

Final Audit Follow-Up

As of May 15, 2014



T. Bert Fletcher, CPA, CGMA
City Auditor

Inquiry Into Status of Fire Apparatus and Hose Inventory Processes

(Report #1324 issued August 16, 2013)

Report #1417

May 28, 2014

Summary

The Fire Department has completed each of the 11 action plan steps established to address issues identified in audit report #1324, Inquiry into Status of Fire Apparatus and Hose Inventory Processes. Additional recommendations have been made to ensure the intent of those actions is achieved. Responsibility for ensuring those additional recommendations are addressed is turned over to Fire Department management.

In audit report #1324, we reported the results of our inquiry into allegations regarding the Fire Department's apparatus inventory, inspection, and repair processes and adequacy of the Fire Department's hose testing and inventory records.

Upon completion of our initial inquiry, we determined there were no major indications that (1) fire apparatus (vehicles) were inadequately equipped or supplied to properly perform their assigned functions or (2) firefighters were not aware of where equipment and supplies were stored/located on their assigned apparatus. However, we reported the need for enhancements and improvements to the apparatus inventory and inspection process. Recommended improvements included the following:

- Better demonstrate inventories and inspections of fire apparatus are performed and documented in accordance with department requirements.

- Ensure fire apparatus are properly equipped and supplied and that inventory/inspection check sheets established for that purpose are accurate and appropriate for the individual fire apparatus.
- Develop a policy or procedure to better account for usage of reserve apparatus and to ensure accountability of equipment and supplies maintained on reserve apparatus.
- Improve the accounting for and tracking of fire hoses, in part to help ensure those hoses are properly tested on a periodic basis in accordance with Fire Department requirements.

Eleven action plan steps were established by the Fire Department to address the identified issues and related recommendations. Our follow-up showed each of those 11 action plans steps was completed. Completed actions included:

- Inventory/inspection check sheets were revised and updated for individual fire apparatus to reflect items considered essential by applicable Fire standards and Fire Department management. (***one action plan step***)
- Standard operating procedures were revised to require the periodic update of fire apparatus inventory/inspection check sheets as requirements change. (***one action plan step***)
- A process was implemented to ensure all required apparatus inventory/inspection

check sheets are properly completed and retained. *(one action plan step)*

- The inventory/inspection check sheets specific to reserve apparatus were revised and updated to ensure applicable and appropriate equipment and supplies for each reserve vehicle are properly represented on the check sheets. *(one action plan step)*
- Standard operating procedures were revised to provide a process to account for the usage of reserve vehicles. *(one action plan step)*
- Inventories and inspections are now regularly performed on the reserve apparatus. *(one action plan step)*
- Standard operating procedures were revised to provide a process to document the transfers of equipment and supplies between primary and reserve apparatus when primary apparatus are temporarily removed from service for repair or maintenance work. *(one action plan step)*
- The fire hose inventory and testing process was revised to ensure all fire hoses are properly accounted for and tested, and documentation maintained to show a history of test results. *(four action plan steps)*

During our follow-up we also identified areas where additional improvements should be made and/or efforts made to ensure compliance with procedures and processes that were established or revised as the result of our initial inquiry. Additional recommendations were made to address those areas. We acknowledged Fire Department management's ongoing efforts in those areas. Responsibility to implement the additional recommendations is turned over to Fire Department management.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by Fire Department management and staff during this follow-up engagement.

Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

We conducted this audit follow-up in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. Those standards require we plan and perform the audit follow-up to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit follow-up objectives.

Original Report #1324

The initial audit inquiry was conducted after allegations were received from a Fire employee that the Fire apparatus inventory, inspection, and repair processes, and hose inventory and inventory records were not adequate. These allegations were discussed with City management, including the Fire Chief. Based on those discussions, City management and the Fire Chief concurred that the audit inquiry be conducted. (A fire apparatus is defined as a Fire vehicle and all related equipment and supplies.)

To answer the allegations, we conducted audit procedures to answer the following four questions:

- 1) Were required apparatus inventories and inspections performed and documented in accordance with Fire standard operating procedures (SOP #803) and good business practices, and are appropriate actions taken based on the results of those inventories and inspections?
- 2) Were repairs on vehicles and equipment used for fire response and rescue activities timely and adequately performed, and is equipment maintained in accordance with department standards?

