

HOL LUMBUS

Fire and Rescue



2013 Self-Assessment Manual 2018



**COMMISSION ON FIRE
ACCREDITATION INTERNATIONAL**

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SELF ASSESSMENT
MANUAL (8TH EDITION)

Columbus Fire and Rescue

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ELECTED OFFICIALS

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Executive Summary

The development of the Self-Assessment Manual represents a significant yet equally important part of the accreditation process. “Through self-assessment, a systematic evaluation can be accomplished to determine what is happening within an organization, focusing on whether or not the organization is meeting the goals that are commensurate with its responsibilities” (Commission on Fire Accreditation International, 2009). Recognizing the importance of self-assessment, Fire Chief Mark Frese of Davenport (IA) Fire Department stated, “There is no other tool within our industry that allows an organization to perform the introspection that the CFAI Self-Assessment process requires.”

The self-assessment process evaluates current department performance with nationally recognized standards and practices. From this self-assessment, Columbus Fire and Rescue can answer three organizational questions critical to success:

1. Is the organization effective?
2. Are the goals, objectives and mission of the organization being achieved?
3. What are the reasons for the success of the organization?

From this understanding, the department is provided with a means of measuring current progress while incorporating solutions to identified problems resulting in a continuous improvement process that ensures the delivery of quality programs and services.

This Self-Assessment Manual represents Columbus Fire and Rescue’s effort at providing factual support that the department is meeting industry best practices and standards. Contained within this manual are 10 categories upon which the department is evaluated. These categories represent every aspect of department operations or aspects that affect department performance. Within the 10 categories, there are 43 criteria with 258 individual performance indicators. Of the 258 indicators, 82 are considered “core competencies.” All core competencies must be successfully meet to be considered for accreditation. Core competencies are presented in **bold text** as well as having the **(CC)** identifier.

As a result of the self-assessment, CFAI’s peer review team identified 14 strategic and specific recommendations for improvement. Internally, the department identified approximately 75 areas in which performance can be improved. Over the next 5 years, the department will work towards

addressing each recommendation as a means of providing quality programs and services that meets community needs. We, the members of Columbus Fire and Rescue, understand that the citizens of Columbus have expectations that the department will provide quality services in an effective, efficient, and fiscally responsible manner. This manual serves as the basis of Columbus Fire and Rescue's commitment to not only the community but also the governing body that the department will strive to meet these expectations.

Category I: Governance and Administration

For purposes of this Category, Governance is defined as the recognition of the authority that allows an organization or agency to legally form and operate. In fulfilling this responsibility, the legal entity that oversees this formation process reflects the public interest, protects the agency from undesirable external interference, determines basic policies for providing services and interprets the agency's activities to its constituency. Administration is defined as the activities that carry out the implementation of the policies established by the authority having jurisdiction. In fulfilling this responsibility, the agency or organization carries out the day-to-day operations.

The legal entity and governing authority defines the duties and responsibilities of the agency in an official policy statement, which should include a separation of powers between the policy-making function of the boards of directors or other elected officials and the executive and administrative responsibilities of those who carry out those policies. An organization's charter or local or state general statutes likely contain an agency's official policy statement.

The chief executive or chief fire officer should provide staff leadership in developing policy proposals for the legal civil authority having jurisdiction, so those officials can take action to implement public policy based upon knowledgeable input from public safety leadership. It is the primary responsibility of agency leadership that reports to an elected governing board and/or other high-ranking individual for the execution of policy, to keep that higher authority informed on all matters affecting the agency and delivery of emergency services to the public.

It must be recognized that other organizations participate in the governance of the agency, such as the state/provincial and federal governments through legislation, regulations and funding procedures, and other organizations through associations and bargaining units. The governing board has the responsibility for the administrative activity and coordinates all of these diverse interests to set the direction of the agency.

The agency administration exercises responsibility for the quality of the agency through an organized system of planning, staffing, directing, coordinating, and evaluating. The agency administration is entrusted with the assets and charged to uphold its mission and programs, to ensure compliance with laws and regulations, and to provide stability and continuity to the agency.

For many volunteer fire service organizations, the governing board is within the municipal or county government and is the executive/legislative body for municipal or county governance, some elected directly by the public, such as special districts.

In the absence of a municipally appointed fire chief, or chief executive officer, for purposes of accreditation, the duly elected or appointed fire chief shall be the individual responsible for the criteria and performance indicators.

In many city or county municipal organizations a separation of powers exists that give the governing body legislative responsibility while giving administrative responsibility for policy and administration with a strong mayor or city manager. The chief fire officer/chief executive officer in such organizations generally reports directly to the mayor, manager, or their designee. It is vital that the leadership of every agency understand who actually sets policy for the government structure they are working in and their role in implementing that policy.

Criterion 1A: Governing Body

The governing body and/or agency manager is legally established to provide general policies to guide the agency, approved programs and services, and appropriated financial resources.

Summary

The City of Columbus was formally established as a municipality under a charter exclusive to the city on March 8, 1884. This charter implemented a mayor/council governing structure while defining the powers and responsibilities of each. The charter is supplemented by the City of Columbus Code of Ordinances that further defined the duties and responsibilities of the governing authority as well as regulatory ordinances governing specific city functions (i.e. fire department).

Columbus Fire & Rescue was established by virtue of municipal authority granted to the mayor and council. City of Columbus Code of Ordinances established the position of Fire Chief and defined the authority of the office. Columbus Fire & Rescue has an administrative structure that supports department operations.

The governing authority approves the administrative structure of the department and programs/services provided by the department through the annual budget process and subsequent appropriation of funds. Department compliance with city policies is maintained through weekly department head meetings and twice monthly city council meetings. The city has implemented policies that preclude agency influence and conflict of interest.

The programs and services provided are aligned with the department's stated mission. Program evaluation is accomplished through annual reports submitted to the Fire Chief and through the city's annual budget process.

1A.1 The agency is legally established. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire Department was legally established by the governing body on April 4, 1840 with the purchase of its first fire apparatus and adoption of general department rules and duties. The department continued as a legally established agency when the City of Columbus was officially chartered by the State of Mississippi on March 8, 1884. Columbus City Charter §24 Part 13 granted municipal authority through the enumeration of powers of mayor and council to organize and maintain a fire department. This authority is reiterated in Mississippi Municipal Code Annotated 1972 §§21-25-3. The governing authority further defines the agency's regulatory powers in Columbus Code of Ordinances §12, Articles I - IV. These articles establish department authority through ordinances, the fire code, and other regulatory issues that fall under fire department authority.

Appraisal

Columbus Fire and Rescue has been legally established by virtue of the provisions found in two regulatory documents; Mississippi Municipal Code Annotated 1972 and the City of Columbus Charter. Furthermore, the department's regulatory authority has been clearly defined by Columbus Code of Ordinances. These statutory mandates have adequately met both city and department needs.

Plan

Columbus will continue to operate under the provisions granted by the city charter, state municipal code, and Columbus Code of Ordinances. Any amendments necessitated by changes in state law or local needs will be reflected in amendments to the Columbus City Charter and/or Code of Ordinances.

References

City of Columbus Charter §24, Part 13

Columbus Code of Ordinances §12, Articles I - IV

Mississippi Municipal Code Annotated 1972 §§ 21-25-3

1A.2 The governing authority having jurisdiction over the fire service organization or agency periodically reviews and approves programs and ensures compliance with basic governmental as well as agency policies.

Description

The department provides monthly and annual reports to the governing authority as directed by Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-24. Twice monthly council meetings allow for periodic department program review and ensure policy compliance. Program approval is achieved through the budget process and subsequent funding allocations. Each program is reviewed using the information provided by the annual reports.

Appraisal

The department has provided the mayor and council with monthly and annual reports required by city ordinance. These reports, in conjunction with twice monthly council meetings, have been effective in providing periodic program review and ensuring fire department compliance with city/department policies. During the budgeting process, annual program assessments have provided the governing authority with objective performance measures that support program justification. Annual budget allocations have supported program continuance.

Plan

The department will continue to provide monthly and annual reports to the governing authority. The department will continue to provide program assessments for the annual budgeting process. The department will continue to participate in all identified processes to ensure compliance.

References

Columbus Code of Ordinances §12/-24

CFR Budgets

Columbus Fire & Rescue Annual Program Reports

1A.3 The method used to select the agency's chief fire officer/chief executive officer includes evaluation of candidate qualifications and credentials.

Description

The mayor and council is responsible for the appointment of the fire chief as mandated by Columbus City Charter §24 Part 13. City of Columbus Employee Handbook Section 2.0 outlines hiring policies and procedures as mandated by federal and state statutes. The Human Resource Director is responsible for maintaining a job description as provided by City of Columbus Policy 3.30. Candidate qualifications are established by the mayor and council and are included in advertisement of position. Candidate qualifications are initially vetted by a hiring committee comprised of the Chief Operations Officer, the Human Resource Director, council members, and, at the discretion of the mayor and council, citizens. From this screening process, finalists are interviewed by the mayor and council with final approval being determined by a council vote.

Appraisal

The mayor and council have been tasked under city charter with the selection of the fire chief. City policies have provided general hiring guidelines to be followed. These guidelines have been compliant with state and federal hiring laws. Qualifications for the position of fire chief have been included in the job description and included in advertisement of position. The job description has included the purpose of position, job context, essential duties and responsibilities, job knowledge, skills, and abilities, and preferred qualifications. This job description was last updated on 4/5/2005. Based upon the last revision date, this description should be reviewed on a more periodic basis to remain consistent with department operations and prerequisite qualifications of position.

Plan

The governing authority will continue to establish the process to be used during the selection of position. The job description will reflect the required knowledge, skills, and abilities and preferred qualifications as set forth by the mayor, council, Chief Operations Officer, and/or Human Resource Director. The Human Resource Director will be responsible for updating this description to reflect these qualifications.

References

City of Columbus Job Description: Fire Chief

Columbus City Charter §24 Part 13

Columbus City Employee Handbook Policies, Section 2.0

Columbus City Employee Handbook Policy 3.30

1A.4 The governing body approves the administrative structure that carries out the agency's mission.

Description

The mayor and council approve the administrative structure of the department through the authorization of the organizational chart as outlined by Columbus Fire & Rescue Policy 102.01. The organizational chart provides an outline of positions that are necessary to manage and carry out the programs and services offered by the department. These programs and services are consistent with the department's mission. The administrative structure is also approved through the adoption of the department's annual budget. CFR's organizational chart is also reflected in the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover.

Appraisal

The administrative structure of CFR has been approved by the governing authority through three measures that include approval of CFR Policy 102.01, annual review and approval during the budgeting process. The organizational structure has adequately provided for administrative management of the programs and services offered by the department and have adequately met city and department needs. The governing body has adopted the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover, which further recognizes the department's organizational structure.

Plan

The Fire Chief will assess the effectiveness of the organizational structure and make recommendations based upon department needs. Changes to this structure will be subject to approval by the mayor and council. There is no plan to change this practice.

References

CFR Policy 102.01 Organizational Chart
CFR Strategic Plan – Organizational Overview
CFR Standards of Cover – Personnel Resources
CFR Annual Budgets

1A.5 The governing body has policies to preclude individual participation of governing board members and staff in actions involving possible conflict of interest.

Description

The City of Columbus expects all officials and employees to conduct themselves in an ethical manner and to preclude participation in any activity where a conflict of interest exists. City of Columbus Employee Policies 2.45, 2.50, and 2.55 addresses business ethics, personal conduct, and conflict of interest. These policies are in compliance with Mississippi Municipal Code Annotated 1972 §§25-4-101.

Appraisal

Employee expectations have been clearly defined in city policies. These policies have addressed personal conduct regarding business ethics and conduct, gift and gratuity acceptance, nepotism, and conflict of interest where a pecuniary benefit may exist. These policies address not only personal benefit but also benefit of relatives and/or other personal/business relationships. These policies have adequately supported community trust of public officials and servants by adhering to applicable state statutes and local guidelines.

Plan

Personnel will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner as described by the provisions of city policy. Any changes to these policies will be reflected by amendments to the City of Columbus Personnel Handbook.

References

City of Columbus Policy 2.45: Business Ethics and Conduct

City of Columbus Policy 2.50: Gift and Gratuities

City of Columbus Policy 2.55: Nepotism and Conflict of Interest Prohibited

Mississippi Municipal Code Annotated 1972 §§25-4.

1A.6 A communication process is in place between the governing body and the administrative structure of the agency.

Description

The mayor and council are informed of department functions through both formal and informal communication processes. Weekly meetings are held by the mayor involving the Chief Operations Officer and department heads. These meetings address department issues, review of the upcoming council meeting agenda, and address citizen concerns. This meeting has no set agenda and is conducted in an informal, roundtable manner.

The city council meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month. During these meetings, the Fire Chief presents the department's monthly report as required by Columbus Code of Ordinance §12-24. The council is also given the opportunity to address issues concerning department operations or citizen inquiries/concerns.

Appraisal

The two communication processes being used have provided effective mechanisms for an exchange of information between the governing authority and the fire department. The weekly department head meetings are primarily used as an internal communication tool for the mayor to coordinate city activities and discuss department issues. The twice monthly council meetings have provided an opportunity for the council to review department operations and address specific issues. Both processes are equally important for the overall operation of the city and have met both city and department needs.

Plan

The department will continue to participate in the weekly department head meetings and monthly council meetings.

References

Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-24
CFR Monthly Reports to City Council
Weekly Department Head Meetings

1A.7 The role and composition of various policy making, planning and special purpose bodies are defined in a governing body organization chart for the authority having jurisdiction.

Description

The City of Columbus Charter dictates a mayor/council governing structure while defining the powers and responsibilities of each. The City Charter also addresses the composition and regulatory authority of the various planning and special purpose boards. The Code of Ordinances is used to address specific city functions (i.e. fire, police, public works, etc.) and their duties and responsibilities. The city's organizational chart reflects an administrative structure with delineating lines of authority.

Appraisal

The City Charter has clearly provided for the city's governing body, planning, and special purpose boards. The authority and responsibilities of each has been clearly identified. The city's organizational chart has identified an administrative structure listing senior administrative positions (i.e. fire, police, human resources, city garage, etc.) and lines of authority. However, this chart is not reflective of the lines of authority currently being used. The fire and police chief report directly to the mayor rather than the Chief Operations Officer. The mayor and council failed to adopt an updated organizational chart in 2011 that would have reflected a truer representation of lines of authority.

Plan

The city will continue to use the present organizational chart until an amendment is adopted by the governing authority.

References

City of Columbus Charter

Columbus Code of Ordinances

City of Columbus Organizational Chart

1A.8 The governing body publishes a mission statement for the agency.

Description

The department's mission, vision, and value statements serve as a basic tenet for department operations and employee conduct. These statements are published in Columbus Fire & Rescue Policy 101.00, the Strategic Plan, and Standards of Cover. These statements are published on the department's web site. A link to the department's Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover may be found on the department web page.

Appraisal

The governing body has approved the mission, vision, and value statements of the department. These statements are published in three mediums; the department's web site, the Strategic Plan, and Standards of Cover. Also, framed copies of the mission and vision statements are posted in each station. The general public has access to these statements via the web site and to document links on the department's web page.

Plan

The department will maintain these statements both internally for employees and externally on its web site for public viewing. Any changes to these statements will be amended and updated as needed.

References

CFR Policy 101.00: Mission and Value Statements

CFR Strategic Plan: Mission Statement

CFR Standards of Cover – Section C: Community Expectations

CFR Website

Criterion 1B: Agency Administration

The established administrative structure provides an environment for achievement of the agency's mission, purposes, goals, strategies, and objectives.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue has a defined administrative structure outlined by the department's organizational chart. The department is divided into administrative and operational divisions. Department policy identifies each position in addition to addressing purpose of position, job context, and primary and related job responsibilities. The Fire Chief is responsible for the overall administration of the department.

The department has a stated mission and value statement that serves as a basic tenet for department operations. Programs and services are aligned with the mission of the department and are accomplished through program goals and objectives. Each program is evaluated on an annual basis through reports submitted to the Fire Chief. Programs are supported on an annual basis through funding appropriations. Columbus Fire and Rescue's title reflects the multi-hazard approach to incident mitigation adopted by the department.

The department strives to remain compliant with all federal, state, and local statutes and directives. The Fire Chief is aided in regulatory compliance by the Human Resource Director, City Attorney, and Chief Financial Officer.

1B.1 The administrative structure reflects the agency's mission, goals, objectives, size, and complexity.

Description

The Fire Chief is responsible for the overall administration of the department as provided by Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-21. Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy 102.01 reflects the organizational structure of the department. The Administrative Division is responsible for the management of the department's programs and services. Program managers are responsible for establishing goals and objectives. Administrative personnel consist of the Assistant Chief, Chief of Training, the Fire Marshal, the Fire and Life Safety Educator, the Special Operations Chief. The Fire Marshal and Fire and Life Safety Educator report to the Assistant Chief while the remaining positions report directly to the Fire Chief. Job descriptions are found in Columbus Fire and Rescue policy 102.02.

The Operations Division is responsible for emergency response and mitigation. The Operations Division is divided into three shifts with a Battalion Chief supervising each shift. The Battalion Chiefs report directly to the Fire Chief. Job descriptions are found in Columbus Fire and Rescue policy 102.02

Appraisal

The organizational structure was last updated and approved by the mayor and council on 6/22/2011. This update was required due to the addition of the Special Operations Chief position. Job descriptions have identified the duties and responsibilities of each position within the organization. These positions were last updated on 11/01/2011. This structure has adequately provided supervisory oversight and supported the programs and services that are required to meet the department's mission and goals.

However, an improvement to this structure is required. In FY 2012, two temporary administrative positions were added but have not been formally approved by the governing body. These positions are the Accreditation Manager and Public Affairs. Approval for these positions is pending.

Plan

The department will continue to operate under its current structure. The Fire Chief will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of this structure and make recommendations concerning any changes to the governing authority, which has final approval. The position of Accreditation Manager and Public Affairs will be addressed during the FY 2013 budget process.

References

Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-21

Columbus Fire & Rescue Policy 102.01 Organizational Chart

Columbus Fire & Rescue Policy 102.02 Job Descriptions

1B.2 Resource allocation reflects the agency's mission, goals, and objectives.

Description

CFR offers programs and services to meet the department's mission of being an all-hazards response agency. Each program is dependent upon adequate resource allocations. Resource allocations are determined through short term and long term planning processes. Short term allocations are identified through equipment replacement schedules and annual program assessments. Long term allocations are identified through apparatus replacement schedules, and goals of the Strategic Plan. The department's annual operating budget is the end result of resource allocations. The department's Capital Improvement Plan is used as a financial management document to assist with strategic budgeting. Personnel resource requirements are determined through program critical tasking levels as identified in the Standards of Cover.

Appraisal

CFR has implemented programs and services that are aligned with the department's mission of being an "all hazards" response agency. The addition of four technical rescue programs from 2006 through 2009 has increased the department's all hazard capability. The short and long term planning processes have adequately identified resource allocation needs. Specifically, annual program reports have provided an effective assessment of short term resource needs regarding personnel and equipment. Annual reports have identified equipment that was lost or damaged from the previous year as well as new equipment needs. Referencing personnel, program reports have identified the number of personnel that have been trained at the technician, operations, and awareness certification level. These training assessments have identified the need for specific training. Critical infrastructure needs and apparatus replacements have been identified through submittal of annual budget requests and the strategic plan. The department has recently incorporated the CFR Capital Improvement Plan into the long range planning process. This capital improvement plan supplements the Strategic Plan and annual budgetary processes. Although the department has provided justification for resource needs, the governing body has final approval of program funding allocations. The department's annual budget has been cut or remained static over the past three fiscal years. This situation has forced the department to prioritize program needs and delay some equipment purchases. Homeland Security equipment

and training grants have offset some of these cuts. Even with financial cutbacks, the department has been able to provide and maintain all programs at previously established service levels.

Plan

The department will ensure that programs and services offered are aligned with the department's mission. The department will continue to ensure that resource allocations support program needs through the processes identified. The department will provide program justification during annual budget hearings.

References

CFR Annual Budgets

CFR Capital Improvement Plan

CFR Strategic Plan: Financial Planning

CFR Standards of Covers: Section D – Critical Tasking

MS Homeland Security grants

1B.3 The agency administration demonstrates compliance with legal requirements of local, state/provincial, and federal governments. (CC)

Description

The Human Resource Director, City Attorney, and Chief Financial Officer provide guidance to the fire chief concerning federal, state, and local mandates concerning aspects of department operations. The City of Columbus Personnel Handbook remains compliant with federal and state laws that includes but is not limited to affirmative action, equal opportunity, Family Medical Leave Act, and Workman Compensation. The department is also guided by the Civil Service Handbook. Additionally, the fire chief uses a professional network to keep abreast of potential issues through participation in such venues as the Mississippi Fire Chief's Association and the National Fire Protection Association.

Appraisal

The fire chief has been provided legal guidance relevant to department operations by the City Attorney, Chief Financial Officer, and Human Resource Director. The fire department has demonstrated regulatory compliance through adherence of the City of Columbus Personnel Handbook and City of Columbus Civil Service Handbook. These handbooks have listed applicable statutory mandates in addition to employee rights as they pertain to city human resource procedures. The above assets have adequately met city and department needs.

Plan

The department will continue to work with the Human Resource Director, Chief Financial Officer, and City Attorney to comply with all regulatory statutes and laws concerning the operation of the department. The department will amend any policies or procedures that are in conflict with federal, state, or local laws.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook
City of Columbus Civil Service Handbook

1B.4 Personnel functions, roles, and responsibilities are defined in writing, and a current organization chart exists that includes the agency's relationship to the governing body.

Description

The organizational structure of the department is found in Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy 102.01. The fire department defines the roles and responsibilities of department personnel in Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy 102.02. Each station maintains a copy of these policies. The city organizational chart illustrates the department's relationship to the governing body.

Appraisal

These policies have clearly outlined the department's administrative structure and each position's job related duties and responsibilities. Personnel have been trained in policy content. The city's organizational chart adequately reflects the department's relationship to the governing body but does not accurately reflect current lines of authority for the fire chief (refer to Performance Indicator 1A.7).

There are several improvements that can be made to improve this indicator. The department has two temporary special project positions that were added in FY 2012; an Accreditation Manager and Public Relations Officer. Neither of these positions has been approved as a permanent position by the governing body nor has job descriptions been written. Once approved by the mayor and council, job descriptions should be developed for each position.

Plan

The fire chief will continue to periodically evaluate the organizational structure and job descriptions of the department. Job descriptions outlining position duties and responsibilities will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the department's policy and guideline review process. The fire chief will address the positions of Accreditation Manager and Public Affairs Officer in the budget review process for FY 2013. Policy amendments will be contingent upon approval by the governing authority.

References

City of Columbus Organizational Chart

CFR Policy 102.01 Organizational Chart

CFR Policy 102.02 Job Descriptions

1B.5 The agency's title is consistent with its mission.

Description

The department's title is Columbus Fire and Rescue. This title is consistent with the "all hazards" philosophy of the department. The programs and services provided by the department are aligned with the department's mission.

Appraisal

The department was originally established as a fire suppression agency. Over the years programs have been added to meet community needs that included hazardous materials response, EMS, dive and high angle technical rescue. In 2005, the department changed its name to Columbus Fire and Rescue to reflect its all-hazards response philosophy. Since the title change, the department has added four new technical rescue programs that have included structural collapse, overland search and rescue, swift water/flood rescue, and trench collapse.

Plan

There is no plan to change the agency's title.

References

City of Columbus Council Minutes (adopted name change)

Category II: Assessment and Planning

Assessment and planning are defined as the processes used to identify the community's fire protection and other emergency service needs in order to identify potential goals and objectives. All agencies should have a basic source of data and information in order to logically and rationally define the organization's mission. Assessment and planning is critical to the establishment of service level objectives, standards of response coverage, and ultimately, the quality of program outcomes.

The overall purpose of using these processes is to establish a long-range general strategy for the operation of the system.

Criterion 2A: Documentation of Area Characteristics

The agency collects and analyzes data specific to the distinct characteristics of the community served and applies the findings to organizational planning.

Summary

The City of Columbus was established through a special charter exclusive to the city. The charter provides a legal description of jurisdictional boundaries. The department provides services within these boundaries. The department provides automatic and requested mutual aid to the county's volunteer fire departments and Columbus Air Force Base. Each department's jurisdictional boundaries are defined.

For community risk assessment planning, the city is divided into 6 primary planning zones known as Station Response Areas (SRAs). SRAs serve as points for distribution response. SRAs are further divided into 15 fire management zones (FMZ) known as Emergency Service Numbers (ESN). ESNs serve as points for concentration response. These zones allow for a detailed community risk analysis. For service delivery objectives and response time performance, the city is classified as a suburban municipality following the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) population density recommendations. The Community risk assessment identified risk factors that affect service delivery such as community demographics, geographical factors, socio-economic factors, commercial and residential occupancies, water supply capabilities, and occupancy water flow requirements.

The department uses two software programs to provide statistical analysis. Fire Programs serves as the department's Record Management System for incident documentation while StatsFD serves as the department's analytical software.

Risk planning took into consideration economic factors that influence program funding allocations. The city's main revenue sources are state sales and ad valorem taxes. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for providing economic projections that are used to establish the city and department budgets.

2A.1 Geographical boundaries for the authority having jurisdiction are identified (e.g., street and local highway network, jurisdictional boundaries, mutual and automatic aid zones, contract service areas, etc.).

Description

The geographical boundaries for Columbus is outlined in Section 1 of the city charter. This section provides a legal description of the city's jurisdictional boundaries. There are no municipalities adjacent to the city. The department provides automatic and requested mutual aid to the county's five volunteer fire departments and the Columbus Air Force Base. Each of these aid agreement areas is geographically defined. In addition to the mutual aid agreements, the department is the lead agency for hazardous materials, overland search and rescue, and structural collapse events for Lowndes County as well as the lead agency for water events on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. The response boundaries for these responses are outlined in state law and written agreements.

Appraisal

The legal description provided by the city charter has clearly defined the jurisdictional boundaries for the city. There are no municipalities that directly adjoin Columbus. Responses made by the department outside of jurisdictional boundaries have been clearly defined by state law as well as written agreements. Each agreement has identified geographical response boundaries. These agreements are reviewed on a scheduled basis and are current. The described processes have met department and outside agency needs.

Plan

Any changes to the jurisdictional boundaries of the city will be amended in the City Charter. Written agreements describing department response will be reviewed on a scheduled basis.

References

City of Columbus Charter: Section 1 – Boundaries

CFR / Outside Agency Automatic and Mutual Aid Agreements

2A.2 The agency organizes the community into geographic planning zone(s) for purposes of analyzing service provision.

Description

The city is divided into six primary planning zones known as Station Response Areas (SRAs). SRAs serve as distribution response zones. SRAs are further sub-divided into 15 fire management zones (FMZs) referred to as Emergency Service Numbers (ESNs). ESNs serve as concentration response zones. For response time performance, the department's analysis software generates a grid system that is referred to as Dynamically Defined Districts (D3 districts). D3 districts allow the department to analyze response time performance within ESNs. These geographical zones are identified in the Standards of Cover.

Appraisal

The department has the capability to analyze data at four specific levels; the city in its entirety, SRAs, ESNs, and D3 districts. Each level has allowed for a detailed risk analysis by providing unique sets of data. This flexibility of analysis has provided an understanding of the various factors that influence service needs and delivery population densities, poverty areas, incident types/frequency, building characteristics, etc.). The D3 grids have been especially effective in analyzing travel time performance. Each D3 square is approximately 1,300 feet by 1,300 feet (approximately 9 city blocks); however, this area is adjustable to meet jurisdictional needs. The use of the D3 grid has allowed the department to pinpoint specific areas of response time non-compliance and understand possible factors that have influenced non-compliance (topography, excessive travel distances, traffic patterns, etc.).

Plan

The department will continue to use the current geographical zones for planning purposes. The department will continue to use its analysis software to generate data for trend analytics.

References

City Map featuring SRA / ESN management zones

CFR Standards of Cover

StatsFD D3 District

2A.3 The agency analyzes the community by service area/population density¹ for the purpose of developing total response time standards. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue develops total response time performance objectives based upon service area/population density classifications as defined by Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). Using CFAI recommendations, Columbus meets the suburban population classification. This classification is based upon total population and population density.

Response time objectives are found in Section F of the Standards of Cover.

Appraisal

Using CFAI recommendations, Columbus has been classified as a suburban service area based on its total population of 23,640 and population density of 1,072 individuals per square mile. Total population and population density totals were based upon data provided by the 2010 U.S. Census. SRA and ESN population totals are close approximations due to the U.S. Census block tracts not being aligned with these management zones boundaries. Each SRA has met the standard for a suburban classification with the exception of SRA 3, which meets the rural definition by having a population density of 656 individuals per square mile. However, the suburban standard was applied for two reasons. First, the low population density of ESN 108 (335) had a significant impact on the overall density average. Second, the travel time performance for first due and ERF units in SRA 3 have meet suburban response time standards.

Plan

The department will continue to use CFAI municipal classifications for service area / population densities to establish total response time performance standards.

References

- 2010 U.S. Census Block Tract Data
- CFAI Fire and Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual (8th Ed)
- CFR Standards of Cover: Section F

¹ See FESSAM pp. 70-71 for discussion of service area/population density.

2A.4 Data including fire loss, injury and life loss, property loss, and other associated losses, are recorded for a minimum of three immediately previous years.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue uses Fire Programs® as its electronic Record Management System (RMS). This software is National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) compliant. Fire Programs records incident data to include structure and property fire loss, civilian and firefighter injuries and fatalities, and other associated losses. This data, in turn, is uploaded into the department's analysis software, StatsFD®. Data used for accreditation was from 2010 through 2012. This information is documented in Section D and F of the Standards of Cover.

Appraisal

The department has met the three year requirement for incident documentation. The use of Fire Programs has been effective in recording incident data. System and custom reports have enabled the department to generate general queries involving fire and other losses for monthly and annual reports to the governing body. The department has been using Fire Programs since 2001. However, data from 2010 through 2012 was used due to a city IT server "crash." The department has since transitioned to a vendor based server to prevent re-occurrence of this issue. The use of StatsFD has been crucial in generating numerous statistical tables and graphs required for the Standards of Cover. Both systems have adequately supported department needs.

Plan

CFR will continue to use Fire Programs and StatsFD for incident documentation and analysis. System upgrades will be evaluated for implementation upon release.

References

Fire Programs RMS - Incidents

StatsFD Analysis System

CFR Standards of Cover: Sections D through F

2A.5 Demographics such as population, land use, topography, climate and occupancy groups are identified and documented.

Description

Section A of the Standards of Cover required the documentation of demographical characteristics that was unique to the city. These demographical characteristics included the following profiles:

- Geographic (topography and environmental)
- Demographic (population)
- Socio-economic (income, employment, housing)
- City land use and land use development
- Commercial and residential occupancy groups

Each of these profiles was used in the community risk assessment section of the Standards of Cover. Information sources included the Lowndes County Tax Assessor's Office, the Columbus / Lowndes Link, the U.S. Census, and the internet.

Appraisal

The profiles that were generated provided a thorough analysis of the city as required by the Standards of Cover. The inclusion of these demographical profiles was instrumental in evaluating the factors that influence community service needs and delivery. Commercial occupancy groups were evaluated using a risk methodology model developed by NAS Jacksonville (Occupancy Vulnerability Assessment). Residential occupancy groups determined the number and value of single and multi-family occupancies. The working relationship with external agencies aided in obtaining demographical information. These profiles were also used in the strategic planning process.

Plan

CFR will continue to update the community profiles on an annual or as available basis. CFR will continue to foster relationships with agencies that use or have access to profile data.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR Strategic Plan

2010 U. S. Census Statistics

MS Department of Employment Security

Lowndes County Tax Assessor Office

2A.6 Significant economic indicators used in the planning effort are identified (e.g., revenue sources, local economic factors, insurance evaluations, and assessed valuation of various components).

Description

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for maintaining various revenue projections that influence city operations. The Mississippi Tax Commission provides state forecasts for municipal sales tax revenues. The Lowndes County Tax Assessor's Office maintains assessed valuations of commercial and residential properties and provides projections regarding ad valorem taxes. The Columbus Lowndes Development Link maintains data regarding economic growth indicators (i.e. local/state employment rates, industrial and commercial growth). Revenue projections for the upcoming fiscal year determine the city's annual budget and, in turn, affect department allocations.

Appraisal

State sales and ad valorem taxes have provided the primary sources of revenue to the city's general fund. The Chief Financial Officer has access to these revenue projections and has been able to establish preliminary department budgets during the budget cycle process. Additionally, these projections have been crucial in the department's strategic planning process with regards to budgetary support of current program as well as new program allocations.

Plan

The Chief Financial Officer will continue to receive revenue projections from those agencies responsible. The Chief Financial Officer will provide preliminary department budget projections to aid in the budget process and strategic planning.

References

MS State Tax Projections

Lowndes County ad valorem assessments

MS Economic / Employment Projections (Columbus Lowndes Development Link)

2A.7 The water supply system that provides available fire flow for the planning zones, major risks, key risks, and special hazard areas should be documented and included in the planning effort.

Description

Columbus Light & Water and East Lowndes Water Association provide the department with water system data necessary for fire suppression planning in all fire management zones. This information includes total number and location of hydrants, fire flow rates, and system capacities. For planning purposes as outlined in the Standards of Cover and Goal 5 of the Strategic Plan, this data is compared with occupancy, major and key risks, and special hazard fire flow requirements to identify areas within the city where flow deficiencies exist. Occupancy fire flow requirements were determined using Appendix B of the International Fire Code.

Appraisal

The water flow data provided by both associations was used in fire management zone analysis and planning. This comparison was critical in identifying areas within the city where fire flow rates was not sufficient for the occupancy or major risk present. As a result of this process, alternative water supplies were deemed necessary.

The department identified mobile water alternatives, namely water shuttle operations, as a viable option to supplement the fixed water system. This water shuttle operation has been made possible through the use of department apparatus and Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Department tenders through mutual aid agreements. Department guidelines 202.02 and 202.03 have identified specific areas for automatic response by the department's water tender (Tanker 31).

Plan

The department will continue to work with each association to identify areas where water flow deficiencies exist. The department will use mobile water alternatives when required. The department will continue to use this data in annual fire management planning reviews and processes.

References

Columbus Light and Water Flow Data

East Lowndes Water Association Flow Data

CFR Standards of Cover: Section D, Appendix C, and E

CFR Strategic Plan: Goals and Objectives – Goal 5

International Fire Code, Appendix B 2006 ED

Criterion 2B: Fire Risk Assessment and Response Strategies

The agency assesses the nature and magnitude of the hazards within its jurisdiction and develops appropriate response coverage strategies.

Each significant fire risk should be categorized and listed to permit future analysis and study in determining standards of response coverage and related services.

Summary

The Community Risk Assessment identified factors that influence service delivery. To identify these risks and their impact on department services, the city is divided into 6 distribution management zones known as Station Response Areas and 15 concentration management zones known as Emergency Service Numbers. Each of these zones was evaluated using risk factors that has the potential to affect or impact service delivery.

The frequency and probability of occurrence of fire suppression service demands for each management zone was identified through an incident history review. The department identified maximum or worst fire risk in each planning zone using a risk model known as the Occupancy Vulnerability Assessment developed by NAS Jacksonville.

The department developed a critical tasking analysis to determine an Effective Response Force deployment that was capable of successfully mitigating all fire risk level events in a safe and efficient manner. Benchmark response time performance objectives were based upon National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) recommendations for a suburban municipal population density classification.

The department evaluates the fire suppression program on an annual basis through the submission of annual program reports to the Fire Chief and through Strategic Planning Goals and Objectives. Both of these processes identify steps that assess program effectiveness against fire risks. Identified program imbalances are identified and addressed.

2B.1 Each planning zone and population area is analyzed and risk factors are evaluated in order to establish a standards of response coverage. (CC)

Description

The city is divided into 6 primary planning zones known as Station Response Areas (SRAs). SRAs serve as distribution management zones. SRAs are further sub-divided into 15 fire management zones (FMZs) referred to as Emergency Service Numbers (ESNs). ESNs serve as concentration management zones. Each of these zones was evaluated using the following demographical profiles:

- Population and special population densities
- Zone size (square miles) and road miles within
- Residential structures (number, square footage, and values)
- Commercial structures (number, occupancy groups, square footage, and values)
- Commercial Occupancy Vulnerability Assessment (OVA) scores
- Incident history
- Water system capabilities / Occupancy fire flow requirements
- Zone characteristics affecting service (Transportation, topography, access)
- ESN risk classification

Distribution and concentration response time performance is evaluated using the department's analysis software, StatsFD. This software generates a grid system known as Dynamically Defined Districts (D3), which represents the smallest area possible for response time analysis.

Appraisal

The demographical profiles used for SRA and ESN planning and use of D3 districts in response time performance have adequately provided for a comprehensive risk assessment used to develop an effective standards of response cover. The demographical profiles were instrumental in understanding characteristics that influence service delivery in SRA and ESN management zones. The use of D3 districts was effective in identifying specific areas of travel time compliance. Each D3 grid is approximately 1,300 feet by 1,300 feet (approximately 9 city blocks). This relatively small area allows the department to pinpoint specific areas of compliance as well as identifying zone characteristics that might cause non-compliance (i.e. topography,

traffic flow issues). By identifying these factors, specific risk levels and service objectives were developed.

Plan

The department will update the Standards of Cover on an annual basis taking into consideration the above risk profiles. Demographic profiles will be updated on a scheduled cycle to allow for effective analysis.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

SRA / ESN Risk Planning Worksheets

SRA Risk Comparison Worksheet

2B.2 The frequency and probability of occurrence of fire suppression service demands are identified in each planning zone.

Description

The frequency and probability of occurrence of fire suppression service demands for each management zone was identified through an incident history review as well as risk factors that affect the occurrence of fire, namely poverty/low income areas. Fire Programs provide system and customized reports for basic incident analysis. StatsFD provides for enhanced incident analysis by allowing the department to identify specific fire event trends by SRA and ESN demand zones. Fire suppression service demands were identified in Section D of the Standards of Cover.

Appraisal

Fire Programs has allowed for basic incident analysis. The use of StatsFD was effective in analyzing frequency and occurrence of fire events for each management zone. Overall, fire events comprise approximately 6.5% of total call volume. During the analysis period, structure fires have declined in each of the previous 3 years. However, due to the increasing age of the residential building stock and changes in demographical influences (increase in “latch-key” children), residential fires are expected to increase in identified ESNs. The following tables reflect fire suppression statistics for SRA and ESN management zones:

SRA	Total Incidents	Percent of Fire Events
4	134	20.8%
1	126	19.5%
2	109	16.9%
3	108	16.7%
6	98	15.2%
5	68	10.5%

ESN (SRA)	Tot. Inc.	% Events	ESN (SRA)	Tot. Inc.	% Events
99 (1)	124	19.2%	111 (4)	96	14.9%
107 (6)	85	13.2%	112 (2)	68	10.5%
110 (5)	68	10.5%	109 (4)	38	5.9
97 (3)	37	5.7	108 (3)	30	4.6
98 (3)	26	4	96 (2)	21	3.2
117 (2)	19	2.9	116 (2)	16	2.4
95 (6)	9	1.4	114 (6)	4	.005
119 (1)	2	.003			

Plan

The department will continue to identify fire suppression service demands for each management zone. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for maintaining the StatsFD data base for incident analysis. The Standards of Cover will be updated on an annual basis to reflect changes in service demands.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

StatsFD Incident analysis reports

Fire Programs RMS

2B.3 The maximum or worst fire risk(s) in each planning zone is/are identified and located, i.e., hazards that require the maximum amount of fire protection resources or that would result in the greatest loss of life or property; the key or special hazard risk in each planning zone is identified and located, i.e., hazards, which if destroyed would be a critical or essential economic loss to the community (this also could include cultural, environmental, or historical loss); the typical or routine risks in each planning zone are identified, i.e., those risks most common to the planning zone; the remote or isolated risks in each planning zone are identified, i.e., those risks most distant from other risks as to be almost unique to the planning zone; and/or other locally adopted equivalencies are utilized to identify fire risk.

Description

The department identified the maximum or worst fire risk in each planning zone as part of Section D of the Standards of Cover. These risks were identified through the Occupancy Vulnerability Assessment (OVA) conducted for commercial occupancies. The OVA risk model was developed by the Jacksonville Naval Air Station Fire Department. The model is based upon 8 risk categories. These categories include:

- Life hazard
- Water supply
- Number of stories
- Community impact
- Building construction
- Square footage
- Hazard index
- Building usage

The total from these categories produced the OVA risk score. This model is illustrated in Appendix B of the Standards of Cover.

Appraisal

The use of the OVA model provided for an effective analysis of the maximum or worst fire risks found within the community. The criteria used by this model represented the risk factors identified by the Performance Indicator. By totaling the eight criterion categories, an overall risk score was produced. These scores were placed in 4 risk categories that included maximum (21 – 24), significant (15 – 20), moderate (10 – 14), and low (9 or less). Commercial and high risk occupancies were evaluated using this model. The Accreditation Manager has documented and maintained a spreadsheet reflecting OVA scores for each SRA and ESN management zone.

Appendix E in the Standards of Cover contains the top 5 fire risk for each SRA and ESN management zone. The following table reflects the top 10 fire risks for the city.

SRA / ESN	Occupancy	OVA Score
1 / 99	First Baptist Church	22
1 / 99	Lowndes County Courthouse/EMA	22
1 / 99	Franklin Elementary	21
1 / 99	Main St. Presbyterian	21
3 / 97	Baptist Memorial Hospital	21
4 / 111	Fairview Baptist Church	21
6 / 114	Calloway/Columbus/Hastings/Lott	21
6 / 114	Reneau Hall	21
6 / 114	Whitfield Auditorium	21
6 / 95	Trotter Convention Center	21

Plan

The department will continue to identify maximum or worst fire risks for each management zone. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for maintaining a spreadsheet documenting these risks by SRA and ESN management zones. The Fire Marshal will provide the Accreditation Manager a list of new commercial occupancies so that an OVA risk may be conducted. This occupancy will be added to the spreadsheet upon completion of the OVA. The OVA spreadsheet will be updated every two years as part of the annual business inspection process. The Standards of Cover will be updated to reflect any changes at that time.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

Jacksonville NASFD OVA model

CFR OVA Commercial Occupancy SRA / ESN Spreadsheet

2B.4 A critical task analysis of each risk category and/or fire incident is conducted to determine the effective response force (ERF).

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue conducted a critical task analysis for each risk category for fire events. Fire events were classified as low, moderate, high, and special. This critical tasking list is found in Section D of the Standards of Cover. Based upon this critical tasking, an Effective Response Force deployment capable of mitigating the fire event was identified. Critical tasking for fire events is identified in CFR Policies 202.01 through 202.03.

Appraisal

The development of the critical tasking list effectively allowed the department to establish an Effective Response Force capable of successfully mitigating the fire event in a safe and efficient manner based upon required incident actions. Prior to accreditation, the department's deployment for structural fire events consisted of three apparatus and the Battalion Chief (10 personnel). Once on scene, additional units could be requested. This deployment was not sufficient to meet the critical tasking of moderate, high, and special risk events. As a result, the department amended its initial fire event deployments to reflect compliance with FESSAM critical task actions (pg. 62-63). Critical tasking for fire events is found in Table D3 of the Standards of Cover.

Plan

The department will continue to evaluate the critical tasking of all risk levels of fire events. Critical tasking will be identified in department operational policies. The Fire Chief will ensure that these policies are reviewed on an annual basis.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR Policies 202.01 through 202.03

FESSAM Manual, 8th Ed.

2B.5 Agency baseline and benchmark total response time objectives for fire response conform to industry best practices as prescribed on page 70 – 71 for first due and effective response force (ERF). (CC)

Description

The department identified fire event benchmark and baseline response time performance as part of Section F of the Standards of Cover. The department based response time performance objectives on National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) recommendations for a suburban municipal population density classification.

Appraisal

The Standards of Cover has effectively identified fire suppression deployment objectives for the department based upon the risk level of the event. The following table reflects the department’s baseline and benchmark response time objectives for **moderate and high risk** fire incidents from 2010 through 2013.

<u>Moderate and High Risk</u> Structure Fires - 90th Percentile Times - Baseline Performance			2010-2013	2013	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	All Risks	2:11	2:07	2:10	2:22	2:19
Turnout Time	Turnout Time 1st Unit	All Risks	2:13	2:04	2:05	2:21	2:30
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	All Risks	4:06	4:13	3:50	4:43	4:00
	Travel Time Concentration	Moderate	6:56	6:28	6:41	7:11	7:31
High		6:45	5:47	7:06	7:01	6:26	
Total Response Time	Tot. Response Time Distribution	All Risks	7:22	7:30	6:51	7:43	7:45
	Total Response Time Concentration	Moderate	11:24	11:16	11:19	10:28	11:54
		High	12:25	12:00	11:48	12:22	12:55

Based on the above table, the department exceeded total response time performance for first due units by 2 seconds. The total response times for ERF units have been met for both moderate and high risk events (56 seconds and 25 seconds respectively). When reviewing the individual components of total response time, it is evident that two response time elements have negatively impacted total response time performance; call processing and turnout times. Call processing has exceeded the objective by 1 minute and 11 seconds. Call processing is handled by the Lowndes County E-911 Communications Center. Turnout time has been exceeded by 53 seconds. The department has initiated actions to address call processing and turnout time performance. These actions resulted in total response time improvements in 2012 and 2013 as seen in the table.

Because baseline travel response times have been met, the department has lowered its travel time benchmarks in an effort of continual self improvement. Travel times for first due and ERF units reflect this change. Adjustments were also made to total response time.

Fire Suppression Benchmarks				
Benchmark Criterion	Response Time Objective			Performance
Alarm handling	1:00			90%
Turnout time	1:20			90%
	1st Due	ERF		Performance
		Moderate	High	
Travel Time	4:06	6:56	6:45	90%
Total Response Time	3:50	6:40	6:30	90%

Plan

The department will continue to evaluate response time performance for fire events. Response time benchmarks will be adjusted to reflect a continuous process of self-improvement in the delivery of quality services. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for maintaining the analysis data base and providing quarterly response time performance reports to the Fire Chief and the department.

