



**PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**BALTIMORE CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**FISCAL YEARS ENDED**  
**JUNE 30, 2016 and 2015**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background Information</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Audit Scope, Objectives and Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Current Findings and Recommendations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Fire Suppression and Emergency Rescue - Number of Smoke Alarms Installed</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Emergency Management – Percent of City Agencies with a Complete Continuity of Operations Plan</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Fire and Emergency Community Outreach – Percent Reduction in 9-1-1 Calls from Operation Care Clients</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Status of Prior Findings and Recommendations</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Agency’s Response to Fiscal Years 2016 and 2015 Findings and Recommendations</b>	<b>Appendix I</b>



Honorable Joan M. Pratt, Comptroller  
and Other Members of the Board of Estimates  
City of Baltimore, Maryland

## Executive Summary

We conducted a performance audit of selected functions within the Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2016 and 2015 (the stated period). The purpose of our performance audit was to determine whether the BCFD met its performance measure targets, and to determine whether its internal controls and the related policies and procedures were effectively designed and placed in operation to monitor, control, and report valid and reliable information that is significant to selected performance measures or functions for the stated period. Our performance audit did not include follow-ups of prior year findings and recommendations included in BCFD's previous performance audit report, dated November 30, 2016, because BCFD furnished us with its updated determination of whether the previous recommendations were implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented after we completed our field work and draft of this report.

As a result of our audit, we determined that several of the targets for the selected performance measures were not met. We were not able to determine if some of the targets were met because of the lack of supporting documentation, or the information regarding performance measure targets and actual amounts was not consistently reported in the Agency Detail Board of Estimates Recommendations (Budget Book) from one fiscal year to another.

In addition, we noted certain areas where the effectiveness of the control procedures could be improved, and we recommend that:

- BCFD identify the causes and develop a corrective action plan for the number of smoke alarms installed that did not meet the established performance measure target. We also recommend that revisions to prior year performance measure targets not be made unless approved by the Department of Finance (Finance). However, those performance measure targets should not be changed in subsequent year Budget Books without adequate disclosure, in order to avoid misleading performance results.
- BCFD develop procedures to adequately maintain records, especially those to support the actual results of the performance measures included in the Budget Books. We also recommend that BCFD modify the 3-1-1 Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Form and the Customer Service Report (CSR) so that information is traceable from one form to the other; i.e., both should include addresses and CSR numbers. Amounts should be reconciled so that the number of smoke alarms installed as reported on the CSR agree to the supporting documentation (3-1-1 Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms) and the actual number reported in the City's Budget Book.

- BCFD continue to identify and address the causes for not meeting the established targets. We also recommend that BCFD obtain the Department of Finance's approval for any revisions to prior year performance measure targets. We also recommend that any approved changes to performance measure targets should not be changed in subsequent year Budget Books without adequate disclosure, in order to avoid misleading performance results.
- The Mayor's Office of Emergency Management (MOEM) develop written policies and procedures that include a list of the agencies that are required to have a completed Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) on file. MOEM should also maintain written documentation explaining which agencies are required to prepare a COOP and why only those agencies, as opposed to the City Administrative Manual's requirement for all agencies to prepare such plans. We also recommend that MOEM maintain a current listing of the agencies that have prepared, and updated as necessary, a completed COOP.
- BCFD review the established performance measure and the actual performance measure results to ensure that both the target and the results are reported on a consistent basis. If the performance measure was established to measure the reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients, we recommend that BCFD modify the methodology for measuring and reporting actual results to determine whether or not a reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients has been achieved.



Audrey Askew, CPA  
Acting City Auditor

March 5, 2018

**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Background Information & Audit Scope, Objectives and Methodology  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

**Background Information**

The mission of the Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) is to protect lives, property, and the environment within the corporate limits of Baltimore City. BCFD's primary and most visible functions are to prevent and suppress fires, and to provide emergency medical services. Although response to emergencies is the focus of BCFD's resources, increased prevention efforts, including residential fire safety training, the Mobile Safety Center, the Juvenile Fire Setters Intervention Program, early childhood education, and the free smoke detector programs have been extremely effective in controlling the incidences of fires and related injuries. The following is a summary of the various services provided by the BCFD that were included as part of our Performance Audit:

1. **Fire Suppression and Emergency Rescue (Service 602)** protects 641,000 City residents by providing 24/7 land and marine fire protection, emergency rescue, and hazardous material; dispatches over 100,000 units to fire and medical emergencies per year; and, manages related apparatus and supplies in accordance with federal standards.
2. **Emergency Management (Service 608)** prepares the City for major emergencies such as hurricanes, power outages, hazardous material incidents, and acts of terrorism. This service manages interagency and public-private sector programs to prevent, mitigate against, and plan for all hazards. This service also includes 24/7 field response and Citywide coordination for incidents and events that are high risk, prolonged, widespread, or complex.
3. **Fire and Emergency Community Outreach (Service 610)** provides outreach and education to the City residents, businesses, and visitors on fire safety and emergency medical service prevention. The service provides funding for Operation CARE, a joint effort with the Health Department to intervene with frequent 9-1-1 callers.

