



**HEIDELBERG FIREMAN'S GOODWILL RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**HEREIN REFERRED TO AS:**

**HEIDELBERG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**LEHIGH COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2006 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 Heidelberg 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 Heidelberg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Heidelberg Township	Lehigh	\$22,105	\$22,874
Lowhill Township	Lehigh	\$ 4,249	\$ 4,426

BACKGROUND (Continued)

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

Goodwill Fire Company No. 1

Mr. Larry Leibensperger, President  
HEIDELBERG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Lehigh County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Heidelberg 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, 2006 to December 31, 2007.

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 findings 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 Heidelberg 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 Heidelberg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's investment balance and the 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, 2006 to December 31, 2007, found, in all significant respects, the Heidelberg 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 findings discussed later in this report. The results of our tests indicated the Heidelberg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the accompanying information and as of December 31, 2007, had a cash balance of \$31,407 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$26,450.

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Membership Roster

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

December 18, 2008

JACK WAGNER  
Auditor General

HEIDELBERG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Heidelberg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit findings and recommendations:

- Undocumented Expenditures

By providing adequate documentation to determine the validity of the undocumented expenditures that were made in the prior audit period. In addition, the relief association maintained adequate supporting documentation for all expenditures made during the current audit period.

- Failure to Obtain a Federal Tax Identification Number

By obtaining a federal tax identification number and furnishing it to the financial institution in which the relief association maintains funds.

- Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

By maintaining a cumulative roster of all equipment owned.

- Inadequate Financial Record-Keeping System

By establishing adequate accounting procedures that meet the minimum financial record-keeping requirements of this department.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Heidelberg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with prior audit findings. These issues are further discussed in the following findings noted in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws
- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation – Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Membership Roster

HEIDELBERG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS (Continued)

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

HEIDELBERG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Inadequate Relief Association Bylaws

Condition: As cited in the prior three audit reports, the existing bylaws of the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association do not contain all of the provisions required by Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505(c). While the relief association amended their bylaws, the new bylaws still do not address the following provisions:

- Procedures for the approval and payment of expenditures and for the investment of funds and sale of investments:
- The requirement for the disbursing officer to be bonded by corporate surety for the faithful performance of his duties.

Also, the bylaws presently state that in order to maintain membership with the relief association, each individual must pay annual dues; however, these dues are not being collected on behalf of the relief association.

Criteria: Act 84 at 53 P.S. § 8505(c) states, in part, that the relief association's bylaws shall include the following provisions:

- Establish procedures for the approval and payment of expenditures, and for the investment of funds and the sale of investments.
- Require the disbursing officer to be bonded by corporate surety for the faithful performance of his duties.

In addition, prudent business practice dictates that the relief association ensure its bylaws reflect the association's current procedures, as the bylaws govern the financial management and operations of the association.

Cause: While notified of this condition in the prior three audit reports, relief association officials neglected to adequately amend the relief association bylaws to meet the bylaw provisions required by Act 84.

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

HEIDELBERG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 1 - (Continued)

Recommendation: We again recommend that relief association officials review and update the bylaws governing their organization so that the bylaws meet the requirements set forth in Act 84 and properly authorize the operating procedures of the relief association. In addition, the relief association should ensure the bylaws reflect the association's current practice. 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 presented at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

HEIDELBERG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding No. 2 – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –  
Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Membership Roster

Condition: As cited in the prior audit report, the relief association officials did not maintain a complete and accurate roster of relief association members. While a listing of members' names was provided, it did not include the members' addresses, dates of birth, dates of membership, or membership classification.

Criteria: Relief association officials should maintain a complete and accurate roster of the relief association's membership, as identified by criteria set forth in the relief association's bylaws. A comprehensive roster of all relief association members should include the following:

- Name of each member.
- Member's mailing address.
- Date of birth.
- Date of membership.
- Membership classification.

In addition, a notation should be made on the roster identifying the date of a member's resignation or death.

Cause: While notified of this condition in the prior audit report, relief association officials neglected to maintain a comprehensive roster of relief association members.

Effect: The failure to maintain a comprehensive membership roster could result in the payment of benefits to nonmembers, or deprive eligible relief association members from receiving authorized benefit payments.

Recommendation: We again recommend the relief association officials compile and maintain a complete and accurate roster of the relief association's membership. For additional 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.

HEIDELBERG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2006 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	\$ 9,914
Death benefits	200
Total Benefit Services	\$ 10,114
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 39,047
Equipment maintenance	1,196
Training expenses	1,116
Total Fire Services	\$ 41,359
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 400
Other administrative expenses	102
Total Administrative Services	\$ 502
Total Investments Purchased	\$ 38,319

HEIDELBERG VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Heidelberg Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Officers:

Mr. Larry Leibensperger, President

Mr. Randy Metzger, Secretary

Mr. Michael Sipos, Treasurer

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

Ms. Janice M. Bortz, Secretary  
Heidelberg Township

Ms. Lucille C. Hahn, Secretary  
Lowhill 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](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).