References

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710

CFAI Fire and Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual, 8th ED

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR Fire Suppression Response Time Fractals

2B.6 Given the fire risk(s), area of responsibility, demographics, economic indicators, fire loss data, water supply and automatic fire protection system information, an effective standards of response coverage strategy is established. (CC)

Description

The department developed a standards of cover document that enables the department to respond to all fire risk level events with an initial deployment (first due and Effective Response Force) capable of successfully mitigating the incident in a safe and effective manner. The Standards of Cover identified risk factors that affect service delivery such as demographic and economic indicators, water system capabilities, and occupancy fire flow demands. Fire flow demands take into consideration code allowances for occupancies that have fire protection systems installed. Fire events were classified by risk that included low, moderate, high, and special. Based upon the risk level, critical tasking identifies needed resources to mitigate the event.

Appraisal

Section D of the Standards of Cover has effectively provided for a response strategy that is capable of successfully mitigating all fire risk level events in a safe and efficient manner. This strategy has been based upon community risks that affect service delivery. Prior to accreditation, the department did not take into consideration critical tasking needs. As a result, additional units were frequently requested. As a result of changes in initial deployments to meet critical tasking requirements, improvements should be seen in service delivery.

Plan

The department will evaluate community risks on an annual basis to ensure that standard of cover response strategies remain consistent with identified hazards. The Standards of Cover will be amended to reflect any changes in community risks. The Accreditation Manager will track fire outcomes (i.e. confined to room of origin, fire extension, or total loss) to determine the impact of deployment changes. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for maintaining the Standards of Cover document.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

2B.7 Fire protection suppression and detection systems are identified and being considered in the planning process.

Description

The department identifies fire suppression and detection systems as part of the plans review process for new construction. The Fire Marshal is responsible for plans reviews. The Fire Marshal ensures that suppression systems are installed to code requirements. Section B105.2 of the International Fire Code allows a 75% reduction in fire flow requirements for occupancies that have approved systems installed. Occupancy information is maintained in the Risk Management Module of Fire Programs as well as a pre-fire plan books. Risk levels that determine critical tasking take into consideration protected occupancies.

Appraisal

The plans review process has adequately identified occupancies that have fire suppression and detection systems installed. This information has been documented in the Risk Management module of Fire Programs. The department has maintained a pre-fire plan book that also contains this information. Code allowances have reduced fire flow demands in these occupancies by 75%. Protection systems are also considered when establishing risk levels / critical tasking needs. Protected structures less than 20,000 square feet have been assigned a moderate risk level whereas protected structures greater than 20,000 square feet have been assigned a high risk level.

Plan

The Fire Marshal will continue to identify occupancies protected by a fire suppression and detection system as part of the plans review process. The department will continue to document occupancies with protected systems. Fire flow demand requirements will reflect code allowances for approved systems. Risk levels will take into consideration protected occupancies.

References

Fire Programs Risk Management module

CFR pre-fire planning book

International Fire Code, 2006 ED

CFR Standards of Cover

2B.8 The agency utilizes a formal process periodically to assess the balance between fire suppression capabilities and fire risks in the service area. Identified imbalances are addressed through the planning process. (CC)

Description

The department evaluates the fire suppression program on an annual basis through the submission of program reports to the fire chief. These reports contain performance objectives that measure the effectiveness of the program. The department's Strategic Plan establishes a process for program review. Objective 5A of the Strategic Plan's Goal and Objectives section provides processes to assess fire suppression capabilities with fire management zone fire risks.

These processes include:

- Establish a Program Review Committee to evaluate program performance.
- Evaluate program performance through established objectives and performance measurements.
- Analyze program performance for each SRA/ESN zone for:
 - Baseline and benchmark response time criteria
 - Staffing objectives based upon type and magnitude of the event
 - Fire progression (room of origin, extension to other areas, or total loss).
 - Community Risk Assessment factors (frequency, probability of occurrence, structures, water supply/alternative water supply requirements, special hazards, etc.)
 - Areas of non-compliance (response time objectives)
- Determine program needs through annual Program Reports

The Standards of Cover is used to document fire suppression capabilities with identified fire risks. Any discrepancy between department capabilities and risk are identified and addressed in program reports.

Appraisal

The submission of annual program reports and the processes identified in the Strategic Plan have adequately met department needs to identify fire suppression capabilities with fire management zone fire risks. Each process occurs on an annual basis and is sufficient to identify program deficiencies. Both processes allow for the implementation of corrective actions.

Plan

The department will continue to provide annual program reports to the Fire Chief. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. Any changes needed to correct program imbalances will be identified and implemented in the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover.

References

CFR Fire Suppression annual program reports

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR Standards of Cover

Criterion 2C: Non-Fire Risk Assessment and Response Strategies

The agency assesses the nature and magnitude of other hazards and risks within its jurisdiction and identified appropriate strategies, methods of operation, and resource allocation required to mitigate potential emergencies.

These may include a wide variety of risk and service demands, e.g., hazardous materials, emergency medical services, rescue, etc. Special attention should be paid to identify, analyze and develop strategies for non-fire or limited fire risks that gain importance due to cultural, economic, environmental, or historical value.

Summary

The Community Risk Assessment identified factors that influence service delivery. To identify these risks and their impact on department services, the city is divided into 6 distribution management zones known as Station Response Areas and 15 concentration management zones known as Emergency Service Numbers. Each of these zones was evaluated using risk factors that has the potential to affect or impact service delivery.

The frequency and probability of occurrence of non-fire service demands for each management zone was identified through an incident history review. The department identified maximum or worst non-fire risk in each planning zone using a review of incident history, a community natural disaster vulnerability assessment, and identification of Tier II hazardous material site locations. The department developed a critical tasking analysis to determine an Effective Response Force deployment that was capable of successfully mitigating all non-fire risk level events in a safe and efficient manner. Benchmark and baseline response time performance was based response time performance objectives on National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) recommendations for a suburban municipal population density classification.

2C.1 Each planning zone and population area is analyzed and non-fire risk factors evaluated in order to establish a standards of response coverage. (CC)

Description

The city is divided into 6 primary planning zones known as Station Response Areas (SRAs). SRAs serve as distribution management zones. SRAs are further sub-divided into 15 fire management zones referred to as Emergency Service Numbers (ESNs). ESNs serve as concentration management zones. Each of these zones is evaluated using the following demographical profiles:

- Population and special population densities
- Zone size (square miles) and road miles within
- Incident history
- Zone characteristics affecting service (Transportation, topography, access)
- ESN risk classification
- Special non-fire risk factors identified through the community service demand and community risk components of Section D of the Standards of Cover

Distribution and concentration response time performance is evaluated using the department's analysis software, StatsFD. This software generates a grid system known as Dynamically Defined Districts (D3), which represents the smallest area possible for response time analysis.

Appraisal

The demographical profiles used for SRA and ESN planning and use of D3 districts in response time performance have adequately provided for a comprehensive non-fire risk assessment to develop an effective standards of response cover. The demographical profiles were instrumental in understanding characteristics that influence service delivery in SRA and ESN management zones. The use of D3 districts was effective in identifying specific areas of travel time compliance. Each D3 grid is approximately 1,300 feet by 1,300 feet (approximately 9 city blocks). This relatively small area allows the department to pinpoint specific areas of compliance as well as identifying zone characteristics that might cause non-compliance (i.e. topography, traffic flow issues). By identifying these factors, specific risk levels and service objectives were developed.

Plan

The department will update the Standards of Cover on an annual basis taking into consideration the above risk profiles for non-fire risk events. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for maintaining the Standards of Cover document.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

SRA / ESN Risk Planning Worksheets

SRA Risk Comparison Worksheet

2C.2 The frequency and probability of occurrence of service demands other than fire are identified in each planning zone.

Description

The frequency and probability of occurrence of non-fire service demands for each management zone was identified through an incident history review. Fire Programs provide system and customized reports for basic incident analysis. StatsFD provides for enhanced incident analysis by allowing the department to identify specific non-fire event trends by SRA and ESN demand zones. Non-fire service demands were identified in Section D of the Standards of Cover.

Appraisal

Fire Programs has been effective at providing basic incident analysis (i.e. types of responses, district responses, apparatus responses, etc.). The use of StatsFD has been effective in analyzing incident trends with regards to frequency and occurrence of non-fire events for each management zone. Overall trends indicated that non-fire events comprise approximately 93.5% of total call volume. The following table provides non-fire service demand statistics for SRA management zones:

Non-Fire Events	SRA 1 & 6	SRA 2	SRA 3	SRA 4	SRA 5
EMS	1818	745	816	1175	909
Haz-Mat	72	18	19	26	19
Tech. Rescue	8	8	4	2	1

Non-fire event incident history for ESNs is documented on the ESN risk worksheets found in Appendix E of the Standards of Cover as well as an incident history Excel spreadsheet maintained by the Accreditation Manager.

Plan

The department will continue to identify non-fire service demands for each management zone. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for maintaining the StatsFD data base for

incident analysis. The Standards of Cover will be updated on an annual basis to reflect these demands.

References

Standards of Cover

Fire Programs

StatsFD Incident History Reports

2C.3 The maximum or worst non-fire risk(s) in each planning zone is/are identified and located; the key or special hazard risk in each planning zone is identified and located, i.e., hazards, which if destroyed would be a critical or essential economic loss to the community (this could also include cultural, environmental, or historical loss); the typical or routine non-fire risks in each planning zone are identified, i.e., those risks most common to the planning zone; the remote or isolated non-fire risks in each planning zone are identified, i.e., those risks most distant from other risks as to be almost unique to the planning zone; and/or other locally adopted equivalencies are utilized to identify non-fire risks.

Description

The department identifies maximum non-fire risks as part of Section D of the Standards of Cover. This section identifies specific high or special risk level events for each non-fire risk (i.e. train derailments for hazardous materials events, mass casualty EMS incidents, etc.). The Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan identified the community's vulnerability to natural weather events. As part of community risk analysis, the most common non-fire risk event for each fire management zone is identified through incident history review and documentation. As part of the hazardous materials risk assessment section, Tier II sites were identified in each management zone.

Appraisal

The above processes have adequately identified maximum or worse non-fire risk events for the city. The most common non-fire risk events that occur in management zones have been identified through a review of incident history. The Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan has effectively identified community vulnerability to natural and man-made disaster events. The hazardous material Tier II sites have effectively identified potential risk sites within each management zone.

Plan

The department will continue to identify maximum or worst non-fire risks for each management zone. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for maintaining a spreadsheet documenting these risks by SRA and ESN management zones. The Standards of Cover will be updated to reflect any changes at that time.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

Lowndes County Hazardous Mitigation Plan

StatsFD Incident History Reports

2C.4 A critical task analysis of each risk category and/or non-fire incident is conducted to determine the effective response force (ERF).

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue conducted a critical task analysis for each non-fire risk category that included EMS, hazardous materials, and technical rescue events. Risk levels were classified as low, moderate, high, and special. Critical tasking for non-fire event risk levels is identified in Section D of the Standards of Cover. Using critical tasking, an Effective Response Force deployment capable of mitigating the event is established. Initial incident deployments meeting critical tasking for non-fire events is identified in CFR Policies 203.01 through 203.03, 204.01 through 204.03 and 205.01 through 205.03.

Appraisal

Critical tasking for non-fire event risk levels has effectively allowed for the deployment of an Effective Response Force capable of successfully mitigating the incident in a safe and efficient manner. Prior to accreditation, department deployments consisting of one or two apparatus and the Battalion Chief was insufficient to meet high and special risk events. To meet accreditation standards, the department amended its non-fire event deployments to reflect compliance with critical tasking requirements. Critical tasking for non-fire events are found in Tables D5, D7, and D8 in Section D of the Standards of Cover.

Plan

The department will continue to evaluate the critical tasking of all non-fire risk level events. Critical tasking will be identified in department operational policies. The Fire Chief will ensure that these policies are reviewed on an annual basis.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR Policies 203.01 through 203.03

CFR Policies 204.01 through 204.03

CFR Policies 205.01 through 205.03

2C.5 Agency baseline and benchmark total response time objectives for non-fire incident response conform to industry best practices as prescribed on pages 70 – 71 for first due and effective response force (ERF). (CC)

Description

The department identified non-fire event benchmark and baseline response time performance as part of Section F of the Standards of Cover. The department based response time performance objectives on National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) recommendations for a suburban municipal population density classification.

Appraisal

Non-fire event response time performance was developed using data from 2010 through 2013. The following tables provide baseline response performance for EMS, hazardous materials, and technical rescue events.

<u>EMS</u> - 90th Percentile Times – Baseline Performance		2010 - 2013	Jan – Nov 2013	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	1:54	1:42	1:51	2:02	2:15
Turnout Time	Turnout Time 1st Unit	2:17	1:58	2:04	2:29	2:33
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	4:40	4:23	4:33	5:01	4:44
	Travel Time Concentration	5:59	5:53	6:16	7:00	4:49
Total Response Time	Total Response Time Distribution	7:38	7:02	7:13	8:05	8:15
	Total Response Time Concentration	9:14	8:38	9:15	11:00	8:59

<u>Hazardous Materials - 90th Percentile Times–Baseline Performance</u>		2010 - 2013	Jan–Nov 2013	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	2:54	2:12	2:26	4:02	3:57
Turnout Time	Turnout Time 1st Unit	2:26	1:56	2:11	2:47	2:39
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	4:32	4:10	4:13	4:32	4:35
	Travel Time Concentration	6:20	5:34	5:17	5:51	7:28
Total Response Time	Total Response Time Distribution	8:43	6:39	6:59	9:00	10:00
	Total Response Time Concentration	10:24	7:57	9:51	9:24	11:00

<u>Technical Rescue - 90th Percentile Times – Baseline Performance</u>		2010 - 2013	Jan-Nov 2013	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	2:11	2:46	1:32	2:04	2:11
Turnout Time	Turnout Time 1st Unit	1:46	2:06	1:38	2:00	1:31
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	4:28	4:38	4:44	4:00	2:00
	Travel Time Concentration	7:53	5:32	12:32	8:45	5:11
Total Response Time	Total Response Time Distribution	7:12	7:01	6:27	7:20	5:00
	Total Response Time Concentration	12:32	10:46	17:15*	13:14	8:08

As can be seen, two response time components have negatively impacted total response time performance; alarm handling and turnout time. When these issues were identified, the department initiated several actions to improve these times that included setting organizational expectations, educating department personnel, setting alarm handling expectations with the Lowndes County Communications Center, and possible procedural changes on how calls are received and dispatched. As a result of these actions, alarm handling and turnout time improvements between 2012/2013 and 2010/2011 have been made.

Because baseline travel response times have been met, the department has lowered its travel time benchmarks for first due and ERF units in an effort of continual self improvement. Adjustments were also made in total response time.

Non-fire Event Benchmarks			
Benchmark Criterion	Response Time Objective		Performance
Alarm handling	1:00		90%
Turnout time	1:20 (1:00 EMS)		90%
	1st Due	ERF	Performance
Travel Time:			
EMS	4:25	5:45	90%
Haz-mat	4:15	6:00	
Tech. Rescue	4:15	7:30	
Total Response Time:			90%
EMS	6:45	8:45	
Haz-mat	6:45	10:00	
Tech. Rescue	5:45	12:00	

Plan

The department will continue to evaluate response time performance for non-fire events. The department will initiate actions to ensure that response time performance objectives are met. Once met, response time objectives will be adjusted to reflect a continuous process of self-improvement in the delivery of quality services. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for maintaining the StatsFD data base so that accurate analysis may be conducted. The Accreditation Manager will publish quarterly response time performance reports to the Fire Chief and the department.

References

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710

CFAI Fire and Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual, 8th ED

CFR Standards of Cover

2C.6 Given the importance and magnitude of service demands, a standards of response coverage strategy is established for each type of non-fire risk(s) and service demand.
(CC)

Description

The department developed a standards of cover document that enables the department to respond to all non-fire risk level events with an initial deployment (first due and Effective Response Force) capable of successfully mitigating the incident in a safe and effective manner. The Standards of Cover identified community risk factors that affect service delivery such as demographic and economic indicators and other non-fire risk factors. Based upon the above factors, non-fire events were classified by risk that included low, moderate, high, and special. Based upon the risk level, critical tasking identified needed resources to mitigate the event.

Appraisal

The Standards of Cover has effectively provided for a response strategy that is capable of successfully mitigating all non-fire risk level events in a safe and efficient manner. This strategy has been based upon community risks that affect service delivery. Prior to accreditation, the department did not adequately match resource deployments with the various risk levels encountered. As a result, additional units were frequently requested.

As a result of the Standards of Cover, resource deployments have been adequately defined to meet service delivery objectives.

Plan

The department will evaluate community risks on an annual basis to ensure that standard of cover response strategies remain consistent with identified hazards. The Standards of Cover will be amended to reflect any changes in community risks. The Accreditation Manager will track non-fire outcomes to determine the impact of deployment changes. The Accreditation Manager will be responsible for maintaining the Standards of Cover document.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

Criterion 2D: Strategic Planning

A strategic plan or other form of long-term planning (3 to 5 years in the future) is in place and, along with the budget, is guiding the activities of the agency. The plan is submitted to the appropriate authority having jurisdiction.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue created a Strategic Plan using the concept of a “community driven” process. The department contracted a private consultant to assist with the development of the document. The strategic plan was undertaken with the approval of the governing body. External customers and stakeholders participated in the development of the document. External customers consisted of city officials that included the Chief Operations Officer, the Human Resource Director, and two council members. An internal strategic planning committee consisted of department personnel. Gaining the support of city officials and department personnel prior to and during the development of the plan proved beneficial in the publication of the Strategic Plan. This inclusion provided a feeling of ownership which not only garnered support of the document but also lead to an understanding of the importance of this plan with regards to department operations.

Upon completion, the plan was presented to the governing body for adoption. The Strategic Plan was adopted in June, 2013. The following month the plan was published for public review on the department’s web site.

2D.1 The fire service agency has a published strategic plan. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue contracted with a private consulting firm to assist with the development of a “community driven” strategic plan. The strategic plan was written in accordance with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International’s Fire and Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual, 8th Ed. The department completed the Strategic Plan in May of 2013. The governing body adopted the plan in June. The Strategic Plan was made available to department personnel in addition to being placed on the department’s web site for public review the following month.

Appraisal

The use of the consulting firm yielded positive results. The consulting firm was instrumental in providing overall direction, facilitating external and internal customer discussions, developing questionnaires and job aids, and offering timely analysis and perspective of questionnaire results. The department’s strategic planning committee developed 8 goals and 43 objectives to address external customer concerns, critical issues, and service gaps. To accomplish these goals and objectives, the department assigned a goal manager and established sub-committees comprised of department personnel. Upon adoption by the governing body, the strategic plan was published on the department’s web site in July, 2013.

Plan

Goal managers will be responsible for tracking progress of department goals and objectives. Goal managers will provide quarterly reports to the Fire Chief reporting goal and objective status. The department will maintain the Strategic Plan on its web site. Annual reviews and changes to the Strategic Plan will be updated on the web site.

References

CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 – 2018

2D.2 The strategic plan is approved within the agency and submitted to the governing body or administrative officer with responsibility over the fire agency and to whom the chief fire officer/chief executive officer reports.

Description

The development of the strategic plan was undertaken with the approval of the governing body. External customers and stakeholders participated in the development of the document. External customers consisted of city officials that included the Chief Operations Officer, the Human Resource Director, and two council members. An internal strategic planning committee consisted of department personnel. These personnel participated in external customer interviews and the development of goals and objectives. The strategic plan was presented to the mayor and council for adoption in June, 2013. A link to the plan is provided on the department's web site for public review.

Appraisal

Gaining the support of city officials and department personnel prior to and during the development of the plan proved beneficial in the publication of the Strategic Plan. This inclusion provided a feeling of ownership which not only garnered support of the document but also led to an understanding of the importance of this plan with regards to department operations. The use of sub-committees comprised of all ranks within the department furthered department acceptance and buy in.

Plan

The department will review the Strategic Plan on an annual basis. The accomplishment of goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan will be included in annual department reports to the mayor and council. The Strategic Plan will be updated to reflect these changes. The department will maintain the Strategic Plan on the department's web site.

References

CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 – 2013

CFR Web Site Link

Category III: Goals and Objectives

Agencies should establish general organizational goals designed to implement their assigned mission and short-range plans. Additionally, agencies should establish goals and objectives for and to direct the priorities of operational programs (to include at least those outlined in Category V) and support services. All goals and objectives should be developed consistent with the elements of the published Strategic and Capital Improvement Plans.

Goals are general statements that identify where the agency wants to be at some point in time. Goals establish targets for performance improvement.

Objectives are specific statements designed to document the steps necessary to achieve the agency's goal statements, and apply to a specific time period. For purposes of accreditation, objectives should be consistent with the elements of the acronym "S.M.A.R.T."²

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Time-bound

Standards of Cover incorporate performances objectives written to measure current (baseline) and future (benchmark) response capability and performance and should be depicted as appropriate within the written responses to the criteria outlined below. An agency that wishes to make improvements in their standards of cover performance should include goals and objectives to that effect.

Agencies should establish a systematic method of communicating and implementing the established goals and objectives. Agencies also should enact a formal process to routinely assess their organizational progress toward achievement. Each of the goals and objectives should be re-examined and modified routinely with an eye toward their necessity and appropriateness. In this way, the agencies can ensure their goals and objectives remain consistent with their mission and their short/long-range plans.

² Peter F. Drucker (1986). *The Practice of Management*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Criterion 3A: Goals and Objectives

The agency has established general goals and specific objectives that direct the agency's priorities in a manner consistent with its mission and appropriate for the community it serves.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue has created organizational goals and objectives based upon both short and long range strategic planning. These goals and objectives are designed to meet service delivery needs. The department identifies these goals and objectives in its Strategic Plan and annual program reports.

The department's long range organizational goals are presented to the governing body through the Strategic Plan. Short term goals are identified in the annual program reports and are made available to the governing body if requested. In addition to organizational goals, the department makes available its mission, vision, and core value statements. Each of these statements is published on the department's web site for public review.

3A.1 The agency publishes general organizational goals directed toward achieving the agency's long-range plans. Corresponding specific objectives are published to implement these goals and incorporate the measurable elements of time, quantity, and quality. (CC)

Description

The department created organizational goals to achieve its long range plans. In order to accomplish these goals, specific objectives were identified. These goals and objectives are part of the department's Strategic Plan. Each goal provides for qualitative or quantitative measurements within a prescribed time period. The Strategic Plan is published and is maintained on the department's web site.

In addition to the strategic plan, the department recently incorporated a capital improvement plan to supplement the strategic planning process. The capital improvement plan identifies infrastructure improvements and needs as well as apparatus/vehicle replacement schedules. Capital improvements and equipment replacement schedules are recognized as general goals and objectives found in the Strategic Plan.

Appraisal

The department has conducted long range planning as a means of addressing issues that affect service delivery. The Strategic Plan identified 8 organizational goals and 43 objectives as a means of effectively addressing these issues. The publication of the Strategic Plan has allowed the department and public an opportunity view these plans. The capital improvement plans and replacement schedules have effectively supported long range planning.

Plan

The department will continue to provide for long range planning using strategic planning, capital improvement planning, and vehicle and equipment replacement scheduling as means to accomplish the organization's programs and services.

References

CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 – 2018

CFR Capital Improvement Plan

CFR vehicle and equipment replacement schedules

3A.2 The agency establishes goals for each operational program with corresponding specific objectives that incorporate the measurable elements of time, quantity and quality.

Description

The department establishes goals and performance measurements for each operational program offered. These goals and performance measurements are identified in the annual program reports submitted to the Fire Chief. These goals and performance measurements are amended each year to reflect program objectives. Program goals provide for both qualitative and quantitative measurements. Each performance measurement is to be accomplished during the upcoming year.

Appraisal

The completion of annual program reports has provided an effective means of identifying and accomplishing program goals and objectives. Each report has specific performance measures used to accomplish goals/objectives and determine program effectiveness. Annual program reports are completed by program managers (i.e. Fire and Life Safety Educator, Fire Marshal, Chief of Training) and technical rescue team coordinators using a standardized template to ensure consistency of reporting. Each program report has been reviewed and approved by the Fire Chief.

Plan

The department will continue to provide program reports to the Fire Chief on an annual basis. These reports will provide for goals and performance objectives comprising qualitative and quantitative measurements as a means to determine program effectiveness.

References

CFR annual program reports

CFR program report template

3A.3 Published materials accurately portray the agency's goals and objectives as well as mission, vision and values in context.

Description

The department publishes its goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan also prominently features the department's mission, vision, and core value statements. The Strategic Plan is published on the department's web site. The department's mission, vision, and core value statements are found in CFR Policy 101.01. The mission and vision statement is displayed at each station in picture frames. The Standard of Cover also lists the department's goals and objectives as well as the mission, vision, and core value statements. These elements are found in Section C. The Standards of Cover is published on the department's web site for public review.

Appraisal

The Strategic Plan has provided an effective forum to publish the department's goal and objectives as well as the mission, vision, and core value statements. These elements have provided the foundation for achieving organizational excellence while serving as the moral compass in every facet of department operations. Internally, the mission, vision, and core value statements have been published in departmental policy and displayed at each station. The public has the opportunity to review each of the elements through the department's web site. The Standards of Cover contains each of these statements as well. Both documents have been placed on the department's web site for public review.

Plan

Columbus Fire and Rescue will continue to document the goals and objectives, mission, vision, and core value statements in the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover. These documents will be maintained on the department's web site for department and public review as well as internally at each station. The Fire Chief will ensure that department policies are reviewed on an annual basis.

References

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR Policy 101.01

3A.4 Agency goals and objectives are submitted to and reviewed by the governing authority responsible for establishing policy.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue presents departmental goals and objectives to the governing body through the submission of the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover. The Strategic Plan is the main document for identifying both short and long term goals and objectives. The Standards of Cover is used to establish response time performance and deployment levels. Both documents support department funding requests during the budget process. Both documents are reviewed and updated on an annual basis prior to submission to the governing body for adoption. Both documents serve as planning tools that enable the governing body to establish public policy.

Appraisal

Both documents have provided an effective means for establishing department goals, objectives, and service delivery performance. Annual program reports have been instrumental in evaluating individual program goals and objectives. The annual review of each document has ensured goals, objectives, and response performance has remained consistent with the department's mission. Both documents have served as a planning tool to the governing body so that public policy may be established.

Plan

The department will continue to provide the governing body with organizational goals and objectives through the submission of the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover. The Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover will be reviewed and amended on an annual basis. Both plans will be presented to the governing body annually for approval.

References

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR annual program reports

Criterion 3B: Implementation of Goals and Objectives

A management process is utilized for implementation of goals and objectives.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue uses two management processes to implement and track organizational goals and objectives. First, the strategic planning process identifies long range planning goals. Each strategic goal is assigned a goal manager. Second, annual program reports are used to identify and track individual program goals and objectives. Program managers and technical rescue team coordinators are responsible for maintaining these goals and objectives. The Standards of Cover provides for response time performance and service delivery in terms of resource deployments. The Standards of Cover also documents the goals and objectives found in the Strategic Plan. Both documents are published on the department's web site for public review. Both documents are placed on the department's intranet network for internal review.

3B.1 Some form of organizational management process is identified and used to implement and track the agency's goals and objectives. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue uses three management processes to implement and track organizational goals and objectives. First, the strategic planning process identifies long range planning goals to support department service delivery. Objectives are identified to accomplish these goals. Each goal in the Strategic Plan is assigned to a goal manager to oversee goal achievement and to track progress. Goal managers provide quarterly reports to the Fire Chief on goal status.

Second, program managers are responsible for establishing individual program goals and objectives. Progress is monitored through the submission of annual program reports, which identify and track program goals, objectives, and performance measurements. Program managers and technical rescue team coordinators submit these annual reports to the Fire Chief for review and approval. These reports provide the basis for program analysis.

Third, response time performance (baseline and benchmark objectives) and service delivery objectives (resource deployments) are identified in the Standards of Cover.

Appraisal

Each of the above management processes has adequately met department needs. These processes have been used to track both short and long range goals and objectives. Goal managers, program managers, and technical rescue team coordinators have provided quarterly and annual reports to the Fire Chief. These reports have enabled the fire chief to assess the effectiveness of each program as well as organizational goals and objectives. The review of the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover has ensured that goals, objectives, and response time performance has remained consistent with the department's mission.

Plan

The department will continue with the management processes in place to implement and track goal progress. Quarterly reports detailing strategic plan goal status will be provided by Goal

Managers. Annual program reports will be submitted by program managers. The Assistant Chief will be responsible for ensuring that all reports are submitted to the fire chief.

References

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR annual program reports

CFR Standards of Cover

3B.2 The agency's goals and objectives are disseminated to all members of the organization.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue's Strategic Plan and Standard of Cover are published on the department's web site and on the department's intranet network. The Strategic Plan identifies the organization's short and long range goals and objectives. The Standards of Cover establishes response time and service delivery goals and objectives. Both documents ensure that organizational goals and objectives remain consistent with the department's mission.

Appraisal

The publishing of the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover has allowed members of the department access to organizational goals and objectives; however, several improvements can be made. First, the department should ensure that all members have been made aware each document's location (web page / intranet). Second, the department should place annual program reports on the department's intranet so personnel are aware of short term program goals and objectives. Another option would be to place program goals and objectives on a department "newsletter" or memorandum.

Plan

The department will continue to publish the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover so that all department personnel have access to the document. The Assistant Fire Chief will review options for publishing annual program goals and objectives no later than March 31, 2014.

References

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR annual program reports

Criterion 3C: Measurement of Organizational Progress

Processes are in place to measure and evaluate progress towards completion of specific objectives and overall system performance. The goals and objectives are re-examined and modified periodically.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue uses three management processes to examine and modify organizational goals and objectives. The Strategic Plan contains critical tasks that serve as performance measures. Critical tasks are qualitative performance measures. Annual program reports provide performance measures that are both qualitative and quantitative. Performance measures are used to evaluate and achieve organizational goals. The Standards of Cover provides response time and resource deployment goals.

These three management processes also provide for a periodic review to ensure that goals and objectives remain relevant and are consistent with the organization's mission and vision. Goal managers, program managers, and technical rescue team coordinators provide reports to the Fire Chief evaluating the effectiveness and status of each goal.

3C.1 The agency's goals and objectives are examined and modified at least annually for quality and to ensure they remain current and consistent with the agency's mission, vision, and long range plan(s). (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue uses three management processes to examine and modify organizational goals and objectives. First, the strategic planning process identifies long range planning goals and objectives to support department service delivery. Each goal in the Strategic Plan is assigned to a goal manager to oversee goal achievement and track progress. Goal managers provide quarterly reports to the Fire Chief on goal status. The Strategic Plan is reviewed annually by the Strategic Planning Committee and command staff. Goals and objectives may be modified at this time.

Second, individual program goals and objectives are identified in annual program reports. Program managers and technical rescue team coordinators submit these reports to the Fire Chief for review and approval. Each year, goals and objectives are evaluate and modified to meet program needs.

Third, the Standards of Cover documents response time goals (baseline and benchmark objectives). These goals are found in Sections E and F of the document. The Standards of Cover is reviewed on an annual basis.

Appraisal

Each of these management processes has allowed organizational goals, objectives, and response time performance to be reviewed and modified on a periodic basis. Personnel have been assigned responsibility for reporting each goal and objective. Goal managers provide quarterly reports while program managers and technical rescue team coordinators have provided annual reports. Both of these reports have been effective at ensuring the Fire Chief is made aware of goal and objective status. The Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure organizational goals and objectives remain consistent with the department's mission.

Plan

The department will continue with the processes in place to examine and modify organizational goals and objectives. The Assistant Chief will ensure that personnel assigned report responsibility will provide these reports in the time frame prescribed.

References

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR annual program reports

CFR Standards of Cover

3C.2 The agency establishes performance measures to evaluate achievement of general organizational and operational program goals and objectives.

Description

The department's Strategic Plan lists general organizational goals. The Strategic Plan provides for performance measures through critical tasks. These tasks are qualitative in nature. The department's annual program reports provide for individual program goals and objectives. Each program report lists performance measures that are both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Performance measures are developed by the department's goal managers, program managers, and technical rescue team coordinators. The Standards of Cover documents response time performance (baseline and benchmark goals) and service delivery (resource deployments) objectives. These goals are found in Sections E and F. Standard of Cover objectives are quantitative in nature.

Appraisal

Each of the above processes have adequately provided for performance measures that may be used to evaluate the effectiveness and achievement of organizational goals. Personnel have been assigned responsibility for program and goal management. These personnel are responsible for the development of effective performance measures. The Fire Chief, through review of periodic reports, has approved goal performance measures.

Plan

The department will continue with the processes being used to identify and implement goal performance measures. Personnel assigned responsibility for goal management will ensure that the performance measures being used are effective at evaluating and achieving each goal

References

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR annual program reports

Category IV: Financial Resources

This category evaluates the financial condition of an agency to determine its ability to fund operational priorities, its effectiveness in serving the community needs, and its prognosis for long-range quality of service given what can be a dynamic and adverse fiscal environment. Resources must be adequate to maintain the various programs to which an agency has made a commitment. Whether the agency is public or private, stability of revenues (demonstrated by a consistent history through at least the past three years) is fundamental.

The chief fire officer or chief executive officer, professional staff, and governing board share responsibility for planning, management, and stability of financial resources. Budget preparation is the ultimate responsibility of the chief fire officer or chief executive officer and administrative staff. Since the budget is the financial expression of agency programs and priorities, it should be developed through appropriate consultation with the governing board of the authority having jurisdiction, departments, divisions, and other units.

In approving the budget, the governing board approves the acquisition and allocation of resources consistent with agency goals, objectives, and stated priorities.

Criterion 4A: Financial Planning

Financial planning and resource allocation is based on agency planning involving broad staff participation.

The agency's plan for financing should reflect sound strategic planning and a commitment to its stated goals and objectives. Financial support for programs and services should be deemed by the agency as adequate to maintain the number and quality of personnel and other operational costs.

Summary

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the planning, preparation, and administrative oversight of city finances. The City of Columbus follows state statutes and guidelines regarding financial management. Columbus Fire and Rescue is provided with appropriate direction in the planning of its annual budget that includes both external and internal processes. Externally, the city establishes a budget process that includes preliminary budget projections, department budget hearings, and final approval of the department's budget. Long term financial planning is coordinated with the City Planner.

The department has an internal process that is aligned with the city's budget calendar. This process allows input from department personnel, technical rescue team coordinators, and program managers. This input provides the basis for annual, short term planning. Long term planning is accomplished by the completion of the department's Capital Improvement Plan. Based upon these two planning documents, the Fire Chief and command staff prioritizes funding needs that best allows the department to meet its mission and service delivery objectives. Financial support for programs and services is consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the department's Strategic Plan.

4A.1 The governing body and regulatory agencies give the agency appropriate direction in budget and planning matters within their scope of services.

Description

The governing body provides the department with appropriate direction in budget preparation and financial planning. The Chief Financial Officer provides preliminary city and department budget estimates that are used for budget preparation. The city establishes a budgetary calendar that identifies specific benchmarks (i.e. development of preliminary budget, department budget hearings, public hearings, mayor/council approval). Finally, the Fire Chief periodically reviews the department's budget on a monthly basis by utilizing the city's software program to ensure all line item expenditures are consistent with funding allocations.

Appraisal

The procedures in place have provided adequate guidance during the budget process and yearly financial management. The departmental budget hearings have effectively provided an opportunity for the Fire Chief to communicate and defend department funding requests. The city has implemented CSI, a financial software system, which allows the Fire Chief to review budget line items to remain compliant with budget allocations. This system allows for report queries in financial management.

Plan

The department will continue to participate in the administrative processes used during the budget cycle and fiscal year in budget management.

References

City of Columbus Budget Cycle

CSI Department Reports

4A.2 Policies, guidelines and processes for developing the annual budget are defined and followed. (CC)

Description

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the planning, preparation, and administrative oversight of city finances. MS Annotated Code §21 Chapter 35 governs municipal budgets. Specifically, §21-35-5 requires that a budget be prepared no later than September 15. The MS State Auditors Municipal Audit and Accounting Guide identifies the steps to be followed in the budget process as well as specific benchmarks required by the Budget Calendar. Internally, the department implements processes to be taken prior to departmental budget hearings. These processes include input from department members, the submission of annual program reports, command staff input, and a prioritization of department needs. The guidelines and processes for budget development are identified in the Strategic Plan and CFR Policy 104.24. The department recently added the CFR Capital Improvement Plan to aid in budget planning.

Appraisal

The processes for developing the annual budget have been defined by state law and recommended practices. State requirements and guidelines have established a budget calendar that had identified specific benchmarks. By following this calendar, the budget process has been kept on track. The department has implemented effective internal processes to be used prior to departmental budget hearings that has included station “wish lists”, prioritization of technical rescue equipment requests, and input from the command staff. All of these processes have adequately met city and department needs.

Plan

The city will remain compliant with state laws and recommended practices. The department will continue to follow internal processes to establish a proposed budget.

References

MS Annotated Code § 21-35-5

MS State Auditor Municipal Audit and Accounting Guide

CFR Policy 104.24

CFR “Wish” Lists

CFR annual program reports

CFR Strategic Plan: Financial Planning

CFR Capital Improvement Plan

4A.3 The budget process involves input from appropriate persons or groups, including staff officers and other members of the agency.

Description

The department solicits input from personnel prior to and during the budget process. These processes are aligned with the city's budget calendar. In developing a preliminary budget, each station develops a "wish list" that typically reflects items for station improvements or equipment for apparatus. Each program manager and technical rescue team coordinator submits an annual program reports identifying program and team needs. Based upon these two requests, the command staff and Fire Chief establishes allocation priorities taking into consideration estimated funding and how the department would best be served. Final budget decisions are made by the Fire Chief.

Appraisal

The processes in place have been effective in soliciting input from department personnel, technical rescue team coordinators, and program managers. This input has allowed the command staff and Fire Chief to prioritize funding allocations. Because of accreditation, one improvement was made. Annual program reports were not aligned with the budget calendar. Reports were due at the end of the year three months after the budget had been set. Beginning in 2013, program reports are due by June so that funding requests may be considered in current budget preparations.

Plan

The department will continue with its current budget preparation processes of involving department personnel in the budgeting process.

References

CFR Station "Wish Lists"

CFR Annual Program Reports

4A.4 The annual budget, short and long-range financial planning, and capital expenditures are consistent with agency priorities and support achievement of the agency's strategic plan and goals and objectives.

Description

The department's strategic planning efforts identify agency goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are listed in the Strategic Plan. To accomplish these goals and objectives, the department uses short and long term planning processes to ensure budget allocations remain consistent with program and department needs. Short term planning involves annual program reports, equipment replacement, preventative maintenance schedules, and review of past budget line items. Long term planning identifies infrastructure needs such as apparatus and station replacements. The department recently incorporated the CFR Capital Improvement Plan to supplement long range planning in the Strategic Plan and annual budget processes. Funding prioritizations is based upon the planning processes described.

Appraisal

The strategic plan has provided a financial road map of department resource needs. The annual budget and planning measures have adequately addressed these needs through budgetary requests and funding allocations. The Fire Chief has worked with the Chief Operations Officer and the Chief Financial Officer in both short and long term financial management and planning. Long range planning has been used effectively to relocate two fire stations (2000 and 2001) and provided replacement of four front-line apparatus (2001, 2009, 2010, and 2013). The use of the CFR Capital Improvement Plan will provide a planning tool to aid in future long term planning.

Plan

The Fire Chief will ensure that the annual budget, short and long term planning, and capital improvements remain consistent with the department's mission, goals, and objectives.

References

CFR Strategic Plan: Goals and Objectives

CFR Annual Budgets

CFR Capital Improvement Plan

4A.5 Budgeted expenditures are consistent with projected financial resources.

Description

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the administrative oversight of city finances. MS Annotated Code §21-35-15 mandates that municipalities will remain within the spending limits set by the budget based upon anticipated revenues. The city currently uses a purchase order system and financial software, CSI, to ensure department expenditures remain consistent with authorized line item amounts. MS Code §21-35-13 requires that a monthly report be provided showing expenditures, liabilities, and year-to-date balances of each budgeted fund. The Fire Chief monitors department expenditures by approving purchase orders, reviewing overtime salary reports, and by accessing the city's financial software. The Fire Chief reports to the proper governing authority for expenditures that exceed budget allocations.

Appraisal

The statutory mandates have been effective at establishing expenditure limits. The financial software has effectively allowed the Chief Financial Officer and Fire Chief to track expenditures on a timely basis through report queries. The monthly financial reports have kept the governing authority informed on the city's financial condition. These processes have ensured that city and department expenditures remain consistent with funding allocations and projected revenues.

Plan

The Chief Financial Officer and Fire Chief will continue to monitor department expenditures through the processes identified to remain compliant with authorized budget allocations.

References

MS Annotated Code §21-35-15 and §21-35-13

CFR CSI Reports

CFR Overtime Reports

Criterion 4B: Financial Practices

Financial management of the agency exhibits sound budgeting and control, proper recording, reporting and auditing.

*NOTE: An agency that has already received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (Certificate) from the **Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)** for their **Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)** may submit that certificate and their **Comprehensive Annual Financial Report** as prima facie compliance with this criterion. (The agency need not address performance indicators 4B.1 – 4B.8). Reciprocity for this is acknowledged by review of the GFOA's process for reviewing CAFRs submitted to its Certificate Program.*

Summary

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is responsible for the administrative oversight of city finances. The CFO adheres to MS Municipal Code Section 21 Chapter 35 which governs municipal financial management. The CFO is also guided by the Municipal Audit and Accounting Guide which is compliant with GAAP and GFOA recommended practices. These documents clearly outline financial management procedures. City expenditures remain consistent with funding allocations. Processes have been identified for budget over-expenditures which allow a limited flexibility in budget management. Independent review of city finances is accomplished through annual audits by a third party accounting firm.

The Fire Chief's financial management duties and responsibilities are outlined by state mandates in addition to City of Columbus Ordinances. The Fire Chief maintains fiscal control through adherence of the department's budget. The Fire Chief tracks department expenditures through the use of purchase orders and the city's financial software CSI. CSI allows periodic review of specific line item expenditures and remaining allowances. The department has established a Disability and Education Fund that is separate from city finances. This fund is managed by an internal and external board of directors. The Disability and Education Fund meets GAAP management and reporting practices.

4B.1 Financial resources management adheres to generally accepted accounting practices (GAAP) for budgeting and accounting. Appropriate safeguards are in place for expenditures, fiscal reports are provided for administrative decision making, and sufficient flexibility exists to meet contingencies.

Description

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is responsible for the administrative oversight of city finances. The city follows the statutory requirements of MS Annotated Code §21 Chapter 35 in addition to the MS State Auditor's Municipal Audit and Accounting Guide, which adheres to GAAP recommended accounting practices. The city uses a line item budget format, purchase order system, and CSI software program to track expenditures. Monthly financial reports are provided to the mayor and council that reflect the city's current financial condition. The CFO can adjust funding within line items that allows for limited flexibility. The city undergoes an annual audit conducted by an outside accounting firm. The city maintains a contingency fund to serve as an emergency reserve.

Appraisal

The above processes have effectively provided management practices and safeguards to ensure fiscal accountability. The city has maintained practices that have provided for flexibility to meet unforeseen occurrences. These processes have adhered to accepted practices recommended by the GAAP.

Plan

The city will continue with the financial controls in place to ensure fiscal practices.

References

MS Annotated Code §21 Chapter 35

MS State Auditor's Municipal Audit and Accounting Guide

CSI Financial Reports

4B.2 Financial administration responsibilities are organized into specific assignments, which are supported by specific clearly-defined policies.

Description

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the planning, preparation, and administrative oversight of city finances. The duties and responsibilities of this position is defined by MS Annotated Code §21 Chapter 35: Municipal Budget and through City of Columbus Code of Ordinances §2-81 through §2-89. MS Code §21-35-31 requires an independent audit be conducted on an annual basis. Columbus Fire and Rescue is a budgeted department. Under MS Annotated Code §21-35-17, each department budget is required to have one department head (or council) to be responsible for its expenditures. The Fire Chief is the designated individual assigned this responsibility.

Appraisal

The above policies have clearly defined the duties and responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer and the Fire Chief regarding financial management. The city has remained compliant with the annual independent audit by using a third party accounting firm (Watkins, Ward, and Stafford).

Plan

The city will continue to follow state statutory and city ordinance requirements. The city will continue to enhance financial monitoring capabilities and respond to recommendations made by the independent auditor.

References

MS Annotated Code §21 Chapter 35

MS Annotated Code §21-35-31

MS Annotated Code §21-35-17

City of Columbus Code of Ordinances §2-81 through §2-89

City of Columbus Annual Audit Reports

4B.3 Any projected operating deficit (expenditures exceeding revenues in a budget year) is explained, and a plan developed to rectify the deficit.

Description

MS Annotated Code §21-35-15 requires governing authorities to stay within the spending limits set by the budget as well as mandates that city expenditures shall not exceed budget revenues. City policy mandates a balanced budget with expenditures remaining within funding allocations. Department heads are responsible for ensuring expenditures remain consistent with budgeted funds. MS Annotated Code §21-35-25 contains provisions to be followed if a deficit occurs that includes line item adjustments and public notices of budget amendments.

Appraisal

The department's budget has been reviewed and amended to reflect anticipated revenues. The independent audit conducted by Watkins, Ward, and Stafford has indicated that the financial position of the city and each major fund has been in compliance with GAAP recommendations. The department's expenditures have remained within its budgeted allocations.

Plan

The city will continue to adopt a balanced budget required by state statutes. The city will operate within the confines of this budget with any deficits being identified and adjustments made consistent with state mandates and GAAP recommendations.

References

MS Annotated Code §21-35-15

MS Annotated Code §21-35-25

CFR Annual Budgets

City of Columbus Annual Audit Reports

4B.4 Periodic financial reports are reviewed by the agency.

Description

The Chief Financial Officer provides monthly reports showing expenditures, liabilities, and year-to-date balances of each budgeted fund as required by MS Annotated Code §21-35-13 and City of Columbus Code of Ordinance §2-86. Annual audited reports are provided by an independent accounting firm. The Fire Chief is able to generate monthly reports and review current budget funding levels by accessing the city's financial software, CSI.

Appraisal

The financial software used by the city has allowed the Fire Chief to generate budget-to-actual comparative reports. These reports have been effective in financial management. The Financial Officer has also provided budget updates to department heads during weekly Mayor/Department Head meetings. While redundant, the department has access to the monthly financial reports generated by the Chief Financial Officer.

Plan

The Fire Chief will continue to periodically review budget information generated from software reports and reports generated by the Chief Financial Officer.