**Audit Scope, Objectives and Methodology**

We conducted a performance audit of selected functions within BCFD for the stated period. The purpose of our performance audit was to determine: a) whether BCFD met its performance measure targets, and b) whether its internal controls and the related policies and procedures were effectively designed and placed in operation to monitor, control, and report valid and reliable information that is significant to selected performance measures or functions for the stated period. Our performance audit did not include follow-ups of prior year findings and recommendations included in BCFD's previous performance audit report, dated November 30, 2016, because BCFD furnished us with its updated determination of whether the previous recommendations were implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented,

**Baltimore City Fire Department**  
**Audit Scope, Objectives and Methodology (continued)**  
**Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

after we completed our field work and draft of this audit report. We conducted our 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 findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objectives of our audit were to determine whether BCFD met its targets for selected performance measures in the stated period and to assess whether BCFD's internal controls and related policies, processes, and procedures were effectively designed and placed in operation to monitor, control, and report valid and reliable information related to those performance measures. Our audit included selected performance measures within the following BCFD Service Areas:

1. **Fire Suppression and Emergency Rescue - Service 602.** We conducted our audit of BCFD's efforts to meet its targets for the number of smoke alarms installed. (Priority Outcome: Safer Streets)
2. **Emergency Management – Service 608.** We conducted our audit of BCFD's efforts to meet its targets for the percent of City agencies with a complete Continuity of Operations Plan. (Priority Outcome: Safer Streets)
3. **Fire and Emergency Community Outreach – Service 610.** We conducted our audit of BCFD's efforts to meet its targets for the percent of reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients; i.e., non-emergency calls routinely made to 9-1-1. (Priority Outcome: Safer Streets)

To accomplish our objectives, we conducted inquiries of key individuals to obtain an understanding of the internal controls and related policies, processes and procedures, and systems, established by BCFD for the selected performance measures. Where possible, we also utilized the systems' documentation obtained as part of our audit of the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). We also performed tests, as necessary, to verify our understanding of the applicable policies and procedures; reviewed applicable records and reports utilized to process, record, monitor, and control BCFD's functions pertaining to the selected performance measures; assessed the efficiency and effectiveness of those policies and procedures; and determined whether BCFD met its performance measure targets. The findings and recommendations are detailed in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report

**Appendix I**

BCFD's responses to our findings and recommendations are included in Appendix I of this report.

**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Current Findings and Recommendations  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

*Fire Suppression and Emergency Rescue – Service 602. The Number of Smoke Alarms Installed*

**Background**

BCFD provides free smoke alarms and installation to all City residents. The free Smoke Alarm Installation Program combined with the free Home Safety Inspection Program provides education and prevention knowledge to the City residents. BCFD also interacts with City residents in their communities as part of Saturday Safety Sweeps, BGE Targeted Address Surveys, 3-1-1 Non-emergency Dispatches, Response Initiated Installations, Community Events, Community Meetings, and other Safety Initiatives.

**Finding #1**

BCFD reported that it did not meet its fiscal year 2016 target for the number of smoke alarms installed. The original performance measure target for fiscal year 2016 was 19,000, but was changed to 16,500 in the City's 2017 and 2018 Budget Books. According to the City's 2018 Budget Book, the actual amount reported was 15,889. Therefore, irrespective of the change, the fiscal year 2016 performance measure target was not met.

**Recommendation #1**

**We recommend that BCFD identify the causes and develop a corrective action plan for the number of smoke alarms installed that did not meet the established performance measure target. We also recommend that revisions to prior year performance measure targets not be made unless approved by the Department of Finance (Finance). However, those performance measure targets should not be changed in subsequent year Budget Books without adequate disclosure, in order to avoid misleading performance results.**

**Finding #2**

Records were not adequately maintained to support the actual results of fiscal years 2016 and 2015 for the number of smoke alarms installed. Therefore, we could not determine whether the reported actual amounts for fiscal years 2016 and 2015 were accurate and reliable because the supporting documentation (3-1-1 Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms) for fiscal years 2016 and 2015 is no longer available. According to BCFD, the number of installed smoke alarms reported in the City's Budget Book is obtained from the Customer Service Report (CSR). However, the number of installed smoke alarms in the CSR differed from the number reported in the City's Budget Books. Even if the Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms for fiscal years 2016 and 2015 were available for audit testing, we could not trace the information on those forms to the CSR because the data on the CSR furnished to us included the names of neighborhoods and not the street addresses that are included on the Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms. In addition, the Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms do not contain the corresponding CSR numbers.

**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Current Findings and Recommendations  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

**Finding #2 (continued)**

**Recommendation #2**

**We recommend that BCFD develop procedures to adequately maintain records, especially those to support the actual results of the performance measures included in the Budget Books. We also recommend that BCFD modify the 3-1-1 Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Form and the CSR so that information is traceable from one form to the other; i.e., both should include addresses and CSR numbers. Amounts should be reconciled so that the number of smoke alarms installed as reported on the CSR agree to the supporting documentation (3-1-1 Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms) and the actual number reported in the City's Budget Book.**

*Emergency Management – Service 608. The Percent of City Agencies with a Complete Continuity of Operations Plan.*

**Background**

The Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) requires state and local agencies to establish a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Each jurisdiction should have an emergency manager. According to the City's Administrative Manual, all City Agencies are required to develop a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management (MOEM). Agencies are also required to appoint a COOP Coordinator, who acts as a point of contact in developing the COOP.

