

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