References

MS Annotated Code §21-35-13

City of Columbus Code of Ordinance §2-86

City of Columbus CSI Financial Reports

**4B.5 Independent financial audits are conducted annually for the prior fiscal year.
Deficiencies are noted and plans made to resolve audit exceptions. (CC)**

Description

MS Annotated Code §21-35-31 mandates that each municipality must contract an independent audit within 12 months of the end of the fiscal year. The auditor must be a CPA or an auditor approved by the State Auditor. The city contracts with the accounting firm of Watkins, Ward, and Stafford, PLLC to conduct its annual audit. The CFO ensures that the CPA firm has all relevant documents and financial statements. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for ensuring annual audits are completed within the time frame mandated by state law and for resolving any issues revealed by the audit. This annual audit meets GAAP recommendations. A synopsis of the audit must be published or notice published with posting in three places.

Appraisal

The contracting of Watkins, Ward, and Stafford, PLLC has met state mandates requiring the use of an independent audit. In the opinion of Watkins, Ward, and Stafford, the financial position of the municipality and funds has been in compliance with GAAP recommendations and accepted practices.

Plan

The city will remain compliant with state codes and continue to contract with independent firms to conduct annual audits.

References

MS Annotated Code §21-35-31

City of Columbus Financial Audit Reports

4B.6 The agency and any subsidiary entities or auxiliaries have financial risk management policies and programs that protect the agency and its assets.

Description

The city maintains several financial risk management policies and programs geared towards protection of city and department assets. The governing body and Chief Financial Officer are required to be bonded. The city maintains a general liability policy for non-human assets. The city completes annual independent, third party audits to remain compliant with MS Annotated Code §21-35-31. The city maintains a cash reserve as set forth by MS Annotated Code §21-35-3.

Appraisal

The financial risk management policies implemented have met city need. The bond requirement and general liability policies have provided legal protection of city assets. The annual audit by an independent CPA firm has ensured fiscal accountability. The cash reserve has provided for an emergency contingency fund if needed.

Plan

The city will continue to review and adopt financial risk management policies and procedures to ensure risks and liabilities are minimized.

References

MS Annotated Code §21-35-31

MS Annotated Code §21-35-3

City of Columbus Annual Financial Audit reports

City of Columbus Liability Insurance Policy

City of Columbus budget (cash reserve)

4B.7 Programs designed to develop financial support from outside sources are planned and coordinated to reflect the objectives of the agency. All fund-raising activities are governed by agency policy, comply with GAAP and/or other recognized financial principles, and are subject to public disclosure and periodic independent financial audits.

Description

City of Columbus Policy 250: Solicitation, Fund Raising, and Donation Policy addresses fund-raising activities conducted by departments or city employees. This policy outlines procedures to be followed as well as requiring governing body approval prior to any fund-raising activities. The department maintains a Disability and Education fund. This fund is chartered as a tax exempt 501c3 organization. The Disability and Education fund establishes financial aid to employees that are injured in the line of duty as well as providing an educational scholarship to dependents of department personnel. This fund has several processes in place to ensure fiscal accountability that includes an internal and external board of directors. The external board is comprised of an attorney and an accountant to remain compliant with GAAP practices. A policy is in place to direct disbursement procedures. The accountant provides financial reports as mandated by federal and state mandates. These accountability practices follow GAAP recommendations.

Appraisal

City policy has effectively addressed fund-raising and solicitation by departments and individual employees. The processes that provide guidance and fiscal accountability to the department's Disability and Education Fund have been effective in remaining compliant with federal and state mandates as well as meeting GAAP recognized practices.

Plan

The department will continue to comply with city policy regarding fund raising activities. The Disability and Education fund will continue to be monitored by the internal and external Board of Directors. These boards will ensure that that all practices and policies are consistent with GAAP recommendations.

References

City of Columbus Policy 250: Solicitation, Fund Raising, and Donation Policy

CFR Disability and Education Fund

CFR Disability and Education Fund Board of Directors

4B.8 Any revenue producing organizations permitted to use the agency's name and/or reputation conform to agency principles of financial operation.

Description

The department does not lend its name or image to any for-profit organization. CFR Policy 103.01: General Rule of Conduct, Article 11 expressly prohibits the “use of the Department logo, pictures of apparatus, or anything that might appear as an endorsement by this Department for private or personal business.”

Appraisal

The department has been very conscious of its public image and reputation. As a result, the department has not allowed any use of its name or images that might otherwise be construed as an endorsement to a for-profit organization.

Plan

The department will continue with its current practices to maintain a positive public image.

References

CFR Policy 103.01: General Rule of Conduct, Article 11

Criterion 4C: Resource Allocation

Financial resources are allocated appropriately to support the established organizational mission, the stated long-term plan, and goals and objectives, and to maintain the quality of programs and services.

Financial stability is a fundamental aspect of an agency's integrity. The agency must ensure that programs and services provided can be supported by the necessary fiscal resources using sound budgetary practices.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue is primarily funded through the city's general fund, the MS Fire Insurance Rebate Program, federal grants, and local funding programs. Each of these funding sources is used to support specific department expenses. Department short and long term funding is adequate to support program and service delivery goals and objectives as outlined in the department's Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover.

The department uses several processes to ensure adequate program funding levels are met and maintained. Annual program reports identify equipment and other resources needed each year. Additionally, the department has established an equipment preventative maintenance and replacement schedule. These processes are used for short term fiscal planning. Long term planning is accomplished through the department's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP identifies infrastructure needs that support department operations. The annual MS Fire Insurance Rebate Fund is dedicated to the repayment of long term indebtedness. Federal grants and local funding sources are used for technical rescue equipment purchases and preventative maintenance. The department avoids the use of one-time funding sources for continuing programs or services. The city maintains a municipal reserve fund for unanticipated or emergency expenditures.

4C.1 Programs and activities based on current and anticipated revenues are adequate to maintain adopted levels of service. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue's Strategic Plan lists all programs provided by the department. The Standards of Cover identifies program service levels of service in terms of response time and deployment objectives. Both of these documents serve to support the department's stated mission, goals, and objectives.

The department is funded from several sources that include the city's general fund and the MS Insurance Rebate Program (MS Annotated Code §83-1-37). The department receives grants from the MS Office of Homeland Security in addition to participating in a shared fund with the Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials Team.

The department's budget is set by the Chief Financial Officer based upon anticipated revenues. During the budget process, department allocations are based upon department requests and needs to provide services and programs to the community.

Appraisal

Department programs and levels of service have been clearly identified in the department's Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover. The department uses three primary funding sources. The department's general fund has been cut or remained static the past 4 years. The budget was cut \$190,000 in FY 2011 and \$200,000 in FY 2014. To compensate for budget cuts, the department reduced training expenses, station supplies, overtime costs by adjusting the vacation policy, limited overtime expenditures, and reduced individual program funding.

The MS Insurance Rebate Program has been dedicated to repayment of fire department infrastructure bonds. Although significantly reduced over the past five years, grant funding from MS Homeland Security have been sufficient to provide for technical rescue equipment maintenance needs.

The budget process has been effective at determining anticipated revenues and establishing the department budget. Even though the department's budget has been reduced in two of the four

previous years, the department has been able to maintain adopted levels of service identified in the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover.

Plan

The department will continue to provide programs and adopted levels of service to support community needs as identified in the Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover. The Fire Chief will allocate funds necessary to maintain program and service levels. The Fire Chief will make adjustments in department expenditures to maintain program and service delivery when required.

References

CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 - 2018

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR Annual Program Reports

CFR Annual Budget

Columbus City budget

MS Annotated Code §83-1-37

MS Homeland Security Grants

4C.2 Plans exist for the payment of long-term liabilities and debts.

Description

The City of Columbus fiscal budget includes a Debt Service Fund. Schedules of debt, including that generated for governmental and business type activities, are included at face value with current balances in the city's Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) compliant financial statements. The department's current long-term liabilities include two apparatus and two stations. The department allocates all funding received from the MS Fire Insurance Rebate Program (MS Annotated Code § 83-1-37) to repay this debt.

Appraisal

The MS State Auditors Office has established the amount of long term debt that a municipality can issue. This limit has been effective at promoting fiscal responsibility. The city has issued general obligation bonds to support capital expenditures. The repayment of these bonds has been clearly outlined by bond requirements. The department has made provisions for the repayment of its debt by allocating all MS Fire Insurance Rebate funds to this purpose. The rebate fund is approximately \$130,000 each year.

Plan

The city will continue to follow state statutes regarding the amount of debt that is issued. The city will continue to issue debt through general service bonds and other means allowed by state law. The department will continue to repay its long-term debt through funds received through the MS Fire Insurance Rebate Program.

References

City of Columbus Debt Bond Financial Statements

MS Fire Insurance Rebate Program Funding (MS Annotated Code § 83-1-37)

City of Columbus Annual Budget

4C.3 Future asset maintenance costs are projected with related funding plans.

Description

The department identifies maintenance costs for facilities and equipment as part of the budget process. Annual inspections of department facilities documents needed repairs. The Chief of Training is responsible for maintenance and replacement schedules for SCBA bottles, turnout replacement, and apparatus hose replacement. Apparatus maintenance costs are maintained by the City Garage. The department projects major infrastructure costs as part of the capital improvement plan.

Appraisal

The processes in place to project future maintenance costs have met department needs. Routine facility maintenance costs are determined through budget trend analysis from previous year expenditures. The maintenance and replacement costs of equipment (i.e. SCBA bottles, turnouts, and hose) are easily determined through vendor quotes. These costs are part of the department's annual budget. Apparatus maintenance costs are part of the City Garage's annual budget. Inspection of department facilities has been effective in identifying repair costs separate of routine maintenance.

Plan

The department will continue to identify future maintenance costs through the provisions identified. The department will maintain budget allocations sufficient to perform needed repairs, maintenance, and replacement costs.

References

CFR SCBA Bottle Hydrostatic Tests Records

CFR Turnout Replacement Schedule

CFR Hose Replacement Schedule

CFR Capital Improvement Plan

City Garage Public Work Apparatus Maintenance Cost Reports

4C.4 Financial plans avoid the use of one-time funding sources to cover ongoing costs unless plans are provided to ensure a means of continuity for personnel resources and capital assets.

Description

The primary revenue sources for the city's general fund are ad valorem and sales taxes. The department receives additional funding from the MS Insurance Rebate Program (MS Annotated Code §83-1-37) and through MS Homeland Security grants. The department also participates in a shared fund with the Golden Triangle Regional Hazardous Materials team. The department does not use one-time funding sources for ongoing programs.

Appraisal

The department's budget has been funded from continual revenue sources that support the city's general fund. The MS Fire Insurance Rebate Program has been appropriated by the state and remains an annual funding source. Funding from MS Homeland Security grants and the Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials Team has primarily been used for equipment maintenance and does not represent major cost investments. The department has not researched how much revenue could be generated from permit fees such as burn permits, plans review, or hazardous work permits, etc.

Plan

The department has no plans to use one time funding sources to support ongoing programs or services. The department will continue to receive funds from its current revenue streams.

References

City of Columbus Budget

CFR Budget

MS Annotated Code §83-1-37: Municipal Fire Insurance Rebate Program

Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials Team Fund Report

MS Homeland Security grant report

4C.5 Contingency funds are maintained in accordance with GAAP recommendations and anticipate budgetary restrictions and/or shortfalls.

Description

MS Annotated Code §21-35-22 establishes a special contingency fund that municipalities may use for unanticipated expenditures which were not otherwise budgeted. This contingency fund is known as a municipal reserve fund. Following GAAP practices, the Government Finance Officers' Association (GFOA) recommends municipalities maintain an unrestricted fund balance no less than two months of general operating revenues or a fund that is between 5 and 15 percent of a municipality's budget.

Appraisal

The contingency fund maintained by the city has met state statute requirements and are within the recommended practices of the GFOA. These cash reserve levels has provided for a fund capable of meeting unanticipated or emergency expenditures. Columbus maintains a municipal reserve fund that is within the recommendations of the GFOA. In FY 2011, the city's ending cash value was \$2,033,432 representing a cash reserve of 7.7%. For FY 2012, the ending cash value was \$2,614,472 which represented a reserve of 102%. In FY 2013, the ending cash balance was projected to be \$2,369,839 or 9.2% cash reserve total.

Plan

The city will continue to maintain a municipal reserve fund in accordance with state laws and GAAP recommendations.

References

MS Annotated Code §21-35-22

GFAO Best Practices: Appropriate Level of Unrestricted Fund Balance in the General Fund
City of Columbus Annual Budgets

Category V: Programs

This category is defined as the services, activities and responses provided by the agency for the community or facility that are designed, organized, and operated in compliance with the agency's mission, goals and objectives. Category VIII – Training and Competency, however, appraises the level of proficiency with which personnel actually perform within these programs.

The key elements used to evaluate these services are: adequacy, deficiency, effectiveness, methods, and results of programs. For purposes of accreditation, these terms are defined within the glossary.

The agency's mission, goals, and objectives should determine the applicability of all the listed programs. The agency should decide the relevancy of each criterion in their self-assessment report. For criterion in Category V, "Programs," that are not applicable to the agency; the agency should briefly explain why it does not provide this program.

Category V

Criterion 5A: Fire Suppression

The agency operates an adequate, effective, and efficient fire suppression program directed toward controlling and/or extinguishing fires for the purposes of protecting people from injury or death, and reducing property loss.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains both personnel and equipment to meet community fire protection needs. The department maintains a minimum staffing level as mandated by the MS State Rating Bureau. The department maintains 4 engines, 2 engines with 50' aerials, (1) 95' aerial platform, and (1) 2,500 gallon water tender. Each engine and ladder has a minimum pumping capacity of 1,250 gallons per minute. Apparatus and equipment is based upon national standards such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and MS Rating Bureau recommendations. The department maintains fire related supplies and materials to support program needs. The City Garage is responsible for maintaining non-fire related materials and supplies. The city maintains a central fuel depot located at the City Garage. Program response time performance is based upon the recommendations of the NFPA and the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).

The department maintains policies and procedures to guide the fire suppression program. These guidelines are found in Volume 2 – Emergency Operations of the Policies and Procedures Manual. Sections 201, 202, and 206 address incident safety, suppression operations, and mutual aid/calls for assistance. The department adheres to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) standards for incident management. The department requires personnel to obtain NIMS certifications dependent upon rank.

Incident documentation and analysis is maintained through Fire Programs, the department's Record Management System, and StatsFD. Fire Programs is mainly used for incident documentation and basic analysis while StatsFD provides the department with an enhanced analytical capability. Annual program reports provide the Fire Chief with an effective means of analyzing program performance as well as establishing program needs that are met through budget funding allocations.

5A.1 Given the agency's standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, pumping capacity, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of fire suppression emergency incidents. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue establishes its fire suppression deployment objectives through the Standards of Cover (SOC) document. Minimum shift staffing levels is mandated by the MS State Rating Bureau. Each apparatus is staffed with a minimum of a company officer, an engineer, and a firefighter. The SOC and national standards establishes staffing, apparatus, equipment, pumping capacity, and response time performance for each risk level associated with this program. Incident staffing and apparatus deployments are established by the Critical Tasking List found in Section D of the SOC. Critical tasking is based upon actions necessary to mitigate the various fire event risk levels. Apparatus equipment is based upon the recommendations of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1901. Response time performance is based upon NFPA 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International's (CFAI) Fire and Emergency Services Self-Assessment Manual (FESSAM) standards for a suburban population density classification.

Appraisal

The Standards of Cover has effectively identified fire suppression deployment objectives for the department based upon the risk level of the event. Columbus Fire and Rescue has a minimum staffing level of 19 (including the Battalion Chief) as recommended by the MS State Rating Bureau. This staffing level has allowed the department to staff 6 engine companies or 5 engine companies and 1 ladder company depending upon event requirements. Critical tasking has identified a total of 16 personnel for its highest risk level. CFR shift staffing levels has adequately met all critical tasking levels identified in the SOC.

The department maintains 4 engines, 2 engines with 50' aerials, (1) 95' aerial platform, and (1) 2,500 gallon water tender. Each engine and ladder has a minimum pumping capacity of 1,250 gallons per minute. Apparatus have been equipped to meet the recommendations of NFPA 1901 with the exception of some miscellaneous equipment (i.e. water extinguisher, keyhole saw, tin

snips). Apparatus, pumping capacity, and equipment have met the deployment objectives of this program.

Response time objectives have been established based upon National Fire Protection Association 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) recommendations. Baseline performance was based upon three years of incident data from 2010 through November of 2013. The following table reflects the department's baseline performance for high and moderate fire event risks:

Moderate and High Risk Structure Fires - 90th Percentile Times - Baseline Performance			2010-2013	2013	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	All Risks	2:11	2:07	2:10	2:22	2:19
Turnout Time	Turnout Time 1st Unit	All Risks	2:13	2:04	2:05	2:21	2:30
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	All Risks	4:06	4:13	3:50	4:43	4:00
	Travel Time Concentration	Moderate	6:56	6:28	6:41	7:11	7:31
		High	6:45	5:47	7:06	7:01	6:26
Total Response Time	Total Response Time Distribution	All Risks	7:22	7:30	6:51	7:43	7:45
	Total Response Time Concentration	Moderate	11:24	11:16	11:19	10:28	11:54
		High	12:25	12:00	11:48	12:22	12:55

Based on the above table, the department exceeded total response time performance for first due units by 2 seconds. The total response times for ERF units have been met for both moderate and high risk events (56 seconds and 25 seconds respectively). When reviewing the individual components of total response time, it is evident that two response time elements have negatively impacted total response time performance; call processing and turnout times. Call processing has exceeded the objective by 1 minute and 11 seconds. Call processing is handled by the Lowndes County E-911 Communications Center. Turnout time has been exceeded by 53 seconds. The

department has initiated actions to address call processing and turnout time performance. These actions resulted in total response time improvements in 2012 and 2013 as seen in the table. Because baseline travel response times have been met, the department has lowered its travel time benchmarks in an effort of continual self improvement. Travel times for first due and ERF units reflect this change. Adjustments were also made to total response time.

Fire Suppression Benchmarks				
Benchmark Criterion	Response Time Objective			Performance
Alarm handling	1:00			90%
Turnout time	1:20			90%
	1st Due	ERF		Performance
		Moderate	High	
Travel Time	4:06	6:56	6:45	90%
Total Response Time	3:50	6:40	6:30	90%

*First arriving units for **All Risks**: For 90% of call fire suppression incidents, the total response time of the department’s first arriving unit, staffed with a minimum of three personnel shall be: **5 minutes 55 seconds** in suburban population areas. The first arriving unit shall be capable of: providing 400 gallons of water and 1,250 gallons per minute (GPM) pumping capacity; initiating command; requesting additional resources; establishing and advancing an attack line flowing a minimum of 125 GPM.; establishing an uninterrupted water supply; containing the fire; rescuing at-risk patients; raising ladders, and performing ventilation and salvage operations. These operations shall be done in accordance with the department’s administrative policy guides while at the same time providing for the safety of all personnel and the community.*

*Effective Response Force (ERF) Total Response Time for **All Risks**: For 90% of all calls for fire suppression services, the total response time for the arrival of the **Effective Response Force (ERF)** staffed with the appropriate number of personnel to meet critical tasking shall be **10 minutes 30 seconds** for moderate risk events and **11:00 minutes** for high risk events. The ERF shall be capable of: establishing command; providing an uninterrupted water supply; advancing an attack line and a backup line for fire control; complying with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements of two in-two out; completing forcible*

entry; searching and rescuing at-risk patients; ventilating the structure; controlling utilities; and performing ventilation, salvage and overhaul. The ERF shall also be capable of placing elevated streams into service from aerial ladders. These operations shall be done in accordance with the department's administrative policy guides while at the same time providing for the safety of all personnel and the community.

Plan

The department will continue to follow the Standards of Cover for deployment objectives for fire suppression incidents regarding staffing, apparatus, equipment, and response time performance. The department will implement steps to improve alarm handling and turnout times that include education, establishing department expectations for performance in the form of policies and guidelines, available technologies (i.e. station turnout clocks, all station single dispatching tones), and changes in dispatching procedures. The Accreditation Manager will track response time performance and provide quarterly reports to the fire chief. The Accreditation Manager will work closely with the E-911 Director to improve alarm processing performance. The department will adjust met performance response times to continually seek improvements in service delivery.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

CFAI Fire and Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual, 8th Ed.

NFPA 1901

NFPA 1710

CFR Apparatus Lists

CFR Apparatus Response Time Fractals

MS State Rating Bureau Shift Staffing Requirements

5A.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for fire suppression and to be compliant with local, state / provincial and national standards.

Description

The department maintains 4 engines, 2 engines with 50' aerials, (1) 95' aerial platform, and (1) 2,500 gallon water tender. Each engine and ladder has a minimum pumping capacity of 1,250 gallons per minute. Apparatus have been equipped to meet the recommendations of NFPA 1901. Apparatus deployment is based upon the risk level encountered and identified in the Standards of Cover. Each apparatus is equipped with a standardized basic tools, appliances, and equipment necessary to support fire suppression operations. This equipment is based upon MS State Rating Bureau requirements, NFPA 1901 (Chapter 5 and Chapter 8) recommendations, and specific department needs. An inventory check of equipment and tools is completed daily in accordance with CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check. The department provides for new and replacement equipment as part of the annual budgeting process.

Appraisal

With exceptions to miscellaneous equipment (i.e. water extinguisher, keyhole saw, tin snips), the department has met State Rating Bureau and NFPA 1901 recommendations for equipment carried on engine and ladder apparatus. The department has exceeded this recommendation in several cases. Each apparatus has equipment necessary for fire suppression operations. Each apparatus carries a complete set of combination and assorted wrenches (aerial apparatus requirement) and standard and metric socket sets. Each apparatus has been checked on a daily basis that ensures all equipment is present and in working condition. One area for improvement was noted in the Fire Suppression Annual Program Report. The department should purchase equipment necessary to complete pre-assembled high rise kits for apparatus with multi-story/high rise occupancies within their district.

Plan

The department will continue to identify apparatus with equipment necessary to achieve program goals based upon incident risk levels. The department will purchase high rise kits for apparatus by FY 2014.

References

MS State Rating Bureau Apparatus Equipment List

NFPA 1901: Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus, Chapter 5 and Chapter 8

CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check and Policy

CFR Apparatus Equipment Inventory List

CFR Fire Suppression Annual Program Reports

CFR Annual Budget

CFR Standards of Cover

5A.3 Supplies and materials allocation (e.g., foam, gasoline, fuel, batteries, etc.) is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet fire suppression operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

Description

The department maintains supplies and materials necessary to accomplish program objectives and operational needs. The department is responsible for maintaining all fire related equipment and supplies. Station 1 maintains a central supply inventory. Supplies are allocated at the beginning of each month or on an “as needed” basis. For non-fire related supplies, the City Garage maintains supplies for apparatus maintenance/repair. However, each station maintains limited apparatus general maintenance items such as bulbs, lubricants, and engine fluids. The city maintains a central fueling depot located at the City Garage complex. The department has access to fuel on a 24 hour basis.

Appraisal

The systems used to maintain and have available supplies and materials have adequately met department needs. The Chief of Training has been tasked with maintaining fire suppression supplies such as foam and absorbent. Batteries for the SCBA air packs and pagers are kept at Station 1 as part of the supply inventory. The City Garage has maintained common supplies (batteries, fluids, tires, etc.) or has access to supplies/parts necessary to perform maintenance or make repairs in a timely manner. Each apparatus has keys to gain access to the fuel depot at any time.

Plan

The city and department will continue with the current systems to maintain supplies and materials necessary to support program needs.

References

CFR Annual Budget

CFR Supply Inventories

5A.4 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct fire suppression activities. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains a Policies and Procedures Manual that contains operational guidelines to direct fire suppression activities. Fire suppression guidelines are located in Volume 2 – Emergency Operations. Section 201 addresses incident safety while Section 202 addresses fire suppression operations. Section 206 addresses miscellaneous guidelines that apply to mutual aid response and calls for assistance. Each station maintains a copy of the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Appraisal

The standard operating guidelines used to direct fire suppression activities has adequately met department needs. These guidelines were written in 2007 and reviewed in 2013. Section 201 has been effective at addressing incident safety through policies that guide incident command, personnel accountability, mayday procedures, rapid intervention crew assignments, personal protective equipment, and incident communications. Section 202 has been effective by addressing apparatus deployments and staffing levels for each risk level identified. Section 206 adequately meets policies for mutual aid assistance.

Plan

The department will continue to provide guidelines to direct fire suppression activities. The Fire Chief will be responsible for ensuring guidelines are reviewed on an annual-basis to support program objectives.

References

CFR Policy and Procedures Manual, Volume 2: Emergency Operations

CFR Procedures 201.01 through 201.06

CFR Procedures 202.01 through 202.03

CFR Procedures 206.01 through 202.02

5A.5 The agency uses a standardized incident command/management system. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy 201.01: Incident Command mandates the use of an incident command system (ICS) for all department incidents. The ICS system used is based upon the concepts of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Personnel are required to obtain NIMS training dependent upon their rank.

Appraisal

Policy and training requirements have been effective at ensuring qualified personnel are able to establish an incident command system for any type of emergency responded to. The department requires all personnel to obtain IS 700, IS 800, ICS 100, and ICS 200 training. Company officers are required to obtain ICS 300 training. Staff personnel are required to obtain ICS 400 training. NIMS compliance is reported via NIMSCAST. The following table reflects department NIMS training compliance as of June 2013:

<u>Department Rank</u>	<u>Personnel Meeting NIMS Requirements</u>
Firefighters/Engineers	36 of 40
Company Officers	16 of 16
Command Staff	5 of 6

Plan

The department will continue to require NIMS training of all personnel dependent upon rank. The Chief of Training will schedule training to ensure that all personnel meet department NIMS requirements.

References

- CFR Policy 201.01: Incident Command
- CFR Master Training Matrix
- CFR Personnel Training Records
- CFR NIMSCAST Reports

5A.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of its fire suppression response program and incident reporting capability.

Description

The department utilizes Fire Programs as its Records Management System. Incident information is entered into Fire Programs through the Incident Reporting Module. Fire Programs is compliant with the National Fire Incident Reporting System. Fire Programs allows for the generation of reports that may be used for basic program analysis. The department also utilizes StatsFD® software for data analysis. This software is capable of generating enhanced reports for analytical purposes. Both systems are used to generate statistics used to identify jurisdictional trends.

Appraisal

Fire Programs and StatsFD software has effectively provided for program documentation and analysis. Fire Programs has been mainly used for program documentation. Fire Programs has allowed for basis analysis through basic and customized reports. StatsFD has provided the department with an enhanced analytical capability by providing numerous trend reports in text, graph, and 3D modeling through dynamically defined districts (3D districts). These districts have enabled analysis within specific Station Response Areas (SRAs) and Emergency Service Number (ESN) response districts.

Plan

The department will continue to document and analyze program incidents through data generated by Fire Programs and StatsFD software.

References

Fire Program Fire Suppression system and custom reports
StatsFD software

5A.7 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the fire suppression program. (CC)

Description

The fire suppression program is assessed on an annual basis through the submission of program reports to the Fire Chief. The annual report provides an overall assessment of the program by outlining program goals, objectives, performance measurements, current program condition, and future needs. Each of these components allows for effective analysis of the program. This report provides the basis for funding allocations that is used to support program needs.

Appraisal

Prior to the accreditation process, the fire suppression program had no formal written goals, objectives, or performance measurements. Program evaluation focused only on output results such as call types, frequency of calls, and property losses. In order to assess the effectiveness of the program; goals, objectives, and performance measurements were developed by the Fire Suppression Training Coordinator. With the inclusion of these performance measures beginning in 2012, the annual reports have provided for an effective program appraisal by identifying specific program expectations in service delivery. Program objectives for 2013 were:

- To respond in a timely manner by meeting response time performance objectives for responding units. The objective for first due units is 5:55. Response time objectives for the ERF units is 10:30 for moderate risk events and 11:00 for high risk events
- Maintain a minimum daily staffing level of 19 personnel
- Maintain equipment necessary to meet fire suppression needs
- Maintain basic training efficiency by using NFPA 1410 recommended standards for engine company and truck operations.

Performance Measurements for 2013 program objectives were:

- The response time objectives of all units were below national standards. As a result, benchmark travel times and total response times were lowered to reflect a continuous self improvement process

- The department met minimum staffing levels from January to April 2013. In April, the department shut down an engine company due to inadequate overtime funding. However, the department was able to meeting critical tasking levels for all fire risk events.
- The department has equipment and apparatus to meet fire suppression needs. The department replaced one engine, replaced attack hose (1.75" and 3") on three apparatus, and added "Cleveland" hose bundles to department apparatus.
- The department conducted single and multi-company training evolutions consistent with NFPA 1410. The department implemented the "Engineer Development Program" to department training.

The appraisal section contained a narrative addressing objectives and performance measurements that were met. The appraisal also addressed training, equipment, and program needs.

The due date for these reports was changed from December to May to correspond with the budget cycle and allow funding requests to be considered into budget decisions.

Plan

The Fire Suppression Training Coordinator will continue to provide annual reports to the Fire Chief regarding program effectiveness. The Fire Chief and Coordinator will continue to evaluate program goals and objectives. The Fire Chief will allocate funding to support program needs.

References

CFR Fire Suppression Annual Program Reports

[NFPA 1410, Single and multi-company training evolutions](#)

[CFR apparatus](#) equipment list

[CFR hose records](#)

[CFR daily shift rosters](#)

[StatsFD fire suppression response time reports](#)

Category V

Criterion 5B: Fire Prevention/Life Safety Program

The agency operates an adequate, effective, and efficient program directed toward fire prevention, life safety, hazard risk reduction, the detection, reporting, and control of fires and other emergencies, the provision of occupant safety and exiting, and the provisions for first aid fire fighting equipment³.

NOTE: Fire Investigations are covered in Criterion 5D.

Summary

The Fire Prevention Division is responsible for implementing processes directed towards fire prevention, life safety, hazard mitigation, and other provisions of occupant safety. The Fire Marshal is responsible for program management and establishes program goals and objectives. The division has several processes in place to ensure fire prevention and risk reduction measures. The city adopted the International Fire Code, 2006 Edition as its fire prevention code. New construction compliance is maintained through a plans review process. The department conducts annual inspections of all businesses focusing on code and safety violations. The Fire Marshal conducts annual inspections of all day care facilities and periodic inspections of nightclubs. Documentation is maintained in the department's Record Management System and hardcopy files.

The Fire Marshal evaluates the effectiveness of the program through annual reports provided to the Fire Chief. This evaluation ensures that the program remains aligned with the department's mission. The Fire Marshal is responsible for identifying equipment and materials needed to support program requirements. The program is supported through annual budget appropriations.

³ For more information about "first aid firefighting equipment," reference NFPA 10 and the current International Fire Code

5B.1 The authority having jurisdiction has an adopted fire prevention code. (CC)

Description

The City of Columbus adopted the International Fire Code (IFC), 2006 Edition as its fire prevention code through the provisions of Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-41. By adopting this fire prevention code, the City of Columbus is compliant with MS Fire Prevention Code §200 B and MS Code Annotated §45-11-101 that mandates municipalities adopt the state code or a code that is equivalent or more stringent than the state code.

Appraisal

The IFC has adequately met the needs of the fire department by providing life safety and fire prevention requirements in new construction and existing structures. The IFC also references other regulatory documents such as those of the National Fire Protection Association that further strengthen code requirements. The city has made minor modifications to the IFC through amendments, deletions, and exceptions as listed in city ordinance to reflect jurisdictional preferences. The city did not adopt the 2009 or 2012 Edition of the IFC.

Plan

The department will continue to use the International Fire Code, 2006 Edition as its fire prevention code. Future editions will be reviewed and adopted as deemed necessary by the governing authority.

References

International Fire Code, 2006 Edition

Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-41

Mississippi Fire Prevention Code §200 B

Mississippi Code Annotated §45-11-101

5B.2 The code enforcement program is designed to ensure compliance with applicable fire protection law and agency objectives. (CC)

Description

The Fire Prevention Division has several programs in place to ensure compliance with applicable laws and codes. The Fire Marshal ensures new construction compliance through plans review, a rough-in inspection, and a final inspection process. Annual business inspections are conducted by engine companies with each company having an assigned inspection district. The Fire Marshal is responsible for annual inspections of child daycares as well as ensuring nightclub compliance with Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-49 which requires a trained Fire and Life Safety Manager being on duty when occupancies are open. The city imposes citations as a means to encourage code compliance.

Appraisal

These inspection and enforcement processes have been effective in ensuring code compliance. The plans review process and subsequent inspections have adequately provided for new construction compliance. These inspections are coordinated with the city's Building and Inspection Department. Engine companies inspect approximately 1725 business occupancies on an annual basis. Any violations noted are re-inspected once by the engine company and, if not corrected, written a Notice of Violation which is referred to the Fire Marshal for further action. The MS Department of Health mandates child daycares are inspected annually by the Fire Marshal which is verified through a signed compliance form. Currently, all of the city's 33 nightclub occupancies have trained Fire and Life Safety Managers. The Fire Marshal has conducted surprise quarterly checks of these occupancies to ensure compliance. By becoming a State Deputy Fire Marshal, the Fire Marshal has the authority to inspect state buildings if requested by the State Fire Marshal's office (i.e. Mississippi University for Women and other state offices).

Plan

The Fire Prevention Division will continue to address code enforcement and compliance with the processes identified. The division will continue to assess the effectiveness of processes in place

and make recommendations for new or amended processes. The Fire Marshal is responsible for this assessment.

References

CFR Plans Review Form

City of Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-49

CFR Engine Company Inspection Reports

CFR Nightclub List

CFR Day Care List

5B.3 The program has adequate staff with specific expertise to meet the fire prevention / life safety program goals and objectives. (CC)

Description

The Fire Marshal manages the Fire Prevention Program. The Fire Marshal is a full time, dedicated position within the organization. The administrative structure and job description for this position is found in Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy 102.01 and 102.02. The Fire Marshal establishes program goals and objectives. The Fire Marshal meets the requirements of Fire Inspector I through the Fire Inspector NFPA 1031 certification. The Fire Marshal is also recognized as a Fire Inspector by International Code Council (ICC) and as a Mississippi Special Deputy Fire Marshal. The Fire Marshal is assisted in annual business inspections by Battalion Chiefs and company officers.

Appraisal

The Fire Inspector NFPA 1031 certification has identified the basic competencies needed for code enforcement. The Fire Marshal has maintained proficiency by obtaining 48 hours of continuing education units (CEUs) every two years as required by the ICC. Prior to annual business inspections, the Fire Marshal has provided in-house training to company officers covering inspection procedures, documentation, and code enforcement topics. All Battalion Chiefs and company officers have obtained NFPA 1031: Fire Inspector certification. Annual program reports have provided for program goals and objectives.

Plan

The Fire Marshal will continue to manage the Fire Prevention Program. The department will continue requiring Fire Inspector NFPA 1031 certification for all company officers and Battalion Chiefs. The Fire Chief will ensure that the program is adequately staffed to meet program needs through review of annual program reports.

References

CFR Policy 102.01: Organizational Chart

CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions

National Fire Protection Association 1031: Fire Inspector

5B.4 A plan review process is in place to ensure that buildings and infrastructure (e.g., hydrants, access, street width, etc.) are constructed in accordance with adopted codes and ordinances.

Description

The City of Columbus utilizes a plan review process to ensure code compliance with new construction and remodels. All plans are initially submitted to the city's Building and Inspection Department. In turn, these plans are routed to five departments that include the city's Building, Fire and Public Works departments, the City Engineer, and Columbus Light and Water. The Fire Marshal is responsible for ensuring that all applicable building and site fire prevention requirements are met. Upon approval of all departments, a construction permit is issued.

Appraisal

The plan review process has adequately met city and department needs. This process requires approval of each department involved before a permit is issued. The city strives to complete a plans review within 10 working days. The city also makes every effort to approve plans within two submittals by providing a detailed list of all discrepancies which must be addressed before re-submittal. Both of these goals have been implemented to improve customer service and meet city needs. The completion of a plans review within 3 working days is a performance measurement objective of the fire prevention program.

Plan

The Building Department will continue to be overall responsible for the plans review process. The Fire Marshal will continue to review plans under this process. Both departments will continue to evaluate the process and make recommendations as needed.

References

City of Columbus Building and Inspection Department Routing Form

5B.5 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment, supplies and materials to meet the fire prevention/life safety program needs.

Description

The Fire Marshal is responsible for identifying equipment and materials needed to support program requirements as part of the annual program report. Examples of current equipment and materials include a vehicle, office equipment and supplies, desktop computer, cell phone, various fire prevention forms, and measuring tape/wheels. The department has provided the Fire Marshal with personal protective equipment that includes a ballistic protective vest, hard hat, gloves, and respiratory protection. Equipment and materials are allocated during the budget process.

Appraisal

The equipment and materials identified have adequately supported program needs. The annual program report has effectively identified program needs. The department has worked with the city's Information Technology Department to identify equipment and processes that would improve the program such as iPads to be used during business inspections. However, no improvements have been made as a result of this collaboration due to funding restrictions.

Plan

The Fire Marshal will be responsible for the completion of annual program reports. Equipment and materials will continue to be identified and allocated as part of the annual budget process. The Fire Marshal will continue to evaluate new technology that will effectively support program needs.

References

CFR Fire Prevention Annual Program Report
CFR Annual Budgets

5B.6 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the fire prevention/life safety program.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains three policies that govern the fire prevention program. CFR Policy 102.01 provides for an organizational structure while CFR Policy 102.02 lists the job responsibilities of the Fire Marshal. CFR Policy 301.01: Inspections provides guidelines for conducting annual business inspections. The Fire Marshal also maintains one general guideline for conducting business inspections that is found in the Company Officer Inspection Manual.

Appraisal

Each of these policies and guideline manual have adequately met department needs. Policies 102.01 and 102.02 have provided for a chain of command and job responsibilities of the Fire Marshal that includes serving as program manager. Policy 301.01 has adequately provided department policy for conducting business inspections. The Company Officer Inspection Manual contains six (6) sections that provides for general administration, inspection tracking, new business forms, inspection forms, and notice of violation forms.

Plan

The department will continue to ensure policies and guidelines are in place to direct the Fire Prevention Program. The Fire Marshal will continue to provide company officers with Inspection Manuals to be used during business inspections.

References

CFR Policy 102.01: Organizational Structure

CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions

CFR Policy 301.01: Inspections

Inspection Manual for Company Officers

5B.7 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the fire prevention program.

Description

The department utilizes Fire Programs as its Record Management System (RMS). This software offers a Risk Management module that is used for fire prevention. From this module, the Fire Marshal can review general occupancy information as well as detailed building and inspection information. The Risk Management module allows for the generation of standardized and customized reports that may be used in program analysis. This module also supports the department's community risk assessments by identifying specific occupancy classifications by Emergency Service Numbers (ESNs) and fire load/water flow requirements of each occupancy.

Appraisal

The Risk Management module adequately meets department needs for the management of its fire prevention program. The information gained from this module has allowed for the review of general occupancy information as well as detailed information from previous inspections. This module also offers several advantageous features such as the review of general and detailed occupancy information, the calculation of required water flow requirements, and the generation of risk assessment reports.

Plan

The department will continue to use the Fire Programs Risk Management module as its information system for fire prevention. With input from the Fire Marshal, the Fire Chief will evaluate the RMS on an annual basis to determine software effectiveness.

References

CFR Fire Programs: Risk Management

5B.8 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the fire prevention program and its efforts in risk reduction. (CC)

Description

The fire prevention program is assessed on an annual basis through the submission of the program report to the Fire Chief. The annual report provides an overall assessment of the program by outlining program goals, objectives, performance measurements, current condition, and future resource needs. Each of these components allows for an effective analysis of the program. This report provides the basis for program funding allocations during the budget process.

Appraisal

Prior to the accreditation process, the fire prevention program had no formal written goals, objectives, or performance measurements. Program evaluation focused only on output results such as the number of businesses inspected. In order to assess the effectiveness of the program; goals, objectives, and performance measurements were developed by the Fire Marshal and included in annual reports beginning with the 2012 report. With the inclusion of these components, the annual reports have provided for an effective program appraisal and have met department needs. The 2013 annual program report contained the following objectives and program measurements:

Objectives

- Engine companies will inspect 100% of assigned occupancies within their district
- Fire Marshal will inspect 100% of night club occupancies on an annual basis
- Fire Marshal will inspect 100% of day care facilities on an annual basis
- Fire Marshal will inspect 100% of assisted living and special needs occupancies on an annual basis
- Fire Marshal will review 100% of all plan review requests within 3 working days
- Fire Marshal will respond to 100% of fire hazard complaints within 24 hours of notification

Performance Measurements

- The department inspected 1775 of 1782 occupancies

- 23 of 23 nightclub occupancies were inspected
- 36 of 36 day care facilities were inspected
- 8 of 8 assisted living facilities were inspected
- 45 of 45 plan reviews were completed within the three working day time frame
- Responded to 7 complaints within prescribed time frame

The appraisal section contained a narrative addressing objectives and performance measurements that were met. The appraisal also addresses training, equipment, and program needs which formed the basis for program recommendations.

The due date for these reports was changed from December to May to correspond with the budget process cycle and to allow for funding requests to be considered in the budget process.

Plan

The Fire Marshal will continue to provide annual reports to the Fire Chief regarding program effectiveness. The Fire Chief and Fire Marshal will continue to evaluate program goals and objectives.

References

CFR Fire Prevention Annual Program Reports

Category V

Criterion 5C: Public Education Program

A public education program is in place and directed toward identifying and reducing specific risks in a manner consistent with the agency's mission.

Summary

The Public Education Division is responsible for implementing programs and services directed towards fire and life safety. The Fire and Life Safety Educator is responsible for program management and establishes program goals and objectives.

The Fire and Life Safety Education Division has adopted an “all hazards” approach to fire and life safety by providing a myriad of programs to the community. The division presents programs based upon identified risks such as seasonal hazards, specific hazards, and at-risk target audiences that include low income families. This approach focuses not only on fire safety and prevention but also to injury awareness and prevention.

The Fire and Life Safety Educator evaluates the effectiveness of the program through annual reports provided to the Fire Chief. This evaluation ensures that the program remains aligned with the department's mission. The Fire and Life Safety Educator is responsible for identifying equipment and materials needed to support program requirements. The program is supported through annual budget appropriations.

5C.1 The diversity and delivery of the public education program includes individual, business, and community audiences.

Description

The Public Safety Education Division provides a variety of programs to address fire and injury prevention. These programs target high risk groups such as K-12 schools, adult assisted living facilities and senior citizens as well as other groups such as area businesses and civic organizations. Programs are delivered through various mediums that include annual prevention and preparedness months (Fire Prevention Month, National Safe Kids Week, National Preparedness Month), continuing education workshops, summer camps, church events, and civic group meetings. Fire stations host tours and birthday parties where various safety topics are presented.

Appraisal

The Public Education Division has adequately met community needs by providing fire and safety prevention programs that have been taught covering a wide demographic spectrum of both public and private audiences. These audiences have included at-risk individuals, at-risk target groups, businesses, and industries. Programs for these groups have included fire and water safety, Child Passenger Safety, Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety, Poison Control, Senior Citizen safety, Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, industrial fire extinguisher training, critical incident stress management, and first aid/CPR certification. The division has partnered with national organizations in providing training curriculum to the programs listed above. These organizations include the National Fire Protection Agency, National Fire Safety Council, Home Safety Council, Safe Kids USA, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Mississippi Department of Health, The Idea Bank, and the National Sheriff's Association.

For the 2012-2013 annual program report, the division accomplished the following training opportunities:

- Public training

K – 12 School Fire Safety Education / training: 4,436 students

First Aid/CPR: 94 individuals

Industrial Fire Extinguisher training: 398 employees

- 72 Smoke Alarms Installed (Fire Marshal Grant)
- 3 Car Seat Check Point Events
- 74 Car Seats Installed
- Public Awareness events
 - 4 Health Fairs
 - 68 Public Relations/Community Involvement Events
 - 61 Miscellaneous (Training/Meetings)

Plan

The division will continue to provide fire and injury programs to meet community needs. Each program will be evaluated for effectiveness on an annual basis. The division will continue to partner with other agencies in providing curriculum based on national practices.

References

CFR Fire and Life Safety Education Division Annual Program Report

CFR Fire and Life Safety Education Division Structure Fire Trend Analysis Report

5C.2 The program has staffing with specific expertise to accomplish the program goals and objectives.

Description

The Fire and Life Safety Educator is a full time, dedicated position within the organization as identified by CFR Policy 102.01. This position is responsible for the management of public education programs, establishing program goals and objectives, and program budget administration. The Fire and Life Safety Educator has received training at the Mississippi State Fire Academy, the National Fire Academy, and through training hosted by national/state organizations. Line personnel assist the division with program activities. Line personnel receive basic public education training as part of the Firefighter curriculum at the Mississippi State Fire Academy. Personnel also receive certification in specific programs such as the Child Passenger Safety Seat installations.

Appraisal

The Fire and Life Safety Educator (FLSE) has received local, state, and national training that is required to manage the programs offered by the department. This training has included community risk assessment, program development and implementation, and program management. The Fire and Life Safety Educator has completed the Fire Prevention Public Education curriculum at the National Fire Academy. Line personnel assist the FLSE with fire prevention month. Additionally, 15 personnel have received certification as registered child passenger safety seat technicians.

Plan

The Fire and Life Safety Educator will continue to attend training opportunities needed to administer fire and injury prevention programs. Line personnel will continue to receive certifications necessary for specific program activities when required.

References

CFR Policy 102.01: Organizational Chart

CFR Car Safety Seat Technician List

5C.3 The agency defines and provides appropriate adequate equipment, supplies and materials to meet the public education program needs.

Description

The Public Safety Education Division maintains equipment and materials needed to support community fire and injury prevention programs. Presentation equipment includes computers, a media projector, props, a generator, and a fire safety trailer equipped with video and smoke generator capabilities. The division maintains materials used to supplement program instruction that includes printed material, videos, and DVDs. Many of these materials are from outside agencies such as the National Fire Protection Association, Home Safety Council, and Safe Kids USA. Promotional items such as stickers, activity books, pencils, erasers, and brochures are given to children to encourage greater prevention awareness. The department maintains a “Sparky the Fire Dog” costume used at many public events.