- 3) When primary vehicles were temporarily taken out of service was applicable equipment and supplies appropriately transferred to reserve vehicles; and when reserve units were returned was applicable equipment and supplies appropriately transferred back to the primary vehicle; and were the transfers of equipment and supplies during those events adequately documented; furthermore was equipment and supplies on reserve units properly accounted for by the department?
- 4) Were the Fire Department's process and procedures for inspecting and testing fire hoses adequate to ensure proper and suitable hoses are placed on vehicles used for fire response and rescue activities?

To make the determinations necessary to answer those questions we performed the following audit procedures:

- During selected dates in May 2013, conducted interviews of selected Fire Department management and staff.
- Obtained an understanding of the apparatus inventory and inspection process and reviewed related records used in that process (e.g., inspection check sheets).
- With the assistance of Fire station engineers and company officers, performed eight apparatus inventory inspections on selected dates in May 2013; one each at seven selected Fire stations and one for an apparatus (vehicle and related equipment and supplies) maintained in reserve status.
- Determined the availability and content of apparatus inventory and inspection records for selected dates within the period October 2012 through March 2013.
- Obtained an understanding of the vehicle and equipment repair/maintenance process; observed the physical condition and status of fire vehicles and equipment at stations selected for visit during other audit procedures.
- Judgmentally selected a sample of eight repair work orders recorded during the period October 2012 through March 2013, and inquired of company officers and engineers to determine if the repair requests were addressed satisfactorily and timely.
- Obtained an understanding of the process for transferring equipment and supplies from primary to reserve units (and vice versa) when primary units are being repaired and/or undergoing maintenance services; determined what records are maintained to document that transfer process; and judgmentally selected a sample of five instances during April and May 2013 where reserve vehicles were placed into service and reviewed available documentation showing items transferred between the primary and reserve vehicles.
- Obtained an understanding of the process for accounting for and testing fire hoses.
- During selected dates in May 2013, identified 51 hoses located on 20 Fire vehicles at 12 Fire stations and determined if records showed those hoses had been tested and accounted for in Fire's hose inventory records.
- Reviewed Risk Management claims from October 2011 through June 2013 and Human Resource safety incident reports from October 2012 through June 2013 to determine whether there had been any accidents or damages caused by faulty hoses.

Report #1417

This is our first and only follow-up on action plan steps identified in audit report #1324. The purpose of this follow-up is to report on the progress and status of efforts to complete action plan steps due for completion as of March 31, 2014. To determine the status of the action plan steps, we interviewed staff, made observations, and reviewed relevant documentation.

Background

Apparatus Inventories and Inspections. The Fire Department established a standard operating procedure (SOP) governing fire apparatus inventory records and inspections, SOP #803 “Apparatus Check Sheets.” As reported in the initial audit report, that SOP outlined the inventories and inspections that should be performed, the staff that should perform those inventories and inspections, and where the related documentation (check sheets) should be submitted and retained. A general description of this process was described in the initial audit report and is restated in the following paragraphs.

Pursuant to the established procedures, an apparatus check sheet was created for each fire vehicle (e.g., firefighting or rescue vehicle). For each vehicle, the apparatus check sheet should list each piece of equipment and applicable supplies that should be maintained on that vehicle, as well as the location each of the pieces of equipment and supplies should be stored on the vehicle (e.g., front cab, rear cab, various compartments located throughout the vehicle, etc.). Examples of equipment include hoses, chain saws, ladders, axes, backboards, extrication tools, various small tools (hammers, pliers, wrenches, etc.). Examples of supplies include medical items, duct tape, caution tape, straps, lubricants, etc.

The specific equipment and supplies that should be placed on a vehicle depends on the type and purpose of the vehicle (apparatus). Different apparatus include, for example, aerial trucks (large extension ladders), tankers (hold large quantities of water or fire repressing foam), pumpers (pump water from fire hydrants), brush trucks (relatively smaller trucks used in remote areas), and HazMat vehicles (respond to hazardous material incidents). Accordingly, inventory check sheets were customized based on the type and purpose of the specific apparatus. Inventory check sheets were to be further customized if appropriate. For example, if there were two different models of aerial trucks, the check sheet for one model may show slightly

different equipment and/or supplies than the other model, and/or might show equipment and supplies as stored in locations different from the other model. The Deputy Chief of Operations was required to approve changes to the inventory (equipment and supplies) established for an apparatus.

