



City of San Antonio

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AUDIT COMMITTEE SUMMARY

January 21, 2020

Audit of San Antonio Fire Department Personal Protective Equipment

Report Issued December 17, 2019

Audit Objective

Determine if the inventory of SAFD personal protective equipment (PPE) is adequately managed and properly accounted for.

Background

To maintain uniformed firefighter safety, the SAFD recently created the Safety Division staffed with three Captains that provide a 24-hour safety resource for on-duty personnel. The Captains are certified to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.

Also, within the Safety Division, the Fire Quartermaster Office is tasked with researching, maintaining, inspecting, and tracking all components of the PPE ensemble for each of the approximately 1,300 active firefighters in the SAFD. The PPE ensemble includes the coats, pants, hoods, gloves, helmets, boots, and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) worn by firefighters.

The SAFD's Logistics and Services Division assists with the tracking of certain elements of the PPE ensemble including the maintenance, inspection, testing and repair of helmets, SCBA gear, and firefighter masks.

Scope & Methodology

The audit scope was October 2017 through May 2019 and included SAFD personal protective equipment including bunker coat, bunker pants, boots, gloves, helmets, and hoods. We also reviewed SCBA and mask tracking and testing procedures.

Conclusion

SAFD has processes in place to manage PPE gear. The PPE gear stored in the Quartermaster inventory room was accurate and the room was properly secured. Helmets were inspected annually as required. Oversight of the Municipal Emergency Services (MES) contract was adequate to verify charges for new bunker gear (firefighter pants and coat) were accurate, insurance requirements were met, and MES technicians were properly certified. Also, the SAFD has processes in place to inspect PPE gear.

However, tracking and accounting for PPE gear needs improvement. The SAFD does not accurately track PPE gear assigned to firefighters. We noted Gear Cleaning Solutions (GCS) made repairs to certain PPE bunker coats and pants without prior SAFD approval. Also, the SAFD is not consistently tracking safety inspections for firefighter masks and SCBA air cylinders.

We recommend that the SAFD Fire Chief:

- Implement a system to accurately track PPE gear in the field.
- Require GCS to request approval for repairs on PPE gear older than 62 months prior to making such repairs as contractually required. In addition, monitor and review GCS invoices on a monthly basis to verify propriety of PPE repairs and related charges.
- Implement a system to accurately track masks and SCBA cylinders in order to facilitate related inspections and testing in compliance with NFPA standards.

Management agreed with the recommendations and developed positive corrective action plans.