A COOP should include at a minimum:

1. Privacy Statement
2. Record of Changes
3. Record of Distribution
4. Basic Plan (including an executive summary, a promulgation statement, COOP Coordinator, and reference documents)
5. Concept of Operations (including organization and assignment of responsibilities, standard operation procedures, essential functions, disaster intelligence needs, and major scenarios)
6. Direction, Control, and Coordination
7. Communications
8. Budget and Acquisition of Resources
9. Plan Development and Maintenance

Agencies should coordinate with MOEM to develop a comprehensive COOP. Agencies should also revise the plan as necessary to keep the plan current. All questions concerning emergency preparedness should be addressed to MOEM, which prepares the City and the public for emergencies, coordinates interagency response and recovery, and implements a comprehensive program of disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.



**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Current Findings and Recommendations  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

**Finding #3**

The MOEM (BCFD's Service - 608 in the Budget Book) reported that it did not meet the performance measure targets for fiscal years 2016 and 2015. The fiscal year 2016 target was 85%, but the actual amount, as reported in fiscal year 2018 Budget Book, was 75%. According to the Director of MOEM, the targets were not met because of the lack of personnel to assist City Agencies to develop and review the COOPs. The target for fiscal year 2015 was originally reported as 90% in fiscal year 2015 Budget Book, but was reduced to 80% in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 Budget Books. The actual amount for fiscal year 2015, as reported in the fiscal year 2017 Budget Book, was 75%. Nevertheless, neither the original target nor the reduced target measures were met. The Director of MOEM informed us that he has hired additional Associate Planners and a Manager to assist agencies in developing complete COOPs.

**Recommendation #3**

**We recommend that BCFD continue to identify and address the causes for not meeting the established targets. In addition, we recommend that BCFD obtain the Department of Finance's approval for any revisions to prior year performance measure targets. We also recommend that any approved changes to performance measure targets should not be changed in subsequent year Budget Books without adequate disclosure, in order to avoid misleading performance results.**

**Finding #4**

We could not determine whether the reported actual performance measure percentages are accurate and reliable. According to the City's Administrative Manual, all City Agencies are required to develop a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management (MOEM). However, according to the MOEM Director, approximately 20 City Agencies should have had a completed COOP on file. The listing that the MOEM Director furnished us contained only sixteen agencies. According to the listing, eleven of the agency COOPs were last updated in 2006, two of the agency COOPs were last updated in 2013, and the last update for three agencies were marked as "N/A." According to a Baltimore City COOP Planning Template, a plan should be updated at least annually but more often if personnel change, equipment changes, or new processes are instituted for protecting vital records.

**Recommendation #4**

**We recommend that MOEM develop written policies and procedures that include a list of the agencies that are required to have a completed COOP on file. MOEM should also maintain written documentation explaining which agencies are required to prepare a COOP and why only those agencies, as opposed to the City Administrative Manual's requirement for all agencies to prepare such plans. We also recommend that MOEM maintain a current listing of the agencies that have prepared, and updated as necessary, a completed COOP.**

**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Current Findings and Recommendations  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

***Fire and Emergency Community Outreach – Service 610. The Percent of Reduction in 9-1-1 Calls from Operation Care Clients.***

**Background**

The Operation Care Program is a case management program within HealthCare Access Maryland (HCAM) that provides case management and care coordination services to persons who excessively utilize the emergency 9-1-1 system for non-emergent and/or poorly managed health conditions. Because Baltimore City has a disproportionately high number of frequent utilizers, the goal of the program is to reduce the costly overuse of the City's Emergency Medical Services and the 9-1-1 system. The EMS Division decided to transition its efforts from the more transient, homeless, and substance abusing population towards high utilizers with poorly managed chronic diseases such as, diabetes or asthma because this small population accounts for a large portion of Emergency Medical Services and diverts resources away from high priority calls.. This population tends to be easy to locate with fixed addresses. Consequently, BCFD expects to see a reduction in citizens utilizing the 9-1-1 system and the emergency departments as their primary health care service.

**Finding #5**

BCFD reported that it did not meet its fiscal years 2016 and 2015 targets for the percent of reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients. In addition, the actual amounts reported for the performance measures for both fiscal years 2016 and 2015 were not consistent with the performance measure targets that were established, and therefore, were misleading. The performance measure target was described in the City's Budget Books as the percent of reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients. However, rather than measuring the actual reduction of 9-1-1 calls during a given period (for example, from one fiscal year to the next), the amounts measured and reported by BCFD were calculated based on the percent (%) of open and active cases in the Operation Care program for which the Operation Care clients made one or less calls to 9-1-1 each month.

**Recommendation #5**

**We recommend that BCFD review the established performance measure and the actual performance measure results to ensure that both the target and the results are reported on a consistent basis. If the performance measure was established to measure the reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients, we recommend that BCFD modify the methodology for measuring and reporting actual results to determine whether or not a reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients has been achieved.**

**Agency's Responses**

See Appendix I for Agency's Responses to Findings and Recommendations.

