

# COMPLIANCE AUDIT

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## The Marion Fireman's Relief Association, of the State of Pennsylvania Franklin County For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2022

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December 2023



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General

Timothy L. DeFoor • Auditor General



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TIMOTHY L. DEFOOR  
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Greg Martin, President  
The Marion Fireman's Relief Association,  
of the State of Pennsylvania  
Franklin County

We have conducted a compliance audit of The Marion Fireman's Relief Association, of the State of Pennsylvania (relief association) for the period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2022. The audit was conducted pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, 72 P.S. § 403; and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act ("VFRA Act"), see 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418.

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, nor was it required to be, conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

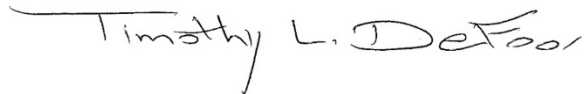
Relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the relief association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief association funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws, and administrative 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, 2021, to December 31, 2022:

- The relief association took appropriate corrective action to address one of the two findings contained in our prior audit report. However, the relief association failed to take appropriate corrective action to address one remaining finding 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 finding listed below and discussed later in this report.

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To Conduct Annual Physical Equipment Inventories

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the relief association and, where appropriate, their response has 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.



Timothy L. DeFoor  
Auditor General  
December 7, 2023

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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<sup>1</sup>, and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act<sup>2</sup> ("VFRA Act"), 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<sup>3</sup> (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.

The VFRA Act 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, the VFRA Act authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by the VFRA Act, 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 relief association officers therefore have a responsibility to the public to conduct the relief association's financial affairs in a businesslike manner and to maintain sufficient financial records to support the propriety of all relief association transactions. Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are also responsible for ensuring that the relief 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 72 P.S. § 403 (as last amended by Act 44 of 2017).

<sup>2</sup> 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.* See specifically, 35 Pa.C.S. § 7418 (amended by Act 91 of 2020).

<sup>3</sup> 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (Act 205 of 1984, as amended by Act 119 of 1990).

**BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

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

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Guilford Township	Franklin	\$17,892	\$22,056
Hamilton Township	Franklin	\$14,511	\$18,660

Based on the relief association’s records, its total cash as of December 31, 2022, was \$238,661, as illustrated below:

Cash	<u>\$ 238,661</u>
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Based on the relief association’s records, its total expenditures for the period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2022, were \$98,059, as noted below. The accuracy of these expenditures was evaluated as part of the Department’s audit to conclude on the relief association’s compliance 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.<sup>4</sup> **The scope of the Department’s audit does not include the issuance of an opinion on the accuracy of these amounts.**

Expenditures:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 10,763
Death benefits	4,000
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 14,763</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 77,991
Training expenses	4,884
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 82,875</u>
Administrative Services:	
Bond premiums	\$ 376
Other administrative expenses	45
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 421</u>
Total Expenditures	<u><u>\$ 98,059</u></u>

<sup>4</sup> Accuracy was evaluated for a selection of transactions based on dollar amount, category, and/or random selection.

## **BACKGROUND – (Continued)**

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:

Marion Fire Department

THE MARION FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION, OF THE STATE OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

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

- Undocumented Expenditure

By providing adequate documentation to evidence the propriety of the undocumented expenditure that was made in the prior audit period.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The relief association has not complied with one of the two prior audit findings. This finding is noted below and discussed in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Failure To Maintain A Complete And Accurate Equipment Roster

We are concerned by the relief association's failure to correct this previously reported audit finding. The relief association management should strive to implement the recommendation and corrective action noted in this audit report.



THE MARION FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION, OF THE STATE OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

**Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure To Conduct Annual Physical Equipment Inventories**

Condition: The relief association officials failed to provide evidence that it conducted annual physical inventories of equipment and ensure such inventory accounted for all equipment owned by the relief association.

A similar condition was noted in our prior audit report.

Criteria: Sound business practice dictates that annual inventories are conducted to ensure the accuracy of the relief association's equipment roster.

Cause: The relief association officials indicated there was a misunderstanding of the prior audit recommendation.

Effect: The continued failure to perform an annual physical inventory of equipment prevents adequate accountability for, and safeguarding of, relief association owned equipment.

Recommendation: We again recommend that the relief association officials ensure they perform an annual physical inventory of all operable equipment and that the completion of the inventories 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.

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.

THE MARION FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION, OF THE STATE OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

**The Honorable Joshua D. Shapiro**  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

The Marion Fireman's Relief Association, of the State of Pennsylvania Governing Body:

**Mr. Greg Martin**  
President

**Mr. Alex Baker**  
Vice President

**Mr. Jerry Dice**  
Secretary

**Mr. Arthur Dice**  
Treasurer

**Mr. Paul Shannon**  
Assistant Treasurer

**Mr. Leo Showalter**  
Trustee

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

**Ms. Shannon Malott**  
Secretary  
Guilford Township

**Ms. Deborah J. Hollenshead**  
Secretary  
Hamilton Township

THE MARION FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION, OF THE STATE OF  
PENNSYLVANIA  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

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