



FIREFIGHTER'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2008 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010



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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, 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 Firefighter's Relief Association of Douglass Township, herein referred to as Douglass 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 118 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 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 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 Douglass Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Douglass Township	Montgomery	\$74,195	\$67,194	\$75,631

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Gilbertsville Fire Company



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
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**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Harvey A. Price, President
DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Montgomery County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Douglass 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, 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, 2008 to December 31, 2010.

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 Douglass Township Volunteer Firefighters' 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. 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 those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of the audit objectives, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Douglass Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Douglass Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2010, with the custodians of the funds, debtors, creditors, and financial institutions to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. Additionally, we performed procedures to provide a reasonable assurance of detecting instances of violations of legal and regulatory requirements or violations of provisions of contracts that are significant within the context of the audit objectives.

The results of our audit, for the period January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010, found the Douglass Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report and, in all significant respects, received and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the finding listed below and discussed later in this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Douglass Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2010, had a cash balance of \$307,789 and no investments.

Finding – Failure to Deposit Proceeds From Vehicle Sold

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

October 3, 2011

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Douglass Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit finding and recommendation:

- Insufficient Officer's Bond Coverage

By increasing the officer's bond coverage to an amount greater than the balance of cash assets.

DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Failure to Deposit Proceeds From Vehicle Sold

Condition: On October 14, 2010, proceeds in the amount of \$12,000 from the sale of a vehicle owned by the relief association were erroneously deposited into the fire company's bank account.

Criteria: Prudent business practice dictates that the relief association should closely monitor the sale of vehicles owned by the relief association to make sure all proceeds are timely deposited into a relief association account.

Cause: The relief association failed to establish internal control procedures to ensure that all proceeds from equipment sold are timely deposited into a relief association account.

Effect: The failure to establish internal control procedures to ensure that the proceeds from the sale of a vehicle owned by the relief association are deposited into a relief association account can result in relief association funds being lost or misappropriated. As a result of the proceeds being deposited into a fire company account, the relief association's funds were not available for investment purposes, or to pay for expenditures authorized by Act 118.

As a result of our audit, and subsequent to the audit period, on October 3, 2011, the relief association received reimbursement from the fire company in the amount of \$12,000 and deposited the funds into a relief association account.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association establish accounting and internal control procedures to ensure that the proceeds from all equipment sold are deposited into a relief association account. 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 have taken action to comply with the recommendation.

DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2008 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7412 states: 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. The organization may contain within its membership the members of one or more fire companies and may serve secondary purposes, as set forth in this subchapter, but only if adequate provisions have been first made to serve the primary purpose.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416 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.

Furthermore, 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	\$ 43,910
Relief benefits	2,410
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 46,320</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 99,119
Equipment maintenance	29,244
Training expenses	6,644
Fire prevention materials	5,658
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 140,665</u>
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	\$ 1,921
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 1,921</u>



DOUGLASS TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Douglass Township Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Harvey A. Price, President

Mr. Rick Smith, Vice President

Mr. Eric V. Bauer, Secretary

Mr. Kris B. Hammill, Treasurer

A report was also distributed to the following municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association.

Ms. Marcy Meitzler, Secretary
Douglass 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.