**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Status of Prior Findings and Recommendations  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

The following information represents a summary of the findings and recommendations that were included as part of the prior performance audit report for BCFD, dated November 30, 2016. BCFD prepared its initial responses, dated December 2, 2016, to that audit. As part of our current audit for fiscal years ended June 30, 2016 and 2015, we made several requests to BCFD for its updated responses and for BCFD to provide us with its current determination as to whether the prior recommendations were implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented. We also requested supporting documentation for any prior recommendations that BCFD classified as either implemented or partially implemented. BCFD's updated status of the prior findings and recommendations and BCFD's determination of whether those prior recommendations have been implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented are included within each group of previous findings and recommendations. However, since we did not receive the requested information until after we completed our field work and the draft of this report, we did not verify the updated status of those prior recommendations as part of this audit.

**Permits and Building Plan Renewals – Revenue and Cash Collections**

**Previous Finding #1**

There are no specific processes in place to identify new businesses in existing buildings and ensure that those locations are inspected for compliance with the Fire Code. When an incident is reported, such as a fire or when a complaint is filed, a business may be identified as non-compliant.

During the testing period, the auditors noted permit numbers that did not follow the time sequence. Namely, a new permit created more recently had a smaller permit number than a permit created earlier, or vice versa.

**Previous Recommendation #1**

The Department should implement a policy to review the permit sequencing in the system for breaks in sequencing. Then investigate the breaks to determine the reasoning and if follow-up action is required. This will ensure the control in place for numerical sequencing of permits is properly operating and not being overridden improperly.

**Previous Finding #2**

There was no specific process in place to follow-up after renewal notices have been sent and confirm whether all expired permits had been renewed.

**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Status of Prior Findings and Recommendations  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

**Previous Recommendation #2**

BCFD should implement policies and procedures to follow-up on expired permits to ensure they are properly renewed or do not need to be renewed. The auditors recommended working with IT to implement a process to generate a list of all expired permits on a periodic basis for proper follow-up.

**Previous Finding #3**

Out of a total of 160 permits tested, the auditors found one instance in May, 2011, where a permit was issued and the applicant was charged a higher rate that was to take effect in September, 2011, rather than the rate applicable at the time.

**Previous Recommendation #3**

It was recommended that the process for applying rates for permits be automated in order to prevent a situation where the wrong rate is charged for permits. The approved rates should be uploaded into the system and automatically applied based on the permit type. This will help reduce the risk of inappropriate rates being charged.

**Previous Finding #4**

Out of a sample of 160 permits, the auditors found three permits in fiscal year 2011 where payment information was not recorded in COBOL; and therefore, the auditors were not able to confirm whether the payment was received. For one permit in fiscal year 2012, the amount was less than the approved rate for the permit.

**Previous Recommendation #4**

It was recommended that a process be put in place to reconcile collections for permits with the permits issued. The reconciliation should be performed on a monthly basis. This will help ensure all permits have appropriate charges applied and the charges were collected. All exceptions should be followed-up timely to identify the discrepancy.

**BCFD Response**

The BCFD Fire Marshall has reviewed the findings and recommendations and would like to add the following as a response. The last issue is the sequencing of permits. This system is not a Fire Department system and the sequencing is an issue needing to be addressed by the Mayor's Office of Information and Technology (MOIT).

**Baltimore City Fire Department**  
**Status of Prior Findings and Recommendations**  
**Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

**BCFD Response (continued)**

Regarding expired permits, the fire code states that every use type shall have a valid fire permit. An updated list of occupancies with expired permits is maintained in this office and followed up on for collection of payment or issuance of a violation for operating without a valid fire permit. If the status of the permit is not reconciled within a seven-day timeframe, a cease and desist action is ordered. The performance audit report is inaccurate to state that we do not follow up on expired fire permits. The following notices are sent to customers with upcoming expirations dates for fire permits that are due for annual inspections:

- 60-day notice (permits expiring within 60-90 days)
- 30-day notice (permits expiring within 30-60 days)
- Final notice (permits expiring within 0-15 days)
- Expired notice (permits that are expired)

The Fire Department does not issue permits based on type of structure. The Fire Department does not issue building permits. The Fire Department issues only fire permits, which are part of the use and occupancy (U&O) permit process designated by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC). The ultimate sign off on a U&O being issued is HABC, which the fire permit is a part of if it is required. Fire permits are only issued and renewed based on the USE of the structure, or areas within the structure, as described in the fire and life safety codes. All occupancies are not required to have annual inspections. Occupancies not requiring to have annual inspections include:

- Business “B” use with capacities of less than 50 and do not have other processes such as hazardous material storage or commercial kitchens with hood systems
- Residential “R” use that are not identified as assisted living, daycare uses, hotels, etc.
- Storage “S” use for structures less than 2500 cubic feet

Since August 2015, the Fire Department has been using a collection agency named Merkle to process all payments for renewal permits only. The Office of the Fire Marshal is currently exploring options to cease collecting monies for ALL services provided per the fee schedule. The options currently being explored are remote payment locations and online collection.