At the beginning of each shift, the assigned engineers (drivers) for each apparatus located at the Fire stations were responsible for inspecting and inventorying the equipment and supplies on the vehicles using the applicable check sheets. The purpose of those inspections and inventories were to ensure the apparatus were ready for continued active service. Specifically, the inspections and inventories helped ensure (1) all required equipment and supplies were on the vehicles in the appropriate locations, (2) equipment and supplies were in good working order, (3) temporary drivers were familiar with the location of equipment and supplies during their shifts. The company officers for the Fire stations were responsible for ensuring the engineers perform the required inventories and inspections for each vehicle. (*Note: While the more critical apparatus were inventoried and inspected at each daily shift change, certain apparatus such as brush trucks, boats, and trailers were inventoried and inspected weekly.*)

Each item listed on the apparatus check sheet was to be inspected and addressed in the inventory. Discrepancies and issues (missing/damaged items) were to be noted on the check sheet forms. Appropriate actions were to be taken to restore items (equipment and supplies) to the proper status and locations. Items found on the apparatus that were not listed on the check sheet (not part of the inventory established for that apparatus) were to be removed from the apparatus and returned to the proper location within the Fire station. Items on the check sheet that were not located during the inspection process were to be reported and investigated as appropriate.

The procedures provided that the name of the employee completing the form, the related shift, and the date the form was completed were to be

included on the completed check sheets. The completed check sheets were to be emailed to the battalion chiefs who were to store the completed forms in the applicable "Apparatus Inventory Folder" located on the City's network.

The shift battalion chiefs were responsible for ensuring staff complied with these procedures.

Repairs and Maintenance. Fire vehicles are generally repaired and maintained through the City's Fleet Management Department. As reported in the initial audit report, Fire engineers or company officers could request repairs to their vehicles through various methods. The most common method utilized was to submit a Vehicle Repair Request Form through the City's internal website. When the forms were submitted, emails were automatically generated and sent to the Fleet supervisor and mechanic responsible for maintaining Fire vehicles, all battalion chiefs, and Fire Support Services staff.

When the engineer or company officer considered a condition to be serious enough that, without repair, it would impair the apparatus' operations or the firefighters' safety, they would exchange the vehicle for a reserve apparatus.

In regards to equipment, there were two forms on the internal website utilized by Fire engineers and company officers when requesting repairs. First, a Station and Equipment Repair Form could be submitted notifying Fire Support Services staff of the specific equipment and model number needing repair, along with a brief description of the issue. Second, if the reason that the equipment needs repair was due to damage, then a Lost, Stolen, Missing, or Damaged Report could be submitted to provide information related to the incident that caused damage to the equipment. When the forms were submitted, emails were automatically generated and sent to all battalion chiefs and Fire Support Services staff.

Fire Support Services staff was responsible for obtaining, repairing, and returning equipment to the applicable station. Upon receipt of the emailed forms, Support Services staff entered the information into a departmental electronic

database (Access) used to track and monitor submitted repair forms. To keep the apparatus fully equipped, Support Services maintained spare equipment that could be used as replacements until the applicable item was repaired and returned to the station.

In regards to maintaining SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) cylinders (tanks), the Fire Department had two vehicles with specialized equipment that were used to refill air in the SCBA tanks. In addition, there were two "cascade fill stations" (equipment that refills SCBA tanks) located at two Fire stations. When company officers determine the air level on a SCBA tank on a vehicle had fallen below a predetermined level, they replaced the SCBA tank with a spare tank located at the station. As needed, SCBA tanks were filled at one of the cascade fill stations. Alternatively, the empty tanks were delivered to a site where one of the specialized vehicles was located, refilled, and returned to the appropriate station.

The engineers were responsible for ensuring their assigned vehicles had an adequate supply of fuel, water, and foam. Fuel could be obtained from the Fleet fuel station, the Police Department fuel station, or smaller fuel tanks maintained at many of the Fire stations located throughout Leon County. Foam and water could be refilled at each fire station.

Equipment and Supply Transfers. As reported in the initial audit, when active apparatus (primary vehicles) needed to be taken out of service for repairs and preventative maintenance, the Fire Department had six older apparatus in reserve status available to temporarily substitute for the primary vehicle. Those reserve apparatus were kept in a designated area behind Fire station 4. At the time of the initial audit, the Fire Department did not have a formal documented process for how those reserve apparatus were to be "checked out" and "checked back in."