Appraisal

The division has maintained the necessary equipment and materials necessary to support program goals and objectives. School enrollments have been updated on an annual basis to ensure that promotional items are available for each child. Additional promotional items are considered for other public events. The Fire and Life Safety Educator has provided annual reports to the Fire Chief assessing equipment and materials needs for the upcoming year. Acquisition of these items has been appropriated through the annual budget process.

Plan

The division will continue to assess the need for equipment and materials used to support the goals and objectives of various public education programs.

References

CFR Annual Budgets

Program equipment and materials list

5C.4 The public education program targets specific risks and risk audiences as identified through incident, demographic, and program data analysis. (CC)

Description

The Fire and Life Safety Educator schedules and presents public education programs based on identified risks such as seasonal hazards, specific hazards, and target audiences. Specific risks and hazards are identified through incident response data gathered in the department's Record Management System, through community requests, and through community demographics. Targeted audiences include groups that are statistically more susceptible to fires and injuries than other age demographics such as the low income, elderly, and the young. These statistics are based upon data from national, state, and local sources. These programs are taught by the Fire and Life Safety Educator and the department's line personnel or presented through various mediums that include scheduled presentations, Public Safety Announcements, and featured news stories.

Appraisal

The programs provided have adequately met community needs. Community demographics indicated that the poverty level in Columbus is 32.3%. This rate is above state and national averages. The elderly and young constitute approximately 22.4% of city population. To address at-risk or specific risk groups, the following programs are provided:

- K – 4th grade: Fire safety (fire safety trailer)
- K – 12th grade: Pedestrian/bicycle safety, babysitting safety
- Juvenile Fire Prevention: at risk teens
- Smoke Detector program: low income, elderly, and children
- Senior citizens: fire safety and fall prevention
- Child Passenger Safety seat installation: infants and young children
- Disaster training and preparedness: all age groups

For the 2012 Annual report, the division provided the following activities:

- K – 12 School Fire safety education and training: 4,436 students taught
- Community First aid/CPR: 94 individuals taught
- 72 Smoke detectors installed

- 3 Car safety check points events
- 74 car safety seat installations
- 4 health fairs
- 61 miscellaneous training and community meeting events

Plan

The division will continue to provide programs based upon specific risks and community needs. These programs will continue to focus on targeted audiences susceptible to fire and injuries. The Fire and Life Educator will continue to evaluate local data provided by the department's Record Management System and other agency data (EMS, law enforcement) as well as state and national fire and injury statistics.

References

CFR Fire and Life Safety Annual Program Reports

U.S. 2010 Census Data

5C.5 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the public education program. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue Policies 102.01, 102.02, and 302.01 provide guidance in the management of the division. Policy 102.01 addresses the organizational structure of the department while Policy 102.02 establishes the job context and description for the Fire and Life Safety Educator position. The job context states that the Fire and Life Safety Educator position “is responsible for the management and operation of the department’s Public Safety Education division and [...] evaluates fire and life safety programs aimed at reducing injuries within the community.” The Fire and Life Safety Educator is responsible for program management and establishing program goals and objectives. Policy 302.01: Fire Prevention Month provides general guidelines for fire and life safety events during Fire Prevention Month.

Appraisal

These policies have provided the basis for program management and have adequately met department needs by identifying the Fire and Life Safety Educator as the manager over the department’s public education programs and listing job responsibilities and job related tasks. Policy 302.01 has provided guidance to be used during Fire Prevention Month as well as other public education events.

Plan

The Fire Chief will continue to evaluate the position of the Fire and Life Safety Educator and make changes as required to meet department and program needs.

References

CFR Policy 102.01: Organizational Chart

CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions

CFR Policy 302.01: Fire Prevention Month

5C.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of its public education program.

Description

The department uses Fire Programs as its Record Management System (RMS). The Fire and Life Safety Educator (FLSE) uses Fire Programs to run system and custom reports, specifically residential and multi-family structure fires. Other basic report queries involve the number and types of incidents responded to, incident locations, and incident causes. The department's analysis software, StatsFD, can isolate areas in the city where specific emergency incidents are occurring. The FLSE documents program information (classes taught, number of individuals involved, etc.) on a personal calendar. These totals are documented on the annual program report provided to the Fire Chief. These annual program reports provide the basis for program analysis.

Appraisal

The department's RMS has adequately met department needs in regards to incident documentation. StatsFD has adequately provided for analysis involving incident locations. The department's RMS does not specifically contain a Public Education module. To document program data, the FLSE uses a personal calendar from which year end and annual report information is obtained. The department will receive a software upgrade to its RMS in early 2014 which contains a module dedicated to Public Education. This module will greatly enhance program documentation.

Plan

The Fire and Life Safety Educator will continue to analyze program effectiveness through data provided by Fire Programs and StatsFD. The department will upgrade its current RMS software version upon receipt of the updated version (2014).

References

Fire Program Incident Reports

StatsFD analysis reports

Public Education Evaluation documents

5C.7 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the public education program and its effect on reducing identified risks. (CC)

Description

The Public Education Division is assessed on an annual basis through the submission of the program report to the Fire Chief. The annual report provides an overall assessment of the program by outlining program goals, objectives, performance measurements, current condition, and future needs. Each of these components allows for effective analysis of the program. This report provides the basis for funding allocations to support program needs.

Appraisal

Prior to accreditation, the FLSE evaluated the effectiveness of the program through comparisons with previous year training and incident trends. Program evaluation also focused on output results such as number of safety classes taught and number of smoke detectors installed. This data indicated a decline by 42% in the number of structure fires responded to since the division was created in 2000.

However, the program had no formal written goals, objectives, or performance measures prior to accreditation that might be used as an effective means of program evaluation. In order to assess the effectiveness of the program; goals, objectives, and performance measurements were developed by the Fire and Life Safety Educator beginning in 2012. The 2013 annual program report contained the following objectives and performance measures:

Objectives

- Continue with fire safety and injury prevention programs addressing community needs as previously established
- Increase awareness of hazards for low income citizens within the community through various outreach programs
- All City Schools Kindergarten through 5th grade will receive hands on fire safety education with the Safety Trailer, educational videos and activity books.
- Increase public access to safety information through various community events
- Participate in local, state, and national partnerships advocating fire safety and risk reduction efforts

Performance Measurements

- Conducted 2 CPR/First Aid training sessions during program reporting period (Objective not met due to 5 month reporting period).
- Conducted 5 Fire Extinguisher Training Classes with a total of 182 participants during program reporting period.
- Presented public awareness in fire safety and injury prevention at 3 Health Fairs (Objective not met due to 5 month reporting period).
- Participated in 16 Community Events during program reporting period (Objective not met due to 5 month reporting period).
- Installed 40 smoke alarms (Objective not met due to 5 month reporting period).

The appraisal section contained a narrative addressing objectives and performance measurements that were met. The appraisal also addressed training, equipment, and program needs which form the basis for program recommendations.

The due date for these reports was changed from December to May to correspond with the budget process cycle and to allow funding requests to be considered as part of the budget process.

Plan

The Fire and Life Safety Educator will continue to provide annual program reports to the Fire Chief supplemented by local comparisons with state and national trends.

References

CFR Public Safety Education Division Annual Program Reports
Public Safety Education Division Comparative Study

5C.8 There are programs in place that enable improved fire protection and injury prevention for low income families (e.g. as free smoke alarm installation, free bicycle helmet program, etc.)

Description

The division offers three programs that are geared towards low income families. The Child Passenger Safety Seat program provides child car safety seats for infants and young children. The division has partnered with local law enforcement agencies in conducting bicycle safety rallies and providing bicycle helmets. Through state grants, the department installs smoke alarms based upon low income and age (elderly, and young) qualification criteria. The division has partnered with Safe Kids USA, Mississippi Department of Health, and the Mississippi State Fire Marshal's office in providing resources for these programs.

Appraisal

These three programs have adequately supported the needs of low income families. For the 2012-2013 Annual report, the division taught the following programs that support this Performance Indicator:

- Fire safety: 4,436 students taught
- First aid/CPR: 94 individuals taught
- 72 Smoke detectors installed
- 3 Car safety check points events
- 74 car safety seat installations

In 2011, the department provided 84 bicycle helmets as part of the Bicycle Safety Awareness Program.

Plan

The division will continue to participate in these programs. The Fire and Life Educator will continue to monitor the effectiveness of these programs and evaluate the need for other prevention programs.

References

CFR Public Education Annual Reports

Safe Kids USA folder

Smoke Alarm Tracking folder

Child Passenger Safety Seat folder

Category V

Criterion 5D: Fire Investigation Program

The agency operates an adequate, effective and efficient program directed toward origin and cause investigation and determination for fires, explosions, and other emergency situations that endanger life or property.

Summary

The Fire Prevention Division is responsible for implementing processes directed towards conducting investigations to determine origin, cause, and circumstances for any fire, explosion, and other hazardous conditions. The [Assistant Chief](#) is responsible for program management and establishes program goals and objectives.

The [Assistant Chief](#) is assisted by [lead investigators which are assigned to specific investigations. The Assistant Chief and lead investigators maintain Mississippi law enforcement certification.](#) Additionally, all company officers are required to obtain NFPA 1033: Fire Investigator certification. All investigations follow the scientific method prescribed by NFPA [921](#) recommendations. The department works jointly with the Columbus Police Department and is aided by the MS State Fire Marshal if requested.

The [Assistant Chief](#) evaluates the effectiveness of the program through annual reports provided to the Fire Chief. This evaluation ensures that the program remains aligned with the department's mission. The [Assistant Chief](#) is responsible for identifying equipment and materials needed to support program requirements. The program is supported through annual budget appropriations.

5D.1 The agency's fire investigation program is authorized by adopted statute, code, or ordinance. (CC)

Description

Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-41 establishes the 2006 Edition of the International Fire Code (IFC) as the city's fire prevention code. Under the provisions of IFC §104.10, the fire department is authorized to "investigate the cause, origin, and circumstances of any fire, explosion or other hazardous condition." Additionally, IFC §104.10.1 allows the fire department to solicit assistance from outside agencies when requested.

Appraisal

The adoption of the 2006 Edition of the International Fire Code has adequately provided for the department's authority to establish a fire investigation program. The Assistant Chief has been designated as the lead investigator and manages the fire investigation program.

Plan

The department will continue to provide a fire investigation program under the provisions of the 2006 Edition of the International Fire Code.

References

Columbus Code of Ordinances §12-41

International Fire Code §104.10, 2006 Edition

International Fire Code §104.10.1, 2006 Edition

5D.2 The scientific method (or an equivalent) is utilized to investigate and determine the origin and cause of all significant fires and explosions. (CC)

Description

CFR Policy 301.02 directs that fire investigations are to be conducted utilizing the scientific method. This scientific method is consistent with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 921: Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations. The Assistant Chief and lead investigators utilize this standardized approach each time an investigation occurs. Investigators review NFPA 921 to ensure investigations remain consistent with the scientific method.

Appraisal

The Assistant Chief and lead investigators have followed the scientific method during fire investigations per CFR policy. This policy has recognized the scientific method as the standardized approach to conducting fire investigations. This investigative approach is consistent with the recommendations of NFPA 921. However, the department has not formally adopted NFPA 921. An improvement to the Fire Investigation program would be the adoption of NFPA 921.

Plan

The Assistant Chief and lead investigators will continue to follow the guidelines of department policy. This policy will continue to mandate the use of the scientific method. The Assistant Chief will be responsible for ensuring this policy remains consistent with NFPA 921.

References

Columbus Fire & Rescue Standard Operating Guideline

National Fire Protection Association 921: Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations

5D.3 The program has adequate staff with specific expertise, training, and credentials to accomplish the program goals and objectives. (CC)

Description

The Assistant Chief manages the Fire Investigation Program. The Assistant Chief is assisted in fire investigations by lead investigators assigned to specific investigations. The Assistant Chief and lead investigators serve as primary investigators for all structure fires. The Assistant Chief and lead investigators maintain MS law enforcement certification in addition to NFPA 1033: Fire Investigation certification.

The Investigation Division is assisted by the Battalion Chiefs and company officers. Battalion Chiefs and company officers assist in determining cause and origin. These personnel are required to obtain NFPA 1033: Fire Investigator certification.

Appraisal

NFPA 1033: Fire Investigator certification has provided the competencies needed to investigate all fires. This certification has provided for the basic competencies to determine fire origin and cause, scene documentation, evidence preservation, and witness interviews. Additionally, the Assistant Chief and lead investigators have achieved MS law enforcement certification. This certification has enabled these personnel to detain individuals of interest, conduct investigation interviews, and have arrest powers.

Two areas of improvement to this program could be made. First, the Assistant Chief and lead investigators should attend fire investigation and arson courses (i.e. National Fire Academy arson curriculum and arson seminars) to maintain investigative proficiencies. Second, Battalion Chiefs and company officers need refresher training in various fire investigation topics to remain proficient in competency skills. Currently, three newly promoted company officers do not have NFPA 1033 certification.

Plan

The department will continue requiring Fire Investigator NFPA 1033 certification for fire department personnel that investigates fires. The Chief of Training will ensure that all personnel meet certification requirements of the position in a timely manner. The department will

implement fire investigation topics for Battalion Chiefs and company officers as part of its in-house training curriculum.

References

National Fire Protection Association 1033: Fire Investigator
CFR Personnel Training Matrix

5D.4 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment, supplies and materials to meet the fire investigation program needs.

Description

Fire investigation equipment is maintained by the Assistant Chief and lead investigators. Funding for this equipment is approved through the budget process and is part of the Fire Prevention budget. This equipment includes evidence collection (shovel, rake, cans, bags, sacks, chain of custody labels, finger print kit), scene documentation (camera, tape measure, graph paper), and a Model 851 Fire Investigator's Aid hydrocarbon detector. This equipment is maintained by the Assistant Chief.

Appraisal

The equipment used by the Investigative Division has adequately met the fire investigative needs of the department. The above mentioned equipment has been used during investigations and personnel are familiar with their use. However, the acquisition of equipment, specifically personal protective equipment is needed. This PPE includes a hard hat, and a dedicated self-contained breathing apparatus and/or personal respirator.

Plan

The Assistant Chief and lead investigators will continue to use the equipment provided by the department. The Assistant Chief will continue to assess and recommend the need for additional equipment. The purchase of PPE will be addressed during program appraisal and the budgeting process.

References

CFR Fire Investigation Annual Program Report
CFR Annual Budget

5D.5 The agency establishes agreements for support from other agencies to aid in accomplishing the program goals and objectives.

Description

The 2006 Edition of the International Fire Code §104.10.1 provides for the assistance of outside agencies when requested. The department may request assistance from the Office of the State Fire Marshal through the provisions of Mississippi Fire Prevention Code §506 and Mississippi Annotated Code of 1972 §45-11-1. The fire department works jointly with Columbus Police Department (CPD) in fire investigations. CPD General Order 404.3 states that the fire department will determine origin and cause while CPD is responsible for activities related to the investigation and prosecution of arson cases. Each department maintains separate case management systems and files. The Assistant Chief also provides assistance to private insurance company investigators when required.

Appraisal

The joint partnership with Columbus Police Department has adequately supported the needs of the department for fire investigations. The fire department has determined origin and cause. The Assistant Chief and lead investigators have actively participated with CPD in witness interviews. CPD has been assigned primary investigation and prosecution tasks. The department has access to additional resources provided by the MS State Fire Marshal's Office.

Plan

The department will continue to maintain relationships with external agencies to support program needs.

References

The International Fire Code, 2006 Edition

Mississippi Fire Prevention Code §506

Mississippi Code Annotated 1972 §45-11-1

Columbus Police Department Policy General Order 404.3

5D.6 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the fire cause and investigation program. (CC)

Description

CFR Policy 301.02: Fire Investigation Procedures provides guidance in fire investigations conducted by the department. This guideline specifies the duties and responsibilities of the Assistant Chief and lead investigators, responsibilities of the Battalion Chiefs and company officers, the use of the scientific method during investigations, and other general guidelines required by the program. The Assistant Chief maintains a copy of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 921: Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations as a reference document.

Appraisal

This SOG has adequately met department and program needs by specifying the duties of the Assistant Chief and lead investigators. This guideline has emphasized the use of the scientific method by identifying specific investigative steps which are consistent with NFPA 921 recommendations. The guideline has also established the use of standardized information to be used in all case files.

Plan

The Assistant Chief will continue to evaluate the current policy for content and revise as necessary to meet current and future department needs.

References

CFR Policy 301.02: Fire Investigation Procedures

National Fire Protection Association 921: Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations

5D.7 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the fire investigation program.

Description

The department uses Fire Programs as its Record Management System (RMS) for incident documentation. However, the basic software package does not provide for an arson module. The Investigative Division currently uses a paper file case management system. All case files are maintained in a secure file cabinet located in the Assistant Chief's office.

Appraisal

The case management system used by the Assistant Chief has allowed for case documentation, storage, and retrieval of case information. However, this system has not allowed for effective analysis of the program. Additionally, the department's RMS has provided limited program analysis. Program analysis and case management would greatly be enhanced using software specific to fire investigations such as the Phoenix Fire Investigation Module, which is a supplemental module to the department's RMS.

Plan

The Assistant Chief will research specific fire investigative software for analysis purposes that meets the need of the department. The Assistant Chief will recommend a software program as part of the annual program report to the Fire Chief.

References

CFR Fire Investigation Case Management System

Fire Programs RMS

5D.8 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the fire investigation program. (CC)

Description

The fire investigation program is assessed on an annual basis through the submission of program reports to the Fire Chief. The annual report provides an overall assessment of the program by outlining program goals, objectives, performance measurements, current condition, and future resource needs. This report provides the basis for program funding allocations during the budget process. Each of these components allows for program appraisal through established objective measurements.

Appraisal

Prior to the accreditation process, the fire investigation program had no formal written goals, objectives, or performance measurements. Program evaluation focused only on output results such as number of fires investigated. In order to assess the effectiveness of the program; goals, objectives, and performance measurements were developed by the Fire Marshal. From this point forward, program reports will be the responsibility of the Assistant Chief. -With the inclusion of these components beginning in 2012, the annual reports have provided for an effective program appraisal by identifying program goals and objectives and establishing performance measurements. The 2013 annual program report contained the following objective and performance measurements:

Objectives

- The Assistant Chief or Lead Investigator will investigate to determine area of origin 100% of time
- The Assistant Chief or Lead Investigator will investigate to determine probable cause 90% of time
- The Assistant Chief or Lead Investigator will retain minimum training certification and attend a minimum of 40 hours of CEUs on an annual basis to maintain competency skills

Performance Measurements

- 29 of 29 fires area of origin was determined
- 37 or 40 fires probable cause was determined

- CEUs was not meet due to budget constraints

The appraisal section contains a narrative addressing objectives and performance measurements that were met. The appraisal also addresses training, equipment, and program needs which form the basis for program recommendations. The due date for these reports was changed from December to May to correspond with the budget process cycle.

Plan

The Assistant Chief will continue to provide annual reports to the Fire Chief regarding program effectiveness. The Fire Marshal will continue to evaluate program goals and objectives.

References

CFR Fire Investigation Annual Program Reports

Category V

Criterion 5E: Technical Rescue

NOTE: The program described in this section may also be called 'Heavy Rescue,' 'Extrication' and/or 'Urban Search and Rescue.'

The agency operates an adequate, effective, and efficient program directed toward rescuing trapped or endangered persons from any life-endangering cause, e.g., structural collapse, vehicle accidents, swift water or submersion, confined space, cave-in, trench collapse, fire, etc.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides six technical rescue programs based upon an “all-hazards” response philosophy. Technical rescue program objectives and response time performance measures are identified in the Standards of Cover. Line personnel are trained to the awareness and operations level for each technical rescue discipline. The department maintains technician level trained personnel in each discipline to support program needs. Training is based upon national standards. Department training supports a three tiered response system for technical rescue events. The department initiates an incident management system for each technical rescue discipline.

The department maintains an equipment cache to support each technical rescue discipline. Team equipment is stored at the Technical Rescue Building located at Station 2. Team equipment is stored on trailers ready for rapid deployment. The department maintains supplies and materials that are used to supplement main equipment and conducts preventative maintenance.

Technical rescue programs are guided by administrative and operational policies and procedures. Program analysis is provided by the department’s Record Management System and analytical software. Annual program reports provide for program effectiveness through identified objective performance measures. Annual reports are used to identify needed program supplies and resources.

5E.1 Given the agency’s standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of technical rescue emergency incidents. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides six technical rescue programs that include dive rescue and recovery, high angle/confined space rescue, structural collapse, overland search and rescue, swift-water/flood rescue, and trench rescue. CFR establishes its technical rescue response time and deployment objectives through the Standards of Cover (SOC) document. Department personnel achieve awareness and operations level training through MS State Fire Academy courses and in-house training. Personnel receive technician level training through the MS State Fire Academy, Office of Domestic Preparedness training agencies, and private vendors. Training curriculums are based upon NFPA 1006 and NFPA 1670. The department maintains a minimum shift staffing level of 19 (including the Battalion Chief) as mandated by the MS Rating Bureau.

Technical rescue responses are based upon a 3 tier system. Level I responses involve an engine company staffed with awareness and operations level personnel. A Level II response involves additional apparatus and on-shift technicians. A Level III response necessitates the re-call of off-duty technicians. Incident staffing and apparatus deployments are established by the Critical Tasking List found in Section D of the SOC and is based upon the risk level of the event.

The department maintains a technical rescue equipment cache to support program needs. This equipment is stored in the department’s Technical Rescue building located at Station 2.

Technical rescue equipment is separated and located on team trailers for rapid deployment. The exception to this separation is the structural collapse equipment which is stored on the 42' trailer with the hazardous materials equipment. Inventory sheets are located on each trailer to maintain equipment accountability.

Response time performance is based upon NFPA 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International’s (CFAI) Fire and Emergency Services Self-Assessment Manual standards for a suburban population density classification.

Appraisal

The Standards of Cover has effectively identified technical rescue response time and deployment objectives based upon the risk level of the event. Columbus Fire and Rescue has a minimum staffing level of 19 (including the Battalion Chief) as recommended by the MS State Rating Bureau. CFR has on-duty technician level trained personnel for a moderate risk level event. This includes support from operations trained engine company personnel (non-team members) that will be used in support and logistical functions. High risk level events in a multiple dive event, hazardous materials, and structural collapse would necessitate the re-call of off-duty technicians.

The department has maintained a minimum equipment cache necessary to perform technical rescues. Team equipment is based upon FEMA Typed Resource Guides and competencies allowed by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards such as NFPA 1006 and NFPA 1670. An equipment inventory has been developed and maintained to reflect current discipline inventory. Equipment needs have been identified in annual program reports.

The following table reflects the total number of technical rescue responses:

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	2013
<u>Overland SAR</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	1
<u>Water Related</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>	6
<u>All Other Tech. Rescue</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	0
<u>Totals</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>8</u>	7

Response time objectives have been established based upon NFPA 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International recommendations. Benchmark and baseline objectives for this program are based upon a suburban municipality population density. Baseline response time performance was based upon an analysis period from 2010 through November, 2013.

The following table reflects department baseline performance for technical rescue events.

Technical Rescue - 90th Percentile Times – Baseline Performance		2010 - 2013	2013	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	2:11	2:46	1:32	2:04	2:11
Turnout Time	Turnout Time 1st Unit	1:46	2:06	1:38	2:00	1:31
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	4:28	4:38	4:44	4:00	2:00
	Travel Time Concentration	7:53	5:32	12:32	8:45	5:11
Total Response Time	Total Response Time Distribution	7:12	7:01	6:27	7:20	5:00
	Total Response Time Concentration	12:32	10:46	17:15*	13:14	8:08

When reviewing the individual components of total response time, it is evident that two response time elements have negatively impacted total response time performance; call processing and turnout times. Call processing has exceeded the objective by 1 minute and 11 seconds. Call processing is handled by the Lowndes County E-911 Communications Center. Turnout time has been exceeded by 26 seconds. The department has initiated actions to address call processing and turnout time performance. These actions resulted in improvements in 2012; however, alarm processing and turnout times increased in 2013. This increase is being analyzed at this time. Another point of concern is the total response time of ERF units. Three factors must be considered that affect ERF total response time. First, technical rescue equipment is stored on trailers; however, these trailers must be connected to prime movers. This connection delays ERF turnout times. Second, all technical rescue equipment is stored at Station 2. Depending on incident location, travel times may be influenced more so than other incident types. Finally, the department responded to only 35 technical rescue events over a four year period. Of this total, only 18 incidents required team equipment. This low incident response does not support an

adequate database upon which any substantial conclusion may be drawn due to the possibility of excessive outliers skewing response time performance.

Because baseline travel response times have been met, the department has lowered its travel time benchmarks in an effort of continual self improvement. Travel times for first due and ERF units reflect this change. Adjustments were also made to total response time.

Technical Rescue Benchmarks			
Benchmark Criterion	Response Time Objective		Performance
Alarm handling	1:00		90%
Turnout time	1:20		90%
	1st Due	ERF	Performance
Travel Time	<u>4:15</u>	7:30	90%
Total Response Time : <u>Low and Moderate Risks</u> <u>High Risk (technician / mutual aid recall)</u>	5:45 5:45	12:00 60:00	90%

First –Arriving Unit Total Response Time for All Technical Rescue Risks: For 90% of all calls for technical rescue services, the total response time of the department’s first arriving unit, staffed with a minimum of three personnel shall be: 5 minutes 45 seconds in suburban population areas. The first arriving unit shall be capable of providing rescue services to stabilize the incident and extricate patients from the emergency situation.

The Effective Response Force (ERF) Total Response Time for All Rescue Risks: For 90% of all calls for rescue services, the total response time consisting of the appropriate number of personnel to meet critical tasking for low and moderate risks shall be 12:00; for high risk level events the total response time consisting of the appropriate number of personnel to meet critical tasking that includes the recall of off-duty technicians shall be 60:00. The ERF shall be capable of providing rescue services to stabilize the incident and extricate patients from the emergency situation.

Plan

The department will continue to provide competent staffing levels and equipment necessary to meet technical rescue needs. The department will analyze response times to remain compliant with NFPA and CFAI recommendations and department benchmark goals. The Accreditation Manager will meet with the Lowndes County E-911 Direct to examine factors that negatively impact alarm handling performance. Based upon these findings, the E-911 Director will implement processes to improve alarm handling times. The Accreditation Manager and command staff will examine factors that negatively impact achieving benchmark standards. Based upon these findings, the command staff will implement steps to improve response time performance. The Fire Chief will assess the effectiveness of each program through annual reports provided by the Team Training Coordinators and the Special Operations Chief.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

NFPA 1006

NFPA 1670

CFR Technical Rescue Team Rosters

CFR Technical Rescue Team Equipment

FEMA Typed Resource Guides

CFR Technical Rescue Response Time Fractals

5E.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for technical rescue and to be compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

Description

The department maintains a technical rescue equipment cache necessary to provide the stated level of response identified in Standards of Cover. The equipment cache is based on FEMA Typed Resource Guides and operational tasks allowed by NFPA 1006 and NFPA 1670. The goal of the department is to maintain equipment to meet FEMA Type II or Type III discipline requirements. Technical rescue equipment is stored on trailers in the department’s Technical Rescue Building located at Station 2. Technical rescue equipment is documented on Team Inventory Sheets located on each trailer.

Appraisal

The department has purchased much of its technical rescue equipment through Homeland Security grants. This funding has allowed the department to develop and provide technical rescue programs not already established. The following table identifies current team typing levels based upon FEMA typing guides.

<u>Technical Rescue Program</u>	<u>FEMA Type</u>
Dive	Not Typed
Rope / confined space	Not applicable
Structure Collapse	III
Overland Search and Rescue	II
Swift-water	III
Trench	Not applicable

The dive team is not typed because the team does not perform deep water dives (>60'). An inventory of team equipment has been maintained by the Special Operations Chief. Discipline equipment is inventoried on scheduled cycles and preventative maintenance is performed based upon manufacturer recommendations. All technical rescue equipment is stored in the Technical Rescue Building located at Station 2. Equipment has been placed on team trailers for rapid response.

Plan

The department will continue to identify and provide equipment necessary to meet each programs stated level of response. Equipment needs will be identified on annual program reports provided to the Fire Chief.

References

FEMA Typed Resource Guides

CFR Technical Rescue Team Equipment Spreadsheet

NFPA 1006

NFPA 1670

5E.3 Supplies and materials allocation is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet technical rescue operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains supplies and materials necessary to support each technical rescue team operational needs. These supplies and materials are used to supplement technical team equipment or are used in preventative maintenance. The department provides for these supplies through the annual budgeting process and through Homeland Security maintenance grants.

Appraisal

The department has identified supplies and materials necessary to support or supplement technical rescue equipment. The department maintains materials and supplies that include oil mix for fuel, bar oil for chain saws, extra propellers for the dive boats, and test/inspection kits. The department has lumber to support structural collapse and trench rescue needs. These materials and supplies are maintained at the Technical Rescue Building. Supplies and materials needs assessment has been identified in the appraisal and equipment needed section of the annual program reports provided by the technical rescue team coordinators.

Plan

The department will continue to provide supplies and materials necessary to support and supplement technical rescue needs. These supplies and materials will be identified on annual program reports provided to the Fire Chief.

References

CFR technical rescue annual program reports
CFR Annual Budget
MS Homeland Security Grants
CFR Technical Rescue Supplies and Materials List

5E.4 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to accomplish the stated level of response for technical rescue incidents. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains standard operational guidelines for technical rescue response. These guidelines are identified by CFR Procedures 205.01 through 205.03. Additionally, CFR Policy 201.01 mandates the use of an incident management system for all technical rescue incidents. The department addresses program response time performance and critical tasking levels in the Standards of Cover. Regional responses by the technical rescue disciplines are guided by local mutual aid agreements, the State Mutual Aid Compact (SMAC) agreement, and guidelines provided by the MS Office of Homeland Security.

Appraisal

Policies that govern technical rescue incidents have adequately addressed program needs through incident management, personnel, apparatus deployment, and team operational practices. Each technical rescue team guideline was reviewed and updated in 2013. Team members have access to these guidelines. Mutual aid and state agreements has provided guidelines for team regional and state deployments.

Plan

The department will continue to provide guidelines for technical rescue events. These guidelines will be reviewed by the Special Operations Chief and Technical Rescue Team Coordinator on an annual basis. These guidelines will be amended to reflect needed changes.

References

CFR Policy and Procedures Manual, Volume 2: Emergency Operations

CFR Procedure 205.02 through 205.07

MS Office of Homeland Security State Technical Rescue Deployments

5E.5 Minimum training and operational standards are established and met for all personnel who function in the technical rescue program.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue establishes minimum training requirements for department personnel. The training requirements are identified in each team's standard operating guideline. Training competencies are based on nationally recognized standards that include National Fire Protection Association standards 1001, 1006, and 1670. All department personnel are to be trained to the awareness and operations level for each technical rescue discipline. The department maintains technician level personnel to accomplish program objectives. Team technicians also receive supplemental training through courses at the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium and other nationally recognized training facilities such as the ROCO and Dive Rescue.

Appraisal

The department has identified minimum training requirements to meet program needs. These training requirements support the tiered response system of the department as well as meeting the critical tasking for all technical rescue risk level events. The department has effectively used awareness and operations level trained personnel to supplement team technicians. These personnel serve in logistical and other support functions.

Plan

The department will continue to require minimum training requirements for all line personnel. These requirements will be identified in Technical Rescue Team SOGs. The department will provide technician level personnel to meet program needs.

References

CFR Technical Rescue Team SOGs
CFR Technical Rescue Team Rosters
NFPA 1001, 1006, and 1670

5E.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the technical rescue program.

Description

The department utilizes Fire Programs as its Records Management System. Incident information is entered into Fire Programs through the Incident Reporting Module. Fire Programs allows for the generation of system reports that may be used for basic program analysis. The department also utilizes StatsFD for data analysis. This software is capable of generating enhanced data analysis reports that include response time performance.

Appraisal

Fire Programs and StatsFD software has effectively provided for program analysis. Fire Programs has provided a capable tool in program analysis through basic and customized reports. Fire Programs is used in meeting NFIRS reporting requirements. StatsFD has provided the department with an enhanced analysis capability by providing numerous trend reports in text, graph, and 3D modeling in dynamically defined districts (3D districts). These districts have enabled analysis within specific Station Response Areas (SRAs) and Emergency Service Number (ESN) response districts.

Plan

The department will continue to analyze program effectiveness through data provided by Fire Programs and StatsFD software.

References

Fire Program RMS

StatsFD

5E.7 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the technical rescue program. (CC)

Description

Technical Rescue programs are assessed on an annual basis through the submission of program reports to the Fire Chief. These annual reports provides an overall assessment of the program by outlining program goals, objectives, performance measurements, current condition, and future needs. Each of these components allows for effective analysis of the program. This report provides the basis for program funding allocations during the budget process.

Appraisal

Prior to the accreditation process, the Technical Rescue programs had no formal written goals, objectives, or performance measurements. Program evaluation focused only on output results such as number of incidents responded to. In 2012, technical rescue annual reports included goals, objectives, and performance measurements to determine program effectiveness.

Additionally, the due date for these reports was changed from December to May to correspond with the budget process cycle. Using the evaluation parameters identified, team objectives have been focused on three main elements:

- Response time benchmarks
- Trained personnel
- Equipment necessary to support technical rescue operations

Performance measurements have documented quantitative data for each of these elements.

- StatsFD tracks response time performance for each technical rescue program
- The department tracks, by shift, personnel that have been trained at the awareness, operations, and technician level
- Each team has maintained equipment necessary to support team operations (See FEMA team typing). The appraisal has listed equipment that has been lost/damaged and acquired from the previous year. Future equipment needs are also identified.

The appraisal section contains a narrative addressing objectives and performance measurements that were met. The appraisal also addresses training, equipment, and program needs which form the basis for program recommendations.

Plan

The Technical Rescue Coordinators will continue to provide annual reports to the Fire Chief as part of program evaluation. Technical rescue annual reports will continue to provide the basis for program funding.

References

CFR Technical Rescue Annual Program Reports

- Dive Rescue

- Rope Rescue/Confined Space

- Overland Search and Rescue

- Structural Collapse

- Swift Water

- Trench Rescue

StatsFD Technical Rescue response time reports

CFR Technical Rescue equipment inventories

CFR Technical Rescue Rosters

Category V

Criterion 5F: Hazardous Materials (Hazmat)

The agency operates an adequate, effective, and efficient hazardous materials program directed toward protecting the community from the hazards associated with fires and uncontrolled releases of hazardous and toxic materials.

NOTE: Hazardous material emergencies, spills, releases, or accidents have become a major function of fire service agency activity. Hazardous materials response is a complex undertaking, and considerable knowledge and resources are required to cope with these types of emergencies. Such incidents may require the integration or coordination of several agencies. The local fire agency has generally become the lead agency during the destabilized emergency portion of the incident.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides response capabilities to hazardous material incidents for transportation and fixed facility locations. The Special Operations Chief is responsible for program management and establishes program goals and objectives. The Special Operations Chief is assisted by the Hazardous Materials Team Coordinator.

The Hazardous Materials Team has sufficient resources to effectively provide mitigation capabilities in chemical release and WMD incidents. The team is staffed by technician level personnel and supplemented by department members trained to the Operations level. The team is supported through a mutual aid agreement as part of a tri-county alliance. The team is also part of a statewide response system.

The Special Operations Chief evaluates the effectiveness of the program through annual reports provided to the Fire Chief. This evaluation ensures that the program remains aligned with the department's mission. The Special Operations Chief is responsible for identifying equipment and materials needed to support program requirements. The program is supported through local, regional, and state grant appropriations.

5F.1 Given the agency's standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of hazardous materials emergency incidents. (CC)

Description

CFR establishes its hazardous materials deployment objectives through the Standards of Cover (SOC) document. Personnel training and equipment is based upon national standards.

Department personnel achieve awareness and operations level hazardous materials training as part of the basic firefighter curriculum at the MS State Fire Academy. Company officers are required to become Hazardous Materials Technician I certified based upon the skills and competencies required by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 472.

The department maintains a minimum shift staffing level of 19 (including the Battalion Chief) as mandated by the MS Rating Bureau. The department is a member of the Golden Triangle Regional Hazardous Materials Team. This team is a regional tri-county alliance formed with Starkville and West Point Fire Departments. Hazardous materials responses are based upon a 3 tier system. Level I responses involve an engine company staffed with a minimum of 1 Technician I certified personnel while Level II responses involve additional engine companies, on-shift technicians, and team equipment. A Level III response involves a re-call of off-duty technicians and activation of the Golden Triangle Regional Hazardous Materials Team. Incident staffing and apparatus deployments are established by the Critical Tasking List found in Section D of the SOC. Critical tasking is based upon the risk level of the event. The department is also part of MS Task Force II, a statewide response system.

The department maintains a hazardous materials equipment cache to support program needs. This equipment is stored in the department's Technical Rescue building located at Station 2. The department maintains equipment that is consistent with a Type II hazardous materials team using FEMA's resource typing guide as reference. Team equipment supports mitigation and containment operations. Hazardous material site clean-up is contracted to private vendors. Response time performance is based upon National Fire Protection Association 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International's (CFAI) Fire and Emergency Services Self-Assessment Manual standards for a suburban population density classification.

Appraisal

The Standards of Cover has effectively identified hazardous materials deployment objectives based upon the risk level of the event. Columbus Fire and Rescue has a minimum staffing level of 19 (including the Battalion Chief) as recommended by the MS State Rating Bureau. CFR has on-duty technician levels to support low and moderate risk level events. This includes support from operations trained engine company personnel (non-team members) that will be used in logistical and decontamination functions. A high and special risk level event would necessitate the re-call of off-duty technicians and activation of the Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials Team. The following table provides baseline response time performance.

The following table provides for hazardous materials responses:

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	2013
Chemical spills	2	5	1	0
Fuel spills	21	8	14	7
Natural gas leaks	29	27	18	9
Other haz-mat	1	6	7	2

Response time objectives have been established based upon NFPA 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International recommendations. Benchmark and baseline objectives for this program are based upon a suburban municipality population density. Baseline response time performance was based upon an analysis period from 2010 through November, 2013.

The following table reflects department baseline performance for technical rescue events.

Hazardous Materials - 90th Percentile Times – Baseline Performance		2010 - 2013	2013	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	2:54	2:12	2:26	4:02	3:57
Turnout Time	Turnout Time 1st Unit	2:26	1:56	2:11	2:47	2:39
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	4:32	4:10	4:13	4:32	4:35
	Travel Time Concentration	6:20	5:34	5:17	5:51	7:28
Total Response Time	Total Response Time Distribution	8:43	6:39	6:59	9:00	10:00
	Total Response Time Concentration	10:24	7:57	9:51	9:24	11:00

When reviewing the individual components of total response time, it is evident that two response time elements have negatively impacted total response time performance; alarm handling and turnout times. Alarm handling has exceeded the objective by 1 minute and 34 seconds. Alarm handling is handled by the Lowndes County E-911 Communications Center. Turnout time has been exceeded by 1 minute and 6 seconds. The department has initiated actions to address call processing and turnout time performance. These actions resulted in improvements in 2012 and 2013.

Because baseline travel response times have been met, the department has lowered its travel time benchmarks in an effort of continual self improvement. Travel times for first due and ERF units reflect this change. Adjustments were also made to total response time.

Hazardous Materials Benchmarks			
Benchmark Criterion	Response Time Objective		Performance
Alarm handling	1:00		90%
Turnout time	1:20		90%
	1st Due	ERF	Performance
Travel Time	4:15	6:00	90%
Total Response Time	6:45	10:00	90%

First –Arriving Unit Total Response Time for All Haz-Mat Risks: For 90% of all calls for hazardous materials incidents, the total response time of the department’s first arriving unit, staffed with a minimum of three personnel shall be: 6 minutes 45 seconds in suburban population areas. The first arriving unit shall be capable of providing Haz-Mat services to stabilize the situation, stop the escalation of the incident, contain the hazard where applicable, and establish an action plan for the successful conclusion of the incident.

Effective Response Force (ERF) Total Response Time for All Haz-Mat Risks: For 90% of all calls for rescue services, the total response time of the Effective Response Force (ERF) shall be 10 minutes for low and moderate risk level events and 60 minutes for high risk events. The ERF shall be capable of providing hazardous materials services to stabilize the situation, stop the escalation of the incident, contain the hazard where applicable, and establish an action plan for the successful conclusion of the incident.

Plan

The department will continue to provide competent staffing levels and equipment necessary to meet hazardous materials response needs. The department will continue to analyze response times to remain compliant with CFAI recommendations and department goals. The Accreditation Manager will meet with the Lowndes County E-911 Director to examine factors that negatively influence alarm handling times. From these findings, the Accreditation Manager will work with the Director to implement processes to improve alarm handling times. The Accreditation Manager will work with the Fire Chief and command staff to identify factors that negatively

impact turnout times. From these findings, the command staff will implement steps to meet turnout time objectives.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR Master Training Matrix

NFPA 472

CFAI Fire and Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual, 8th Ed.

FEMA Resource Typing Guide

CFR Hazardous Materials Inventory List

5F.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for hazardous materials response and to be compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

Description

The department maintains a hazardous materials equipment cache necessary to provide the stated level of response identified in the Standards of Cover. The equipment cache is based on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 508-4 Typed Resource Guide, competencies allowed by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 472, specific jurisdictional hazards identified through Community Right to Know Tier II reports, and hazards identified in the community risk assessment of the Standards of Cover. The goal of the department is to maintain a FEMA Type II team. The department's equipment cache is stored on a 42' response trailer located in the Technical Rescue Building at Station 2 that allows for rapid deployment. The department also maintains a prime mover for its mobile decontamination unit.

Appraisal

The majority of equipment has been purchased through MS Homeland Security grants. Additional funding has also been provided by the Golden Triangle Regional Hazardous Materials mutual aid agreement and department budget allocations. The department acquired a mobile decontamination unit from Columbus Air Force Base that significantly upgraded the team's decontamination capabilities. Equipment accountability has been maintained by an Equipment Inventory List. The department has equipment to meet the requirements of a FEMA Type II hazardous materials team. Based upon the community risk assessment conducted in Section D of the Standards of Cover and the Tier II reports, this equipment is adequate to meet program needs.

Plan

The department will continue to provide equipment necessary to maintain program needs. The Special Operations Chief will be overall responsible for team equipment and inventory.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

FEMA Guide 508-4, Typed Resource Definitions Fire and Hazardous Materials Resources

NFPA 472

CFR Hazardous Materials Equipment Inventory List

CFR Tier II Reports

5F.3 Supplies and materials allocation is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet hazardous materials response operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

Description

The Standards of Cover and annual program reports establish program objectives. Materials and supplies are allocated to meet these objectives and maintain operational capabilities at the technician level. Engine companies maintain basic equipment that is consistent with awareness and operations level actions. Hazardous material equipment for technician level events is maintained on a 42' equipment trailer for rapid deployment. The department also maintains a reference library on the communications van for research purposes. The department maintains supplies and materials necessary for preventative maintenance of team equipment. The department provides for these supplies through the annual budgeting process and through Homeland Security maintenance grants. During hazardous materials events, the Fire Chief has the authority to purchase supplies and materials for mitigation purposes.

Appraisal

The department has identified supplies and materials necessary to support or supplement the hazardous materials program. Each fire apparatus has been equipped with a pair of binoculars, an Emergency Response Guide (ERG) book, absorbent, and other equipment that may be used in defensive operations. The department has materials and supplies that may be used for technician level operations. The team has maintained supplies and materials for preventative maintenance that have included batteries, filters, calibration gas for air monitors, and test kits for Level A Chemical Protective Clothing. The department has maintained a technical reference library for research purposes. The annual program reports have provided an effective means of requesting needed supplies and materials.

Plan

The department will continue to allocate funds for supplies and materials based upon program objectives. The Special Operations Chief will be responsible for ensuring supplies and materials are available to support program operations. The Hazardous Materials Team Coordinator and

Special Operations Chief will be responsible for ensuring the annual reports identify resources to support program operations.

References

CFR Apparatus Inventory Sheet

CFR Hazardous Materials Equipment Inventory

Golden Triangle Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team mutual aid agreement

Homeland Security grants

5F.4 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the hazardous materials response program. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains Procedures 204.01 through 204.03 to guide hazardous material operations. These guidelines provide the basis for operational procedures by identifying apparatus and personnel staffing deployments. Department Policy 201.01 requires the use of an incident management system to be used during hazardous materials events. Department policy 109.05 establishes procedures to be followed in the event of a chemical or WMD exposure. The department addresses program response time performance and critical tasking levels in the Standards of Cover. The department also follows federal statute 29 CFR 1910.120 and National Fire Protection Association Standard 472 for training requirements.

Appraisal

The above policies have adequately met department needs by providing training requirements and identifying personnel and apparatus deployments for the risk levels that may be encountered. Department policies were written in 2007 and revised in 2013 to reflect current department operations. Team members and department personnel have access to these guidelines. The Standards of Cover has effectively identified response time objectives and resource deployment needs. The department has remained compliant with national statutes and standards.

Plan

The department will continue to operate a hazardous materials program under the guidance of Procedures 204.01 through 204.03. These guidelines will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Hazardous Materials Training Coordinator and Special Operations Chief.

References

- CFR Standards of Cover
- CFR Procedure 204.01 through 204.03
- 29 CFR 1910.120
- NFPA 472

5F.5 Minimum training and operational standards are established and met for all personnel who function in the hazardous materials response program, including for incidents involving weapons of mass destruction.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue establishes minimum training levels for hazardous materials operations. At a minimum, line personnel are trained to the operations level as part of the basic firefighter curriculum at the MS State Fire Academy. Company officers are required to obtain Technician I certification. Training competencies are based upon 29 CFR 1910.120 and NFPA 472 hazardous materials and weapons of mass destruction requirements. The department is in the process of requiring all personnel to obtain Technician I certification. The department encourages additional training for hazardous material technicians provided by the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium and the National Fire Academy.

Appraisal

Minimum training requirements have been clearly identified. All line personnel have been trained to provide defensive capabilities and support team operations. This training has allowed personnel to be used in logistical and other support functions(decontamination). Technician level personnel have been afforded numerous training opportunities through the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium and the National Fire Academy. These training requirements have supported the tier response system used by the department and have adequately met program needs. This training has been documented in the department's Master Training Matrix.

Plan

The department will continue to require training as described. The Special Operations Chief and Chief of Training will coordinate supplemental training opportunities. All training will comply with recognized standards and practices.

References

NFPA 472

MS State Fire Academy Firefighter I and II training curriculum

CFR Master Training Matrix

5F.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the hazardous materials program.