In addition to customers applying for fire permits for new construction/use, a review of plans is needed should the structure require features such as sprinklers, fire alarm detection, and life safety. If the Fire Department has to review plans for new construction/use of fire protection components, the plans would have to be approved first before those components are installed. After the components are installed, they must be tested and pass per the fire and life safety codes prior to the final inspection is issued for the fire permit. Again, the fire permit is only a part of the U&O process, which is the permit issued from HABC before the occupancy of any structure can legally occur.

**Current Status Per BCFD – Partially Implemented.**

**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Status of Prior Findings and Recommendations  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

**Emergency Medical Services Billings – Percentage of Fees Collected**

**Previous Finding #5**

The accounts receivable reports are not provided to the Department of Finance for inclusion in the financial records.

**Previous Recommendation #5**

The auditors recommended BCFD to maintain a numerical sequence of all EMS Services provided. This record can be used to reconcile billable services performed to actual billings and can form a basis for valuation of accounts receivable.

**BCFD Response**

BCFD EMS has reviewed the findings and recommendations from the performance audit and would like to add to the record that first the rates that are charged are approved by the City of Baltimore Board of Estimates which was last approved back in FY 2010. Secondly the current Patient Care Report (PCR) system is done through a contracted vendor by the State of Maryland and is the Maryland Electronic Patient Care Reporting System (eMEDS). Lastly the reports that the auditor was unable to have retrieved from the older system back in 2011 and 2012 have all been retrieved from the legacy system and have been attached for further review.

The City of Baltimore effectively went to a new vendor for billing services back at the end of 2013 since the data from the old vendor may have been corrupted. Since that time the old data has been transferred to the new vendor to find both patient and financial data when requested. The vendor maintains the billing and account receivable file for the City of Baltimore. In doing so it assigns the numbering sequence of the bills in their system with the tracking number from the CAD dispatch system which is the Incident number.

**Current Status Per BCFD – Implemented**

Reconciled reports are provided monthly by Digitech now. In addition, Digitech has recorded record high revenue despite no increase in fees. City now has a PO/Contract with vendor P519894.

**Fire Suppression and Emergency Response – Percentage of Responses Within 5 Minutes**

**Previous Finding #6**

The auditors were unable to agree EMS response times provided for April 2011 to the Citistat report.

**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Status of Prior Findings and Recommendations  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

**Previous Recommendation #6**

The auditors recommended that BCFD use the CAD system to calculate response times for reporting to Citistat. BCFD can have a program written in CAD to perform the calculation. This would eliminate the need to download information into Excel and calculate the times. It would also reduce the risk of manual error in the calculation and reduce the opportunity to change the times prior to the calculations.

**BCFD Response**

BCFD Operations regularly checks the average response times of all of our response units and uses the NFPA as a guideline in making corrective actions where response time is critical. This information is requested and reviewed on a monthly basis with CitiStat. The old CAD system was out dated and has since been replaced by the City of Baltimore. The new CAD system does give the auditor recommended flexibility.

**Current Status Per BCFD – Implemented**

Regarding response times Fire Suppression Administration is always tracking response times and continue to maintain NFPA minimum compliance. The new CAD was implemented in March, 2015.

**Payroll – Time Entry and Compliance**

**Previous Finding #7**

The auditors found three instances where the attendance per the Station records did not agree with Tele-Staff and E-Time.

**Previous Recommendation #7**

The auditors recommended that a process be put in place to ensure attendance per the attendance records at the Station agree with the payroll system, ADP. The auditors recommended that an interface be put in place between the attendance records at the Station and with Tele-Staff and E-Time.

**BCFD Response**

BCFD strives to complete the reports for payroll exceptions in a timely fashion to make sure that all the information agrees however due to the fact that Telestaff or Company Journal information is independent systems to eTIME all are manually adjusted and irregularities do occur. It is the timekeeper and the employee responsibility to review their accrual leave balances and report any irregularities which may occur from time to time. The eTIME system since August of 2013 now accrues the leave balances and all are reported biweekly on the employees pay stub. The examples that are given by the Auditors could be exceptions not recorded correctly in the system and will need to be corrected by the timekeeper/company officer.

**Baltimore City Fire Department  
Status of Prior Findings and Recommendations  
Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

**Current Status Per BCFD – Implemented**

This has been updated in the most recent MOP, and there is now one entry made at the watch desk for members working at each location.

**Emergency Medical Services – Continuing Education**

**Previous Finding #8**

The auditors noted instances where records provided by BCFD show that some certifications were not renewed on time. Therefore, employees may have been providing services when their licenses were expired.

**Previous Recommendation #8**

The auditors recommended that a process be put in place to automate the re-certification notification process. The process should generate periodic reports based on expirations prior to the expiration date and a listing of expired licenses. This process would allow for proper monitoring of the re-certification process and allow corrective actions to take place on a timely basis. This process would also provide documentation of compliance and non-compliance status.