In the initial audit report we noted that reserve apparatus were intentionally not fully equipped and supplied. Our review showed the one selected reserve apparatus was only equipped with 60% of

the equipment required according to the applicable apparatus inventory check sheet. Under the practice reported in the initial audit, the applicable engineer was responsible for ensuring that the necessary equipment and supplies were transferred from the primary apparatus so the reserve apparatus was properly equipped to adequately perform fire and rescue activities. The engineer was to document all the items transferred from the primary apparatus to the reserve apparatus and communicate that information to the engineers on subsequent shifts. This process allowed the engineer on duty when the primary apparatus was returned to service to accurately return the appropriate items from the reserve apparatus.

Fire Hose Testing and Inventory. As reported in the initial audit report, fire hoses were located in various compartments on Fire vehicles. Backup fire hoses were stored in various other locations at the stations. In the initial audit we noted that Fire SOP #935, “Annual Hose Testing and Rotation” stated, in part, that “all fire hose will be tested and rotated annually. Company officers will be responsible for ensuring (each) hose is tested and rotated in accordance with departmental procedure and that information is properly recorded on the Fire Hose Form and forward to the battalion chief responsible for hose inventory.” The policy also provided detailed testing instructions and stated that completed hose testing forms shall be forwarded to the Fire Special Operations Division.

Previous Conditions and Current Status

In audit report #1324, we concluded in regard to the allegation and resulting audit procedures:

1) There were no major indications that (a) fire vehicles were inadequately equipped and/or supplied to properly perform their assigned functions or (b) firefighters were not aware of where equipment and supplies were stored/located on their assigned vehicles. However, the results of our inquiry procedures showed the need for

enhancements and improvements to the apparatus inventory and inspection process. Specifically, we noted:

- Lack of adequate evidence to clearly demonstrate apparatus inventories and inspections were always performed and documented in accordance with established department requirements.
- Instances where equipment and supplies on vehicle inventory records were not located on the assigned vehicles.
- Instances where equipment and supplies located on a vehicle were not on the inventory records established for those vehicles.
- Instances where equipment and supplies were stored in locations on a vehicle that were different from the storage location indicated on the inventory records.

Many of the identified instances were attributed to the lack of updated and appropriate check sheets used by Fire personnel in the inventory and inspection process.

- 2) We did not find evidence to support that vehicle repairs or equipment repairs were not performed in a timely manner. We also did not identify any major damage to the chassis, frame, tires, or bumpers of the vehicles we observed. Furthermore, for vehicles reviewed, the required levels of fuel, water, foam, and air were maintained.
- 3) Fire management had not developed a policy or procedures regarding the usage of reserve vehicles to ensure accountability for the equipment and supplies maintained on reserve vehicles. Our inquiry results indicated that Fire station personnel were not required to document reserve vehicle usage and in three of five instances could not provide documentation to support the equipment and supplies transferred to and from the reserve

vehicles when the primary vehicle was temporarily taken out of service.

- 4) We noted significant deficiencies in accounting for and tracking fire hoses. Those deficiencies adversely impacted the Fire's hose testing process. Accordingly, we could not provide assurance that all hoses used on Fire vehicles had been properly tested, were in satisfactory working condition, and were properly accounted for in the Fire's inventory records. Notwithstanding the identified deficiencies, we did not identify any incidents that adversely impacted the public's or firefighters' health, safety, or welfare.

We provided the following recommendations to improve the apparatus inventory and inspection and hose inventory and testing processes.

- The current inventory check sheets should be updated and be specific to each individual apparatus (including reserve apparatus) to ensure all applicable and appropriate equipment and supplies for each vehicle are properly represented on the check sheets (e.g., as to description, quantity, and location). A process should be implemented to periodically update the check sheets as requirements change.
- A process should be implemented to ensure all required apparatus inventory check sheets are properly completed, submitted, and retained according to Fire SOP 803 "Apparatus Check Sheets."
- A policy and/or written procedures should be developed and implemented addressing transfers of equipment and supplies between primary and reserve vehicles, including a process for documenting such transfers.
- A policy and/or written procedures should be developed and implemented to account for the usage of the reserve vehicles and the

equipment and supplies expected to be maintained on the reserve vehicles.

- The hose inventory and testing processes should be revised to ensure all Fire hoses are properly accounted for and tested.
- A comprehensive hose inventory process should be developed and immediately performed to account for all department hoses and testing should be performed on those hoses that were not tested in fall 2012. Additionally, histories of test results for individual hoses should be maintained.

