



**COPLAY FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION, OF THE BOROUGH OF COPLAY,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**COPLAY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**LEHIGH COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

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



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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, 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 Coplay 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. The Coplay Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Coplay Borough	Lehigh	\$19,865	\$20,004	\$20,637

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Coplay Fire Department

Mr. Darren Schleicher, President  
COPLAY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Lehigh County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Coplay 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 Coplay 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 Coplay Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash balance as of December 31, 2007, with the custodians 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 Coplay 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 finding discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Coplay Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$17,250 and no investments.

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

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

October 17, 2008

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General



COPLAY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Coplay Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with the prior audit finding. This issue is further discussed in the following finding noted in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

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

COPLAY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

Condition: As cited in the two prior audit reports, the relief association officials did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of equipment owned by the relief association. While a roster of relief association owned equipment was provided, it did not include any equipment items purchased during the years 2001 through 2005. In addition, the roster did not always reflect the dates of purchase, unit costs, names of suppliers, or the serial numbers for the equipment items recorded.

Criteria: 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 fixed assets. A cumulative roster of all relief association equipment should include the following:

- Type of equipment purchased.
- Date of purchase.
- Unit cost.
- Name of supplier.
- Serial number, if applicable.
- Current location of item.
- Final disposition of sold or damaged equipment.
- Notation of the annual inventory.

Cause: While notified of this condition in the two prior audit reports, relief association officials neglected to establish adequate internal control procedures over fixed assets to include the maintenance of a cumulative equipment roster.

Effect: The 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 prevents adequate accountability and safeguarding of relief association assets.

Recommendation: We again recommend the relief association officials maintain a cumulative roster of all relief association owned equipment. Furthermore, the relief association should ensure they continue to perform an annual inventory of all operable equipment and that the inventory be sufficiently documented. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

COPLAY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – (Continued)

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.

COPLAY 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	\$ 8,625
Death benefits	300
Total Benefit Services	\$ 8,925
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 36,404
Equipment maintenance	9,513
Training expenses	4,302
Fire prevention materials	529
Total Fire Services	\$ 50,748
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 2,800
Other administrative expenses	1,324
Total Administrative Services	\$ 4,124
Other Expenditures:	
Repayment of insurance claim*	\$ 741
Total Other Expenditures	\$ 741

\* The relief association received an insurance claim check for a lost radio; however, the radio was subsequently found and returned to the relief association. Therefore, the relief association returned the insurance claim proceeds to the insurance company.

COPLAY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Coplay Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Darren Schleicher, President

Ms. Christine Buskaritz, Secretary

Mr. David F. Buskaritz, Treasurer

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

Ms. Sandra Gyecsek, Secretary  
Coplay Borough

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).