Description

The department utilizes Fire Programs as its Records Management System. Incident information is entered into Fire Programs through the Incident Reporting Module. Fire Programs allows for the generation of system reports that may be used for basic program analysis. The department also utilizes StatsFD for program analysis. This software is capable of generating enhanced reports for data analysis.

Appraisal

Fire Programs and StatsFD software has effectively provided for program analysis. Fire Programs has been used mainly for incident documentation but has provided for program analysis through basic and customized incident reports. StatsFD has provided the department with an enhanced analysis capability by providing numerous trend reports such as graphs and tables in addition to 3D modeling. One advantage of StatsFD software has been data analysis within specific Station Response Area and Emergency Service Number (ESN) response districts.

Plan

The department will continue to analyze program effectiveness through data provided by Fire Programs and 5Alive® software.

References

Fire Program software

StatsFD software

5F.7 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the hazardous materials program. (CC)

Description

The Hazardous Materials program is assessed on an annual basis through the submission of program reports to the Fire Chief. The annual report provides an overall assessment of the program by outlining program goals, objectives, performance measurements, current condition, and future needs. Each of these components allows for effective analysis of the program. This report provides the basis for program funding allocations during the budget process.

Appraisal

Prior to the accreditation process, the Hazardous Materials program had no formal written goals, objectives, or performance measurements. Program evaluation focused only on output results such as number of calls responded to. In 2012, annual program reports included the use of goals, objectives, and performance measures as a means to determine program effectiveness.

Additionally, the due date for these reports was changed from December to May to correspond with the budget process cycle.

The 2013 program report has provided the following program objectives and performance measurements.

Program Objectives:

- All shift personnel shall be trained to the Awareness and Operations level
- All shift personnel shall be trained to the technician level
- Meet response time benchmark objectives
- Maintain an equipment cache necessary to support team operations

Performance Measurements

- All personnel have been trained to the awareness and operations level. This training has been accomplished as part of the MS Fire Academy 1001 training curriculum. Presently, 4 new employees do not have this training (Academy training pending).
- The department has 38 Technician I and 15 Technician II level trained personnel.

- Response time benchmark objectives were met. As a result, travel time and total response time benchmarks were adjusted to reflect a continuous self improvement process. Response time adjustments are documented in the benchmark table.
- The department has maintained an equipment cache necessary to support team operations. Annual program reports identify equipment that is lost/damaged, acquired, and future needs.

The appraisal section contains a narrative addressing objectives and performance measurements that were met. The appraisal also addressed training, equipment, and program needs which form the basis for program recommendations.

Plan

The Special Operations Chief and Hazardous Materials Team Coordinator will continue to provide annual reports to the Fire Chief. These reports will provide the basis for evaluating program effectiveness and allocation of funds to support program needs.

References

Hazardous Materials Program Annual Reports

[CFR Training matrix](#)

[CFR Hazardous materials equipment inventory](#)

[StatsFD hazardous material response time fractal reports](#)

Category V

Criterion 5G: Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The agency operates an EMS program that provides the community with a designated level of out-of-hospital emergency medical care.

NOTE: EMS is a major element of many fire service agencies. Fire service personnel are frequently the first responder to medical emergencies. For that reason, emergency medical response can be organizationally integrated with fire suppression activity. Care should be exercised not to create a priority or resource allocation conflict between the two program activities. Agencies that only provide first responder services must also complete this criterion.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides non-transport Basic Life Support services to the city. This program supports the Advanced Life Support transport service offered by the city's health care provider. National and state standards provide for a standard of care. Response time performance is based upon objectives established by the National Fire Protection Association and Commission on Fire Accreditation International.

The department has adequate resources to effectively provide program services. Personnel are required to obtain NREMT certification. Each apparatus is equipped with an External Automatic Defibrillator, supplemental oxygen with airway adjuncts, and a basic trauma kit.

The department's standard operating guideline clearly identifies the scope of practice allowed. This standard is compliant with national and state guidelines as well as that allowed by the Medical Control Officer through offline medical control protocols.

The department's Record Management System is used to document patient care. The Chief of Training evaluates program effectiveness through annual reports provided to the Fire Chief. This evaluation ensures that the program remains aligned with the department's mission by identifying equipment and materials needed to support program requirements. The program is supported through annual funding appropriations.

5G.1 Given the agency’s standards of response coverage and emergency deployment objectives, the agency meets its staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment deployment objectives for each type and magnitude of emergency medical incidents.
(CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides non-transport Basic Life Support service supporting 5 types of EMS emergencies that include cardiac, respiratory, excessive hemorrhage, unconscious, and motor vehicle accidents (MVAs) with injuries. Each engine company is staffed with Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and equipment necessary to mitigate these emergencies. Patient care is provided within the scope of practice allowed by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) and MS Annotated Code §41-59-5. Each engine company maintains basic medical equipment and supplies that is consistent with the standards of care allowed.

The Standards of Cover (SOC) and national standards establish staffing, apparatus, and response time performance. Incident staffing and apparatus deployments are established by the Critical Tasking List found in Section D of the SOC. Critical tasking is based upon the risk level of the event. Response time objectives are based upon National Fire Protection Association 1710 and Commission on Fire Accreditation International recommendations for a suburban municipal population density classification.

Appraisal

The Standards of Cover has effectively identified EMS deployment objectives for the department based upon the risk level of the event. CFR has a minimum staffing level of 19 (including the Battalion Chief) as recommended by the MS State Rating Bureau. This staffing level has allowed the department to staff 6 engine companies. The department has required all new personnel to become NREMTs. The department has 48 NREMTs. Currently, 10 personnel are awaiting NREMT class. Critical tasking has identified a total of 13 personnel for its highest risk level. CFR shift staffing levels has adequately met the Critical Tasking levels identified in the SOC.

Each apparatus has been equipped with materials and supplies that are consistent with the standards of care allowed. This equipment includes a basic trauma kit, Automatic External Defibrillator, and supplemental oxygen and air adjuncts.

The Standards of Cover has identified the following benchmark and baseline response time objectives. These objectives are based upon NFPA [1710](#) and CFAI recommendations for a suburban municipal population density classification. [Baseline performance was based upon incident data from 2010 through](#) November, 2013.

EMS - 90th Percentile Times – Baseline Performance		2010 - 2013	2013	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	1:54	1:42	1:51	2:02	2:15
Turnout Time	Turnout Time 1st Unit	2:17	1:58	2:04	2:29	2:33
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	4:40	4:23	4:33	5:01	4:44
	Travel Time Concentration	5:59	5:53	6:16	7:00	4:49
Total Response Time	Total Response Time Distribution	7:38	7:02	7:13	8:05	8:15
	Total Response Time Concentration	9:14	8:38	9:15	11:00	8:59

When reviewing the individual components of total response time, it is evident that two response time elements have negatively impacted total response time performance; alarm handling and turnout times. Alarm handling has exceeded the objective by 54 seconds. Alarm handling is handled by the Lowndes County E-911 Communications Center. Turnout time has been exceeded by 1 minute and 17 seconds. The department has initiated actions to address call processing and turnout time performance. These actions resulted in improvements in 2012 and 2013.

Because baseline travel response times have been met, the department has lowered its travel time benchmarks in an effort of continual self improvement. Travel times for first due and ERF units reflect this change. Adjustments were also made to total response time.

EMS Benchmarks			
Benchmark Criterion	Response Time Objective		Performance
Alarm handling (Call Processing)	1:00		90%
Turnout time	1:00		90%
	1st Due	ERF	Performance
Travel Time	4:25	5:45	90%
Total Response Time	6:45	8:45	90%

First Arriving Unit Total Response Time for All Risks: For 90% of all calls for EMS services, the total response time of the department’s first arriving unit (with BLS capabilities), staffed with a minimum of three personnel shall be: 6 minutes and 45 seconds in suburban population areas. The first arriving unit shall be capable of providing medical services that will stabilize the situation and provide care and support to the patient.

Effective Response Force (ERF) Total Response Time for All Risks: For 90% of all calls for EMS services, the total response time of the Effective Response Force (ERF) staffed with the appropriate number of personnel to meet critical tasking shall be: 8 minutes and 45 seconds. The ERF shall be capable of providing medical services that will stabilize the situation and provide care and support to the patient.

Plan

The department will continue to provide EMS services as described. The department will continue to monitor response time performance and implement actions so that the program meets its response time objectives. The Accreditation Manager will meet with the Lowndes County E-911 Director to examine factors that negatively influence alarm handling times. From these findings, the Accreditation Manager will work with the Director to implement processes to improve alarm handling times. The Accreditation Manager will work with the Fire Chief and

command staff to identify factors that negatively impact turnout times. From these findings, the command staff will implement steps to meet turnout time objectives. Once met, the department will adjust the objectives as a means of self improvement in quality service delivery.

References

CFR Standards of Cover

CFAI Standards of Cover Manual, 5th Edition

MS Annotated Code §41-59-5

NREMT Standards of Care

5G.2 The agency defines and provides appropriate and adequate equipment to accomplish the stated level of response for EMS incidents and to be compliant with applicable local, state/provincial and national standards and mandates.

Description

The department provides non-transport BLS pre-hospital care in support of the ALS transport service of Baptist Memorial Hospital. The department responds to 5 types of EMS incidents that include cardiac, respiratory, excessive hemorrhage, unconscious, and motor vehicle accidents with injuries. These responses are consistent with the NREMT scope of practice allowed by the EMS Division of the MS Department of Health (Subchapters 16 and 20 of Title 15, Part 12, Subpart 31 and MS Code §41-59-5) and offline medical control protocols established by the Medical Control Officer.

Each apparatus is equipped to provide intervention in the types of incidents responded to. Each apparatus is equipped with a trauma kit, cervical collars, supplemental oxygen with airway management adjuncts, and an automatic external defibrillator. Appropriate BSI protection is provided for personnel.

Appraisal

The department has maintained equipment to adequately provide pre-hospital BLS services. This equipment is consistent with the scope of practice that has been clearly identified through State mandates and local off-line protocols. BSI protection is compliant with local and national standards.

Plan

The department will continue to equip each apparatus with equipment necessary to provide BLS standard of care services allowed by national, state, and local standards.

References

EMS Division of the MS Department of Health (Subchapters 16 and 20 of Title 15, Part 12, Subpart 31 and MS Code §41-59-5).

BMH Medical Control Director EMS Protocols

5G.3 Supplies and materials allocation is based on established objectives, is appropriate to meet EMS operational needs, and is compliant with local, state/provincial and national standards.

Description

The department maintains a basic supply of medical equipment and supplies necessary to provide non-transport BLS care. The department purchases AED pads/batteries, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, and body substance isolation (gloves, BSI kits). The department maintains a primary inventory at Station 1. Each end station maintains supplies necessary to restock apparatus after EMS incidents. Stations are re-stocked at the first of each month or on an as needed basis. Engine companies may replace supplies directly from Baptist Memorial Hospital (BMH) ambulances. These supplies and materials are consistent with the standard of care allowed by national standards, state law, and local protocols described in Performance Indicators 5G.1 and 5G.2.

Appraisal

The department has maintained adequate supplies necessary to meet program needs. Outlying stations have been restocked at the first of each month from the central inventory at Station 1. Engine companies have also restocked supplies from BMH ambulance units. BHM has provided many basic supplies free of charge; however, the department has purchased required EMS items not supplied by BMH such as AED pads/batteries, stethoscopes, EMS gloves/ BSI kits, etc. Each of the above processes has been effective at maintaining supplies necessary to achieve program objectives.

Plan

The department will continue to maintain an inventory at Station 1 to meet program needs. This inventory will be supplied by BHM and department purchases.

References

MS State Department of Health EMS scope of practice

BMH Medical Control Director EMS Protocol

Station 1 Master EMS Inventory Sheet

5G.4 Standard operating procedures or general guidelines, and standing orders / protocols, are in place to direct EMS response activities and to meet the stated level of EMS response. (CC)

Description

The EMS program is guided by national, state, local, and department guidelines. The National Registry of Emergency Medical Technician curriculum establishes the standards of care allowed by EMTs. MS Annotated Code §41-59-5 establishes the scope of practice allowed within the state. Locally, Baptist Memorial Hospital's Medical Control Officer identifies the scope of practice allowed by the department through off-line medical control protocols.

Internally, there are 6 policies that directly affect the EMS program. CFR Procedures 203.01 through 203.03 provides operational guidelines for EMS responses based upon the risk level encountered. Policy 202.01 mandates the use of an incident management system for every incident. Policy 109.05 establishes the department's infectious control program. Policy 401.02 governs EMT re-certification.

Appraisal

The above policies and guidelines have adequately met department needs regarding EMS operational response and the department's ability to meet its stated level of care. The scope of practice allowed within the state is consistent with national standards of care. The off-line medical control protocols have clearly defined what is allowed within the jurisdiction. The Medical Control Director has remained active in protocol monitoring. Internally, the 6 policies and guides have been effective at providing operational and administrative guidance to meet program needs.

Plan

The department will continue to operate under the guidance of these SOGs and directives. The Fire Chief will ensure that policies and guidelines support program needs and remain consistent with national, state, and local standards, laws, and directives. The Medical Control Director of BMH will be responsible for evaluating off-line medical control protocols

References

NREMT curriculum standards of care

MS Annotated Code §41-59-5

CFR Procedures 203.01 through 203.03 (EMS services)

CFR Policy 202.01: Incident Command

CFR Policy 109.05: Infectious Control

CFR Policy 401.02: EMT Re-certification

BMH Medical Control Director EMS Protocols

5G.5 Online and offline medical control is available to the agency.

Description

The department provides non-transport basic life support pre-hospital care. Medical control is mandated by the MS Department of Health in Appendix 1 and 2 of Title 15, Part 12, Subpart 31. The department's offline medical control is established through protocols authorized by Baptist Memorial Hospital's Medical Control Director. These directives identify the scope of practice that may be provided by department personnel. These protocols are maintained at each station. The department has limited online medical control which is restricted to radio contact with responding BMH paramedics.

Appraisal

The use of online and offline medical control has been effective at providing guidelines concerning patient care. State directives and local protocols have clearly defined patient care through the scope of practice that is allowed under the NREMT curriculum. Off-line medical control protocols have remained consistent with this scope of practice. Personnel have direct access to responding BMH paramedics via an interoperable communications system. This online access has been effective in providing pre-arrival patient care instructions.

Plan

The department will continue to operate under BMH EMS protocols that provide for both online and offline medical control. The Medical Control Director will be responsible for any changes to the current protocol.

References

BMH EMS Protocol

MS Department of Health, Title 15, Part 12, Subpart 31 Appendix 1 and 2.

5G.6 A patient care record is created and maintained for each patient encountered by the EMS system. This report contains patient history, incident history, data regarding treatment rendered, and the patient disposition recorded. The agency must make reasonable efforts to protect reports from public access and maintain them as per local and state/provincial records retention requirements. (CC)

Description

All medical incidents are documented on a hard copy department medical incident form recording basic patient information, patient history, treatment rendered, patient disposition, and a medical refusal statement if applicable. This information is recorded into the EMS module of Fire Programs, the department's Record Management System. Both documentation systems are used internally and is restricted from public viewing. The department maintains medical hard copy records for a period of 5 years as required by the MS Records Retention Schedule for Municipalities.

Appraisal

The incident reports utilized to document EMS incidents have adequately met department needs. Both reports have provided for documentation and retrieval of patient information. The department maintains hard copy records as required by the state's Record Retention Schedule. Electronic records are maintained on a server maintained by the vendor.

Plan

The department will continue to document patient care through individual incident reports and the EMS module of Fire Programs. The department will continue to comply with state requirements for preservation of incident documentation.

References

CFR EMS Incident forms

Fire Programs – EMS Incident Reports

MS Records Retention Schedule for Municipalities

5G.7 The agency has a HIPAA⁴ compliance program in place for the EMS program that meets with federal guidelines and all personnel have been properly trained in HIPAA regulations and procedures. (CC)

Description

Using site sources provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and a written opinion from the law office of Mitchell, McNutt, & Sams (City Attorney), the department is not considered a “covered entity” and is not subject to the Privacy and Security Rules of HIPAA. However, the department maintains strict patient confidentiality and restricts access to personal health information only to those identified by HIPAA as having a legal need for the information. Personnel receive training regarding patient confidentiality as part of the NREMT curriculum and through in-house training. Department Policy 104.12 provides guidance regarding the dissemination of patient information.

Appraisal

The department has recognized the importance of patient confidentiality and its responsibility in safeguarding personal health information. All personnel have been instructed in patient confidentiality as part of the NREMT curriculum and in-house training. Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy 104.12 has clearly stated that the Chief of Training shall approve the dissemination of medical information. The department has two measures in place to restrict viewing of patient information and to protect both hard copy and electronic storage of personal health information. Hardcopy medical incident reports are kept at secure department facilities. EMS records are destroyed through the use of paper shredders in accordance with the MS Retention Schedule,. The department’s electronic RMS is password protected that further limits information access. These measures have effectively protected patient health information.

Plan

The department will continue to ensure patient confidentiality and restrict access to personal health information through the measures established.

⁴ HIPAA=Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

References

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services HIPPA Covered Entity Chart

Mitchell, McNutt & Sams HIPPA Opinion Letter

NREMT training curriculum

Columbus Fire & Rescue Policy 104.12: Information

5G.8 Patient care records receive an independent review and the agency has a quality assurance program in place.

Description

The department maintains an informal process to ensure quality assurance in service delivery. The Chief of Training reviews EMS reports as part of the NFIRS reporting process. The Accreditation Manager reviews EMS reports to ensure accuracy of response time data that is needed in program analysis. Quality assurance is provided through an informal process involving feedback from BMH paramedics or through engine company critiques.

Appraisal

The department has several internal processes to ensure quality assurance. Quality assurance has been accomplished through feedback from BMH paramedics and through engine company post event critiques. The department has conducted training on incident documentation that leads to a quality assurance process. The department does not provide for an external review of incident documentation. To improve quality assurance, the department should implement a formal quality assurance program using BHM as an external examiner to review department incident reports. As part of this program, the department will review on a monthly basis an identified number of incident reports to determine whether personnel are providing care based upon the scope of practice allowed. The department will also adopt an external process for incident review.

Plan

The department will develop a quality assurance program to evaluate patient care records. The Chief of Training will evaluate various processes to ensure that program quality assurance is being met. The Chief of Training will implement a QA program no later than December 31, 2013.

References

CFR EMS incident reports

5G.9 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the EMS program.

Description

The department utilizes Fire Programs as its Records Management System. The EMS module allows for the documentation of incident and patient information. Fire Programs allows for the generation of reports that may be used for basic program analysis. The department also uses StatsFd for enhanced incident analysis. StatsFD is used to identify incident trends, location analysis, and response time performance.

Appraisal

Fire Programs and StatsFD software has effectively provided for program analysis. Fire Programs has provided a capable tool by generating basic and customized reports. These reports include the number of responses made, stations and units involved. StatsFD has provided the department with an enhanced analysis capability by providing numerous trend reports in text, graph, and 3D modeling through dynamically defined districts (3D districts). StatsFD has allowed the department to assess specific Station Response Areas (SRAs) and Emergency Service Number (ESN) response districts. StatsFD has also been used extensively in response time performance (fractiles), concurrent incidents, station and unit reliability, and other accreditation appraisal requirements. The department has not effectively analyzed the specific types of medical responses (i.e. cardiac, respiratory, diabetic, etc.)

Plan

The department will continue to analyze program effectiveness through data provided by Fire Programs and StatsFD software. The Accreditation Manager will analyze specific types of EMS responses in order to effectively assess the EMS program.

References

Fire Program EMS system and custom reports
StatsFD software

5G.10 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the EMS program. (CC)

Description

The EMS program is assessed on an annual basis through the submission of program reports to the Fire Chief. The annual report provides an overall assessment of the program by outlining program goals, objectives, performance measurements, current status, and future needs. Each of these components allows for effective analysis of the program. This report provides the basis for program funding allocations during the budget process.

Appraisal

Prior to the accreditation process, the EMS program had no formal written goals, objectives, or performance measurements. Program evaluation focused only on output results such as call types and frequency of calls. In 2012, the department implemented program goals, objectives, and performance measures as a means to determine program effectiveness. Additionally, the due date for these reports was changed from December to May to correspond with the budget process cycle. Program reports for 2013 include the following objectives and performance measures.

Program Objectives

- The department will transition all department EMT-Bs to the national EMT level
- Meet response time benchmark objectives identified by the Standards of Cover
- Maintain equipment necessary to meet emergency operations

Performance Measurements

- The department has 66 (of 72) personnel transitioned to the national EMT standard. The remaining 6 are awaiting initial EMT training (new employees)
- The department has maintained equipment necessary to support emergency operations. The department has added portable disposal suction equipment to all apparatus.
- The department has met response time benchmark objectives. Travel and total response time benchmark objectives were adjusted to reflect a continuous self improvement process. Benchmark objectives are identified the in above benchmark table.

The appraisal section contains a narrative addressing objectives and performance measurements that were met. The appraisal also addresses training, equipment, and program needs which form the basis for program recommendations.

Plan

The Chief of Training will continue to provide annual reports to the Fire Chief regarding program effectiveness. The Chief of Training will continue to evaluate program goals and objectives.

References

EMS Program Annual Reports

[CFR training matrix](#)

[CFR apparatus equipment inventory](#)

[StatsFD EMS response time fractal reports](#)

Category V

Criterion 5H: Domestic Preparedness Planning and Response

The agency operates an all-hazards preparedness program that includes a coordinated multi-agency response plan, designed to protect the community from terrorist threats or attacks, major disasters, and other large-scale emergencies occurring at or in the immediate area.

Summary

The Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency (LCEMA) maintains two response plans that address domestic preparedness. These plans are the Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan (LCHMP) and the Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (LCCEMP). The LCHMP addresses domestic preparedness through a jurisdictional vulnerability assessment of potential natural and man-made disasters as well as identification of critical infrastructure resources. The LCCEMP focuses on preparedness planning, incident management, and response. Under the provisions of state law, Columbus Fire and Rescue adopts these plans in domestic preparedness and mitigation response.

The jurisdiction maintains domestic preparedness through several processes. First, Lowndes County emergency agencies follow the concepts to the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Each agency requires personnel to become NIMS compliant, which is tracked through the use of NIMSCAST reports. Second, the jurisdiction maintains interoperable communication equipment allowing for coordination between agencies during emergency events. Third, the response capabilities of the jurisdiction are assessed through annual multi-agency exercises and drills. These exercises include regional emergency agencies.

To support large scale emergency events, the jurisdiction maintains a list of public and private assets which are identified in the LCCEMP, the Statewide Mutual Aid Compact (SMAC) Agreement, Web EOC, and the MS Office of Homeland Security (MS OHS).

5H.1 The agency publishes an all-hazards plan that defines roles and responsibilities of all participating departments and/or external agencies. An appropriate multi-agency organizational structure is identified and authorized to carry out the all-hazards plan predetermined functions and duties. (CC)

Description

MS Code Annotated §33-15-14 mandates each county develop and maintain an all-hazards plan consistent with the State's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. This code allows municipalities the option to use this plan or develop a separate plan. The city has adopted the Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (LCCEMP) as its all-hazards plan. The LCCEMP identifies both man-made and natural disaster events. This plan uses Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) to define individual agency roles and responsibilities. During significant events, agencies from the county and city staff the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) using a Unified Command structure consistent with NIMS concepts.

Appraisal

The LCCEMP has adequately met jurisdictional needs for an all-hazards mitigation plan. Agencies have worked closely with the Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency in developing and maintaining the CEMP. This plan has identified 16 potential man-made or natural disaster events. The use of ESFs has been effective at identifying agency functions. The use of the EOC as a central command center during weather related events has been effective at coordinating actions with the various agencies involved. The CEMP is reviewed on an annual basis.

Plan

Columbus Fire and Rescue will continue to use the LCCEMP as its all-hazard plan. The LCCEMA Director will review the CEMP on an annual basis. The EOC will continue to be used as a joint command location utilizing a Unified Command for incident management.

References

Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
MS Code §33-15-14

5H.2 The agency is compliant with the National Incident Management System⁵(NIMS) and its operational methods are compatible with all external response agencies.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue requires all members to obtain NIMS training. CFR Policy 201.01: Incident Command requires all members to obtain IS 700, IS 800, ICS 100, and ICS 200 training. Company officers are required to obtain ICS 300 training. Command staff personnel are required to obtain ICS 400 training. NIMS compliance is documented through the use of the NIMSCAST reporting system. The Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency is responsible for coordinating and submitting the NIMSCAST report. All emergency response agencies require NIMS training as part of the Lowndes County IMS Standard Operating Guide.

Appraisal

As of July 1, 2013 all members with the exception of four recently hired members have obtained IS 700, IS 800, ICS 100, and ICS 200 training. All company officers have achieved IS 300. Presently, 5 of 6 command staff members have obtained ICS 400 training. The use of NIMSCAST has effectively documented NIMS training of all emergency agencies. The use of NIMS has worked well during emergency incidents as well as multi-jurisdictional exercises.

Plan

The department will continue with its present NIMS requirements. The department will schedule training to accomplish 100% compliance no later than December 31, 2013. The governing body will ensure all elected officials and department heads are NIMS compliant.

References

CFR Policy 201.01: Incident Command
Lowndes County 2012 NIMSCAST Report
Lowndes County IMS Standard Operating Guide
CFR Training Matrix

⁵ Federal Emergency Management Agency, Retrieved May 26, 2009 from About the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Web Site: <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/AboutNIMS.shtm>

5H.3 The necessary outside agency support is identified and documented.

Description

The Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (LCCEMP) maintains a current list of local and private agency resources that may be used during emergency events. The department maintains mutual aid agreements with local and regional fire agencies to support department operations. The Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency (LCEMA) identifies statewide resources through three sources that include the Statewide Mutual Aid Compact (SMAC) Agreement, Web EOC, and the MS Office of Homeland Security (MS OHS). Each of these sources maintains a statewide data base of resources and assets.

Appraisal

The above processes have adequately identified outside support and resources that may be requested for events that overwhelm the jurisdiction's mitigation capabilities. The CEMP, SMAC, and MS OHS are updated on an annual basis. The use of the Web EOC has provided a "real time" resource request and asset tracking capability.

Plan

The department will maintain current mutual aid agreements. The LCEMA will continue to provide resource information to the SMAC and Web EOC. The department, a member of the MS OHS regional response system, will provide annual resource updates.

References

Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
CFR mutual aid agreements
MS SMAC Agreement
Web EOC

5H.4 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct domestic preparedness planning and response activities. (CC)

Description

The Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) and Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan address domestic preparedness planning and response. The CEMP establishes fundamental policies for planning, incident management, and response. The Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan addresses domestic preparedness through the hazard planning process, the development of a community profile, and a risk assessment identifying potential jurisdictional hazards.

Appraisal

Both plans have met jurisdictional and department planning and response needs. The CEMP has effectively identified response procedures to be used during jurisdictional emergencies through the use of ESFs, which specify agency mitigation responsibilities. The CEMP has been tested annually through multi-agency exercises and through emergency incidents involving natural weather and bomb threat emergencies. Regarding domestic preparedness planning, the Hazard Mitigation Plan has identified 12 potential natural and man-made events that pose a threat to the community. CFR response responsibilities have remained consistent with ESF 4, Fire Departments.

Plan

Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency will review the CEMP and Hazard Mitigation Plan on an annual basis. These plans will be tested through annual exercises and actual emergencies. Post incident critiques will be held to identify specific issues.

References

The Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)
Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan

5H.5 Processes are in place to provide for interoperability with other public safety agencies in the field including portable, mobile, and fixed communications systems, tools, and equipment. (CC)

Description

The Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center operates the fixed radio system. This system maintains UHF and VHF radio frequencies to communicate with jurisdictional agencies that include city/county fire, city/county law enforcement, public works, and Baptist Memorial Hospital Ambulance Service. This system contains county wide repeater towers to provide radio coverage. The communication center is equipped with an ACU 2000, a gateway device capable of linking various jurisdictional and regional agencies radio frequencies.

All Columbus Fire and Rescue apparatus and vehicles are equipped with mobile radios. All command staff and line personnel are issued personal hand held radios. These UHF radios are programmed with agency specific and city/county common frequencies that allows for interoperability. The department also maintains a mobile communications van capable of supporting interoperable field communications through UHF and VHF radios, a UHF repeater system, an ACU 2000 gateway device, (1) aviation radio, (1) 800 mhz radio, and (1) satellite phone. This van may also be used as a mobile interoperable command and control center. Columbus Fire and Rescue is part of the Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials response team. Each entity of this partnership maintains a compatible equipment cache (i.e. decontamination, monitoring and testing equipment, chemical protective clothing, SCBAs, etc.) that allows for operational interoperability.

The jurisdiction operates under the Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. This plan identifies interoperable communications as part of its mitigation strategy. Each year, Lowndes County conducts a multi-jurisdictional exercise involving local and regional assets that tests interoperable communication capabilities.

Appraisal

The current processes have been used to effectively identify, plan, and provide for interoperable communication capabilities. Interoperable communications have been used effectively in multi-agency exercises, local emergencies (bomb threats), and regional emergencies (civilian airplane

crash, hazardous materials event). Columbus Fire and Rescue has two communications specialist that has effectively managed exercises and emergency scenes by developing a communications plan in accordance with the MS Interoperable Communications Plan. Due to changing communication policies, the jurisdiction should research 800 MHZ systems and other communication technologies.

Plan

The Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center will continue to provide fixed communication assets. The department will continue to use communication equipment that is interoperable with other agencies. The jurisdiction, including CFR, will continue to participate in local and regional exercises that test interoperable communication capabilities.

References

Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Lowndes County Annual Emergency Hazard Exercises

Lowndes County Jurisdictional Frequency List w/interoperable channels

5H.6 A process is in place to record information and provide data on needed resources, scope, nature of the event, and field resources deployment.

Description

The Emergency Operations Center is established to direct emergency operations during significant events. Information is provided through E-911 calls and field reports provided by agency units. Information is documented through the Lowndes County E-911 CAD system and damage reports generated by the Lowndes County EMA that includes an initial damage report (DR 1) and a situational damage report (DR 2). The EOC uses an electronic Incident ICS workbook (Excel) to identify and manage resources (ICS 215). The EOC also uses the State Mutual Aid Compact Agreement and Web EOC to identify statewide resources that are available. The Web EOC and Incident ICS workbook provides for permanent incident documentation.

Appraisal

The use of the EOC during significant events has been effective at managing significant events. The EOC has been able to determine the scope of the event through citizen and field reports. The EOC is staffed by agency members and has allowed for a prioritization of incident needs and deployment of resource units. The use of ICS form 215 tracks agency units. The use of the SMAC agreement and Web EOC has allowed the center to identify potential resources available at the state level. The Web EOC also has allowed for resource tracking of assets. However, one area may be improved. Initial damage reports are provided by field units. These units do not have windshield damage assessment forms to properly document event information. The use of these forms would greatly aid the EOC in determining the initial scope of the incident as well as serving as a record of events.

Plan

The EOC will continue to use the processes in place for data collection and request/deployment of resources. Upon meeting with emergency agency heads, the EMA Director will determine the need of placing windshield damage assessment forms in field units no later than January 31, 2014.

References

MEMA Damage Assessment Form DR 1

MEMA Damage Assessment Form DR 2

Excel Incident ICS workbook

Web EOC

MS SMAC

5H.7 The agency periodically conducts operational tests of and evaluates the all-hazards plan and the domestic preparedness program.

Description

The Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency coordinates an annual exercise involving a multi-jurisdictional response that includes municipal, county, and regional emergency agencies and private sector organizations. These exercises are conducted to remain compliant with MS Code Annotated §33-15-14 Subsection 2(a)(vii) which mandates that each county receiving state Emergency Management Planning Grant funds conduct at least one exercise on an annual basis that tests the deficiencies from the previous exercise(s). Exercise documentation is provided for on the Emergency Management Exercise Reporting System (EMERS) form.

Appraisal

The annual exercises coordinated by the Lowndes County EMA have effectively tested the operational planning and mitigation capabilities of area agencies by focusing on catastrophic and terrorism events requiring multi-agency coordination. For example, these exercises have involved not only various emergency agencies but also private/community organizations such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Golden Triangle Regional Airport, Baptist Memorial Hospital, and MS University for Women. These exercises have also included regional fire and law enforcement assets. At the end of the exercise, a post exercise critique is conducted to identify needed changes in operational procedures or required resources.

Plan

The Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency will continue to coordinate annual exercises testing the operational planning and mitigation capabilities of local and regional resources. These exercises will include local and regional emergency agencies. CFR will continue to participate in these exercises.

References

MS Code of 1972 §33-15-14 Subsection 2(a)(vii): Preparation and maintenance of state comprehensive emergency management plan.

Lowndes County Emergency Management Exercise Reporting System (EMERS) forms

5H.8 The agency conducts and documents a vulnerability assessment and has operational plans to protect and secure the agency's specific critical infrastructure, including but not limited to materials and supplies, apparatus and facilities security, fuel, and information systems.

Description

The Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan provides a jurisdictional vulnerability assessment identifying the potential for natural events, a list of critical infrastructures, and a strategy to respond to and mitigate emergency incidents. This plan supplements the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), which identifies resources to be used during these events. The Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan is updated on a five year cycle.

Appraisal

The Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan has adequately met jurisdictional vulnerability planning needs. This plan has provided an overall numerical risk rating for 12 identified potential hazards. This plan also identified approximately 65 critical infrastructures within city limits. This plan has provided an effective tool for operational planning while the CEMP has provided for mitigation planning and response. The Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan is at the end of its operational cycle and is due for update in 2014.

Plan

The jurisdiction will maintain a vulnerability assessment. The Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency will maintain this document. The Lowndes County EMA Director will ensure that the plan is updated at the end of its operational cycle.

References

Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Category V

Criterion 5I: Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Services

The agency operates an adequate, effective and efficient program directed toward an aviation accident or incident occurring at, or in the immediate area.

This criterion report should be completed by agencies that have direct responsibility for operating programs that provide aircraft crash/rescue protection on airfields, or that have identified an aircraft emergency in the immediate area as a highly probable hazard in Category II, "Assessment and Planning." Simply because aircraft fly over the jurisdiction is not reason enough to require this criterion be completed.

If the agency determines this criterion is not applicable, the agency should still provide a brief explanation of why it does not provide this program.

Summary

Columbus Fire & Rescue has no commercial airports within its jurisdiction. Golden Triangle Regional Airport maintains its own aviation rescue and fire fighting force. A private airfield is located within the city limits to accommodate small prop aircraft; however, any mid-flight emergencies are referred to the regional airport if possible.

During the Assessment and Planning phase, the probability of an event involving an aircraft rescue or fire event is considered negligible. Another factor that influences this criterion is the resources provided by Columbus Air Force Base Fire Department (CAFB FD). CAFB FD is located 8 miles north of Columbus and provides mutual aid support to the regional airport and city airfield if requested. CAFB FD is capable of meeting all aviation rescue and fire fighting resources. Therefore, based upon the probability of occurrence and the resources of CAFB FD, the department does not provide aviation rescue and fire fighting. The department will re-evaluate the need for this program should changes in conditions occur.

Category V

Criterion 5J: Marine and Shipboard Rescue and Fire Fighting Services

The agency operates an adequate, effective and efficient program directed toward a marine or shipboard fire or incident occurring at, or in the immediate area.

This criterion report should be completed by agencies that have direct responsibility for operating programs that provide marine and shipboard firefighting and /or rescue services, or that have identified a marine emergency in the immediate area as a highly probable hazard in Category II, Assessment and Planning.

If the agency determines this criterion is not applicable, the agency should still provide a brief explanation of why it does not provide this program.

Summary

Columbus borders the Tennessee-Tombigbee River which is part of the Gulf Inter-coastal Waterway (GIWW) system. Within the jurisdiction is an industrial port access for local manufacturing. The vast majority of traffic on the waterway is small to medium sized recreational craft. Commercial traffic is limited to river tug boats and barges hauling non-hazardous materials/products.

During the Assessment and Planning phase, the probability of an event involving marine/shipboard rescue and fire fighting is considered negligible. The department does not maintain any specialized marine fire suppression equipment. Therefore, the department does not provide marine/shipboard rescue and fire fighting. The department will re-evaluate the need for this program should changes in commercial tonnage and products occur.

Category V

Criterion 5K: Other Programs

The agency may provide an additional operational program designed to provide a specific service to the community in accordance with the agency's stated mission, goals and objectives.

Summary

Columbus Fire & Rescue provides no other programs other than those listed in Criterion 5A through 5H.

Category VI: Physical Resources

Physical resources are defined as the fire stations, training facilities, fire apparatus and other capital expenditures and outlays that make up the property assets of an agency. Special attention is required to obtain and maintain appropriate quality physical resources.

Facilities that are leased and/or jointly operated may also be considered for agency use if this is accomplished in accordance with properly adopted and clearly established policies.

If work is contracted outside the agency and/or to another department within the a parent agency, it is incumbent on the agency to ensure that facilities, equipment, staff, record keeping, and procedures are consistent with the performance indicators and core competencies listed herein.

Criterion 6A: Physical Resources Plan

Development and use of physical resources is consistent with the agency's established plans. A systematic and planned approach to the future development of facilities is in place.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue identifies department goals in its Strategic Plan. These goals are developed to address community expectations, to support program needs, and address specific issues that affect service delivery. To meet strategic goals, the department's Capital Improvement Plan and apparatus replacement schedule identifies physical resource needs. The department's command staff participates in the planning of physical resources through the development of the capital improvement plan and development of the Strategic Plan. In turn, these plans provide the basis for department capital budget requests. The governing body participates in physical resource planning through the annual budget process.

6A.1 The development, construction, or purchase of physical resources is consistent with the agency's goals and the strategic plan.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue identifies physical resource needs through long range planning. This planning involves infrastructure needs and improvements as well as apparatus replacement schedules. These goals are developed to meet community expectations, to support department programs, to address specific issues that affect department services, and provide the community with quality services. Resource goals are identified in the Strategic Plan.

Appraisal

Since 2000, the department has constructed or purchased the following major physical resources that support department programs and services:

- The relocation of Station 2 and Station 3 (relocated due to annexation)
- The construction of the Technical Rescue Building
- Purchase of Engine 21, Engine 22, and Tanker 31
- Construction of two administrative offices for the Fire and Life Safety Educator and the Fire Marshal/Special Operations Chief.
- Purchase of technical rescue equipment trailers, a rescue boat, and other support equipment

These physical resource improvements have supported the achievement of departmental goals. The department recently implemented the CFR Capital Improvement Plan as a supplemental planning aid to the strategic planning and annual budget planning process.

Plan

The department will continue to identify physical resource needs through its strategic planning process, the capital improvement plan, and apparatus replacement schedules. The Fire Chief will be responsible to the completion of these planning processes.

References

CFR Capital Improvement Plan

CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 – 2018

CFR Annual Budgets

6A.2 The governing body, administration and staff are involved in the planning for physical facilities. (CC)

Description

The governing body participates in department infrastructure planning through the annual budget process and adoption of the department's strategic plan. Prior to budget hearings, the department identifies physical infrastructure needs and improvements. These needs serve as the basis for funding requests during budget hearings.

The department's command staff and line personnel participates in infrastructure planning as part of the annual budgeting process and through the development of the strategic plan. The strategic plan identifies infrastructure needs necessary to accomplish program goals and objectives. The Strategic Plan serves as the primary basis for long range planning for the department and the governing authority.

Appraisal

The annual budget process and strategic plan has provided adequate processes to involve the governing body and department staff and personnel in planning for department physical facilities. The strategic plan has addressed infrastructure needs necessary to meet program goals and objectives. The department recently implemented the CFR Capital Improvement Plan as a supplemental planning tool to aid in long range strategic planning. The Strategic Plan and capital improvement plan have allowed for adequate resource planning and participation by department personnel and the governing body.

Plan

The city and department will continue with the processes used to plan and allocate funding for the department's physical resource needs.

References

CFR Capital Improvement Plan
CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 - 2018
CFR Annual Budget

Criterion 6B: Fixed Facilities

Fixed facility resources are designed, maintained, managed, and adequate to meet the agency's goals and objectives.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains nine fixed facilities to support service delivery. These buildings include 5 stations, 1 technical rescue equipment building, 1 shared storage building, and 2 administrative office spaces. Fixed facilities are designed to adequately support current and future needs. Department facilities were built to meet applicable federal, state, and local codes and ordinances at time of construction. Presently, three department facilities are compliant with ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) regarding common use spaces. The city formed a committee to review city facilities that do not meet ADAAG requirements.

Stations are distributed to meet response time performance objectives. Response time benchmarks are based upon Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) recommendations for a suburban municipal classification.

The department addresses station maintenance and care through two policies. These policies ensure stations are periodically cleaned and well kept. Station preventative maintenance and repair is also addressed. Together, these policies ensure that each facility is maintained in a safe and operable condition.

6B.1 Each facility has adequate space for agency functions (e.g., operations, fire prevention, training, support services, administration, etc.)

Description

Columbus Fire and Recue maintains 5 stations, 1 technical rescue equipment building, 1 shared storage building, and 2 administrative office spaces. Station 1 contains the administrative offices of the Fire Chief, Assistant Chief, Chief of Training, and the Administrative Assistant. The 2 administrative offices are used by the Fire and Life Safety Educator, the Public Relations Officer, the Fire Marshal, the Special Operations Chief, and the Accreditation Manager. The Fire and Life Safety office also doubles as the department’s training room. These facilities support the various programs offered by the department that are used to meet organizational goals and objectives.

Appraisal

The department has maintained or constructed facilities necessary to meet organizational goals and provide for service delivery. The following table illustrates facility characteristics.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Constr. Date</u>	<u>Sq. Ft.</u>	<u># Apparatus/Other</u>
Station 1	1981	9000	4
Station 2	2001	6700	2
Station 3	2000	5100	1
Station 4	1960	2200	1
Station 5	1981	3200	2
Tech. Rescue Building	2009	8000	1 / trailers & equipment
Pub. Education Office	2009	2400	2 offices / classroom
Fire Marshal/Ops. Chief	2004	1200	3 offices
Storage Building	1970s	6000	N/A

The department has constructed facilities that adequately support department operations. Station 2 and 3 were constructed with multiple drive-through bays that will allow for additional engine companies to accommodate future growth. The department constructed the Technical Rescue Building to store the department’s technical rescue equipment cache. This building was located at Station 2 to take advantage of the transportation routes that offer rapid responses to local and

jurisdictional incidents. The Public Education office also serves as a classroom for department training. Each office has been furnished with the technology and general office equipment needed for program management. However, one facility improvements was noted. The replacement of Station 4 is needed due to its age and space limitations. This station cannot support additional growth.

Plan

The department will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of its current facilities. Future needs will be identified in the Strategic Plan and documented on the Capital Improvement Plan. The replacement of Station 4 will continue to be identified on the Capital Improvement Plan and considered a department priority. This plan will be utilized during the annual budget process with city administration.

References

CFR Capital Improvement Plan

CFR Budgets (Technical Rescue Equipment Building)

6B.2 Buildings and outbuildings are clean and in good repair and the surrounding grounds are well kept. Maintenance is conducted in a systematic and planned manner.

Description

CFR Policy 601.01: Station Care and Maintenance addresses station maintenance and care. This policy ensures that stations and surrounding grounds are kept clean by daily and weekly cleaning schedules. This policy states that each station is inspected by the Battalion Chief on the first Friday of each month.

CFR Policy 601.02: Facility Maintenance and Reporting describes the procedures to be followed to report problems. This policy ensures that facilities are maintained in a safe manner and the building and equipment performs as designed. Problems are reported to the Battalion Chief and documented in the Station Daily Journal and Battalion Chief Daily Journal. This policy also states that a Battalion Chief inspect stations on a bi-annual basis to document major repair needs that will be included in the annual budgeting process.

Appraisal

These policies have effectively met department needs in caring for and maintaining current facilities. Policy 601.01 has provided for daily and weekly cleaning schedules. Policy 601.02 has provided a process to document needed and major repairs that may require approval during the budget allocation process.

Plan

The department will continue to follow both policies in station care and maintenance. The Fire Chief will review these policies on an annual basis.

References

CFR Policy 601.01: Station Care and Maintenance

CFR Policy 601.02: Facility Maintenance and Reporting

Station Daily Journal

Battalion Chief Daily Journal

6B.3 Physical facilities are adequate and properly distributed in accordance with stated service level objectives and standards of response coverage. (CC)

Description

The department maintains five stations that are located based upon recommendations from the MS State Rating Bureau (MSRB). Each station is strategically placed and designed to meet stated levels of service and response time criteria as outlined in the Standards of Cover for distribution and concentration units. Response time performance are based upon [National Fire Protection Association 1710](#) and Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) recommendations for a suburban municipal classification.

Appraisal

Physical facilities have adequately supported department operations and are properly distributed to meet response time performance objectives for distribution and concentration units. The following table illustrates [response time performance standards for all incidents responded to during the analysis period from 2010 through 2012.](#)

CFR: Baseline Performance		2010 / 2012	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	2:13	1:57	2:14	2:24
Turnout Time	Turnout Time - 1st Unit	2:24	2:07	2:28	2:34
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	4:42	4:30	4:53	4:44
	Travel Time Concentration - ERF	6:46	6:56	7:17	5:47
Total Response Time	Total Response Time Distribution	7:52	7:12	8:04	8:14
	Total Response Time Concentration ERF	10:24	10:25	11:37	9:47

Using CFAI travel time response criteria, the department's baseline performance has met and exceeded recommended performance criteria for distribution and concentration unit travel times. Each station has adequately met department expectations and support program needs with the exception of Station 4. Due to its age and space limitations, Station 4 cannot support additional growth.

Plan

The department will continue to evaluate facility capabilities to support program needs. The department will continue to monitor distribution and concentration unit response times to ensure compliance with response time performance objectives. Additional facilities will be included as part of the department's Capital Improvement Plan.

References

MS State Rating Bureau Station Location Recommendations
CFR Standards of Cover
CFAI Fire and Emergency Service Self Assessment Manual
CFR Station Travel Time Fractal Report

6B.4 Facilities comply with federal, state/provincial and local codes and regulations.
(CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue is responsible for maintaining (5) stations, (2) office spaces, and (1) technical rescue equipment building. Each facility is compliant with the local building code and ordinances at time of construction. In reference to federal mandates, Station 2, Station 3, and the Public Education Division office/classroom are compliant with ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) regarding common use spaces. The Technical Rescue Equipment Building meets ADAAG work space requirements. Other department facilities do not meet ADAAG requirements for common use spaces.