Note: As reported in the initial audit report, in June and July 2013 (subsequent to our initial audit fieldwork), the Fire Department conducted a comprehensive inventory whereby all hoses within the Fire Department were identified and accounted for in the department's records; every identified hose was tested in connection with that process. As reported, a new method was implemented to specifically mark each hose in a manner that showed the hose had been tested and whether it passed the test. Fire management indicated their intent to reemphasize to Fire personnel to use only those hoses that are marked as successfully passing the annual test on fire vehicles.

Eleven action plan steps were developed to address the identified issues and recommendations. Each of those 11 steps was due for completion no later than March 31, 2014. As shown below in **Table 1**, as of the end of our follow-up fieldwork, each of those 11 steps have been completed or resolved.

The specific actions taken, and additional recommendations as applicable, are described in further detail in **Table 1** that follows.

**Table 1
Action Plan Steps from Audit Report #1324
Due as of March 31, 2014, and Current Status**

Action Plan Steps Due as of March 31, 2014	Current Status as of May 15, 2014
Improve the apparatus inventory and inspection processes.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the current inventory check sheets specific to each individual apparatus to ensure all applicable and appropriate equipment and supplies for each vehicle are properly represented on the check sheets (e.g., as to description, quantity, and location). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Significant actions have been taken to update, standardize, and simplify the inspection/inventory check sheets. Specifically, the check sheets for each type of apparatus have been modeled to contain the items considered <u>essential</u> by applicable Fire standards and Fire Department management. The primary purpose of the revised check sheets, as stated by Fire Department management, is to ensure the items and equipment <u>essential</u> for fire and/or rescue activities are properly placed on the vehicles and ready for use (in good operating condition). Fire Department management indicated that the revised check sheets are not intended to necessarily list each item maintained on the apparatus; accordingly only items deemed <u>essential</u> (critical) for the mission of the apparatus are listed. <p>As a result, the revised check sheets no longer list things, such as buckets, clip boards, garden hoses, extension cords, broom and mop handles, squeegees, and stuffed animals. Furthermore, to simply the process, the revised check sheets for some apparatus no longer list certain individual small tools (e.g., hammers, wire brushes, tin snips, miscellaneous types and sizes of pliers and wrenches, etc.). Because those items individually are not considered essential for the mission of those apparatus (e.g., firefighting and/or other activities), those items are now listed on the respective check sheets collectively as a single item ("tool box with assorted tools").</p> <p>Additionally, although fire hoses are primary and essential firefighting equipment, the revised check sheets no longer list many of those hoses. In response to our inquiry as to the reasons for not including the hose on the revised check sheets, Fire Department management stated the purpose of the daily inspection/inventory process is primarily to ensure the equipment is on the apparatus <u>and</u> in good operating condition. Management indicated that engineers and firefighters inherently are expected to verify the hose is on the apparatus, but are not expected to remove and measure and test that hose during each and every daily inspection (i.e., to</p>