**BCFD Response**

BCFD agrees with both the finding and recommendation of an automatic recertification notification process which would be ideal. However, BCFD EMS training does currently not have access to the BCFD Journal which is an internal Fire database system. This would need to be developed by BCFD. Secondly, MIEMSS is in the process of upgrading their licensure/certification system, and this may become a feature on eMEDS, which is the State Patient Care Reporting System that BCFD upgraded to back in 2013. However, not all licensed medical providers (for example, Command Staff members) log into the eMEDS system. In the future it may send a notification to the provider via email, but most ALS providers begin their recertification process shortly after they renew, so the notification would need to be months in advance.

**Current Status Per BCFD – Not Implemented**

As of now, there is no automated process for license renewal/expiration. The recertification process is handled manually, but has been made easier due to windows of expiration. For example, all ALS (paramedics) expire at the end of April every year, while the BLS (EMTs) expire either at the end of June or end of December. The ALS recertification cycle is every two years, and the BLS cycle is every three years. We do keep databases of these providers, which include expiration dates. ALS providers are expected to schedule their own continuing education (offered at EMS Training or they can choose elsewhere). BLS providers are given their refresher



**Baltimore City Fire Department**  
**Status of Prior Findings and Recommendations**  
**Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

class while on duty. EMS Training coordinates with Shift Commander to facilitate companies being out of service for training.

Training records are kept electronically and are checked during the recertification cycle. The current practice is to suspend a provider if they fail to maintain their required license. The suspension is at the discretion of Chief, Assistant Chief, and Shift Commander.

MIEMSS has recently changed their licensing web site. There are still a few problems being worked through with the site, but it does not allow for automatic notification of expiration to our knowledge.

# **Appendix I**

**Baltimore City Fire Department's Response**

**To the Performance Audit**

**Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2016 and 2015**

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**

CATHERINE E. PUGH, Mayor



**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**NILES R. FORD, PhD**  
Chief of Fire Department  
401 E. Fayette Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

**January 11, 2018**

**Robert L. McCarty, Jr., City Auditor**  
Department of Audits  
City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

The Baltimore City Fire Department acknowledges the performance audit prepared by the City Auditor and submitted to the Board of Estimates by the Department of Audits. We view this audit as an opportunity to both review our past performance and continue to improve the processes in the current and future periods as well as strengthen our internal controls. BCFD submits the following responses to each of the findings contained in the audit report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Niles R. Ford".

**Niles R. Ford, PhD**  
Chief of Baltimore City Fire Department

***Fire Suppression and Emergency Rescue – Service 602. The Number of Smoke Alarms Installed***

**Background**

BCFD provides free smoke alarms and installation to City residents. The free Smoke Alarm Installation Program combined with the free Home Safety Inspection Program provides education and prevention services to the City residents. BCFD also interacts with City residents in their communities as part of Saturday Safety Sweeps, BGE Targeted Address Surveys, 3-1-1 Non-emergency Dispatches, Response Initiated Installations, Community Events, Community Meetings and other Safety Initiatives.

**Finding #1:**

BCFD reported that it met its fiscal year 2015 target for the number of smoke alarms installed. The performance measure target for fiscal year 2015 was 10,000, and, according to the City's Budget Book, the actual amount reported was 15,626. However, BCFD reported that it did not meet its fiscal year 2016 target for the number of smoke alarms installed. The original performance measure target for fiscal year 2016 was 19,000, but was changed to 16,500 in the City's fiscal year 2017 and 2018 Budget Books. According to the City's 2018 Budget Book, the actual amount reported was 15,889. Therefore, in either case, the fiscal year 2016 performance measure target was not met.

**Recommendation #1**

We recommend that BCFD identify the causes and develop a corrective action plan for the number of smoke alarms installed that did not meet the established performance measure target. We also recommend that revisions to prior year performance measure targets not be made unless approved by the Department of Finance (Finance). However, those performance measure targets should not be changed in subsequent year Budget Books without adequate disclosure, in order to avoid misleading performance results.

**BCFD Response:**

The identification of the causes for the disparities with the FY 2015 and FY 2016 targets and actuals were due to tracking and accountability with respect to the FY 2015 numbers, and the implementation of the department's Home Safety Inspection Program/Smoke Alarm Installation Program in FY 2016. This program promotes quality Home Safety Inspections with Inspection of existing Smoke Alarms or Installation of new 10 year lithium battery Smoke Alarms if needed over the previous year's practice of quantity installation of Smoke Alarms. The redirected program resulted in less homes visited and less alarms installed because members were spending more time at each location to provide inspections and education. With respect to the change of the original target of 19,000 to 16,500 there is no identifiable cause. The department will refrain from altering any future targets without approval from the Bureau of Budget and Management Research. The difficulty the department faces with exact target/actual numbers lies with the residents requesting installations, i.e., BCFD cannot predict how many requests will be made. The department is attempting to provide a better service with the addition of the Home Safety Inspection in

**conjunction with the Smoke Alarm Installation measure in an attempt to provide safety and prevention education to the residents as well as free Smoke Alarms.**

**Finding #2**

Records were not adequately maintained to support the actual results of fiscal years 2015 and 2016 for the number of smoke alarms installed. Therefore, we could not determine whether the reported actual amounts for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 were accurate and reliable because the supporting documentation (3-1-1 Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms) for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 is no longer available. According to BCFD, the number of installed smoke alarms reported in the City's Budget Book is obtained from the Customer Service Report (CSR). However, the number of installed smoke alarms in the CSR differed from the number reported in the City's Budget Books. Even if the Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 were available for audit testing, we could not trace the information on those forms to the CSR because the data on the CSR furnished to us included the names of neighborhoods and not the street addresses that are included on the Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms. Also, the Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms do not contain the corresponding CSR numbers.