Appraisal

All department facilities, with the exception of Station 2, Station 3, and the Technical Rescue Equipment Building, were constructed prior to 1990. These facilities met local building codes and ordinances at time of construction and have not been altered since construction. Only (3) department facilities have met ADAAG requirements. The remaining (5) do not meet ADAAG requirements. The city formed a committee consisting of the Chief Operations Officer, the Human Resource Director, the Federal Programs Director, and the Director of City Facilities to assess all city facilities for ADA compliance. A plan to address non-compliant buildings is pending.

Plan

The Facility Committee will develop a plan to bring department facilities into ADAAG compliance. This plan will be reflected in the department's Capital Improvement Plan presented to the Mayor and Council during the annual budget process.

References

ADA Accessibility Guideline for Buildings and Facilities

Criterion 6C: Apparatus and Vehicles

Apparatus resources are designed and purchased to be adequate to meet the agency's goals and objectives.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains apparatus to support program needs and meet service delivery objectives. Each apparatus is strategically placed based upon stated levels of service, response coverage objectives, and to mitigate specific hazards found with the station's district. Response coverage standards are based upon response time performance objectives. The department maintains nine apparatus for fire suppression operations, 4 prime movers and support vehicles for technical rescue, and 10 vehicles for administrative purposes.

Apparatus replacement is based upon rating provisions established by the MS Rating Bureau. Apparatus replacements are part of the department's Capital Improvement Plan. The department replaces command staff and support vehicles on an as needed basis. All apparatus replacement requests are subject to Mayor/Council approval. Apparatus specifications for new apparatus are written by the department's Apparatus Committee. This committee is comprised of department members that provide for a diversity of experience and ideas.

6C.1 Apparatus are located strategically to accomplish the stated standards of response coverage and service level objectives. (CC)

Description

Fire department apparatus are located based upon recommendations from the MS State Rating Bureau (MSRB). Each apparatus is strategically placed to meet stated levels of service, response coverage objectives, and to mitigate specific hazards identified by the Community Risk Assessment for that station. The number and type of apparatus response is determined by critical tasking requirements based upon the event type and risk level encountered. Apparatus response time performance is based upon [National Fire Protection Association 1710](#) and Commission on Fire Accreditation International's recommendations for a suburban municipality.

Appraisal

The Standards of Cover has adequately identified response time performance objectives. The following table illustrates department baseline response time performance for all incidents from 2010 through 2012.

CFR: Baseline Performance		2010 / 2012	2012	2011	2010
Alarm Handling	Pick-up to Dispatch	2:13	1:57	2:14	2:24
Turnout Time	Turnout Time - 1st Unit	2:24	2:07	2:28	2:34
Travel Time	Travel Time Distribution	4:42	4:30	4:53	4:44
	Travel Time - Concentration ERF	6:46	6:56	7:17	5:47
Total Response Time	Total Response Time Distribution	7:52	7:12	8:04	8:14
	Total Response Time Concentration ERF	10:24	10:25	11:37	9:47

Apparatus have met distribution and concentration response travel time objectives. This compliance has indicated that apparatus are correctly placed to meet service delivery objectives. Additionally, apparatus have been placed to meet specific hazards. As an example, Ladder 29 is located at Station 1 to support fire suppression operations in ESN 95, the city's "fire district." Additionally, Engine 23 was located at Station 3 to support commercial growth on Highway 45 N.

Plan

The department will continue to place apparatus to support service delivery and mitigate specific hazards within the city. The department will continue to monitor response times to ensure that apparatus are correctly placed to meet department response time performance objectives.

References

MS State Rating Bureau Station Location Recommendations

CFR Standards of Cover

CFAI Fire and Emergency Service Self Assessment Manual, 8th ED

CFR Apparatus Travel Time Fractal Report

6C.2 Apparatus types are appropriate for the functions served, e.g., operations, staff support services, specialized services, and administration.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains an apparatus fleet to support the programs provided by the department. Based upon National Fire Protection Association 1901, department fire suppression apparatus consists of the following: (4) pumpers, (2) pumpers with 50' aerial devices, (1) 95' aerial platform, (1) 2,500 gallon water tender, and (1) reserve pumper.

The department maintains apparatus to support its technical rescue programs. These apparatus include a Ford F550, International DT 570, a communications van, and a 2wd pickup truck. The department also maintains staff/administrative support vehicles that include (2) SUVs, (1) 2wd pickup, (1) 4wd pickup, (5) sedans, and (1) mini-van. The department maintains (1) pumper assigned for public education use.

Appraisal

The department's apparatus fleet has adequately met department needs. Each station has apparatus assigned to meet individual district hazards (i.e. uptown fire district, commercial zones, etc.). The department has apparatus to support technical rescue needs (i.e. prime movers for team equipment trailers, dive boats, and light towers, etc.). Each command staff position has been assigned a vehicle that supports program needs. The department has provided vehicles for training and technical rescue deployments (sedans, SUVs, mini-van).

Plan

The department will maintain an apparatus fleet to support department operations and programs provided. The Fire Chief will evaluate on an annual basis the need for additional apparatus/vehicles or replacement needs.

References

NFPA 1901

CFR Apparatus Inventory List

6C.3 A current replacement schedule exists for all apparatus.

Description

MS Code Annotated §83-3-24 mandates that the MS State Rating Bureau (MSRB) shall consider “mileage, condition, and maintenance” rather than age as the primary factors for apparatus replacement. However, the MSRB recommends primary or first due units having a custom chassis be replaced after 20 years of service due to chassis weakening, motor performance, parts deterioration, and parts availability. For fire suppression rating purposes, the MSRB will not give full credit for apparatus past 20 years of age. No credit will be given for apparatus past 25 years of age. Due to this MSRB fire suppression rating criteria, the department identifies an apparatus replacement schedule as part of its budget and strategic planning process. The department replaces command staff and support vehicles on an as needed basis. All apparatus replacement requests are subject to Mayor/Council approval.

Appraisal

The apparatus replacement strategy has adequately met department needs. All apparatus have been constructed on a custom chassis which provides for maximum allowance. The department did not replace any pumpers or aerials from 2002 through 2009 due to economic conditions. This situation resulted in the department having several apparatus that were past their replacement date. However, recent apparatus purchases have allowed all apparatus to be within their 20 year replacement cycle. Ladder 29 has a 25 year replacement cycle. The following table provides for current apparatus age:

<u>Apparatus / Age</u>	<u>Apparatus / Age</u>	<u>Apparatus / Age</u>	<u>Apparatus / Age</u>
E 21 – 2013	E 22 – 2010	E 23 – 2001	E 24 – 1995
E 25 – 1999	E 30* - 1987	L 29 – 1991	T 31 – 2008

*E 30 is not considered a first due unit

The department recently implemented the CFR Capital Improvement Plan as a supplemental planning tool to support the strategic planning and budgetary processes.

Plan

The department will continue to follow MSRB recommendations for apparatus replacement. The department will include the replacement of L 29 as part of its Capital Improvement Plan.

Apparatus replacement cycles will continue to be identified in the CFR Strategic Plan. The Fire Chief will replace command staff and support vehicles on an as needed basis.

References

MS Code of 1972 §83-3-24

MS State Rating Bureau Fire Apparatus Lifespan & Replacement Letter

CFR Capital Improvement Plan

CFR Strategic Plan

6C.4 A process is in place for writing apparatus replacement specifications that allows for employee input.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue's Apparatus Committee is responsible for writing apparatus specifications. This committee is comprised of (8) members. These members include the Chief of Training, (1) Battalion Chief, (3) company officers, and (3) engineers. This committee provides for employee participation and input in apparatus decisions.

The committee is aided in writing apparatus specifications by using specifications from other fire agencies, presentations made from apparatus manufacturers, and financial direction given by the Fire Chief. All specifications follow NFPA 1901 recommendations.

Appraisal

The use of a formal committee in writing apparatus specifications has adequately met department needs. The diversity of the committee has provided for a wide range of knowledge and experience. During a pre-construction visit for the 2013 apparatus, the committee noted an error by the manufacturer (omitting [1] piece of equipment identified in the specifications). This oversight was corrected.

Plan

The department will continue to use a diverse committee in writing apparatus specifications.

References

CFR 2013 Apparatus Specification Documents

Criterion 6D: Apparatus Maintenance

The inspection, testing, preventive maintenance, replacement schedule, and emergency repair of all apparatus is well established and meets the emergency apparatus service and reliability needs.

Summary

The apparatus maintenance program is based upon preventative maintenance, repairs, and scheduled inspections and testing. The City Garage is responsible for apparatus maintenance and repairs. The department is capable of performing limited general repairs such as bulb and fluid replacement. Preventative maintenance and inspections are based upon manufacturer's recommendations.

The City Garage is capable of meeting city and department apparatus and vehicle repair needs. The facility is separated into a light and heavy duty section. Each section contains equipment, tools, and diagnostic equipment needed to make repairs. The City Garage is staffed with qualified personnel trained in gasoline, diesel, and hydraulic repair. The City Garage Manager is assisted by two lead mechanics and four general mechanics. Repairs are performed when work orders are submitted by city departments. This work order process allows for proper repair documentation and allows for repair accountability. The City Garage uses "Pub Works" software for fleet maintenance. This software provides a list of all vehicles, apparatus, and machinery by department, the generation of daily repair/maintenance reports, scheduled maintenance, current Work Orders, and the status of each order. City department heads have access of this software. The department maintains an internal maintenance program. Apparatus checks, preventative maintenance, and inspections/testing are in accordance with CFR policies. Apparatus inspections and testing (aerial inspections/checks, pump tests) are performed following manufacturer recommendations. Structural certification testing of aerial ladders is conducted every four years by a licensed 3rd party vendor.

The department maintains one reserve apparatus to be used when a front line apparatus is taken out of service for preventative maintenance or repairs. The reserve apparatus is pre-loaded with attack and supply hose, tools, extinguishers, and SCBAs.

6D.1 An apparatus maintenance program is established. Apparatus maintenance is conducted in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and federal and/or state/provincial regulations. Attention is given to the safety, health, and security aspects of equipment operation and maintenance. (CC)

Description

The City Garage and Columbus Fire and Rescue maintain an apparatus maintenance program based upon preventative maintenance, repairs, and scheduled inspections/testing. The Columbus City Garage is responsible for the majority of apparatus maintenance and repairs. The Garage maintains a set of manufacturer Apparatus Maintenance Manuals. Maintenance is based upon manufacturer recommendations. Written directives are in place for apparatus repairs.

The department performs daily and weekly maintenance checks of apparatus in accordance with CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check and Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance. The department also maintains a copy of Apparatus Maintenance Manuals. Department personnel conduct scheduled inspections and testing (i.e. aerial hour checks) based upon manufacturer recommendations. Annual pump tests are conducted in accordance with CFR Policy 602.03: Apparatus Pump Testing. These checks and tests conform to manufacturer and NFPA 1911 recommendations. Certification testing (aerial ladders) is conducted by a licensed 3rd party vendor.

Appraisal

The current maintenance program has met department and city needs. The City Garage has scheduled preventative maintenance based on a 4,000 mile cycle or manufacturer recommendations. The daily and weekly apparatus checks have been effective for ensuring apparatus reliability and for identifying apparatus problems. Department personnel have been allowed to perform limited general repairs such as bulb replacements, adding engine fluids, etc. Apparatus repairs by the city garage have been handled in a timely manner due to the reporting procedures implemented. The maintenance and repair procedures implemented by the City Garage and CFR have ensured reliable and safe operation of apparatus.

Plan

The City Garage and department will continue to provide for an apparatus preventative maintenance, repair, and inspection/testing through current processes in place.

References

CFR Apparatus Pump Tests

CFR Apparatus Preventative Maintenance

Pierce and E-One Apparatus Manuals

CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check

CFR Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance

CFR Policy 602.03: Apparatus Pump Testing

NFPA 1911: Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing and Retirement of In-Service
Automotive Fire Apparatus

6D.2 The maintenance and repair facility is provided with sufficient space and equipped with appropriate tools.

Description

The Columbus City Garage is located at 2502 Bell Ave. This facility is approximately 200'L X 75' W for a total of 14,250 square feet. The facility is separated into light and heavy duty repair sections. The light duty section (9000 sq. ft.) is comprised of 6 bays that includes (1) above ground lift, (1) drive over pit, a parts supply room and an administrative office. This section repairs city fleet vehicles (pick-ups, sedans, etc.). The heavy duty section (5250 sq. ft.) is comprised of 6 bays with drive through capabilities. This section repairs the city's heavy machinery and will accommodate all department apparatus.

Each section is equipped with a variety of repair equipment that includes hand tools, hydraulic jacks, welders, tire repair, and diagnostic instruments. The Garage outsources body work, front end alignments, or complex repairs (i.e. apparatus pumps) using authorized manufacturer repair centers.

Appraisal

The repair facility has adequately met city needs. The heavy duty section was added in 2005. This addition enhanced maintenance and repair capabilities by providing a climate controlled space capable of repairing all city machinery and apparatus. This section also provided for a drive through capability that made available room to maneuver apparatus.

Plan

The City will maintain the current repair facility. The City Garage Manager will make facility recommendations as required.

References

Columbus Garage Aerial Image
City of Columbus Inventory List

6D.3 A system is in place to ensure the regular inspection, testing, fueling, preventive maintenance, and emergency repair for all fire apparatus and equipment.

Description

The City Garage maintains a system to ensure that preventative maintenance and repairs are made to apparatus. Preventative maintenance is based upon miles or manufacturer recommendations. Repairs are made when Work Orders are submitted by the agency. For emergency repairs, mechanics are available 24/7 through on-call procedures.

The department performs daily and weekly maintenance checks of apparatus in accordance with CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check and Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance. Equipment assigned to the apparatus is checked as part of the Daily and Weekly maintenance checks. Qualified department personnel conduct scheduled apparatus inspections and testing (aerial inspections/checks, pump tests). Each apparatus is pump tested on an annual basis. These inspections and tests conform to manufacturer and NFPA 1911 recommendations. Structural certification testing of aerial ladders is conducted every four years by a licensed 3rd party vendor.

Apparatus fuel levels are maintained at $\frac{3}{4}$ full or above per CFR Policy 602.04: Fuel. Fuel is available at the City Garage complex with each apparatus having a key for after hour access.

Appraisal

The current maintenance and repair procedures have effectively met department and city needs. The City Garage has scheduled preventative maintenance based on a 4,000 mile cycle or manufacturer recommendations. The Garage has its own set of manufacturer manuals for reference. The daily and weekly apparatus checks have been effective for ensuring apparatus reliability and for identifying apparatus problems. Department personnel have been allowed to perform limited general repairs such as bulb replacements and adding engine fluids. Apparatus repairs have been handled in a timely manner due to the Work Order reporting procedures. The maintenance and repair procedures implemented by the City Garage and CFR have ensured reliable and safe operation of apparatus.

Plan

The City Garage and department will continue with current maintenance, repair, inspection/testing, and fueling procedures.

References

City Garage Work Orders

Pierce and E-One Apparatus Manuals

CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check

CFR Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance

CFR Policy 602.04: Fuel

Daily and Weekly Maintenance Sheets

NFPA 1911: Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing and Retirement of In-Service
Automotive Fire Apparatus

Certified Testing/Inspection 3rd Party Vendor Records

6D.4 An adequate number of trained and certified maintenance personnel are available to meet the program needs.

Description

The Columbus City Garage employs 8 personnel that are trained and certified to repair department vehicles and apparatus that includes a Shop Foreman, a Lead Diesel Mechanic, a Lead Gas Mechanic, and four (4) Mechanic IIs. The lead mechanics are responsible for major repairs and oversee the Mechanic IIs. These mechanics are certified in diesel, gas, and hydraulic repair. The Garage also employs 1 worker for tire repair and replacement.

Appraisal

The City Garage has employed mechanics that are capable of performing repairs on department apparatus and vehicles. The Garage has made repairs to apparatus and vehicles in an efficient and timely manner during and after work hours. The city garage has no mechanics that are emergency vehicle technician (EVT) certified. For this reason, complex repairs are performed by authorized manufacturer repair centers. Prior to September of 2012, the department had personnel that were certified in fire pump and valve repair. These personnel are no longer with the department. For this reason, pump and valve repair has been contracted to manufacturer authorized representatives.

Plan

The City Garage will continue to make apparatus repairs in-house or contract with authorized manufacturer repair centers when necessary. The City Garage Manager will assess the need to have mechanics EVT certified. The Fire Chief will assess the need for department personnel to be certified in fire pump and valve repair.

References

City Garage Organizational Chart

City Garage Job Descriptions

6D.5 Current standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the apparatus maintenance program. (CC)

Description

The apparatus maintenance program is managed by a written directive from the Garage Manager and department policies. The written directive contains procedures to be followed to report apparatus problems to the City Garage. The department head is responsible for ensuring that these procedures are followed and the proper documentation is completed. CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check and Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance guide department personnel in performing daily and weekly preventative maintenance checks. CFR Policy 602.03: Apparatus Pump Testing addresses annual testing of apparatus fire pumps.

Appraisal

The written directive and department SOGS have been effective at providing guidance to the apparatus maintenance and repair program. Work orders have been effective at reporting apparatus problems and providing documentation that may be used for repair tracking and accountability purposes. Daily and weekly apparatus checks have provided for identification of problems in a timely manner that ensures each apparatus responds and operates in a safe and efficient manner.

Plan

The apparatus preventative maintenance program will continue to be managed by City Garage directives and department SOGs. Directives and SOGs will be reviewed by the Garage Manager and Fire Chief on a scheduled basis.

References

CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check

CFR Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance

CFR Policy 602.03: Apparatus Pump Testing

6D.6 The level of supervision is adequate to manage the program.

Description

The City Garage Manager is a full time position in the city having department head status. The Garage Manager reports directly to the Chief Operations Officer. The Garage Manager is assisted by a Shop Foreman. The Shop Foreman serves as Acting Manager when required and works with the Manager to ensure that Work Orders are completed. The garage has Lead Diesel and Gas Mechanics that are responsible for major repairs within their sections. These Lead Mechanics supervise the Mechanic II personnel.

The department assigns apparatus maintenance to a Battalion Chief as a collateral duty. The Battalion Chief coordinates preventative maintenance with the City Garage, assigns apparatus inspection checks and tests, schedules bi-annual apparatus waxing, and maintains maintenance records. The Battalion Chief documents apparatus repairs in the Battalion Chief Daily Journal.

Appraisal

The supervision of the maintenance program have effectively met city and department needs. The chain-of-command and job responsibilities for both agencies have been clearly defined. The City Garage has qualified mechanics that support preventative maintenance and repair of apparatus.

Plan

The City Garage and fire department will continue with the current supervisory system established.

References

City Garage Job Descriptions

Pub Works Apparatus Maintenance Records

CFR Battalion Chief Daily Journal

6D.7 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the apparatus maintenance program.

Description

The Columbus City Garage's information system is "Pub Works." This software provides many features to manage fleet maintenance that includes a list of all vehicles, apparatus, and machinery by department, the generation of daily repair/maintenance reports, scheduled maintenance, current Work Orders, and the status of each order. This software allows for each department head to access the system to schedule maintenance and repairs. Pub Works provides an analytical capability by creating a repair history for each vehicle and the costs associated with those repairs.

Appraisal

Pub Works was installed in July of 2012. The software is undergoing a trail run using vehicles from Public Works before being implemented city wide. Beta testing has indicated that this software will meet city needs.

Plan

The City Garage will implement Pub Works upon completion of testing.

References

Pub Works Information System

6D.8 The reserve vehicle fleet is adequate or a documented contingency plan with another agency is in place for the event that apparatus must be taken out of service.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains one reserve apparatus to be used when front line apparatus are taken out of service for preventative maintenance or repair. The reserve apparatus is pre-loaded with a full compliment of attack and supply hose, tools, extinguishers, and self-contained breathing apparatus.

The apparatus is kept at Station 3. This apparatus is checked as part of the Weekly Preventative Maintenance Checks as mandated by CFR Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance. The reserve apparatus' fire pump is tested on an annual basis.

Appraisal

The reserve apparatus has met department needs. By having the apparatus pre-loaded, delays in placing the apparatus in service has been prevented. This apparatus undergoes weekly apparatus checks and preventative maintenance in addition to annual pump tests. These checks ensure apparatus reliability.

Plan

The department will maintain a reserve apparatus fleet that meets department's needs.

References

CFR Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance

Reserve R 28 Weekly Maintenance Sheets

Reserve R 28 Equipment List

Reserve R 28 Annual Pump Test

Criterion 6E: Tools and Small Equipment

Equipment resources are adequate and designed and maintained to meet the agencies goals and objectives.

Summary

The department equips each apparatus with equipment and tools to meet program needs. Each apparatus is equipped with a standardized equipment cache based upon NFPA 1901 recommendations. The department maintains specialized tools and equipment to meet program goals such as auto extrication equipment. An equipment inventory check is completed daily in accordance with CFR policy.

The department maintains a tool and equipment replacement schedule based upon fixed schedules, life expectancy, and damage. These replacement schedules have allowed for adequate budget allocations. The department performs general maintenance and testing of equipment following department policies and manufacturer recommendations.

The department maintains equipment and tool accountability through daily equipment checks. Equipment and tools are color coded to identify apparatus assignment. The city maintains an equipment inventory for all tools and equipment that meet cost criteria.

6E.1 Tools and equipment are distributed appropriately in sufficient quantities.

Description

Each apparatus is equipped with a standardized basic tool and equipment/appliance cache necessary to support emergency operations. This cache is based upon NFPA 1901 (Chapter 5 and Chapter 8) recommendations and department needs. Specialized tools and equipment is purchased to support specific program needs. As an example, two engines are equipped with extrication equipment and tools based upon their proximity to major transportation routes. An inventory check of equipment and tools is completed daily in accordance with CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check. Each station is allotted an annual budget for tools and equipment. Annual tool and equipment purchases are established during the annual budget process.

Appraisal

The tools and equipment placed on apparatus and at each station have adequately supported department and program needs. With exceptions to miscellaneous equipment (i.e. water extinguisher, keyhole saw, tin snips), the department follows NFPA 1901 equipment recommendations. The department has exceeded this recommendation in several cases. Each pumper carries a complete set of combination and assorted wrenches (aerial apparatus requirement) and standard and metric socket sets. Daily equipment checks have ensured that all equipment is present. Two areas for improvement are noted. The department should purchase equipment and tools necessary to complete pre-assembled high rise kits for apparatus with high rise occupancies within their district in addition to each apparatus having dedicated RIT kits.

Plan

The department will continue to equip apparatus and stations with tools and equipment necessary to achieve program goals. The department will purchase high rise and RIT kits to address noted improvements.

References

CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check and Policy
CFR Apparatus Equipment Inventory List

CFR Station Supply/Equipment Budget

NFPA 1901: Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus, Chapter 5 and Chapter 8

6E.2 Tools and equipment replacement is scheduled, budgeted, and implemented, and is adequate to meet the agency's needs.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue implements a tool and equipment replacement program to meet department and program needs. This program is based upon three replacement cycles; a fixed schedule (apparatus hose), life expectancy (SCBA composite bottles), and replacement due to damage (small tools, wrenches, etc.). The Chief of Training is responsible for maintaining the replacement schedule for hose and SCBA bottles. The Fire Chief approves the replacement of tools/equipment due to damage. The replacement program is part of the annual budget process. Funding allocations support the replacement programs.

Appraisal

The replacement program has adequately met department needs. Attack hose on each apparatus is replaced every 5 years and supply hose every 10 years. SCBA bottles have been replaced based upon the 15 year life expectancy requirement for composite bottles. Damaged tools/equipment has been replaced on an "as needed" basis and included in annual budgeting allocations. Each of these replacement processes has ensured that equipment is replaced on a fixed schedule or as needed. These replacement cycles have allowed for adequate budget planning.

Plan

The department will continue to replace tools and equipment using the processes currently being used. The replacement program will continue to be part of the annual budget process and funded accordingly.

References

CFR Annual Budget

CFR Request form for damaged equipment replacement

6E.3 Equipment maintenance, testing, and inspections are conducted by qualified personnel and appropriate records are kept. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue personnel perform general maintenance, testing, and inspection of department equipment. These checks are performed by engineers and firefighters. Equipment is checked and maintained through the following policies:

- Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check
- Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance
- Policy 602.03: Apparatus Pump Testing
- Policy 603.02: Hose Testing.

Department personnel perform scheduled inspections and testing following manufacturer recommendations. Personnel are authorized to perform these checks and tests through NFPA 1002 certification. Apparatus preventative maintenance is also performed by City Garage mechanics.

Department personnel are qualified to perform maintenance and repair on self contained breathing apparatus. However, equipment such as ground ladders and extrication equipment is checked and repaired by certified 3rd party vendors. The City Garage and department maintain records as proof of certification/repair.

Appraisal

The maintenance and testing policies and procedures have effectively met department needs. The department has effectively used qualified department personnel to inspect, test, and perform general maintenance of equipment. For maintenance or repairs beyond their capabilities, the department has used manufacturer authorized vendors. Prior to September of 2012, the department had personnel that were certified in fire pump and valve repair. These personnel are no longer with the department. The department should consider sending current personnel to certification classes for fire pump/valve repair.

Plan

The department will continue to follow department policy regarding equipment inspection, testing, and maintenance. The Fire Chief will assess the need to certify personnel in fire pump and valve maintenance and repair.

References

CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check

CFR 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance

CFR Policy 602.03: Apparatus Pump Testing

CFR Policy 603.02: Hose Testing

Daily and Weekly Apparatus and Equipment Check Records

Equipment Maintenance and Repair 3rd Vendor Repair / Certification Records

6E.4 An inventory control and maintenance tracking system is in place and is current.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains a standardized equipment cache on all department pumpers. The tender is equipped based upon apparatus needs. A tool and equipment inventory sheet is maintained for each apparatus and is checked on a daily basis in accordance with CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check. Tools and equipment are color coded to identify apparatus assignment. Apparatus hose is numbered for testing and replacement requirements. The Chief of Training is responsible for hose inventory.

Preventative maintenance is performed on each apparatus and equipment on a weekly basis in accordance with CFR Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance. The results of these checks are documented on department record sheets. The city maintains an inventory control sheet for all equipment that meets cost criteria.

Appraisal

The current inventory and tracking system has adequately met department needs. The daily checks have provided for quick accountability of missing items. The color coding of each piece of equipment has ensured that all equipment and tools are returned to the appropriate apparatus. The department's Record Management System has the ability to track equipment inventories but is not being utilized at this time. The city maintains an inventory tracking system for all equipment that meets cost criteria.

Plan

The department will continue to follow department policy for inventory and maintenance. The Fire Chief will review these policies on an annual basis to ensure effectiveness. The Fire Chief will assess the need to use Fire Programs for equipment inventory and tracking.

References

CFR Policy 602.01: Daily Apparatus and Equipment Check

CFR 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance

Criterion 6F: Safety Equipment

Safety equipment is adequate and designed to meet the agency goals and objectives. For the purposes of this criterion, safety equipment includes personal protective equipment (PPE) and related equipment (e.g., SCBA).

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides safety equipment to personnel to meet program goals and objectives. The Chief of Training is responsible for ensuring that personnel are issued safety equipment to perform their assigned duties. Safety equipment is issued directly to personnel or made available through common access assignments. Safety equipment is identified through national mandates and standards. All equipment meets safety performance specifications as identified by national standards.

The issuance of safety equipment is based upon job assignments and participation on the department's technical rescue teams. Safety equipment is inspected on an annual basis. The department inspects and tests safety equipment through multiple processes. The department provides for safety equipment replacement through fixed life expectancy schedules, when damaged, or when deemed unsafe. Any inspections or testing that is beyond the capabilities of department personnel is assigned to a manufacturer's authorized representative.

6F.1 Safety equipment is identified and distributed to appropriate personnel. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides personnel with safety equipment necessary to achieve program goals and objectives. Safety equipment is identified through federal mandates such as OSHA 1910.134 (c) and nationally recognized standards such as NFPA 1500, 1851, 1852, and 1855. The Chief of Training is responsible for ensuring that personnel are issued safety equipment to perform their assigned duties.

Personnel are issued safety equipment that includes structural fire suppression gear, SCBA face-piece, handheld radio, flashlight, and Passport accountability tag. Command Staff personnel maintain safety equipment required by their position. The department maintains common use safety equipment such as SCBAs with PASS devices, electrical kit gloves and safety glasses, EMS Body Substance Isolation PPE and kits, hazardous materials PPE, etc. Technical rescue safety equipment is issued to personnel serving on those teams or stored as a common use item. The department provides safety equipment as part of the annual budget process.

Appraisal

Columbus Fire and Rescue has adequately provided safety equipment to achieve program goals and objectives. Personnel have been issued safety equipment as well as having access to common safety equipment assigned to apparatus. Technical rescue teams have maintained safety equipment to meet program needs. The Chief of Training has been assigned the responsibility to ensure that all personnel have been issued or has access to safety equipment.

Plan

The department will continue to provide personnel with safety equipment needed to perform their job assignments.

References

CFR Employee Equipment Log

OSHA 1910.134 (c), Respiratory Protection Standard

NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program

NFPA 1851 Standard for Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for
Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting

NFPA 1852, Standard for Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Open-Circuit Self Contained
Breathing Apparatus

NFPA 1855. Standard for Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for
Technical Rescue Incidents

6F.2 Distributed safety equipment is sufficient for the functions performed.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue distributes safety equipment to personnel based upon their job assignments and participation on technical rescue teams. Issued safety equipment includes structural firefighting gear (2 sets), SCBA mask, handheld radio, and flashlight. This equipment is designed, based upon manufacturer specifications, to meet nationally recognized performance standards such as NFPA 1500, NFPA 1851, NFPA 1852, and NFPA 1855.

Appraisal

Safety equipment has been issued to personnel based upon their job assignments. The safety equipment distributed has met or exceeded national standards and, as a result, has been determined to be adequate for department use.

Plan

The department will continue to provide safety equipment to personnel that is sufficient to meet the hazards faced based upon job assignments. This equipment shall meet national performance standards.

References

NFPA 1500 Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program

NFPA 1851 Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for
Structural Fire Fighting

NFPA 1852 Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of SCBA

NFPA 1855: Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for
Technical Rescue

Safety gear Manufacturer's Specifications

6F.3 Safety equipment replacement is scheduled, budgeted and implemented, and is adequate to meet the agency's needs.

Description

Safety equipment is inspected on an annual basis. The department replaces safety equipment when damaged, when deemed unsafe, or through a life expectancy schedule. The Chief of Training (responsible for fire suppression/EMS) and the Special Operations Chief (responsible for technical rescue equipment) maintains a replacement schedule for life expectancy items. The replacement of safety equipment is part of the department's budget process and through general maintenance provisions of MS Homeland Security grants. Specific budget line items are dedicated to safety equipment replacement.

Appraisal

The department has replaced safety equipment on an "as needed" basis or through a life cycle replacement schedule. Annual inspections have identified worn and damaged equipment. Records management has provided for replacement of life cycle items. Safety equipment has been included in the annual budget process with replacement of these items being accomplished through budget line item funding allocations.

Plan

The department will continue to replacement safety equipment using current department procedures. The Fire Chief will continue to allocate funding necessary to replace safety equipment used to accomplish department programs.

References

CFR Annual Budget

MS Homeland Security Grant Funding

CFR Replacement Records

- Structural fire fighting gear
- SCBA bottles
- Hazardous Material monitor sensor replacement

6F.4 Safety equipment maintenance, testing, and inspections are conducted by trained qualified personnel and appropriate records are kept.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue inspects and tests safety equipment through several measures that include:

- Annual routine inspection of structural fire fighting gear
- Annual fit tests of SCBA face-pieces
- Hydrostatic inspection/testing of SCBA bottles (3rd party vendor)
- Annual inspection/testing of Level A chemical protective clothing
- Annual swipe tests of the Hazardous Materials radiological monitors (3rd party testing)
- Cascade system air quality testing (3rd party vendor)
- Technical rescue equipment is inspected/tested in accordance with manufacturer recommendations

Two personnel are certified for maintenance and repair of the department's SCBAs. The department also installed a commercial washing machine and dryer in October 2012 to wash structural fire fighting gear. Any maintenance, testing, or repair that exceeds the capabilities of department personnel are performed by certified manufacturer representatives. Using NFPA 1851 standards, the Chief of Training conducts routine inspections of protective ensembles. The department follows the checklists provided by the standard. Turnout gear that does not pass the checklist are sent to an authorized vendor for repair or are replaced.

Appraisal

The measures taken to inspect, test, and perform maintenance on safety equipment has met department needs. The department has maintained a building where SCBA inspection and maintenance is performed. The Chief of Training has conducted annual routine inspections of structural fire fighting gear using a standardized checklist. The department has not meet NFPA 1851 requiring the annual inspection of turnout gear by a certified inspector. Technical rescue equipment is inspected and tested in accordance with manufacturer recommendations. Technical rescue team coordinators are responsible for ensuring maintenance and testing is conducted. The department has used third party vendors to perform maintenance when required.

Plan

The department will continue to inspect, test, and perform general maintenance on safety equipment through the measures identified using qualified personnel or manufacturer authorized representatives. The department will certify personnel to conduct annual inspections of turnout gear to meet NFPA 1851 recommendations.

References

CFR SCBA Repair and Fit Test Records

CFR Structural Fire Fighting Inspection Records

CFR Hazardous Materials Level A Inspection Records

CFR Hazardous Materials Radiological Swipe Test Inspection Records

CFR Technical Rescue SOGs

6F.5 A safety equipment inventory control and maintenance tracking system is in place and current.

Description

The department uses both hardcopy and electronic records to provide for safety equipment inventory and maintenance documentation. All safety equipment issued to personnel is documented in the Equipment Log book. This book is kept at Station 1. Replacement of individual safety equipment is made through the department Request Forms. Maintenance documentation is kept electronically through Excel spreadsheets. Non-issued safety equipment is kept by the Chief of Training in a locked storage space at Station 1.

Appraisal

The safety equipment inventory control and maintenance tracking processes used by the department are adequate but could be improved. The Personnel Module in Fire Programs has the capability to document individual equipment information (i.e. sizes) and equipment issued. However, this feature has not been utilized. This system has the capability to document not only equipment issued but also provides a warning notification for life expectancy items. The department should transition from its current measures to this software capability.

Plan

The Chief of Training will incorporate the issuance of safety equipment into the Fire Programs database no later than December 31, 2013.

References

CFR Equipment Book

Fire Programs Personnel Module; Equipment tab

Category VII: Human Resources

Human resources are defined as all aspects of personnel administration except those of training and competency, which are addressed in Category VIII. The heart of any organization is its people and this category is designed to appraise the importance and results of the human resources program. It is recognized that the completion of this human resources section may involve members from other governing entities or other elements of the community

Category VII: Human Resources

Criterion 7A: Human Resources Administration

General human resources administration practices are in place and are consistent with local, state/provincial, and federal statutory and regulatory requirements.

Summary

The Human Resource Director is an appointed senior administrative position within the city. This position is responsible for overseeing personnel related matters such as compensation, discipline, employee benefits, and hiring. The Human Resource Director is provided a payroll clerk to aid in daily office operations.

The Human Resource Director is responsible for maintaining city policies regarding personnel management. These policies are contained within the City of Columbus Employee Handbook. These policies adhere to federal, state, and local mandates. In addition to the Employee Handbook, department personnel are subject to policies of the Civil Service Handbook. Each employee receives a copy of these handbooks at time of hire.

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains a Policies and Procedures Manual for policies specific to department administrative operations. Department policies defer to City policies where commonality exists. Each station has a copy of this manual in both hardcopy and electronic format.

7A.1 A human resources manager is designated. (CC)

Description

The Human Resource Director is an appointed senior administrative position within the city having department head status. The Human Resource Director reports directly to the Chief Operations Officer. The Human Resource Director is responsible for:

- manages the city's personnel systems and services that includes but not limited to hiring, compensation, discipline, and employee benefits
- maintains the City of Columbus Employee Handbook
- provides support to all city departments regarding personnel management and ensures that the policies and procedures comply with federal and state mandates.

A job description for this position is approved by the governing body.

Appraisal

The position of Human Resource Director has adequately met city and department needs in personnel administration functions. The responsibilities of the Human Resource Director have been clearly outlined in a job description adopted by the governing authority. The Human Resource Director has provided direction to all department head in human resource management.

Plan

There is no plan to change the Human Resource Director position. This position will remain an integral part of city administration in human resource management.

References

City of Columbus Organizational Chart

Human Resource Director Job Description

7A.2 The human resources program has adequate staffing to accomplish the human resources administrative functions.

Description

The Personnel Department is staffed by the Human Resource Director and a payroll clerk. Each position has defined job responsibilities. The Human Resource Director's main responsibilities are listed in Performance Indicator 7A.1. In addition to general clerical duties, the payroll clerk is responsible for salary management. Duties include the reconciliation of personnel time statements, maintaining the city's salary software system, completion of employee bi-monthly pay statements, and understanding and applying federal and state salary laws.

Appraisal

The staffing of the Personnel Department has met city needs. Each of the two positions has specific job responsibilities which cover all aspects of human resource management. The use of contracted services (insurance) and human resource management software (automated time clocks linked with payroll software, etc.) has reduced time consuming tasks and eliminated the need for additional personnel.

Plan

The Personnel Department will continue with its current staffing level. The Human Resource Director will be responsible for assessing future staffing needs.

References

Human Resource Director job description

Administrative Assistant job description

7A.3 Policies are established to direct the human resources administrative practices in accordance with local, state/provincial, and federal requirements.

Description

Personnel administrative policies are contained in the City of Columbus Employee Handbook. These policies adhere to federal, state and local human resource mandates through the application of the Civil Rights Act, the Equal Opportunity Employment Act, sexual harassment statutes, employee salaries and benefits, and the Family Medical Leave Act. . The Human Resource Director is responsible for the content and maintenance of this handbook. Each employee is given an Employee Handbook as part of the new employee orientation process. The Employee Handbook was last updated in 2008. However, policy revisions are placed in employee pay statements.

Administrative policies specific to the department are found in Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy and Procedures Manual, Volume 1: Administration. Each station maintains a hardcopy and electronic copy of this manual. In cases where dual policies exist, city policy is followed.

Appraisal

The Employee Handbook and CFR Policy and Procedures Manual have adequately met personnel administration needs. The city's Employee Handbook has effectively outlined administrative human resource/management policies whereas CFR's Policy and Procedure Manual has met department needs by outlining administrative and operational guidelines specific to department administrative operations. The department has a process in place to ensure that the manual is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the contents within remain consistent with city policy. Each employee has been assigned an Employee Handbook and has access to the Policy and Procedures Manual in both hardcopy and electronic format.

Plan

The Employee Handbook and CFR Policy and Procedures Manual will continue to be used for personnel administrative polices. The Fire Chief will conduct annual reviews of the department manual. The Human Resource Director will ensure the Employee Handbook remains compliant with federal, state, and local mandates.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook

CFR Policies and Procedures Manual

Criterion 7B: Recruitment, Selection, Retention and Promotion

Systems are established to attract, select, retain, and promote qualified personnel in accordance with applicable local, state/provincial, and federal statutory requirements.

Summary

The City of Columbus is an Equal Opportunity Employer meeting federal, state, and local human resource mandates. The City of Columbus Employee Handbook and City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook contain policies regarding the attraction, selection, and promotion of qualified applicants and candidates.

The City of Columbus is committed to attracting and hiring a workforce that is representative of the community and reflective of the relevant labor pool. The city, through the adoption of its Diversity Plan, has implemented steps to accomplish this goal.

The city and department utilizes a combination of screening and qualifying devices in the hiring process. These devices are based upon validated processes and meet federal and state hiring mandates. In developing a qualified applicant pool, the city considers both external and internal candidates.

The city and department has processes in place to improve employee retention and the quality of its workforce. New employees are acquainted to city and department operations through an orientation program. New hires and newly promoted personnel are subject to probationary periods to evaluate performance requirements. These requirements are outlined by policies in both the City of Columbus Employee Handbook and Civil Service Rules Handbook. The department has several processes in place to recognize performance and service. The city uses an exit interview process to identify reasons for voluntary separation of employment and identify ways in which the city and department may improve its retention efforts.

7B.1 A mechanism is in place to identify and announce potential entry level, lateral, and promotional positions.

Description

The City of Columbus Employee Handbook outlines the processes used to identify and announce potential entry level, lateral, and promotional positions within the city. The Civil Service Rule book also identifies processes to be followed for city firefighters and police officers. City department heads request filling vacant positions by submitting a letter to the council to be approved during a scheduled monthly council meeting. Upon approval by the mayor and council, the Human Resource Director advertises for vacant positions using external and internal processes. External advertising involves print and electronic media. Internal notification involves a Notice of Vacancy memo that is posted in all departments for a minimum of five working days.

Appraisal

The processes used to fill vacant positions have met city and department needs. The city has reserved the right to confine competition for vacant positions to the current workforce if determined to be in the best interest of the city, as in the case of promotions or lateral transfers. Filling vacancies of entry level positions have mainly been accomplished through the use of external applicants. The use of internal and external applicants has provided for an adequate applicant pool.

Plan

The city will continue to use the processes in place to fill vacant positions.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook: Policy 2.35: Recruitment

City of Columbus Civil Service Rules book

Sample Notice of Vacancy memo

7B.2 The agency and its members are part of the recruiting process.

Description

City of Columbus Policy 2.35 encourages department head participation in the recruitment of job candidates. The department actively participates in local job fairs and provides brochures explaining job requirements and benefits. The department also encourages members to become involved through “word of mouth” recruitment of potential applicants. The department head provides input into whether internal candidates exist or if an external search will provide the best pool of potential applicants.

Appraisal

The recruitment process has met department needs. Job fairs have provided an effective venue in an attempt to attract a diverse candidate pool. The Fire and Life Safety Educator has been designated to attend job fairs. The department has also used community events and public meetings to promote employment opportunities. The use of department members in the recruitment process has been a valuable asset in providing real life experiences and career opportunities. The department’s Strategic Plan has identified processes that will support the recruitment process and further employee participation. These processes have included a junior firefighter program, a volunteer firefighter program, and a review of strategies used by other departments.

Plan

The department and its employees will continue to participate in the recruitment of employees. The department will continue to use various opportunities to recruit potential employees. The department will use Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan to address personnel recruitment.

References

Policy 2.35: Recruitment, City of Columbus Employee Handbook

CFR job fair brochure

CFR Strategic Plan, 2013-2018

7B.3 Processes and screening/qualifying devices⁶ used for recruitment and selection of initial, lateral, and promotional candidates are job related and comply with all local, state/provincial, and federal requirements including equal opportunity and discriminations statutes. (CC)

Description

City of Columbus Employee Handbook Section 2.0 identifies the policies, processes, and screening/qualifying devices used by the city in the selection of entry level, lateral transfer, and promotion of candidates. These policies reference federal, state, and local mandates related to these policies that include but not limited to the Affirmative Action Program which is based upon the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972. The Human Resource Director is responsible for ensuring all processes and screening/qualifying devices meet federal and state mandates.

The City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook Section VIII, Minimum Standards, lists minimum entrance qualifications for applicants. In addition, Section IX lists any pre-qualification (i.e. time in rank) requirements prior to promotional testing.

The department utilizes a combination of screening/qualifying devices in the hiring process that includes:

- Application form
- Candidate Physical Ability Test (C-Pat)
- Written exam
- Background check
- Interview
- Physical exam (upon offer of employment)

The C-Pat physical assessment is based upon a peer recognized entrance evaluation using job related skills. Written examinations are contracted through an accredited vendor with tests being validated to remain compliant with federal and state requirements.

⁶Examples of screening/qualifying devices: Application forms, written exams, ability tests, physical exams, psychological exams, background checks, etc.

Promotional testing for the engineer and company officer position is based upon a time in rank requirement and successfully passing a validated, job related examination. The City of Columbus Federal Projects Office verifies candidate eligibility consistent with Civil Service requirements.

Appraisal

The processes being used in hiring and promotional testing have met federal, state, and local legal requirements through the application of the laws referenced. [The Employee Handbook and Civil Service Handbook have clearly outlined](#) the processes to be followed in the hiring [and promotional processes.](#)

Plan

The city and department will continue to use the screening/qualifying processes being used in both the entry level and promotional process. The city and department will ensure that screening/qualifying processes remain compliant with federal, state, and local mandates.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 2.05: Affirmative Action Program

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 2.10: Equal Employment Opportunity

City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook, Section VIII & IX

CFR Hiring Orientation letter

7B.4 The agency’s workforce composition is reflective of the service area demographics or the agency has a recruitment plan to achieve the desired workforce composition.

Description

The City of Columbus uses several processes to attract and maintain a workforce that is representative of the community and reflective of the relevant labor pool. The city implemented its Diversity Plan to attract diverse, qualified applicants by:

- Recruitment advertising using various media outlets and the use of firms specializing in minority recruitment
- Recruitment and selection training for hiring officials that includes interview techniques, cultural awareness, human relations, and objective hiring practices
- Utilization of a non-discriminatory, equal opportunity hiring process open to all persons wishing to apply

In addition to this plan, the department participates in job fairs and other community events to promote the profession and attract a diverse applicant pool.

Appraisal

The city’s Diversity Plan and department efforts to hire a workforce reflective of the community has had limited success. The recruitment process has yielded initial applicants reflective of city demographics. The majority of applicants have been male, but increases in female applicants have been noted. The department’s workforce is not reflective of city demographics. The following table provides statistics regarding department racial and gender makeup compared to city demographics.

	Gender		Racial Composition		
	Male	Female	White	Black	Other
City	45.9%	54.1%	37.4%	60%	2.6%
CFR	97.2%	2.8%	84%	15.9%	.01%

Goal 2 of the department’s Strategic Plan has identified various objectives to increase the diversity of the department in terms of gender and racial makeup. A committee to address this problem has been created with the task of accomplishing Goal 2.

Plan

The department will continue to follow the Diversity Plan implemented by the city and participate in job fairs and other community events to attract a diverse applicant pool. The department's Recruitment and Retention Committee will use Goal 2 of the department's Strategic Plan as a guide to seek increased diversity within the department.

References

U.S. census: 2010 Demographic Profile

Policy 2.20: Diversity Plan, City of Columbus Employee Handbook

CFR Strategic Plan, 2013-2018

CFR Roster

CFR C-Pat Roster List

7B.5 A new member orientation program is in place.