	<p>verify its operating condition). Accordingly, management determined it appropriate to not include the hose on the revised check sheets. (<i>Note: As part of a separate process, fire hoses are tested annually for operating readiness and condition.</i>)</p> <p>Similarly, the revised check sheets no longer require the engineers/firefighters to document on the check sheets their verification of the operating condition/status of certain components of the apparatus, including the status of the fluids and condition of the radiator, engine oil, transmission, power steering, fuel, lights, tires, foam, water tank, and siren/horn. Instead, Fire Department management revised the standard operating procedures to specifically require the engineers and firefighters to verify the operating condition and status of those apparatus components as part of their daily (and weekly) inspections. Fire Department management indicated it is their professional judgment that establishing formal written procedures requiring those daily inspections is adequate; accordingly it is not necessary for the engineers and firefighters to document those inspections/verifications on the daily inspection/inventory check sheets.</p> <p>Fire Department management acknowledged that a few additional refinements remain to finalize the check sheets and to fully equip each apparatus. For example, they indicated some of the apparatus currently do not have the required quantities of certain items deemed necessary by Fire standards (e.g., certain types of traffic cones).</p> <p>Our review confirmed the described circumstance, as our inspections of four judgmentally selected apparatus showed that, for the most part, the revised check sheets were accurate and representative as to the items/equipment actually placed and stored on the vehicles. Only a <u>few</u> instances were noted where (1) there were critical items on the apparatus that were not on the check sheets and (2) items were on the vehicles in quantities different than those indicated on the check sheets.</p> <p>We <u>recommend</u> Fire management continue the ongoing efforts to update inspection/inventory check sheets and to make each apparatus' check sheet specific and appropriate to that apparatus. Because of the significant revisions and implementation of a process to periodically update the check sheets (see the following action plan step), this step is considered completed.</p>
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	<p><u>Additional recommendation.</u> During our follow-up review we noted that, to simplify and standardize the process, Fire Department management revised the check sheets to no longer indicate the specific location or compartment where items are stored. Our review of four apparatus during this follow-up engagement showed that the items on the corresponding revised check sheets are not listed in the order on which they are stored on the apparatus (e.g., front to back on one side and back to front on the other side, etc.). Some engineers and firefighters that perform the daily inspections and inventories indicated during our follow-up efforts that, because there is no correlation between the order in which items appear on the revised check sheets and the order in which they are stored, the inspection/inventory process is less efficient, as they either have to constantly move around the apparatus if they conduct the inspection/inventory in the order items appear on the list, or they have to peruse the list each time they inspect/identify an item if they conduct the inspection/inventory in the order items are stored on the apparatus. To facilitate the inspection/inventory process, we <u>recommend</u> Fire Department management consider ordering items on the revised check sheets in the same order they are stored on the applicable apparatus.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and implement a process to periodically update the check sheets as requirements change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Standard Operating Procedure 803 “Apparatus Maintenance and Check Sheet” was updated to provide an annual review, by the Division Chief of Emergency Response, of all inventory/inspection check sheets for the purpose of ensuring required inspections were properly done and to determine if modifications to the standard inventory maintained on the apparatus and/or the check sheets are needed. As noted in the status reported for the previous action plan step, the Fire Department has made significant modifications to the daily inventory/inspection check sheets. Based on the revised standard operating procedure and noted efforts, this step is considered completed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement a process to ensure all required apparatus inventory check sheets are properly completed, submitted, and retained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ We determined, for the <u>most</u> part, the Fire department is now performing required daily inspections and inventories and retaining documentation to demonstrate those tasks were performed. As described in the status reported for a previous action plan step, standard check sheets were revised and are being used for that purpose. Generally, evidence is being prepared and retained identifying the engineer performing the inspections/inventories and the officer approving the

	<p>results. Procedures have been established to require monthly reviews of completed check sheets by battalion chiefs or designated captains. Because of these significant actions, this step is considered completed.</p> <p><u>Additional Recommendations.</u> Notwithstanding the above statements, we also determined that additional improvements and enhancements are needed. Specifically, we identified (1) a <u>few</u> instances where there was no record that daily inspections/inventories were done for certain selected apparatus on certain days and (2) <u>some</u> instances where engineers and/or officers did not initial the completed check sheets for certain days. Also, we found that engineers often did not explain or justify those instances where items were found in different quantities than the amounts provided by the standard check sheets. Furthermore, for one apparatus at one station, we noted the engineer did not complete the check sheet properly to positively assert that the listed items were there (i.e., as required by the revised policy); instead, the engineer only made notations for items on the check sheet that were either not there or there in different quantities than those listed on the applicable check sheet. Lastly, our review and inspection of four sampled apparatus and related check sheets disclosed a <u>few</u> isolated incidents where the engineers appeared to have made errors in the quantities of items documented as inspected and verified.</p> <p>Accordingly, we <u>recommend</u> Fire management again reinforce to staff the importance of properly completing and documenting the required inspections/inventories for each apparatus for each applicable day. Also, proper explanation and/or justification <u>should</u> be included in the remarks section of the check sheets in those instances where the inspections/inventories show items in quantities different from those indicated on the check sheets.</p>
<p>Improve the accountability for reserve vehicles and the equipment and supplies maintained on reserve vehicles.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update the current inventory check sheets specific to reserve apparatus to ensure all applicable and appropriate equipment and supplies for each vehicle are properly represented on the check sheets (e.g., as to description, quantity, and location). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Inspection/inventory check sheets for the Fire Department’s reserve vehicles were revised and provided to applicable staff in April and early May 2014. Specifically, revised check sheets have been provided for each of the ten reserve vehicles. For each basic type of reserve unit (engine, tanker, rescue, etc.), the revised check sheets list items specific to that type as determined appropriate by

