
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR



Follow-up Audit of San Antonio Fire Department

New Building Fire Inspections

Project No. AU15-F03

December 9, 2015

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA
City Auditor

Executive Summary

As part of our annual Audit Plan approved by City Council, we conducted a follow-up audit of the recommendations made in the Audit of the San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) New Building Fire Inspections audit report dated August 19, 2014. The objective for this follow-up audit is:

Are prior audit recommendations successfully implemented and working as intended?

We determined that SAFD has made progress implementing management action plans to address prior audit recommendations. In total, there were four recommendations made to SAFD. SAFD has successfully implemented three action plans, and one action plan involving the implementation of employee performance evaluations is still in progress.

The SAFD Management's verbatim response is in **Appendix B** on page 6.

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Background

In August 2014, the Office of the City Auditor completed an audit of the San Antonio Fire Department's (SAFD's) new building fire inspection process. The objective of the audit was as follows:

Are controls over the SAFD new building fire inspection program adequate to ensure appropriate and timely inspections?

The Office of the City Auditor (OCA) concluded that SAFD management had not implemented adequate controls to ensure appropriate and timely SAFD fire inspections for new building construction, as summarized below:

- SAFD management had not established performance measures in order to provide decision makers with reliable and accurate measures of program outcomes and impacts.
- SAFD fire inspectors were not given periodic performance evaluations.
- SAFD had not developed inspection checklists and a quality control review program to ensure the quality and consistency of fire inspections.
- SAFD fire inspectors were issued inadequate computers to actively update the Hansen system while in the field.
- SAFD fire inspectors performed their inspections independently from the Development Services Department (DSD) building inspectors and plan reviewers. There was little, if any, open communication between the two groups who operationally perform their functions differently.

Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit scope was limited to the recommendations and corrective action plans made in the original report for the time frame on October 2014 through July 2015.

The audit methodology consisted of interviewing SAFD Fire Prevention Division management to obtain an understanding of the fire inspection process, management practices, related policies and procedures, and methods used to monitor performance. We reviewed source documents such as Hansen reports, performance reports, and quality control review assessments.

We conducted this follow-up performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. 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.

Prior Audit Recommendations and Status

A. Lack of Performance Measures, Evaluations, and Performance Reviews

Develop appropriate performance measures in order to provide decision makers with reliable and accurate measures of program outcomes and impacts. Resulting measures should be incorporated into employee performance evaluations.

Status: Partially Implemented

SAFD has implemented performance measures in assessing fire inspector performance. An inspection tracking model emphasizing cycle time performance goals is now incorporated for each inspector based on 100% of inspections performed as scheduled.

SAFD is in the process of implementing employee performance evaluations. Presently, SAFD is planning to develop an employee performance evaluation format specifically for all specialized positions.

Updated Recommendation

The Chief of the Fire Department should continue to implement SAFD Fire Prevention Division employee performance evaluations.

B. Lack of Inspection Checklists

Develop inspection checklists and a quality control review program to ensure the quality and consistency of fire inspections.

Status: Implemented

OCA tested a sample of inspection checklists and quality control reviews and determined that SAFD has developed and implemented inspection checklists and a quality control review program.

Inspection checklists include current fiscal year 2015 inspection codes and standards which are utilized as a reference while conducting on-site inspections.

The quality control review program is administered by SAFD supervisors in order to ensure effective and efficient inspections. Supervisors are required to conduct two evaluations per inspector per month; including one ride-out with the inspector

and one follow-up with customers to verify that services rendered are satisfactory.

C. Insufficient Hardware

Replace the current fire inspector laptops for tablets equipped with GPS software and require fire inspectors to update Hansen at the conclusion of each inspection.

Status: Implemented

OCA verified that SAFD has replaced all fire inspector laptops with tablets equipped with GPS enabled software allowing SAFD management the ability to monitor fire inspector routing progress throughout the course of the day. Fire inspectors are now required to update Hansen at the conclusion of each inspection. OCA tested a sample of inspection start and end times and concluded that fire inspectors are accurately updating the Hansen system.

D. Lack of Coordination with DSD

Establish a collaborative foundation for DSD fire plan reviews and SAFD fire inspections to be performed in a coordinated and seamless manner to improve the overall fire inspection process.

Status: Implemented

The Deputy Fire Marshal's office, which oversees the Fire Prevention Division, has been physically moved to the Development and Business Services Center with the Development Services Department. This collaborative effort between SAFD and DSD has enabled fire inspectors, building inspectors, and building reviewers a means to effectively communicate on a daily basis.

OCA contacted a judgmental sample of contractors and customers, who reported that the SAFD inspection process has improved, thereby providing services to customers in an efficient manner.

In addition, SAFD and DSD coordinate joint meetings on a continual basis to discuss specific items such as: code modification requests, code adoption, and amendment processes in order to streamline the overall fire inspection process.

Appendix A – Staff Acknowledgement

Mark Bigler, CPA-Utah, CISA, CFE, Audit Manager
Michael Hurlbut, CISA, Auditor in Charge
Gabe Trevino, CISA, Auditor

Appendix B – Management Response



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78283-3966

November 13, 2015

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA
City Auditor
San Antonio, Texas

RE: Management's Acknowledgment and Corrective Action Plan for the Follow-Up Fire Department
New Building Fire Inspections Audit.

- ☒ Fully Agree (provide detailed comments)
- ☐ Agree Except For (provide detailed comments)
- ☐ Do Not Agree (provide detailed comments)

The San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) has reviewed the audit report and has developed the
Corrective Action Plans below corresponding to report recommendations.

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
A	Lack of Performance Measures, Evaluations, and Performance Reviews Recommendation The Chief of the Fire Department should continue to implement SAFD Fire Prevention Division employee performance evaluations.	Page 3	Accept	Carl Wedige Deputy Fire Chief	Ongoing: Full year of evaluations end of FY16

Appendix B – Management Response

The SAFD Fire Prevention Division is currently conducting monthly employee performance appraisals and reviews. The evaluation form has been modified since the original implementation in late FY15. The Division will have a full year of evaluations with the new form at the end of fiscal year 2016.

We are committed to addressing the recommendations in the audit report and the plan of actions presented above.

Sincerely,



Charles N. Hood
Fire Chief
San Antonio Fire Department

Date



Erik Walsh
Deputy City Manager
City Manager's Office

11/16/15

Date