**Recommendation #2:**

We recommend that BCFD develop procedures to adequately maintain records, especially those to support the actual results of the performance measures included in the Budget Books. We also recommend that BCFD modify the 3-1-1 Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Form and the CSR so that information is traceable from one form to the other; i.e., both should include addresses and CSR numbers. Amounts should be reconciled so that the number of smoke alarms installed as reported on the CSR agree to the supporting documentation (3-1-1 Smoke Alarm Receipt/Tracking Forms) and the actual number reported in the City's Budget Book.

**BCFD Response:**

The Community and Risk Reduction Division – Baltimore City Fire Departments IT Bureau is currently developing a module within the FIRE RECORDS program to accurately track every Home Safety Inspection, Smoke Alarm Installation, and pre-existing Smoke Alarm Inspection, performed by all units in the field by address and street. The FIRE RECORDS program is the database that houses multiple data sets with regard to all department activities and inspections. This program will provide exact locations and amounts of smoke alarm installations, smoke alarm inspections of pre-existing alarms, and home safety inspections performed. This program is currently projected to be on-line and live by the Spring of 2018.

**Emergency Management – Service 608. *The Percent of City Agencies with a Complete Continuity of Operations Plan.***

## **Background**

The Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) requires state and local agencies to establish a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Each jurisdiction should have an emergency manager. According to the City's Administrative Manual, all City Agencies are required to develop a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management (MOEM). Agencies are also required to appoint a COOP Coordinator, who acts as a point of contact in developing the COOP.

A COOP should include at a minimum:

1. Privacy Statement
2. Record of Changes
3. Record of Distribution
4. Basic Plan (including an executive summary, a promulgation statement, COOP Coordinator, and reference documents)
5. Concept of Operations (including organization and assignment of responsibilities, standard operation procedures, essential functions, disaster intelligence needs, and major scenarios)
6. Direction, Control, and Coordination
7. Communications
8. Budget and Acquisition of Resources
9. Plan Development and Maintenance

Agencies should coordinate with MOEM to develop a comprehensive COOP. Agencies should also revise the plan as necessary to keep the plan current. All questions concerning emergency preparedness should be addressed to MOEM, which prepares the City and the public for emergencies, coordinates interagency response and recovery, and implements a comprehensive program of disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

## **Finding #3**

The MOEM (BCFD's Service - 608 in the Budget Book) reported that it did not meet the performance measure targets for fiscal years 2015 and 2016. The target for fiscal year 2015 was originally reported as 90% in the fiscal year 2015 Budget Book, but was reduced to 80% in the fiscal years 2016 and 2017 Budget Books. The actual amount for fiscal year 2015, as reported in the fiscal year 2017 Budget Book, was 75%. In either case, both the original target and the reduced target were not met. The fiscal year 2016 target was 85%, but the actual amount, as reported in the fiscal year 2018 Budget Book, was 75%. According to the Director of MOEM, the targets were not met because of the lack of personnel to assist City Agencies to develop and review the COOPs. The Director of MOEM informed us that he has hired additional Associate Planners and a Manager to assist agencies in developing complete COOPs.

## **Recommendation #3**

**We recommend that BCFD continue to identify and address the causes for not meeting the established targets. We also recommend that BCFD obtain the Department of Finance's**

approval for any revisions to prior year performance measure targets. We also recommend that any approved changes to performance measure targets should not be changed in subsequent year Budget Books without adequate disclosure, in order to avoid misleading performance results.

#### **Finding #4**

We could not determine whether the reported actual performance measure percentages are accurate and reliable. According to the City's Administrative Manual, all City Agencies are required to develop a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management (MOEM). However, according to the MOEM Director, approximately 20 City Agencies should have had a completed COOP on file. The listing that the MOEM Director furnished us contained only 16 agencies. According to the listing, 11 of the agency COOPs were last updated in 2006, 2 of the agency COOPs were last updated in 2013, and the last update for 3 agencies were marked as "N/A." According to a Baltimore City COOP Planning Template, a plan should be updated at least annually but more often if personnel change, equipment changes, or new processes are instituted for protecting vital records.

#### **Recommendation #4**

We recommend that MOEM develop written policies and procedures that include a list of the agencies that are required to have a completed COOP on file. MOEM should also maintain written documentation explaining which agencies are required to prepare a COOP and why only those agencies, as opposed to the City Administrative Manual's requirement for all agencies to prepare such plans. We also recommend that MOEM maintain a current listing of the agencies that have prepared, and updated as necessary, a completed COOP.