	<p>the Fire Department. Fire Department management stated their intent is to place, on each type of reserve unit, certain standard items and equipment applicable to that type unit. Those specified standard items are to stay with the reserve unit when it is placed in active status such that it will no longer be necessary to transfer those items from the primary unit to the reserve unit (e.g., when a primary unit goes to the City's Fleet Division for service or repair and is temporarily replaced with a reserve unit). Other items not contained on the reserve unit (and not listed on the new check sheets for the reserve units) that are necessary for that unit when it is placed in an active status will be transferred from the primary unit to the reserve unit. When the primary unit is returned to service those additional items are to be returned (transferred back) to the primary unit.</p> <p>Weekly inspections/inventories performed to date showed that the reserve units are currently not equipped with all of the items specified by the new check sheets. Our review and analysis of the completed check sheets for five reserve vehicles and re-inspection/re-inventory of one of those five reserve vehicle confirmed those circumstances, as we determined for the five reserve vehicles that 35% (85 of 154 items) listed on the new check sheets were not on the vehicles, and another 10% (15 of 154 items) were on the vehicles but in quantities different from those provided by the new check sheets.</p> <p>Fire Department management indicated they are aware the reserve vehicles are currently not stocked with all the standard items determined appropriate as shown on the revised check sheets. Specifically, they acknowledged that each of the reserve apparatus currently do not have each of the identified items or have them in the quantities determined appropriate and, conversely, that some reserve apparatus currently have some items in addition to the items specified by the applicable check sheets (as revised). Fire Department management indicated they are in the process of determining what required items are available to completely equip the reserve vehicles with the specified items, and that once such items are identified and located and/or purchased (within budgetary constraints), the reserve vehicles will eventually be fully equipped. They stated, however, that priority will be given to ensuring all primary apparatus are properly and fully equipped.</p>
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	<p>Because of the actions to determine items appropriate for reserve units and to update the check sheets accordingly, this step is considered completed. We <u>recommend</u> Fire management continue the ongoing efforts to fully equip reserve vehicles with applicable items.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a policy or written procedure to account for usage of reserve vehicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Fire Department revised standard operating procedures (SOP 803 “Apparatus Check Sheets”) to require the preparation and retention of documentation showing the items/equipment transferred from primary apparatus when a reserve apparatus is placed into service and the subsequent return of those items when the primary apparatus is returned to service. That activity will be documented on the inventory/inspection check sheets for both the reserve and primary apparatus. That procedure will provide a record showing the usage (including dates) of reserve vehicles. Based on that action, this step is considered completed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign responsibility to ensure inventories and inspections are regularly performed on the reserve vehicles to verify they are equipped and supplied as expected and in proper working condition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fire Department standard operating procedures were revised to require a designated officer (Air Resource Lieutenant) stationed at Fire Station 4 where reserve vehicles are located to perform weekly inspection/inventories of reserve apparatus. Our follow-up review show the required weekly inspections/inventories are now (as of early May 2014) being conducted for the ten reserve vehicles as required by that procedure. The designated officer has properly documented those reviews and communicated the results to applicable management and staff (e.g., his supervisors, Station 4 captains, and certain battalion chiefs). Based on these actions this step is considered completed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a process or written procedure addressing transfers of equipment and supplies between primary and reserve vehicles, and for documenting those transfers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To determine the status of this action plan step, we reviewed four recent instances (in April 2014) where reserve apparatus were temporarily placed into active status when primary apparatus were sent to the City’s Fleet Division for repair and/or service. That review showed applicable Fire station staff did not always retain documentation showing items and equipment transferred from the primary apparatus to the reserve apparatus, and the subsequent return of those items and equipment when primary apparatus returned to active service. Specifically, records evidencing the transfer of items and equipment were retained for only two of the four instances. Fire Department staff indicated that records had been prepared to document the item/equipment transfers for the other two instances but those records were discarded after the applicable items/equipment were