Description

The City of Columbus' New Member Orientation Program serves three purposes:

- Acquaint personnel with city policies and benefit entitlements
- Complete payroll requirements
- Complete employee benefits paperwork

Employees attend this orientation session prior to or on the first day of employment.

The Chief of Training conducts an orientation session for new members regarding an overview of job hazards, department safety policies and procedures, vehicle and tool safety, and completion of required administrative forms. Company officers are in charge of acquainting new members with general rules of conduct, personnel policies specific to the department (vacation, swap time, sick leave, etc.), and emergency operational policies and guidelines.

Appraisal

The city's orientation program has adequately met city needs. However, the department needs to implement a formal orientation program for new members using a standardized method of instruction and material. The quality of employee orientation has been dependent upon the knowledge of the company officer. Therefore, inconsistency exists.

Plan

The department will implement a new employee orientation program. The Chief of Training will be responsible for the development of this program to be presented to the Fire Chief no later than March 31, 2014. The department will amend its Strategic Plan to formally address this issue. The Goal Manager for Goal 2 will be responsible for objective actions.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 2.35: New Employee Orientation,

7B.6 A supervised probationary process is used to evaluate new and promoted members based on the candidates' demonstrated knowledge, skills and abilities. (CC)

Description

City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook Section XII establishes the probationary periods for new hires and newly promoted personnel. The probationary period for new members is one year. Within this time period, new employees are required to successfully complete the NFPA 1001 I & II firefighter certification and the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technician curriculum. This probationary period may be extended beyond one year by the Civil Service Commission for extenuating circumstances. The probationary period for newly promoted personnel is six months.

Appraisal

The probationary periods for both new and promoted employees have met department needs. The probationary requirements of new hires have been clearly identified and enforced. In 2012, an employee was terminated due to failure to meet one probationary requirement. Probationary evaluations of newly promoted personnel have been based upon on-the-job performance and semi-annual employee performance reviews. Depending upon the promotion date and the fact that employee performance reviews occur every six months, the probationary evaluation may only reflect a limited timeframe of performance. To improve the probationary evaluation process, the department should implement an objective, skill and knowledge assessment tool. The department currently has a Driver/Operator Development Program that may be used. No development programs exist for other positions.

Plan

The department will continue to adhere to the probationary requirements established by the Civil Service Commission. The department will continue to evaluate probationary employee performance as part of the employee appraisal review. The department will incorporate the Driver/Operator Program as a probationary evaluation tool for newly promoted drivers no later than December 31, 2013. The Chief of Training will develop a probationary assessment tool for company officer by March 31, 2014.

References

City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook, Section XII

City of Columbus Employee Performance Review Forms

CFR Driver/Operator Development Program

7B.7 An employee/member recognition program is in place.

Description

The department recognizes individual achievement through several processes that include:

- An “Oath of Office” ceremony before the city council when members complete their probationary requirements
- Members that successfully complete the Smoke Diver and Certified Advanced Rescue Specialist courses have their names engraved on plaques located at Sta. 1
- Recognition in the department’s quarterly magazine
- A retirement dinner in which members are presented a shadow box

Appraisal

While these processes have recognized individual achievements, a formal recognition program expanding upon the above would be a valuable tool in promoting morale and recognizing outstanding performance. The department should consider a comprehensive recognition program for individual and crew achievements as well as recognizing citizens that have made an impact regarding fire and/or life safety. Recognition should include the awarding of ribbons, medals, and framed certificates of achievement. The department should consider implementing an awards banquet to provide a formal setting for acknowledgement of achievements from the previous year. Objective 7D of the department’s strategic plan has developed to address this issue.

Plan

The department will continue with current methods of employee recognition. The Strategic Plan committee tasked with Objective 7D will develop a comprehensive awards program no later than March 31, 2014.

References

CFR Oath of Office

CFR Smoke Diver / Certified Advanced Rescue Specialist Plaques

CFR Magazine

7B.8 The working conditions and environment are such that the agency attracts diverse and qualified applicants and retains a tenured workforce.

Description

The department works toward providing a diverse and qualified workforce through the processes described in Performance Indicators 7B.2 and 7B.4. The city conducts an exit interview for all retirements or voluntary separations of service. This interview focuses on work environment, compensation, benefits, career development, and reasons for separation. The department uses surveys as a means of determining the satisfaction of personnel regarding the working conditions and environment of the department. These surveys were conducted by outside management consultants.

Appraisal

The exit interviews conducted by the city have not been shared with the department. The two surveys conducted by the management consultant indicated an overall dis-satisfaction with the working conditions and environment. The following table reflects the results of the CFR 360 Degree survey.

	Total Average Score	National Average
1 Our Vision is Clear	6.2	5.2
2 Command Staff Unity	5.5	6.3
3 This is a fun place to work	4.9	7.1
4 Our Chiefs have a long-term focus	6.4	6.4
5 The morale is high in the department	4.0	4.3
6 My opinions count to the Chief	5.3	6.0
7 The communication is positive and consistent	5.2	4.9
8 We are good at change here	4.9	4.9
9 The Officers are coachable	4.7	6.0
10 We have a strong team atmosphere	5.5	7.6

Even though the department had favorable responses in service delivery, training opportunities, and equipment; the Sampson survey reflected similar results of dis-satisfaction towards working conditions. Unfavorable responses were recorded in job development, training format, and morale.

Since January 1, 2010 the department has experienced a 42.4% (28 of 66) turnover of line personnel. Personnel left the department due to retirement (13), terminations (7), and voluntary separations (8). Retirements represented a natural attrition to employment. A telling statistic is the number of personnel that voluntarily resigned their position. Since 2010, 8 firefighters have left the department. The three most senior members that left had 19, 16, and 11 years respectively. The remaining 5 had less than 3 years of service. Goal 2 of CFR's Strategic Plan was developed to identify the reasons why personnel are leaving the department.

Plan

The department will continue with the processes identified to attract a qualified workforce. The department will continue to monitor working conditions and environment by working towards Goal 8 of the Strategic Plan. The department will identify the reasons behind the retention problem by working towards Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan. The department will work toward providing an environment conducive of attracting and retaining qualified employees.

References

CFR Personnel Roster

CFR Strategic Plan

Rowan 360 Degree Survey

Sampson Internal

7B.9 Exit interviews or periodic employee surveys, or other mechanisms are used to acquire feedback and improve agency policies and procedures.

Description

The City of Columbus conducts exit interviews in all voluntary separations and retirements. Columbus city Policy 3.45: Exit Interview serves as a means of soliciting employee feedback regarding city and department operations, explanation and status of benefits, and to eliminate any possible misunderstandings that may have a negative impact on current and future employees. The Human Resource Director and Chief Operations Officer conduct the exit interviews. The department utilizes several feedback mechanisms. The Fire Chief conducts staff meetings with command staff personnel. Battalion chiefs conduct company officer meetings. Additionally, all members are encouraged to discuss ideas or changes in procedures with their supervisors. As part of the strategic planning process, employee feedback was solicited through two surveys. Finally, the Fire Chief has an open door policy for all personnel.

Appraisal

These mechanisms have adequately provided forums for employee feedback. The city exit interviews have provided valuable information regarding the reasons for employee separation. The mechanisms used by the department has provided a format where employees have offered suggestions to improve department operations, expressed their concerns over a policy or issue, and kept members informed regarding city or department operations. The use of the two surveys has been extremely effective in identifying potential problems. From these surveys, employees identified a wide range of issues facing the department. These issues were addressed in the Strategic Plan.

Plan

The city and department will continue to use the current mechanisms in place to solicit employee feedback. In order to facilitate better employee feedback, the department will implement the following processes:

- Annual employee surveys similar to other surveys employed
- Quarterly web-conferences conducted by the Fire Chief with shift personnel

- Focus on Goals 2F and 7C of the Strategic Plan
- Allow the Retention Committee to review exit interviews conducted by the Human Resource department

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 3.45: Exit Interview

Columbus Exit interview forms

Rowan 360 Degree Survey

Sampson Internal Survey

Command Staff and Company Officer Meeting Agendas

7B.10 The agency conducts workforce assessments and has a plan to address projected personnel resource needs including retention and attrition of tenured and experienced employees/members.

Description

The department conducts workforce assessments through several methods that include annual program reports, strategic planning, and staffing analysis. Annual reports identify the number of personnel that are certified and to what level in department programs (fire, EMS, hazardous materials, and technical rescue). The strategic planning process addresses department attrition and retention issues. The fire chief conducts a staffing analysis through the use of a spreadsheet containing personnel, dates of employment, and dates of advancement. This comparison identifies potential personnel gaps due to retirement, personnel available for promotion, and hiring needs.

Appraisal

The processes in place have had limited success. The annual reports have been effective at providing the number of technician, operations, and awareness level trained personnel in all department programs which in turn has identified training certification gaps in program delivery (i.e. number of current technicians versus the number of technicians required). The strategic planning process identified potential problems related to retention. In response, Strategic Plan Goal 2 was developed to address these issues.

The department does not have a formal succession planning process in place. The department has lost a significant amount of experience due to personnel attrition (retirement, termination, resignations). Since 2010, the department has hired 28 new members. Approximately 22% of line personnel have less than 1 year of service while 39% have less than 3 years of service. The department has been in “catch up” mode in terms of hiring to full staffing levels as well as filling vacant promotional positions. To fill driver/operator positions, the department was granted a waiver by the Civil Service Commission with regards to the time in grade requirement. A formal succession planning process coupled with career development programs might have been prevented this situation.

Plan

The department will evaluate processes currently being used to determine planning effectiveness. The department will work towards completion of Goal 2F of the Strategic Plan to address retention issues. The Fire Chief will implement a formal succession planning process as a method of projecting future resource needs and identifying potential personnel gaps. This plan will be in place by June 30, 2014.

References

CFR Annual reports

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR Roster

Criterion 7C: Personnel Policies and Procedures

Personnel policies and procedures are in place, documented, and guiding both administrative and personnel behavior.

Summary

Human resource policies and procedures are outlined in the City of Columbus Employee Handbook, the City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook, and the Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy and Procedures Manual. Each of these sources contains personnel policies relevant to administrative operations and personal behavior. These policies adhere to federal, state, and local requirements.

Each employee is given a copy of the City of Columbus Employee Handbook and City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook at the time of employment. The department maintains a copy of its Policy and Procedure Manual at each station. Updates and amendments to these manuals are distributed to personnel via memos placed in their bi-monthly pay statements. The department issues amendments to its policies and procedures through directives. Company officers are responsible for ensuring that these changes are made to the manual. The City of Columbus and Civil Service Commission outlines disciplinary actions that may be taken against employees as well as addressing an appeals process. The city also establishes a process to be used for employee grievances.

7C.1 Personnel policies, procedures and rules are current, written, and communicated to all personnel. (CC)

Description

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, City of Columbus Civil Service Rule Handbook, and Columbus Fire and Rescue Policies and Procedures Manual outline personnel policies. The City of Columbus Employee Handbook contains 9 sections addressing employment, benefits, working conditions, employee conduct, etc. Each employee receives a copy of this handbook during the orientation process. The Employee Handbook was last updated May 20, 2008. Policy revisions are placed in employee pay statements. The City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook establishes rules and policies for firefighters protected by the Civil Service Act. The Civil Service Rules Handbook was last updated on February 9, 2012.

The Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy and Procedures Manual contain policies and operational guidelines specific to department operations. The Policy and Procedures Manual is approved by the Human Resource Director and City Attorney to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local statutes/directives. A copy of this manual is kept at each station. Personnel receive training on each policy and/or guideline during the initial orientation process, when new policies or guidelines are issued, and when policies or guidelines are revised. The Policy and Procedures Manual was reviewed and updated in 2013.

Appraisal

The Employee Handbook, Civil Service Rules Handbook, and CFR Policy and Procedures Manual have met the needs of personnel with regards to personnel management. The Employee Handbook and Civil Service Rule Handbook have been in compliance with federal, state, and local mandates regarding human resource management.

CFR's Policy and Procedures Manual has provided direction to operations specific to the department. The manual was reviewed and amended in 2013. During this process, the need for additional policies was identified. These policies are pending. Each of the above manuals has processes in place to review and amend ensuring policies and guidelines are current and remain compliant with applicable laws and directives.

Plan

The City and Department will continue with provide employees with access to all policies and procedures contained in the Employee Handbook, Civil Service Rules Handbook, and Policy and Procedures Manual. The Human Resource Director and Civil Service Commission will ensure that the Employee Handbook and Civil Service Rule Handbook remain current. The Fire Chief will review the Policies and Procedures Manual on an annual basis.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook

City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook

CFR Policy and Procedures Manual

CFR Training sheets

7C.2 A specific policy defines and prohibits sexual, racial, disability or other forms of harassment, bias, and unlawful discrimination of employees/members and describes the related reporting procedures. The policy and organizational expectations specific to employee behavior are communicated formally to all members/employees and are enforced. (CC)

Description

The City of Columbus is committed to providing a workplace free of discrimination or harassment. Policy 2.10: Equal Employment Opportunity addresses employment opportunities or practices to eliminate forms of discrimination based upon “race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, veteran’s status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.” Policy 7.05: Policy Against Harassment prohibits harassment in any form that includes verbal, physical, and visual harassment. These policies apply to all city employees.

Appraisal

These policies have met city needs. Both policies have clearly defined actions that would constitute discriminatory and harassment practices. These policies have been effective in promoting a discriminatory and harassment free workplace. Any employee found guilty of discrimination or harassment are subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

Plan

The Human Resource Director is responsible for maintaining these policies. All personnel will adhere to these policies. Any changes in federal or state laws pertaining to harassment or discrimination will be reflected by policy updates.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 2.10: Equal Employment Opportunity
City of Columbus Employee Handbook , Policy 7.05: Policy Against Harassment

7C.3 A disciplinary system is in place and enforced.

Description

The City of Columbus maintains a disciplinary system as outlined by Policy 7.15: Disciplinary Action. This policy establishes causes for disciplinary actions, disciplinary actions that may be taken, and steps identified in the disciplinary and appeal process. The City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook Section XV §§ 3 establishes the disciplinary and appeals process. This section is compliant with MS Code §21-31-23.

Appraisal

The Disciplinary policies has effectively met city and department needs. These policies have clearly identified causes for employee discipline, the actions that may be taken, and the steps in the discipline and appeals process. The Fire Chief approves disciplinary measures taken by Battalion Chiefs or company officers for minor offenses (oral and written reprimands) and makes recommendations to the Mayor and Council for serious infractions (suspensions and terminations). All disciplinary actions may be appealed by personnel to the appropriate personnel (i.e. fire chief, city council, or Civil Service Commission).

Plan

The department will continue to follow the disciplinary processes as outlined in the City of Columbus Employee and Civil Service Rules Handbooks.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 7.15: Disciplinary Action

City of Columbus Civil Service Rules Handbook, Section XV

MS Code §21-31-23

7C.4 An internal ethics and conflict of interest policy is published and communicated to employees/members.

Description

The City of Columbus expects all officials and employees to conduct themselves in an ethical manner and to preclude participation in any activity where a conflict of interest exists. Business ethics, conduct, and conflict of interest is defined in the City of Columbus Employee Handbook in Policies 2.45, 2.50, and 2.55. These policies are in compliance with Mississippi Municipal Code §25-4-101.

Appraisal

Employee expectations have been clearly defined in city policies. These policies have addressed business ethics and conduct, gift and gratuity acceptance, nepotism, and conflict of interest where a pecuniary benefit may exist. These policies have addressed not only personal benefit but also benefit of relatives and/or other personal/business relationships. These policies have adequately supported community trust of public officials and servants by adhering to applicable statutes, regulations and local guidelines.

Plan

The City of Columbus will maintain the policies used to guide ethical conduct and eliminate conflict of interest. Any changes to these policies will be reflected by revisions to the City of Columbus Personnel Handbook. Department personnel are expected to abide by these policies.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 2.45: Business Ethics and Conduct

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 2.50: Gift and Gratuities

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 2.55: Nepotism and Conflict of Interest Prohibited

Mississippi Municipal Code Annotated 1972 §25-4-101.

7C.5 A grievance/complaint procedure is published and communicated to employees / members.

Description

City of Columbus Policy 7.20: Grievance Procedure is implemented to ensure that all employees receive equitable treatment in accordance with city policies adopted by the mayor and council. This policy outlines employee actions and identifies each step in the grievance process. Each employee maintains a personal copy of the City of Columbus Employee Handbook.

Appraisal

The Grievance Procedure Policy has effectively met department needs. This policy has clearly defined employee and city actions during the process as well as identifying additional actions after the grievance is settled.

Plan

The city and department will continue to use this policy to address grievances on part of the employee. The Human Resource Director will be responsible for maintenance of this policy.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 7.20: Grievance Procedure

Criterion 7D: Use of Human Resources

Human resources development and utilization is consistent with the agency's established mission, goals, and objectives.

Summary

The City of Columbus mandates that a job description exist for each position. These descriptions establish hiring criteria and orient employees to their job requirements. The department provides a description for each position that contains a purpose of position, job context, primary position responsibilities, and other related tasks relevant to the position.

The city and department provides members with opportunities for professional development. Members are encouraged to achieve professional certifications as well as degrees and designations. The department maintains a Master Training Matrix identifying each member's accomplishments.

The city and department conducts performance evaluations on a semi-annual schedule. These evaluations are used to measure employee performance, identify employee strengths and weaknesses, and identify ways in which an employee may improve their performance.

7D.1 A position classification system and a process by which jobs are audited and modified are in place. (CC)

Description

CFR Policy 102.01: CFR Organizational Chart establishes a position classification system. This organizational structure is adopted by the governing body. CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions defines the duties and responsibilities for each position within the department. Both of these processes are documented in city and department administrative records and policies. The Human Resource Director and Fire Chief are responsible for auditing each position and for ensuring the job descriptions remain consistent with the duties and responsibilities of the position. New positions must be approved by the governing body. The Human Resource Director is responsible for writing the job description for this position. The governing body approves the organizational chart through annual budget allocations.

Appraisal

The current processes have met city and department needs. The organizational chart has established a classification system identifying specific positions as well as providing a delineation of authority in the form of a chain of command. The job descriptions have clearly defined the duties and responsibilities of each position that further classifies and separates by position. The classification system has been audited through the annual budget process as well as annual policy reviews by the Fire Chief.

Plan

The city and department will continue with the processes used to maintain a position classification system. The Human Resource Director and Fire Chief will continue to audit and monitor the classification system through annual policy reviews.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 3.25: Job Descriptions
CFR Policy 102.01: Organization Chart
CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions

7D.2 Current written job descriptions exist for all positions and incumbent personnel have input into revisions.

Description

City of Columbus Policy 3.25: Job Descriptions mandates the use of job descriptions for each position within the city. The Human Resource Director is responsible for establishing new job descriptions. Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions identifies each position within the department. Each job description contains a purpose of position, job context, primary responsibilities, and other related tasks relevant to the position. The Human Resource Director and Fire Chief is responsible for reviewing each position and ensuring that job positions/descriptions are accurate, current, and reflect the work being performed.

Appraisal

Both policies have effectively met city and department needs. These policies have provided the basis for establishing hiring criteria, orientating new employees to their jobs, job requirements, and establishing performance criteria used during personnel evaluations. CFR Policy 102.02 has clearly defined the purpose and responsibilities of each position. Department personnel had input when writing job descriptions for the department's Policy and Procedure Manual. Job descriptions have been periodically reviewed by the Fire Chief to ensure that the position accurately reflects job responsibilities and tasks.

Plan

The department will continue to provide current job descriptions for each position as required by city policy. The Fire Chief will review job descriptions on an annual basis to ensure each description is reflective of the current duties and responsibilities of the position.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Policy 3.25: Job Descriptions

Columbus Fire & Rescue Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions

7D.3 A personnel appraisal system is in place.

Description

City of Columbus Policy 3.25: Performance Evaluations mandates that personnel appraisals are conducted twice per year. The city uses a standardized Rating Scale appraisal form for all departments. Fire department evaluations are completed by the member's immediate supervisor.

Appraisal

The Rating Scale appraisal system has met city needs. However, this appraisal system has limitations when considering department needs. The following shortcomings are noted:

- The Rating Scale appraisal is trait based and does not consider specific, job related criteria as a means of performance measurement. As a result, appraisals have been subjective in nature rather than objective.
- Supervisory personnel have not received training on appraisal ratings. As a result, performance measurements have been inconsistent due to a lack of standardization.
- Appraisals are not considered in the promotional process; therefore, appraisals have been viewed by some supervisors as exercises in administrative "pencil whipping."
- Appraisals are not conducted at the end of probationary periods. Therefore, depending on promotional dates, an employee's scheduled appraisal may fall at the beginning or middle of their probationary period resulting in an inaccurate assessment of job performance.

To best meet department needs, an appraisal system such as a Behavior Anchored Rating system that uses specific criteria identified from job analysis' and job descriptions should be developed as the basis for performance evaluations.

Plan

The department will continue to use the Rating Scale appraisal system until another appraisal system is authorized by the Human Resource Director. The Fire Chief will research various appraisal systems to determine which system best meets the need of the department.

Additionally, appraisals should also be conducted at the end of the probationary period of new hires and newly promoted employees rather than wait for the next appraisal period. The Fire

Chief will present any appraisal recommendation changes to the Human Resource Director and governing body for -consideration.

References

Policy 3.25: Performance Evaluations, City of Columbus Employee Handbook
City of Columbus Personnel Evaluation Forms

7D.4 The agency maintains a current list of the special knowledge, skills, and abilities of each employee/member.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains a list of each member's knowledge, skills, and abilities in one hardcopy and two electronic formats. All training certifications and completed courses are placed in each member's hardcopy personnel file that is maintained by the Chief of Training. Individual and company level training evolutions is entered into Fire Programs, the department's record management system. The Chief of Training maintains a training matrix listing major training and technical rescue certifications.

Appraisal

The department has documented training certifications through three methods that have effectively met department needs. First, all completed certification and professional development courses are entered into the member's hardcopy personnel file. These files have been maintained as a master index that has served as a point for training documentation audits and verification of individual training. Fire Programs has been used to store records electronically that allows for easy access and viewing. The Training Matrix has provided a quick reference and has been used in assessing future training needs. For example, by listing each individual by shift and listing their technical rescue certifications, training gaps are identified. (I.e. the actual number of technicians compared to the required number of technicians).

Plan

The department will continue to use all three methods to document and store personnel training records. The Chief of Training will maintain files on all department personnel.

References

CFR Personnel Files

CFR Training Matrix

7D.5 Methods for employee/member input or a suggestion program are in place.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides informal methods for employee input or suggestions. The Fire Chief periodically conducts command staff meetings to discuss various department issues. Each Battalion Chief conducts company officer meetings to discuss upcoming department events, training schedules, policies or procedures, or other city/department issues. The content of these meetings are then relayed to line personnel. The Fire Chief and department supervisors maintain an “open door policy” where personnel may offer suggestions for improvements in the department.

Appraisal

The processes in place have adequately met department needs. The use of company officer meetings has been effective at relaying department events and other points of interest to line personnel. All personnel in the department have been encouraged to make suggestions to their supervisors or to the Fire Chief through the open door policy. However, this policy has been used in several instances to “by-pass the chain of command”. This situation necessitates the need to develop a formal employee suggestion program.

Plan

The Fire Chief will assign the command staff the responsibility of developing an Employee Suggestion program. This program will be presented no later than March 31, 2014. Until the program is implemented, the department will continue to use current processes in place.

References

CFR Command Staff Meeting Agenda

CFR Captain Monthly Meeting Agenda

7D.6 Career development programs are made available to all employees/members.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides opportunities for professional development. The department requires engineers to complete the NFPA 1002 certification and company officers to complete the NFPA 1021, 1031, 1033, 1041, and 1521 certifications. Line personnel are encouraged to attend two courses per year at the MS State Fire Academy to work towards these requirements prior to promotion.

Supervisory personnel are afforded training opportunities geared towards executive development through National Fire Academy courses and programs such as the Mississippi Certified Supervisory Manager and Certified Public Managers curriculum. The city offers a tuition assistance program to encourage achievement of higher education degrees. The department also encourages members to achieve professional designations. The department recently contracted with a private vendor to provide officer leadership/management development. The department implemented an Engineer Development Program to expose firefighters to the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of the position.

Appraisal

The department has provided personnel with ample opportunities to attend training events. The department has clearly outlined the professional requirements for engineer (driver/operator) and company officers. The department implemented an Engineer Development Program that prepares firefighters for promotion through a series of skill assessments. Company officers have been encouraged to apply for National Fire Academy courses. The department has required company officers to attend the MS Certified Supervisory Program and, once completed, enroll in the MS Certified Public Managers curriculum. To date, four personnel (the Fire Chief, two Battalion Chiefs, and one company officer) have achieved the MS Certified Public Managers designation. The city's tuition re-imbursement program has provided \$1,800 per year with a maximum of \$600 per course to personnel seeking job related degrees. The tuition assistance program has enabled three personnel to obtain Public Administration degrees (two Masters, one Bachelors of Science). Personnel have taken advantage of other professional development opportunities. To date, one company officer has achieved the Executive Fire Officer designation.

However, two improvements can be made. First, the department should implement a “career ladder” to identify specific certifications and educational requirements for personnel seeking advancement. Second, the department should develop a Company Officer Development Program to provide engineers/drivers with a tasked based program comprised on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required by the position. Third, the department should implement a Chief Officer Development Program based upon the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of command staff positions.

Plan

The department will continue to provide training opportunities for personnel as listed. The Chief of Training will work towards a career development plan for company officers and command staff. These programs will be presented to the Fire Chief no later than August 31, 2014.

References

City of Columbus Tuition Program

CFR Training Requirements

CFR Training Sheets

Criterion 7E: Personnel Compensation

A system and practices for providing employee/member compensation are in place.

Summary

The city publishes employee compensation and benefit information as part of the job advertisement process. Employee benefits are further explained during new employee orientation sessions and in the City of Columbus Employee Handbook. The department publishes pay scales for each position.

Employee benefits are clearly defined by city policy and are contained in the City of Columbus Employee Handbook. Each employee attends an orientation program where compensation and benefits is explained. Each employee maintains a personal copy of the Employee Handbook.

7E.1 Rates of pay and compensation are published and available to all employees / members. (CC)

Description

The city publishes employee compensation and benefit information as part of the job advertisement process. This rate of pay and compensation are for new hires. The city lists benefits in Section 4.0 of the City of Columbus Employee Handbook. The department publishes pay scales for each position in Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy 102.02. Each station maintains a policy and procedures manual.

Appraisal

The current processes for publishing rates of pay and compensation have met city and department needs. The city has effectively informed applicants with information regarding compensation and benefits prior to employment as part of the job advertisement and interview process. CFR policy 102.02 has clearly identified a rate of pay for the various positions within the department.

Plan

The city and department will continue to publish pay and compensation information through the processes currently being used. Changes in pay will be reflected through policy amendments.

References

City of Columbus job advertisement example
CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions

7E.2 Member benefits are defined, published and communicated to all employees/members.

Description

Member benefits are published in Section 4, Section 5, and Section 9 of the City of Columbus Employee Handbook. Each employee is given a handbook as part of the orientation process. The Human Resource Director conducts a benefits orientation session with each employee prior to or on the first day of employment.

Appraisal

The methods used by the city to define and communicate benefits have effectively met personnel needs. All benefits have been published in the city's Employee Handbook. Each employee has been given an Employee Handbook. The city has provided benefit orientation sessions where benefits are explained and benefit documentation is completed.

Plan

The Human Resource Director will ensure that current employee benefits are maintained in the Employee Handbook. The Human Resource Director will continue to provide orientation programs to new employees.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Section 4: Employee Benefits

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Section 5: Insurance

City of Columbus Employee Handbook, Section 9: Retirement

Criterion 7F: Occupational Health and Safety and Risk Management

Occupational health and safety and risk management programs are established and designed to protect the organization and personnel from unnecessary injuries or losses from accidents or liability.

Summary

The Chief of Training is responsible for implementing policies to ensure compliance with the department's occupational health and safety and risk management program. The Chief of Training serves as the department's Safety and Infection Control Officer.

The department utilizes various checklists to identify potential safety problems. Inspections are performed on department facilities to identify and correct safety issues. Problems noted through these measures are documented in station and Battalion Chief Daily Journals. All personnel protective equipment is inspected on an annual basis.

The department minimizes exposure to communicable diseases and chemicals through written protocols. Both exposures require proper documentation and follow up procedures.

Documentation is maintained in accordance with federal and state requirements.

The department recognizes the importance of workplace safety. New employees are acquainted with department operations, job hazards, safety policies, and vehicle/tool safety during orientation training. Department injuries are documented as part of the workman compensation process. The department conducts post critiques of structural fire incidents.

7F.1 A specific person or persons are assigned responsibility for implementing the occupational health and safety and risk management programs.

Description

The City of Columbus addresses risk management through the Municipal Employee Safety Program as outlined in Policy 6.35. This policy addresses vehicle accidents. Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions mandates that the Chief of Training serves as the department's Safety and Infection Control Officer. By virtue of the position, the Chief of Training implements policies to ensure compliance with occupational health and safety and risk management practices. The department maintains its own occupational health and safety and risk management program that is consistent with NFPA 1500 recommendations. The Chief of Training serves as the department's Occupational Health and Safety Officer.

Appraisal

Policy 6.35 has adequately met city needs with regards to vehicle accidents. However, the city should implement a comprehensive policy taking into account other safety and risk issues. The department has maintained its own occupational health and safety program. This program has met department needs. The Chief of Training has effectively managed this program by ensuring compliance with applicable policies, maintaining necessary documentation, and conducting employee follow-ups when required.

Plan

The Chief of Training will continue to serve as the department's Occupational Health and Safety and Risk Management Program manager. The Chief of Training will ensure that policies are updated to reflect current department needs.

References

City of Columbus Policy 6.35: Municipal Employee Safety Program

CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions

CFR Policy 109.05: Infection Control Program

7F.2 Procedures are established for reporting, evaluating, addressing, and communicating workplace hazards as well as unsafe/unhealthy conditions and work practices.

Description

All department personnel are responsible for maintaining a workplace free from hazards and unsafe/unhealthy conditions or practices. Workplace hazards are reported to company officers and the Battalion Chief. Documentation entries are made in the station Daily Journal and the Battalion Chief's Journal. The Battalion Chief notifies the Chief of Training of these hazards for correction. The Chief of Training is responsible for ensuring each unsafe condition is addressed as well as any necessary follow-ups.

Appraisal

The reporting and documentation processes used to report workplace hazards have adequately met department needs. The Chief of Training is responsible for addressing and correcting reported hazards. These processes have been effective in resolving each issue in a timely manner and have ensured process accountability. The Chief of Training has maintained documentation for employee exposures and workman compensation claims that may be used to identify unsafe work practices or conditions. For example, 3 exposure and 17 workman compensation cases were filed in 2011 while 2 exposure and 15 workman compensation cases were filed in 2012.

Plan

The department will continue with company officer certification and reporting processes identified in the reporting of hazardous and/or unsafe/unhealthy workplace conditions. The Chief of Training will be responsible for correcting each reported occurrence.

References

CFR Policy 601.02

CFR Infectious Exposure form

Station Daily Journal

Battalion Chief Journal

CFR Exposure and Workman Compensation forms

CFR Personnel Training Records

7F.3 The agency documents steps taken to implement risk reduction and address identified workplace hazards.

Description

The department documents risk reduction measures using standardized checklists that include station inspections, daily SCBA checks, daily and scheduled preventative maintenance apparatus checks, and annual personal protective equipment inspections. The Chief of Training maintains files for personnel exposures and workman compensation injuries. The department uses post incident critiques as a means of risk reduction by identifying needed changes in protocols or identifying unsafe scene practices.

Appraisal

The use of checklists has ensured the safe condition of department facilities and operation of equipment. Identified hazardous conditions have been documented and repaired. The use of post incident critiques has been a valuable learning tool. However, post incident critiques should be available to all personnel, not just those involved with the incident.

Plan

The department will continue with the processes used in risk reduction. The Chief of Training will implement an “Incident Lessons Learned” program that will share post critique information to all personnel. This program will be implemented no later than February 28, 2014.

References

Station Daily Journals

Battalion Chief Journals

SCBA logs

Apparatus checklists

Post Incident critiques

7F.4 Procedures are established and communicated specific to minimizing occupational exposure to communicable diseases or chemicals.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue minimizes exposure to communicable diseases and chemicals through written policies. CFR Policy 109.05 addresses exposure to communicable diseases during medical emergency response. CFR Policy Volume 2: Emergency Operations addresses personnel exposures to chemicals during structure fires, hazardous materials, or technical rescue events. These policies mandate the use of personal protective equipment during the incident and procedures to be followed in the event of an exposure.

Appraisal

Both policies have effectively met department needs in minimizing exposures to communicable diseases and chemicals. These policies have mandated the use of personal protective equipment when employees may be exposed to communicable diseases, chemicals, or the by-products of combustion.

Plan

Department personnel will follow applicable policies regarding the use of personal protective equipment to minimize exposure to communicable diseases and chemical exposures. The Chief of Training will review all policies related to minimizing occupational exposure to communicable diseases and chemicals on an annual basis.

References

CFR Policy 109.05: Infectious Control Program

CFR Policy Volume 2

7F.5 An occupational health and safety training program is established and designed to instruct the workforce in general safe work practices, from point of initial employment through each job assignment and/or whenever new substances, new processes, procedures, or equipment are introduced. It provides specific instructions on operations and hazards specific to the agency. (CC)

Description

The department maintains an occupational health and safety training program through several measures. These measures include:

- New employee orientation covering health and safety conducted by the Human Resource Director and the Chief of Training
- Professional certifications required by positions that cover occupational health and safety that includes NFPA 1001, NFPA 1002, NFPA 1021, and NFPA 1521
- Orientation on new equipment safety and operations prior to being placed in service
- Outside agency training covering general and specific work place safety
- Employee vaccinations are current
- Utilization of post incident critiques to identify safety and operational issues
- Infectious and Exposure Control program

Appraisal

The processes used by the department have been effective in maintaining an occupational health and safety program. The new member orientation has been effective in providing initial safety awareness. This orientation has provided an overview of job hazards, departmental safety policies and procedures, and vehicle and tool safety. Training at the MS State Fire Academy has supplemented in-house training and exposed personnel to health and safety issues and processes for each positional rank within the department. The department has provided operational and safety instruction for new equipment prior to being placed in service (i.e. apparatus, extrication equipment, chain saws, etc.). The department has used outside subject matter experts for additional health and safety related training. Baptist Memorial Hospital Ambulance Service has provided training related to medical safety/exposure topics while Lowndes County Sheriff's Office has provided training in clandestine drug lab operations.

Plan

The department will continue to provide safe work practice training to all employees through the measures discussed. The Chief of Training will evaluate the effectiveness of this training on an annual basis. Personnel will continue to attend certification training as part of position requirements.

References

New Employee Orientation Training Agenda

CFR Training records

CFR training sheets

7F.6 The agency uses near miss reporting to elevate the level of situational awareness in an effort to teach and share lessons learned from events that, except for a fortunate break in the chain of events, could have resulted in a fatality, injury or property damage.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue conducts post incident critiques as a means of reviewing incident events in relation to “near miss” events and other hazardous conditions or practices witnessed. Post incident critiques serve as an actual lesson learned event.

Appraisal

The use of post incident critiques has provided an effective forum of reviewing emergency events. However, several improvements can be made. First, the department should implement an “Incidents Lessons Learned” program that shares post incident critiques with all members of the department (see 7F.3). Second, the department should participate in the national Near Miss Reporting System. Third, the department should incorporate the use of NIOSH fatality reports into department safety training. These recommendations would provide a means of exposing personnel to actual events, their causes, and ways to prevent or reduce the chances of occurrence. Implementation of these recommendations would represent a significant improvement in this performance indicator.

Plan

The Chief of Training will implement an Incident Lessons Learned training program for department personnel. The Chief of Training will implement the National Near Miss Reporting system into department operations. The Chief of Training will be responsible for ensuring department near misses are reported in a timely manner. The Chief of Training will incorporate the NIOSH fatality reports into department training as a supplemental safety training aid. This implementation will occur no later than February 28, 2014.

References

CFR Post Incident critiques

7F.7 A process is in place to investigate and document accidents, injuries, legal actions, etc., which is supported by the agency's information management system.

Description

City of Columbus Policy 6.35: Municipal Employee Safety Program addresses the procedures used to investigate vehicle accidents. The department uses several processes to document injuries. All accidents and injuries are documented in the Station Daily Journal and Battalion Chief Journal. For injuries where lost work time occurs, personnel are required to complete workman compensation forms. Personnel are also encouraged to complete workman compensation forms if the injury has the potential to cause future problems. Personnel are required to complete exposure forms for EMS or hazardous materials exposures. The Chief of Training maintains files for exposure and workman compensation claims. The department's record management system supports the documentation of injuries and exposures.

Appraisal

The current processes used to document vehicle accidents and injuries have adequately met city and department needs. The department has implemented a multi-level reporting system for injuries or exposures. These processes have served as a check and balance system to ensure proper reporting, documentation, and treatment. One improvement can be made to best meet this performance indicator. The department should implement a safety committee comprised of all ranks of department personnel.

Plan

The city and department will continue with the current processes to investigate and record injuries, accidents, and exposures. The department will establish a safety committee tasked with implementing a formal process for accident and injury investigations. The Chief of Training will serve as committee chairperson. This committee will be formed no later than March 31, 2014.

References

City of Columbus Policy 6.35: Municipal Employee Safety Program

City of Columbus Vehicle Accident Report form

CFR Policy 104.04

Station Daily Journals

Battalion Chief Journals

Fire Programs Personnel Module

Criterion 7G: Wellness/Fitness Programs

The agency has a wellness/fitness program for recruit and incumbent personnel and provisions for noncompliance by employees/members are written and communicated.

Summary

The department provides for the wellness and fitness of its members through several initiatives. The department provides annual physical examinations to all members. As part of the physical examination, members are provided wellness and health education emphasizing healthy nutritional options and regular exercise. A physical examination summary is provided that may be used to analyze department fitness trends.

The department does not have a mandatory physical fitness requirement. However, the department provides cardiovascular equipment at each station and provides access to outdoor running tracks. The department provides for mental wellness by providing Critical Incident Stress Management and counseling to members. The department has one member trained in CISM as well as a retired pastor serving as department Chaplin.

7G.1 The agency provides for initial, regular, and rehabilitative medical and physical fitness evaluations. (CC)

Description

The City of Columbus requires an initial medical examination of new employees upon offer of employment. This examination is required by City of Columbus Employee Handbook Policy 2.40 and Civil Service Rules Manual, Section VIII. The department provides annual physical examinations for all members. These examinations meet NFPA 1582, OSHA 1910.120, and OSHA 1910.134 requirements. When an employee is absent three or more days of continual absence due to sickness, injury, or disability, members are required to provide a letter from their physician indicating the employee's ability to return to work.

Appraisal

The initial and annual physical examinations have adequately met city and department needs. The annual physical examinations have provided a comprehensive evaluation that includes the following major components; a basic blood-work panel, physiological tests, submaximal ergometer stress test, pulmonary function assessment, coronary risk assessment, and physician review. The physician conducting the examination clears each employee for duty or refers the member to their personal physician or specialist if indicated. Each member is given a booklet containing the results of the assessment.

Plan

The city and department will continue with pre-employment and annual physical fitness assessments.

References

City of Columbus Employee Handbook Policy 2.40: Disqualification of Applicants

Civil Service Rules Manual Section VIII

North Greenville Fitness services

7G.2 The agency provides personnel with access to fitness facilities and equipment as well as exercise instruction.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides each station with a cardiovascular stationary elliptical trainer. The department has access to walking/running tracks at Baptist Memorial Hospital and Columbus High School. Personnel have provided personal equipment for strength training that consists of free weights, weight benches, dumbbells, etc. Exercise instruction is provided as part of the services offered by North Greenville Fitness, the department's physical fitness assessment vendor.

Appraisal

The elliptical equipment provided by the department has met basic cardio exercise needs. Personnel have been encouraged to exercise at outdoor track facilities. Both of these training opportunities have provided personnel with an opportunity to exercise. The exercise instruction provided by North Greenville has provided employees with a basic exercise plan. Additionally, this instruction has included an exercise progression form to track personal fitness improvement.

Several improvements are recommended. First, the department should research the feasibility of a centralized exercise facility that maintains cardio and strength training equipment. Second, the department should provide shift peer health and fitness trainers to provide exercise instruction to personnel.

Plan

The department will continue to provide and maintain cardiovascular equipment for each station. The Chief of Training will research costs for weight training equipment and a central fitness facility. The department will assess the feasibility of shift peer fitness trainers.

References

North Greenville Fitness Exercise Plan

7G.3 The agency provides wellness/fitness education to all employees/members.

Description

North Greenville Fitness provides wellness and fitness education to all employees as part of their annual screening process. Each employee completes a thorough health questionnaire that is used to assess their nutritional and fitness habits. Each employee is given a handbook that contains the results of their physical assessment, a coronary risk report, a structured exercise program based upon individual exercise preferences, and healthy nutritional information and options.

Appraisal

The information presented by North Greenville has been effective at providing personnel with a basic understanding of health and wellness. This information has been presented during the annual assessments. The department should consider a partnership with local resources (i.e. Baptist Memorial Hospital, local fitness centers, YMCA, etc) to provide wellness and fitness education to personnel on a more frequent basis to reinforce healthy lifestyles. The department should assess the need for shift peer fitness trainers to provide exercise instruction.

Plan

The department will continue to provide health and wellness education to all employees. The Chief of Training will contact local resources regarding quarterly health and wellness training for personnel. This training will be incorporated into the department's annual training plan for 2014.

References

North Greenville Fitness employee fitness assessment handbook

7G.4 The agency provides an employee/member assistance program with timely access to critical incident stress debriefing and behavioral counseling resources.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides critical incident stress management (CISM) to department personnel, other public safety agencies, and the public. The department has one member trained in both informal and formal stress management techniques. A retired pastor provides additional counseling by serving as the department Chaplin. The Fire and Life Safety Educator is contacted during residential structure fires to provide counseling and assist homeowners in identifying sources of aid.

Appraisal

The counseling resources provided have met department needs. The department has one member that has been trained in critical incident stress management. The department has access to individuals in other agencies that have been trained in CISM techniques. The department recently added a Chaplin to assist with counseling needs. The city has provided access to behavior counseling to local agencies. However, the city does not have a formal Employee Assistance Program that involves other means of aid (i.e. substance abuse/addiction, financial counseling, etc.).

Plan

The department will continue to provide CISM and counseling to department members. The city will continue to provide behavior counseling using current processes. The decision to implement a citywide EAP program is subject to mayor/council approval.

References

CFR CISM training certification

Department Chaplin

7G.5 Current policies and standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct the wellness/fitness programs. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue Policies and Procedure Manual Section 109 address firefighter health and wellness. The purpose of this section is to improve the overall health and wellness of department personnel. This section contains the following policies:

- Medical examination
- Wellness component
- Behavior component
- Critical Incident Stress Management
- Infectious Control Program

Appraisal

The department has provided policies that have adequately met department and personnel needs. The policies have addressed the various components that comprise health and wellness. The policies have clearly defined department and employee requirements towards health and wellness. There is one exception that must be addressed. The Wellness policy has not been written. The completion of this policy will complete the health and wellness component of departmental policy.

Plan

The department will continue to provide policies aimed towards addressing employee health and wellness. The Fire Chief will ensure that each policy is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure each policy reflects current requirements. The Chief of Training will complete the Wellness component policy by March 31, 2014.

References

CFR Policy and Procedures Manual: Section 109

7G.6 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of the wellness / fitness programs.

Description

Fire Programs is the department's Record Management System. The Training Module supports documentation of personal fitness training. This system allows for analysis by assigning point values for each physical fitness activity. Additional analysis is provided by North Greenville Fitness. Each year, North Greenville provides a printed booklet containing employee fitness results. Also included in the booklet is the previous year's result that allows for a comparison analysis. North Greenville provides individual and department results.

Appraisal

Fire Programs has the capability to document physical fitness activities; however, this capability has not been utilized by the department. Therefore, the department has relied on North Greenville Fitness to provide fitness results used to assess the wellness program. North Greenville Fitness has provided overall fitness evaluations that may be compared with previous data.

Plan

The department will utilize software features provided by Fire Programs to provide data for an internal analysis. The Chief of Training will research the best options available to analyze the wellness and fitness of personnel. This recommendation will be made to the Fire Chief no later than December 31, 2013.

References

Fire Program Training Module
North Greenville Fitness Reports

7G.7 An appraisal is conducted, at least annually, to determine the effectiveness of the wellness/fitness programs.

Description

North Greenville Fitness provides an annual summary showing the overall fitness of department personnel. The department is able to conduct an appraisal of the health and wellness program based upon these summaries. These summaries provide an overview of the previous five years that allows the department to identify specific trends.

Appraisal

The summaries provided by North Greenville have been effective in providing reliable data used for statistical analysis. These summaries have identified data regarding department demographics relevant to the health and wellness screenings (i.e. age, weight, body fat percentage, lipid profiles, aerobic capacity, etc.). These summaries have provided an average score, recommended ranges, and the number of members that exceed specific health risk ranges.

Plan

The vendor will continue to provide the department with fitness summaries.

References

North Greenville Annual Summary Fitness Reports

Category VIII: Training and Competency

Training and educational resource programs express the philosophy of the organization they serve and are central to its mission. Learning resources should include a library, other collections of materials that support teaching and learning, instructional methodologies and technologies, support services, distribution and maintenance systems for equipment and materials, instructional information systems, such as computers and software, telecommunications, other audio visual media, and the facilities to utilize such equipment and services.

Central to success of the training and educational process is a learning resources organizational structure and a technically proficient support staff. The training staff should provide services that encourage and stimulate competency, innovation, and increased effectiveness. The agency or system should provide those learning resources necessary to support quality training. The agency should depict their approach to recognized state/provincial and national fire service professional standards programs within their written responses to the performance indicators in this section as adherence to those programs will be considered as *prima facie* compliance with the intent of this section.

Category VIII: Training and Competency

Criterion 8A: Training and Education Program Requirements

A training and education program is established to support the agency's needs.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue is dedicated to providing members with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to provide the various programs that are used to support the department's stated mission. The Chief of Training is a full time position within the organization. The Chief of Training is responsible for the management of the training and education program. Program evaluation is performed on a yearly basis as part of the Annual Program Report provided to the Fire Chief.