#### **MOEM Response:**

The Mayor's Office of Emergency Management has reviewed these findings and recommendations and does not take any issue with them. The background section is accurate, as are the findings. And the recommendations are all within reason.

MOEM would like to note, regarding the MEMA requirement for a COOP plan, that the City has the equivalent of a City wide COOP plan – our Continuity of Government (COG) Plan. That document sets forth the major functions of City Government and what actions would be taken to maintain them as well as to maintain the City's leadership capacity if we were to lose access to City Hall, or if a number of leaders were incapacitated, etc.

Regarding the AM requirement for each agency to have a COOP plan, we agree with the findings and recommendations. Regarding findings #3 and #4 – the Administrative Manual does not layout any exact record keeping requirement or procedure for tracking COOP compliance, or how often COOP plans need to be updated to be effective or count against the requirement, etc. Because of this, prior Director and Deputy Director(s) ad hoc checked in with agencies to calculate compliance with AM as well as achievement of the chosen performance measures.

MOEM would like to note that it did attempt to locate the emails or physical paper trail related to the Outcome Based Budgeting targets / performance measures on COOP, but has been unable as of this report to locate them. It could be that the work/math was done via email and given the city's 90 day email retention policy, is no longer available. In the future we will comply with recommendation #4 and develop a record keeping procedure and COOP reporting/accounting format.

Finally, as noted by Audits, the AM does not give a detailed explanation or list of what agencies should be counted towards this requirement. It says all agencies, but the tactical reality is that there are a number of City agencies (and sub-division / bureaus) of various sizes and special statuses. MOEM will, in 2018, work to create a list of which agencies and subdivisions/bureaus will be checked for COOP plans and why.

***Fire and Emergency Community Outreach – Service 610. The Percent of Reduction in 9-1-1 Calls from Operation Care Clients.***

**Background**

The Operation Care Program is a case management program within HealthCare Access Maryland (HCAM) that provides case management and care coordination services to persons who excessively utilize the emergency 9-1-1 system for non-emergent and/or poorly managed health conditions. Because Baltimore City has a disproportionately high number of frequent utilizers, the goal of the program is to reduce the costly overuse of the City's Emergency Medical Services and the 9-1-1 system. The EMS Division decided to transition its efforts from the more transient, homeless, and substance abusing population towards high utilizers with poorly managed chronic disease like diabetes or asthma because this small population accounts for a large portion of Emergency Medical Services and diverts resources away from high priority calls. This population tends to be easy to locate with fixed addresses. Consequently, BCFD expects to see a reduction in citizens utilizing the 9-1-1 system and the emergency departments as their primary health care service.

**Finding #5**

BCFD reported that it did not meet its fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016 targets for the percent of reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients. In addition, the actual amounts reported for the performance measures for both fiscal years 2015 and 2016 were not consistent with the performance measure targets that were established; and therefore, were misleading. The performance measure target was described in the City's Budget Books as the percent of reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients. However, rather than measuring the actual reduction of 9-1-1 calls during a given period (for example, from one fiscal year to the next), the amounts measured and reported by BCFD were calculated based on the percent (%) of open and active cases in the Operation Care program for which the Operation Care clients made one or less calls to 9-1-1 each month.



#### **Recommendation #5**

We recommend that BCFD review the established performance measure and the actual performance measure results to ensure that both the target and the results are reported on a consistent basis. If the performance measure was established to measure the reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients, we recommend that BCFD modify the methodology for measuring and reporting actual results to determine whether or not a reduction in 9-1-1 calls from Operation Care clients has been achieved.

#### **BCFD Response:**

Health Care Access Maryland's - Operation Care program has had numerous performance and contract compliance issues over the last three fiscal years. Some of the performance problems include the following:

- Annual Program Director turnover starting in Calendar Year 2014, leading to inconsistent performance and documentation.
- Unwillingness/inability to share needs assessment data for Operation Care patients.
- Failure to report accurate tracking log data monthly as required by the scope of services detailed within contract for Fiscal Years 16, 17, and 18.
- Failure to report on individual care plans as required by the scope of services detailed within contract for Fiscal Years 16, 17, and 18.
- Failure to maintain an active client case load of 40 throughout Fiscal Year 16 (Average 23.58 cases enrolled).
- Failure to maintain an active client case load of 40 throughout Fiscal Year 17 (Average 21.83 cases enrolled).
- Failure to maintain an active client case load of 40 throughout Fiscal Year 18 (Currently 17 enrolled).
- Notified Operation Care March, 2017, that performance continues to be substandard and we will be meeting in person bi-weekly for additional oversight.
- From March, 2017 to present, Operation Care failed to provide accurate data on the status of BCFD referred patients.
- Inability to demonstrate the return on investment with reduction in call volume.

The Fire Department's call volume has increased substantially over those same three fiscal years. For that reason the Fire Department chose not to renew the contract with Operation Care. The Department is developing its own Mobile Integrated Health-Community Paramedicine (MIH-CP) model to improve community health, while lowering social barriers that prevent citizens from managing chronic diseases and lower acuity medical issues. As a direct result of these initiatives, the Department expects to see a reduction in citizens utilizing the 911 system and the emergency departments as their primary health care service.