	<p>returned to the primary apparatus. Department management acknowledged the need to retain documentation of the item/equipment transfers and revised, effective May 2, 2014, standard operating procedures (SOP 803 “Apparatus Check Sheets”) to require the preparation and retention of documentation showing the items/equipment transferred and subsequently returned. Based on that action, this step is considered completed. We <u>recommend</u> Fire Department management monitor activity to ensure compliance with this revised procedure.</p>
<p>Improve the accounting for and tracking of hose inventory and annual testing process.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revise the hose inventory and testing processes to ensure all Fire hoses are properly accounted for and tested annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As indicated in the initial audit, the Fire department completed a complete inventory of all fire hoses in June and July 2013 in response to our initial audit finding. That inventory was re-verified by the Fire Department’s internal review, as discussed in the status reported for a subsequent action plan step. As verified during this follow-up engagement, the Fire Department is now using Microsoft Excel to account for and track fire hoses. New hoses are added to the inventory records and discarded hoses are removed from those inventory records. The Fire Department recently executed a contract with a vendor (Xerox Government Systems, LLC) to acquire and implement a new Records Management System (RMS). Fire Department management indicated plans include using the new RMS to track and account for fire hoses. <p>Additionally, the Fire Department recently revised SOP (standard operating procedure) 935 “Annual Hose Testing and Rotation” to require annual testing of fire hoses in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1962, “Standard for the Care, Use, Inspection, Service Testing, and Replacement of Fire Hose, Couplings, Nozzles, and Fire Hose Appliance.” The Fire Department provided records demonstrating their intent to complete required annual testing of hoses in 2014. Based on these actions, this step is considered completed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A comprehensive hose inventory should be performed to account for all department hoses and testing should be performed on those hoses that were not tested in fall 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In the initial audit we determined there were incomplete and inaccurate inventory records for fire hoses and, as a result, not all fire hoses were subject to required annual testing. In response to that issue, the Fire Department conducted a comprehensive inventory in June and July 2013 (subsequent to our audit fieldwork but before the audit report was issued) whereby each hose located at each station

	<p>and on each vehicle was identified and accounted for in the department’s records. Each hose was tested in connection with that process. As reported in the initial audit, over 1,800 hoses were identified and tested, with more than 100 hoses of those being removed from service when the applicable hose did not pass the test. Accordingly, this action plan step was reported as completed in the initial audit.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perform an internal review to verify the recently completed hose inventory and test records addressed in the previous action plan step. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Subsequent to the completion of the comprehensive hose inventory and testing performed in June-July 2013 as a result of the initial audit, the Fire Department conducted an internal review to verify the validity and accuracy of the results (of that inventory and testing). The internal review consisted of each station selecting samples of hoses and tracing those hoses back to the inventory and test lists. Fire Department records show that approximately 230 hoses were sampled and the results validated (and corrections made when applicable) as part of that internal review. Accordingly, this step is completed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement a process to record and maintain a history of test results for individual hoses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As previously noted, the Fire Department is now using Microsoft Excel to track hose inventory and record/maintain results of required annual testing of all hoses. Separate records are prepared and retained for each year’s testing. Test results for each hose, as well as the date tested and employee that conducted the tests, are recorded. The Fire Department provided a copy of the Excel document used to track and record test results for 2013 and a copy of the Excel document created to track and record test results for 2014. Furthermore, the Fire Department recently executed a contract with a vendor (Xerox Government Systems, LLC) to acquire and implement a new Records Management System (RMS). Fire Department management indicated plans include using the new RMS to track and account for fire hoses as well as record/maintain annual test results for each hose. Based on these actions this step is considered completed.

Table Legend:

- Issue to be addressed from the original audit.
- ✓ Issue addressed and completed or otherwise resolved.
- ❖ Significant action completed to address issue; responsibility to ensure completion of additional recommended actions, as identified during follow-up review, is turned over to management.

Conclusion

Table 1 above shows each of the 11 action plan steps established to address issues identified in our initial audit have been completed. As also shown in Table 1, we made additional recommendations for further improvements and to ensure compliance with revised procedures and processes. Responsibility to implement those additional recommendations is turned over to Fire Department management.

We appreciate the assistance and cooperation from the Fire Department management and staff during this audit follow-up.

Appointed Official's Response

City Manager:

I appreciate the thorough job the City Auditor's staff did in examining the Fire Department's fire apparatus and hose inventory processes. I am very pleased to see the action steps in your audit were addressed by the Fire Department in a timely manner. I am confident that further recommendations will be completed through our follow-up process. We recognize the importance of detailed documentation and records and believe these recommendations will have a positive impact on Fire Department operations. I would like to thank you, as well as all staff that were involved with this audit.

Copies of this final audit follow-up #1417 or audit report #1324 may be obtained from the City Auditor's website (<http://talgov.com/auditing/index.cfm>) or via request by telephone (850 / 891-8397), by FAX (850 / 891-0912), by mail or in person (Office of the City Auditor, 300 S. Adams Street, Mail Box A-22, Tallahassee, FL 32301-1731), or by e-mail (auditors@talgov.com).

Audit follow-up conducted by:
T. Bert Fletcher, CPA, CGMA, City Auditor