Training is established upon a prioritized system that includes the following components:

- Mandated training
- Professional certifications
- Supplemental training
- In-house specialty team training
- Management/supervisory training
- Company level evolutions.

This training philosophy provides for the achievement of basic competencies through professional certifications, supplemental, and managerial training while in-house and company level training focuses on continued maintenance of skills in firefighting, medical, and specialty team operations.

8A.1 The organization has a process in place to identify training needs, which identifies the tasks, activities, knowledge, skills, and abilities required to deal with anticipated emergency conditions. (CC)

Description

The department's training program is based upon an annual and quarterly scheduling format that allows for both short and long range training objectives. The training program focuses on a prioritized system centered on six (6) training components that include:

1. Mandated training (certification maintenance, federal/state mandated training)
2. Required professional certifications (NFPA 1001, 1002, 1021, 1031 etc.)
3. Supplemental training and non-required certifications
4. In-house training that includes fire suppression, emergency medical service, hazardous materials, and technical rescue.
5. Management/supervisory training for company officers and battalion chiefs (Certified Supervisory/Public Manager, "Grow Your Officers" curriculum)
6. Company level evolutions (territory, hydrants, truck familiarization, etc.)

The training involved in each of these training components addresses specific competencies required of personnel in the performance of their duties.

Appraisal

The training format utilized has created an effective training program meeting department needs. Scheduling of training requirements that are static in nature such as annual re-certifications (i.e. EMT and CPR) has allowed for long term planning. The Chief of Training has maintained a Training Matrix that reflects required certifications by position and personnel. This matrix has identified training certification needs.

Quarterly training has allowed flexibility in providing in-house training taking into account factors such as training prioritizations, one time training needs, instructor availability, weather, and individual company level training needs. Quarterly scheduling is coordinated by the Chief of Training with input provided from the department's technical rescue team coordinators and company officers. One area that the department should address is chief officer development. A

training curriculum should be developed focusing on inherent competencies such as conceptual skills, critical thinking, and leadership development.

Plan

The department will continue to identify training needs based upon annual and quarterly reviews. The Chief of Training will identify a training curriculum addressing the needs of chief officers with an implementation date no later than June 30, 2014.

References

CFR Training Goals - 2013

Quarterly Training Schedules

Annual Training Schedules

CFR Training Matrix

National Emergency Medical Technician Re-certification

8A.2 The training program is consistent with the agency's mission statement and published goals and objectives, and meets the agency's needs.

Description

The training program identifies the competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities required to execute department programs that support and are aligned the department's stated mission. The Chief of Training is responsible for developing goals and objectives that ensures the training program remains aligned with the department's mission. External training focuses on obtaining certifications and acquisition of new skills whereas in-house training typically focuses on the maintenance of skills in fire suppression, EMS, hazardous materials, and technical rescue.

Appraisal

The training program has been designed to support the programs and services provided by the department. These services and programs are consistent with the stated mission. Professional certifications are obtained at the MS State Fire Academy, an International Fire Service Accreditation Congress accredited institution. The National Fire Academy, MS State Personnel Board, and National Domestic Preparedness Consortium training facilities have provided supplemental training. In-house training has been effective at providing for continued maintenance of skills in firefighting, medical, hazardous materials, and technical rescue operations. One area for improvement has been noted. The lack of a chief officer development program has the potential to adversely impact the department's ability to achieve its stated mission. At the chief officer level, the development of conceptual skills, critical thinking, and leadership maturity is essential in managing department operations.

Plan

The department will continue to provide training using its current training philosophy. The Chief of Training will research a training curriculum that meets the needs for chief officer development by June 30, 2014.

References

CFR Master Training Schedule
2012 Training Program Annual Report

8A.3 The training program is consistent with legal requirements for performing mandatory training.

Description

Mississippi Code Annotated §45-11-251 establishes the MS Fire Personnel Minimum Standards and Certification Board as the authority for determining training criteria and standards for state firefighters. This statute designates the MS State Fire Academy as the principle training provider (MS Code Annotated §45-11-201). The minimum training curriculum is compliant with federal and state statutes such as 29 CFR 1910.120 (HAZWOPER) requirements for hazardous materials training and National Incident Management System (NIMS) requirements. The MS Rating Bureau recommends a minimum of 24 hours per month of training. Professional and technical rescue team certification meets NFPA standards (i.e. NFPA 1001, 1002, 1006, etc.). The department meets the certification/re-certification requirements of The National Registry Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) for the EMS program.

Appraisal

The training program implemented by the department has met or exceeded legal requirements. Department personnel are trained, at a minimum, to the HAZWOPER operations level by obtaining 32 hours of training as part of the NFPA 1001 curriculum at the MS State Fire Academy. The department has required personnel to obtain NIMS training relevant to their position (see Performance Indicator 5H.2). Monthly training has met or exceeded the 24 hours recommended by the MS Rating Bureau. Personnel have met or exceeded the NREMT re-certification requirements (72 CEU hours).

Plan

The department will continue to provide training to meet all legally mandated training.

The Chief of Training will schedule training that is consistent with maintaining the competencies, skills, and knowledge to maintain program proficiency and quality of services delivered.

References

MS Code Annotated §45-11-201

MS Code Annotated §45-11-251

MS Rating Bureau Standards

29 CFR 1910.120

National Registered Emergency Medical Technician Standards

CFR Training Records

8A.4 The agency has identified minimum levels of training required for all positions in the organization.

Description

The department requires minimum training requirements for firefighters, engineers, and company officers as outlined by Columbus Fire and Rescue Policies and Procedures Manual Section 401 and 403. Section 401 contains policies that outline training and certification requirements by position. Section 403 contains policies regarding training requirements specific to hazardous materials and technical rescue.

Appraisal

The department has implemented policies outlining minimum training and certification requirements. Policy 401.01 has addressed minimum training requirements for firefighters, engineers, and company officers. Section 403 has identified the minimum training requirements for hazardous materials and technical rescue. All personnel are expected to be trained at the awareness and operations level of each discipline. These training policies have provided the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities required of the position and have adequately met department needs. However, one improvement can be made. There are no minimum training requirements for chief officers other than those required of company officers. A program addressing chief officer development should be implemented.

Plan

The department will continue to require professional certifications determined by position. The department will review all policies related to training ensuring each policy reflects training needs and requirements. The Chief of Training will research a training curriculum that meets the needs for chief officer development by June 30, 2014.

References

Columbus Fire and Rescue Section 401

Columbus Fire and Rescue Section 403

8A.5 A command and staff development program is in place.

Description

The city and department provides training opportunities for command and staff development. City Policy 6.10 provides an opportunity to obtain a college degree through tuition reimbursement. MS University for Women established a “bank” of college hours allowing city personnel to attend courses free of charge. The department requires company officers to attend the MS Certified Supervisory Management program by the MS State Personnel Board. Upon completion, personnel are encouraged to attend the MS Certified Public Managers curriculum. Personnel are encouraged to attend National Fire Academy curriculums geared towards professional development

Appraisal

The city and department has implemented programs that support command and staff professional development. The city’s tuition assistance program provides reimbursement up to \$1800 per year with a maximum of \$600 for each course successfully completed. This program has aided three personnel in achieving Public Administration degrees (two Masters, one Bachelors of Science). Personnel have taken advantage of National Fire Academy courses with several members completing course curriculums and one company officer having achieved the Executive Fire Officer designation. Four members have achieved the MS Certified Public Mangers designation. The implementation of a Chief Officer Development Program would greatly enhance this performance indicator. This program would provide professional development for the command staff.

Plan

The department will continue to provide training opportunities for executive and professional development. The Chief of Training will research a training curriculum that meets the needs for chief officer development by June 30, 2014.

References

CFR Training Matrix

City of Columbus Policy 6.10: Reimbursement Policy

Criterion 8B: Training and Education Program Performance

Training and education programs are provided to support the agency's needs.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue provides training opportunities designed to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities of department personnel. The department establishes minimum training requirements for the positions of firefighter, engineer, and company officer. Additionally, the department's technical rescue team standard operating guidelines specify minimum training requirements for personnel operating at the technician level. The department encourages personnel to attend training opportunities beyond what is required. Much of this training is obtained at outside agencies that include MS State Fire Academy, the National Fire Academy, MS State Personnel Board, and the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium.

Training is coordinated through the use of annual and quarterly schedules. Annual schedules focus primarily on individual training such as that of mandated, professional, supplemental, and managerial/supervisory training. Quarterly schedules are more team oriented such as that for in-house specialty team training and company level drills.

Training performance measurements are based upon NFPA and other nationally recognized performance standards and recommendations. The department's lesson plans reflect training objectives and performance based measurements as a general guide of competency. The department implemented a non-mandatory Engineer Development Program in 2011 to aid firefighters seeking promotion to the rank of engineer.

The Chief of Training maintains a Training Matrix that is useful in analyzing department training needs. Training documentation is accomplished through the use of Fire Programs, the department's Record Management System. This software may be used to record individual and company level training drills.

8B.1 A process is in place to ensure that personnel are appropriately trained.

Description

Mississippi Code Annotated §45-11-201 mandates minimum training levels for career firefighters. CFR Policies Sections 401 and 403 outline minimum training certifications by position. Certification training at the MS State Fire Academy meets IFSAC, NFPA, and MS Fire Service Minimum Standard Certification Board requirements. Department personnel are trained to NREMT curriculum standards. NFPA compliant hazardous materials and technical rescue training is provided at the MS State Fire Academy and the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium training facilities. The department provides opportunities for professional development of company officers and chief officers. This training is offered by the National Fire Academy and MS State Personnel Board (Certified Supervisory Manager and Certified Public Manager).

The department's in-house training program is geared towards maintenance of skills obtained. The department also provides training opportunities in management and leadership development for company officers and command staff personnel. The Chief of Training ensures that personnel have met certification requirements through a Master Training Matrix which lists required training and certifications obtained. Technical rescue certification and training is coordinated by the Special Operations Chief and Chief of Training. In-house instructors have been certified through NFPA 1041 Fire Service Instructor and/or Train-the-Trainer courses. Lesson plans with identified training objectives and performance measures are developed to support this training.

Appraisal

The training program that has been established has adequately met department needs to ensure personnel are appropriately trained for job responsibilities. Minimum training has been established for each line position. The department has extensively used NDPC vendors and facilities for specialized training (hazardous materials, technical rescue). The department has partnered with local resources such as Baptist Memorial Hospital for supplemental EMS training. These processes have adequately met department training needs. However, one improvement can be made. The department does not have a formal program for executive

development. A formally adopted chief officer development program would identify and standardize training essential for command and staff positions.

Plan

The Chief of Training will continue to identify training programs to support personnel development and ensure that personnel are appropriately trained relevant to the position. The

Chief of Training will research and implement a training curriculum that meets the needs for a Chief Officer Development Program by June 30, 2014.

References

Columbus Fire & Rescue Policy Section 401 and 403

CFR Training Matrix

CFR Lesson Plans

8B.2 The agency provides both short and long-range training schedules.

Description

The Chief of Training establishes a master training schedule that includes both short and long term training. Long range schedules focus on certifications, re-certifications, and supplemental training needs. Short term training is identified on a quarterly basis with input provided by the Special Operations Chief, technical rescue team coordinators, and company officers. The Quarterly Schedule is established during Coordinator meetings.

Appraisal

The current scheduling format has adequately met department needs. Long range scheduling has identified certification and re-certifications needs. Personnel have identified supplemental training opportunities through course catalogs or institution web sites. The application process has allowed for advanced planning. Due to the more dynamic nature of in-house program training, quarterly scheduling has provided flexibility taking into account factors such as training prioritizations (rotation of training), availability of instructors, weather, and company level needs. Both scheduling processes have adequately met department needs.

Plan

The Chief of Training will continue to maintain a master training schedule that reflects both short and long range training requirements/needs. The Chief of Training will continue to conduct quarterly coordinators meetings to schedule short range planning needs.

References

Master Training Schedule

CFR Coordinators meetings

Quarterly Training Schedules

8B.3 The agency has a process for developing performance-based measurements.

Description

As a result of MS Rating Bureau recommendations, the department has implemented training objectives and performance measurements into lesson plans as a means of competency evaluation. Lesson plans incorporate training objectives and performance based measurements using applicable NFPA, NREMT, NDPC, ROCO, Dive Rescue International, and other nationally recognized peer standards regarding performance based objectives. The department uses drills, exams, and skills check-offs as evaluation tools. The department implemented an Engineer Development Program in 2013. This program is a competency based task book in which individuals demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of the engineer position through a skills check-off process.

Appraisal

The use of performance based training objectives and performance measurements have adequately met department needs. These objectives and measurements specifically state what/how training is to be conducted (objectives) and to what knowledge/skill levels (performance measurements). Examples of performance based training include:

- The use of the Engineer Development Program for firefighters
- The use of department training scenarios, regional, and state emergency drills/exercises for technical rescue evolutions.
- Engine and truck company level training evolutions following the recommendations of NFPA 1410.

Plan

The Chief of Training will continue to ensure that training objectives and performance measurements are mandatory components in lesson plan development. The Chief of Training will continue to use national accepted standards and practices as outlined by NFPA, NREMT, NDPC, ROCO, Dive Rescue International, and etc. for performance measurements. The Chief of Training will continue to use company level evolutions, drills, exams, and skill check-offs as evaluation tools of performance.

References

MS Rating Bureau Report: 2012

NFPA 1410, Standard on Training for Initial Emergency Scene Operations

CFR Lesson Plans

CFR Engineer Development Handbook

8B.4 The agency provides for evaluation of individual, company, or crew, and multi-company or crew performance through performance-based measurements. (CC)

Description

The department evaluates training through several methods. First, training from outside agencies (MS State Fire Academy, National Domestic Preparedness Consortium) are evaluated using performance measurements based upon NFPA recommendations or national practices. In-house training is based upon lesson plans using training objectives and performance criteria from national standards or practices (NFPA, National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, NDPC, ROCO, Dive Rescue International, etc.). This training is evaluated through a combination of written tests, skill assessments, and skill observations. Technical rescue team training is evaluated through individual skills assessments, department scenarios, and regional and state sponsored emergency drills/exercises. The department also implemented a non-mandatory competency based Engineer Development Program in which personnel complete task specific competencies required of the position through a series of check-off skills.

Appraisal

The evaluation methods being used have adequately met department needs. Performance has been measured through timed drill evolutions (donning personal protective equipment, SCBA), setting up fire apparatus, and rigging technical rescue equipment, to name a few. Written tests and skill assessments have been effective in evaluating performance after initial training. Long term performance has been effectively evaluated through job observations of department training scenarios and participation in regional and state emergency drills and exercises. One area in which the department could improve is at the company level. More drills and evolutions involving individual and multi-company units based upon NFPA 1710 recommendations should be conducted.

Plan

The department will continue to utilize written tests, skill assessments, job observation, and department scenarios and emergency drills as a means of evaluating individual and company level performance. The Chief of Training will incorporate more individual and multi-company

training based upon NFPA 1710 recommendations into the department's in-house training program.

References

CFR Lesson Plans

CFR Training Sheets

CFR Engineer Development Program

8B.5 The agency maintains individual/member training records.

Description

The department maintains training records on each employee in both hardcopy and electronic format. The Chief of Training is responsible for maintaining employee training files. The department requires personnel to provide the Chief of Training with copies of training certificates obtained from external agencies. The department uses Fire Company Training Record forms to document in-house training. This training is recorded in the department's electronic record management system, Fire Programs. The department maintains employee training files and training documents for a set period of time. The Chief of Training maintains a Training Matrix reflecting training requirements and individual accomplishments.

Appraisal

The hardcopy training records and electronic RMS has adequately met training documentation requirements by providing access to individual training records. The Training Matrix has provided a quick reference for analyzing department and individual training needs. The department has maintained hardcopy training records for a period of five years. During Performance Indicator review, it was discovered that the five year period was in conflict with the State of MS Records Retention Schedule for Municipalities which recommends maintaining training records for a period of 10 years.

Plan

The department will continue to use both hardcopy and Fire Programs for training documentation. The Chief of Training is responsible for maintaining training files for all department personnel. The department will amend its record retention schedule for training records to reflect State requirements.

References

Fire Programs Personnel and Training Modules

CFR Training Matrix

CFR Fire Company Training Records Sheet

State of MS Records Retention Schedule for Municipalities

Criterion 8C: Training and Education Resources

Training and education resources, printed and non-printed library materials, media equipment, facilities, and staff are available in sufficient quantity, relevancy, diversity, and are current.

Summary

The Training Division consists of the Chief of Training. The Chief of Training is assisted by department members that have received NFPA 1041 certification or received Train-the-Trainer certification. External subject matter experts are used on an as needed basis.

The Training Division maintains a library that consists of texts and a video collection of EMS and fire related tapes. Texts are generally limited to promotional testing. The department subscribes to various industry magazines. Texts and tapes are available to all members through a checkout process. The Chief of Training evaluates printed and non-printed material for content and relevancy.

For classroom instruction, the division uses the Fire and Life Safety Education office. This office has the seated capacity and audio/visual equipment necessary for training. This equipment includes computer laptops, audio/visual projection equipment, white boards, and flip charts.

The department uses external agencies for training opportunities. These agencies include the MS State Fire Academy and National Domestic Preparedness Consortium. The department has used local industries and other locations in providing realistic and challenging environments during specialty team training.

8C.1 Available training facilities and apparatus are provided to support the training needs of the agency. (CC)

Description

The department utilizes the MS State Fire Academy as the main provider of certification courses (NFPA 1001, 1002, 1033, etc.) as well as hazardous materials and technical rescue certifications. The MS State Fire Academy facility includes a multi-storied heat house, a five story drill tower, assorted specialty props, fire apparatus, and four classrooms. The National Domestic Preparedness Consortium agencies provide supplemental training focusing mainly on weapons of mass destruction (WMD), hazardous materials, incident management, improvised explosive devices, and radiological incidents. These facilities are properly equipped to support training requirements.

The department uses facilities and equipment to support in-house training. The department uses the Fire and Life Safety Office for classroom instruction. Department apparatus is used during company level training and live burn exercises. The department partners with local industries and private owners in providing site locations for technical rescue training purposes. The city's Dilapidated Structure Program provides approximately 10 to 15 abandoned residential structures for live fire training events. These structures are certified for live burns following MS Department of Environmental Quality inspections.

Appraisal

The resources that have been used by the department adequately support training needs. External agency facilities have provided excellent training venues and adhered to national standards. The department's Fire and Life Safety Office has provided an effective training facility due to the size, audio-visual equipment, and other instruction needs. The department has apparatus and equipment to support program training needs. The use of local industries has been valuable in acquainting personnel with actual training environments. Baptist Memorial Hospital has provided props that effectively support EMS training. The department recently acquired an 8,000 square foot building that may be used for training purposes. The department does not currently have a dedicated training facility. The construction of a dedicated training facility was identified in the Strategic Plan.

Plan

The department will continue to use the resources available for training. The department will evaluate the feasibility of renovating the recently acquired building as training resource. The department will continue working towards a dedicated training facility as part of the Strategic Plan.

References

MS State Fire Academy Catalog

MS Department of Environmental Quality Standards for building burns

8C.2 Instructional personnel are available to meet the needs of the agency.

Description

The Chief of Training is a full time command staff position responsible for managing the department's training program. Department personnel are used extensively for in-house training. Company officers are required to obtain NFPA 1041: Fire Service Instructor certification.

Firefighters and engineers also have the opportunity to obtain this certification. There are 29 members that have achieved NFPA 1041 certification. The department has personnel certified through Train-the-Trainer programs in specific technical rescue team areas such as rope/high angle rescue (ROCO Rescue), overland search and rescue (MS Office of Homeland Security), and dive rescue (Team LGS). The training division uses outside subject matter experts (paramedics, law enforcement officers) in specific agency training.

Appraisal

The use of department personnel and subject matter experts has effectively met department needs. All company officers have been required to obtain NFPA 1041 certification ensuring each shift has an adequate number of in-house instructors. Other personnel such as specialty team coordinators, engineers, and firefighters are encouraged to obtain this certification as well. The department has effectively used subject matter experts from external agencies to provide instruction in various topics.

Plan

The department will continue to use in-house personnel and subject matter experts in department training. The department will continue to provide opportunities for department personnel to obtain NFPA 1041 certification as well as Train-the-Trainer programs.

References

CFR Master Training Matrix

Training Sheets

8C.3 Instructional materials are current, support the training program, and are easily accessible.

Description

The Chief of Training is responsible for maintaining instructional materials. The department maintains a promotional text library as well as Fire and Emergency Training Network (FETN) video tapes. The department maintains IFSTA manuals at each station for instructional and reference use and subscribes to various fire and emergency service magazines. Each station is Internet equipped to allow access to view instructional videos or to research fire, medical, or technical rescue related topics. The department has vendor developed lesson plans in hazardous materials, auto extrication, and trench rescue.

Appraisal

The instruction materials used for training purposes as adequately met department needs. The department's library was recently updated to reflect current editions of most texts. Promotional texts have been made available to personnel on a two week basis through a check out system. IFSTA manuals and FETN video library has provided supplemental instruction in fire and medical related topics. Several improvements could be made to enhance this indicator. First, several promotional texts and IFSTA manuals have been superseded by newer editions. Second, many of the FETN videos are 5 to 10 years in age and may not reflect current standards/protocols and operational practices/tactics. Third, the department should develop an "Incident Lessons Learned" Library containing post incident critiques for all shifts to review. Finally, firefighting training should make better use of professional magazines or website training topics for current operational practices.

Plan

Beginning in 2013, members attending the MS Fire Academy will be required to return IFSTA manuals to the Chief of Training. This requirement will ensure current editions are available to all personnel. As the training budget allows, the department will replace other promotional texts and provide each station with a standardized set of current edition IFSTA manuals. The Chief of Training will research the feasibility of on-line subscription services such as CiNet, Firehouse, and Fire Engineering and make better use of magazine and web-based training. -The Chief of Training will develop a standardized template to be used for post incident critiques. These

critiques will be filed in an Incident Lessons Learned Library available to all personnel for training reviews. This process will completed no later than March 31, 2013.

References

CFR Reference Text Library

FETN tapes

IFSTA manuals

8C.4 Apparatus and equipment utilized for training are properly maintained in accordance with the agency's operational procedures, and are readily accessible to trainers and employees.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue Policy Section 602 addresses preventative maintenance, annual pump service test, and hose testing. Department members perform daily apparatus and equipment checks as well as general preventative maintenance each Friday following manufacturers recommended practices. Department personnel perform scheduled preventative maintenance on apparatus following manufacturer recommendations. The city garage makes repairs on apparatus and maintains a preventative maintenance schedule. Technical rescue and other equipment are inspected each Friday. Hoses are tested on an annual basis and repaired as needed. Ground ladders are cleaned following manufacturer recommendations. Private vendors are used to inspect equipment such as ground ladders, aerial ladders, and hazardous materials monitoring devices.

Appraisal

The procedures used to maintain and repair apparatus and equipment has adequately met department needs. Department members have performed daily, weekly, and schedule preventative maintenance checks using standardized forms. Department personnel have performed general repairs (i.e. fluid replacement, bulb replacement, etc.) while the city garage has performed more advanced repairs. Certified manufacture repair representatives have been used for specialty repairs or when repairs extend beyond the capabilities of the city garage. Equipment has been properly maintained through daily and weekly preventative maintenance.

Plan

The department will continue with daily and weekly apparatus and equipment checks. The department will perform scheduled preventative maintenance in accordance with current manufacturer recommendations. The city garage will continue to make repairs when required. The city garage will maintain apparatus maintenance records.

References

CFR Policy Section 602.01: Daily Apparatus Inspection and Equipment Check.

CFR Policy 602.02: Apparatus Preventative Maintenance/Repair

CFR Policy 602.03: Apparatus Annual Pump Test

CFR Policy 603.02: Hose Testing

City Shop Maintenance Records

Pierce and E-One Recommended Maintenance Schedules

Hose Test and Repair Records

8C.5 The agency maintains a current inventory of all training equipment and resources.

Description

The Chief of Training maintains an inventory of training materials (promotional texts, IFSTA manuals, audio-visual equipment, training aids, etc.). Company officers are responsible for training materials kept at individual stations. Training materials are available for check out. Accountability is maintained by a check out process. Training equipment (computers, projection devices, etc.) are inventoried and placed on the City's Equipment Inventory List.

Appraisal

The current inventory system used has met department and city needs. The Chief of Training has maintained an inventory of training equipment. Accountability has been maintained through a check out process. The city has maintained an inventory of department equipment.

Plan

The Chief of Training will continue to maintain an equipment inventory list. The Chief of Training will update inventory lists on an annual basis to reflect current training equipment inventories.

References

CFR Library List

Video Inventory List

CFR Equipment Inventory List

CFR Training Prop List

8C.6 A selection process is in place for training and educational resource materials.

Description

The Chief of Training is responsible for recommending training and educational resource materials. Input is provided by company officers and technical rescue team coordinators in selecting training materials such as lesson plans, videos, and power point presentations. All training material requests are reviewed by the command staff and Fire Chief as part of the annual budgeting process to determine which resource materials best meets the needs of the department.

Appraisal

The selection processes implemented has met program needs. The Chief of Training has upgraded the training resource materials used. The input provided by technical rescue coordinators have been effective by identifying materials that best meet team training requirements. As an example, recent training materials purchases has included hazardous materials, auto extrication, and trench rescue power point presentations.

Plan

The Chief of Training will continue to evaluate training resource materials. The Chief of Training will solicit input from personnel regarding which materials best meet department needs. The Chief of Training will provide purchase recommendations as part of the annual budgeting process.

References

Purchase Orders for training materials

Library Inventory List

8C.7 Training materials are evaluated on a continuing basis, and reflect current practices. (CC)

Description

The Chief of Training is responsible for the evaluation of training materials. Company officers and technical rescue team coordinators provide input regarding material purchases. Training materials are reviewed on a yearly basis as part of the department's budget process and annual program report requirement. The Chief of Training reviews reference materials prior to promotional testing to ensure texts are current and are aligned with question test banks being used for promotions.

Appraisal

Training materials have met department needs. The department recently updated its training resource inventory with the purchase of hazardous materials, auto extrication, and trench rescue power point presentations. Lesson plans have been reviewed and amended to reflect MS State Fire Rating Bureau recommendations to include training goals/objectives and performance measurements. The department has purchased text to replace outdated editions used in promotional testing. However, the department still has texts that are outdated.

Plan

The department will continue with its present system of material evaluation. The Chief of Training will evaluate training materials and reference material on an annual basis to reflect current practices. The Chief of Training will continue to provide annual program reports detailing program training needs. The department will continue replacing texts and other material resources as the budget allows.

References

Training Division Annual Program Reports

Library Inventory List

Training Equipment / Resource Inventory Sheet

Category IX: Essential Resources

Essential resources are defined as those mandatory services or systems required for the agency's operational programs to function. They may be given the same value of importance as a primary program. Appropriate adjustments may be necessary in the self analysis to adapt the typical components listed below to the local situation.

For example, when reviewing a water supply system, the evaluation may not be limited to conventional resources such as water lines and hydrants, but may include alternative resources, such as tankers, ponds, streams, lakes, etc.

Criterion 9A: Water Supply

The water supply resources are reliable and capable of distributing adequate volumes of water and pressures to all areas of agency responsibility. All areas meet fire flow requirements for emergencies.

Summary

Columbus Light and Water and East Lowndes Water Association maintain fixed water systems in the city. Each association maintains an infrastructure necessary to meet domestic and fire suppression water needs. The department establishes fire flow and flow duration rates through the plans review process. Fire flow requirements and flow rates are established by the International Fire Code (2006 ED).

Water system capabilities and performance is compared against known community hazards through the community risk assessment process required by the Standards of Cover. Strategic planning emphasizes the need for water system performance to meet known hazard requirements. The department maintains a working relationship with both associations in identifying areas where fire suppression demands exceed system capabilities.

Mobile water shuttle operations have been identified as a viable alternative water supply to supplement fixed systems. Water shuttle operations are established through department resources and mutual aid agreements with the Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Departments.

9A.1 The agency establishes minimum fire flow requirements and total water supply needed for existing representative structures and other potential fire locations. This information should also be included in the fire risk evaluation and pre-fire planning process. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue establishes minimum fire flow requirements and flow duration times (total water supply) through Appendix B Sections B105 and Table B105.1 of the International Building Code (2006 Ed.) and through the fire risk module of Fire Programs, the department's record management system (RMS). This information is used in the community risk assessment section of the Standards of Cover and the Strategic Plan. In the pre-fire planning process, the department identifies the location and number of hydrants that are available for fire suppression operations.

Appraisal

Prior to accreditation, fire flow requirements were determined during the plans review process for new commercial construction only. For existing commercial structures, information necessary to calculate fire flow requirements was documented by department personnel on the back of the Business Community Risk Assessment form. Using NFPA formulas, the fire risk module of Fire Programs was used to calculate fire flow requirements. Residential fire flow rates were determined based upon IFC requirements. The resources used by the department have adequately met department needs in providing fire flow requirements and flow duration times. This information has been entered into the department's RMS and readily accessible for reference. However, one area of improvement can be made. The department has not fully utilized fire flow requirements in its pre-planning efforts. Current pre-fire forms only require the location and number of hydrants accessible.

Plan

The department will continue to use the plans review process to establish water supply requirements for new construction. The department will continue to use the department's RMS for fire risk analysis. The Fire Marshal will change pre-fire planning forms to document

minimum fire flow requirements and flow duration rates. This change will occur no later than December 31, 2013.

References

International Building Code, 2006 Ed.

Fire Programs - Fire Risk

CFR Community Risk Assessment forms

CFR Pre-fire Plan forms

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR Standards of Cover

9A.2 An adequate and reliable fixed or portable water supply is available for fire fighting purposes. The identified water supply sources are sufficient in volume and pressure to control and extinguish fires. (CC)

Description

Columbus is provided an adequate water supply through a fixed system that includes aboveground storage tanks, wells, and hydrants supplied by a gridded system. Columbus Light & Water and East Lowndes Water Association maintain fixed systems with Columbus Light & Water maintaining the majority of the water system infrastructure. In areas where water supplies are insufficient, the department is capable of establishing a water shuttle operation through the use of department apparatus or through mutual aid assistance from the county’s volunteer fire departments. CFR guideline 202.02 and 202.03 provides for automatic response of the department’s water tender (Tanker 31) in defined areas of insufficient water flow.

Appraisal

The city’s water supply system has adequately met fire suppression needs. The following table provides fixed system capabilities.

Assoc.	Tanks (cap.)	Wells (cap.)	Hydrants	% Design Capacity
CL&W	4 (6.8 m/g)	8 (11,200 gpm)	1,125	42%
E. Lowndes	1 (400,000 g)	2 (1,800 gpm)	114	7%

Both systems have been inter-connected by valves that enables each to provide additional water if needed. Each system’s water pressure can be boosted during fire suppression operations. The department has worked with each association to identify water needs and determine needed hydrant locations. Both systems have provided documentation reflecting hydrant flow rates and static pressures.

The Standards of Cover has identified areas where the fixed systems do not provide minimum flow requirements. Portable water shuttle operation would be required. A continuous water shuttle operation has been maintained through the use of the department’s 2,500 gallon tender, department apparatus, and requested mutual aid support from the county’s five volunteer fire departments. The city has established water shuttle operations with the county in the Automatic

Mutual Aid D3 district. Conservatively, the volunteer departments could provide a minimum water supply in excess of 15,000 gallons.

Plan

The department will continue to make use of both fixed water system and portable water shuttle operations to meet fire suppression needs. The department will continue to work with both water associations to identify coverage gaps and maintain mutual aid agreements with the volunteer fire departments for water shuttle operations.

References

Columbus Light and Water system maps and Excel spreadsheets

East Lowndes Water Association system maps and Excel spreadsheets

CFR / Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Department Mutual Aid Agreement

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR Guideline 202.02

CFR Guideline 202.03

9A.3 The fire agency evaluates fire suppression water flow requirements for proposed projects involving structures or complexes of structures within their jurisdiction. Significant reductions in required fire flow granted by the installation of an approved sprinkler system in buildings are documented.

Description

The Fire Prevention Division evaluates fire suppression water flow requirements as part of the plans review process for multi-family residential and commercial structures. Appendix B of the International Fire Code (IFC) identifies minimum water flow and flow duration requirements while Appendix C identifies the minimum number of hydrants needed to support this rate. Section B105.2 of the IFC allows for a reduction of flow requirements for structures other than one or two family residences that have approved sprinkler systems installed. Occupancies with sprinkler systems are identified in a department pre-fire plan booklet as well as in the Risk Management module of Fire Programs.

Appraisal

The plans review process has adequately identified fire flow requirements for multi-family residential and commercial structures. The IFC has made an allowance of a 75% reduction in fire flow requirements for buildings that has an approved sprinkler system installed; however, a minimum of 1,500 gallons per minute for the prescribed duration must still be met. Both of these practices follow the standards of practice set forth by the International Fire Code.

Plan

The department will continue to follow the recommendations of the International Fire Code.

References

International Fire Code (2006 Ed.)
Fire Programs Risk Management Module
CFR Pre-Fire Planning Book

9A.4 The agency maintains regular contact with the managers of public and private water systems to stay informed about all sources of water available for fighting fires.

Description

The department maintains a working relationship with the manager and supervisory personnel of each system. The department reports hydrant problems to each system agency through the use of Fire Plug Maintenance Report forms. Each water system notifies the department of hydrant status (i.e. out of service/in-service) via E-911 notifications. For new hydrant installations, the department is sent a memorandum of notification. The department also works with each association to identify areas where hydrants are needed.

Appraisal

The department has developed an effective working relationship with each water association. The flow of information extends from provider to user and vice versa. Written notification by both parties has provided each agency/organization with up-to-date information. No problems have been noted with either system provider.

Plan

The department will continue to foster and maintain a positive working relationship with each water association.

References

CFR Fire Plug Maintenance Report form

9A.5 The agency maintains copies of current water supply and hydrant maps for its service area.

Description

Both water associations have provided an electronic copy of hydrant locations and maps. A copy of hydrant locations is maintained on each apparatus in the City of Columbus Map Directory. Department driver/operators maintain personal map books that identify hydrant locations. Station 4 is the only station to maintain a map in the engine room showing hydrant locations for their primary response district.

Appraisal

Both water associations have provided hydrant information (locations, flow rates, static/residual pressures, new hydrants, etc.) to the department. Even though the Columbus Map Directory has been identified as the primary reference source for hydrant information, most driver/operators have used their personal map books due to familiarity as well as placing their primary district maps first. There are several issues that need to be addressed to improve this performance indicator. First, the Columbus Map Directory has not been maintained and may not reflect locations of recently installed hydrants. Second, the department should maintain a NFPA compliant color-coded hydrant location / status board in each station's engine room.

Plan

The Fire Chief will assign a department member to maintain the City of Columbus Map Directory. The department will install NFPA compliant color-coded hydrant / status boards in each station by June 30, 2014. The Fire Chief will coordinate with city IT personnel regarding the use of GIS in hydrant mapping.

References

Water Association electronic water documents
City of Columbus Map Directory

9A.6 Hydrant adequacy and placement reflects the locality's known hazards and the agency's needs for dealing with those hazards.

Description

The Fire Prevention Division identifies hydrant adequacy and placement as part of the plans review process for multi-family residential and commercial construction. Appendix C of the IFC (2006 ED) provides instruction for fire hydrant location and distribution. Placement of hydrants takes into consideration apparatus access, street configurations, and other features specific to that location. The department works with each water association to identify areas with insufficient fire suppression flow rates. Hydrant adequacy for the community's known hazards was identified as part of the Standards of Cover Community Risk Assessment requirement.

Appraisal

Appendix C of the IFC has been effective at providing direction in the number and distribution distances of hydrants required by the plans review process. Except for isolated areas, hydrant spacing for residential and commercial occupancies in the city does not exceed 600 feet (2 blocks). The department has identified areas where fire flows and/or hydrant numbers are insufficient. These locations were identified in Section D of the Standards of Cover. The department has worked effectively with each association in identifying these locations and having hydrants installed to meet fire suppression needs.

Plan

The department will continue to identify areas and/or target hazards where water flow and/or hydrant numbers are insufficient. The department will work with each water association in resolving these issues. The department will continue to use Appendix C of the IFC as the primary reference for the number and distribution of hydrant placement.

References

International Fire Code (2006 ED)

CFR Standards of Cover: Section D – Community Risk Assessment

9A.7 Fire hydrants are located so that each is visible and accessible at all times. Hydrant locations are documented.

Description

Fire hydrant location and visibility is maintained through several processes. First, each engine company is given a “hydrant territory” for general maintenance. This maintenance involves mowing grass and cutting tree limbs around hydrants. Second, hydrant accessibility and visibility is noted in accordance with Section 508.5.4 and 508.5.5 of the IFC during annual business inspections. Third, the department placed hydrant road markers for nighttime identification.

Appraisal

The above processes have been effective at identifying hydrant locations and ensuring accessibility has been maintained. During annual business inspections, any accessibility problem not corrected has been referred to the Fire Marshal for issuance of notice of violations and citations. General maintenance has ensured that all hydrants are readily accessible and visible. Additionally, any problems with hydrants have been filed with the water association. The use of hydrant road markers was effective; however, this placement was performed approximately 15 years ago. Since, many markers have been lost due to the road being paved or through normal use / attrition.

Plan

The department will continue to use the processes in place to identify hydrant locations and ensure continued accessibility and visibility. The Fire Chief will appoint a department member to initiate research into the cost of placing hydrant road markers for nighttime identification. This research will be completed by March 31, 2014.

References

International Fire Code (2006 ED)

CFR Inspection Forms

CFR Engine Company “Hydrant Territory” maps

9A.8 Fire hydrants are inspected, tested and maintained and the agency's related processes are evaluated periodically to ensure adequate and readily available public or private water for fire protection.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue performs general maintenance on public water hydrants. Any problems noted during this maintenance check are filed with the water association responsible by completing CFR Hydrant Maintenance forms. Water associations are responsible for inspecting, testing, and maintaining all public hydrants. This inspection includes hydrant flushing. At this time the department does not require proof of inspection and maintenance of private system hydrants. There are 27 private hydrants in use.

Appraisal

The processes used by the department to perform general maintenance and report hydrant problems have been effective at ensuring hydrant performance. The Chief of Training has been given responsibility for ensuring all completed hydrant maintenance forms are given to the appropriate person of each water association. Each association has made timely repairs and notified the department of hydrant returns to service. One improvement should be made. The department should require proof of inspection and maintenance of all private system hydrants as part of annual business inspections.

Plan

CFR will continue with the general maintenance processes described with problems reported to the Chief of Training. Each association will repair hydrants in a timely manner and notify the department upon completion. The Fire Marshal will require, as part of the annual business inspection, proof of inspection and maintenance of private hydrant systems.

References

CFR Hydrant Maintenance forms

9A.9 The agency identifies and plans for alternate sources of water supply for those areas without hydrants, where hydrant flows are insufficient, or in the event of a major disruption in public water supply capabilities.

Description

The department identifies and plans for alternative sources of water supply through two processes; the use of the department's water tender and apparatus and through mutual aid agreements with Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Departments. This identification and planning process was part of the Standards of Cover Community Risk Assessment and Strategic Plan. Although independent of each other, the two water associations have connected their distribution system to the other through a series of valves. In the event of a major disruption, valves can be opened providing an external or supplemental water supply. CFR guideline 202.02 and 202.03 provides for Tanker 31 automatic response in defined areas of insufficient water flow.

Appraisal

The use of mutual aid agreements and department apparatus has adequately provided a means of establishing an alternative water supply. A continuous water shuttle operation has been maintained through the use of the department's 2,500 gallon tanker and apparatus. Using mutual aid support, the volunteer department's can provide a minimum water supply capability in excess of 15,000 gallons. Travel time for these units is between 10 to 20 minutes depending upon the location of the incident.

Each department apparatus has a LDH supply hose load of 1,500 feet that may be used as an "aboveground water main" in the event of a disruption or system failure. Each water system has built in redundancies to reduce the chances of system disruptions. Additionally, the connection of the two water association water systems has ensured a supplemental water supply if system failures occur. One improvement can be made to this performance indicator. The department should establish water shuttle operation training with the volunteer fire departments.

Plan

The department will maintain mutual aid agreements with the county's volunteer fire departments. The department will continue to consider alternative water sources as part of its

community risk assessment and strategic planning process. The Chief of Training will schedule water shuttle operation training with the volunteer fire departments as part of the 2014 training cycle.

References

CFR / Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Department Mutual Aid Agreements

CFR Strategic Plan

CFR Standards of Cover

CFR Guideline 202.02

CFR Guideline 202.03

9A.10 The agency has operational procedures in place outlining available water supply.

Description

The department addresses available water supplies during fire suppression operations through Columbus Fire and Rescue Standard Operating Guidelines 202.01, 202.02, and 202.03. These guidelines establish procedures to be followed and ensure that an adequate water supply is established and maintained.

Appraisal

CFR guidelines have adequately addressed the establishment and continuance of an adequate water supply during fire suppression operations.

Plan

The Fire Chief will ensure that guidelines and policies are reviewed to ensure each is current and reflect accepted practices.

References

- CFR Standard Operating Guideline 202.01
- CFR Standard Operating Guideline 202.02
- CFR Standard Operating Guideline 202.03

Criterion 9B: Communication Systems

The public and the agency have an adequate, effective, and efficient emergency communications system. The system is reliable and able to meet the demands of major operations, including command and control within fire/rescue services during emergency operations, and meets the needs of other public safety agencies having the need for distribution of information.

Summary

The Lowndes County E-911 Communications Center (LCCC) maintains UHF and VHF radio and repeater systems, computer aided dispatching (CAD) hardware and software, and accessory equipment to meet the interoperable communication needs of jurisdictional agencies in emergency event notification and dispatching. The LCCC is equipped with an uninterrupted power supply and emergency generator to ensure no disruption of service occurs. Maintenance agreements, in addition to in-house weekly and annual preventative maintenance checks, ensure system reliability.

The LCCC has adequate staffing levels to meet county call volumes. Public Safety Dispatchers (PSDs) must meet state certification training. LCCC dispatchers complete state training requirements in addition to an in-house training program. The LCCC ensures proper supervision by the establishment of a governing board, an acting Director, and shift supervisors.

Jurisdictional agencies provide protocols for dispatching procedures.

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains communication equipment necessary to meet agency needs. Each station, apparatus, and vehicle contains a mobile radio. Personnel are issued handheld radios. These radios are programmed with other agency frequencies to allow interoperability. The department maintains a communication van that is used for field operations. This van contains various radios and devices that allow for interoperability with regional and state assets.

9B.1 A system is in place to ensure communications with portable, mobile, and fixed communications systems in the field. (CC)

Description

The Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center communicates with jurisdictional agencies through a FCC licensed UHF and VHF radio system (WNNM804). The communication center maintains a 100 foot main repeater tower and two repeater towers in the northern and western part of the county. This system allows for communications with the following agencies; Columbus Fire and Rescue, Columbus Police Department, Columbus Public Works, Lowndes County Sheriffs Office, Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Districts, and Baptist Memorial Hospital Ambulance Service. The communication center has an ACU 2000 gateway device to link jurisdictional and regional radio frequencies.

The fire department maintains (1) dispatch talk group, (1) command talk group, (1) tactical talk group, and (1) back-up talk group. All emergency apparatus and vehicles are equipped with mobile radios. All command staff and line personnel are issued personal hand held radios. All stations maintain desktop radios. These UHF radios are programmed with agency specific and common frequencies that allows for jurisdictional interoperability. The fire department maintains a communications van capable of supporting interoperable field communications through UHF and VHF radios, a UHF repeater system, an ACU 1000 gateway device, (1) aviation radio, and (1) 800 MHz radio. The communication center maintains a mobile communication trailer that may be used in the event of main center failure.

Appraisal

The Lowndes County E-911 communication system has adequately met agency and jurisdictional needs. This system has provided communication capabilities in all parts of the county through a repeater based system. Additionally, the system has allowed for interoperable communications with jurisdictional agencies. Columbus Fire and Rescue has fixed and mobile radios that have effectively supported agency and interoperable capabilities. Both agencies have mobile communication centers that may be used during main system communication failures or used as field communication centers.

Plan

The Lowndes County Communication Center will continue to operate under its assigned license. The center will maintain a radio system to ensure communication with jurisdictional agencies. The department will continue to provide for fixed and mobile communication equipment to support field needs. Both agencies will ensure that communication equipment will support interoperability capabilities.

References

Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center FCC License
Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center Inventory List
Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center Radio Frequency List
Columbus Fire & Rescue Radio Equipment Inventory List

9B.2 The emergency communications system is capable of receiving automatic and manual early warning and other emergency reporting signals.

Description

The Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center (LCCC) does not receive fire alarms or other reporting signals directly from commercial or residential locations. All alarm system activations go through private vendors that notify the LCCC through telephone lines using pre-established telephone numbers and procedures.

Appraisal

The capability to receive automatic and manual alarms was removed during the 2011 renovation of the communications center and up-date of CAD system hardware. Therefore, the current system of using private vendors to monitor and report alarm activations to the communications center has adequately met jurisdiction needs.

Plan

There is no plan to change the current system. The Lowndes County E-911 Director will evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the reporting procedures and make changes as necessary.

References

LCCC CAD System Capabilities

9B.3 The agency's communications center(s) is/are adequately equipped and designed, e.g., telephones, radios, equipment status, alarm devices, computers, address files, dispatching circuits, playback devices, recording systems, printers, consoles, desks, chairs, lighting and map displays, etc.

Description

The Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center serves as the public safety answering point (PSAP) for all emergency agencies in the county. The center underwent a renovation in 2011 that included facility and CAD hardware/software upgrades. The renovation included UHF and VHF radio systems, an ANI/ALI E-911 telephone system, "ring down" telephone circuits to each city fire station, (4) functional dispatching consoles/monitors, a recording/playback system, CAD software/address files, county/city map displays, and general office equipment. These systems and equipment support emergency / non-emergency calls and dispatching of jurisdictional agencies. The center has a Director's office that is used for agency administration. The office contains an Internet accessible computer as well as general office equipment. The center has access to restrooms and a break room. The center maintains security through site security cameras and locked accesses.

Appraisal

The communications center recently conducted an up-grade of system hardware and software in 2011. The center has equipment necessary to support agency operations. Equipment layout has provided for dispatcher interaction and communication. However, several concerns exist. First, there is no backup to the recording/playback system. This system has experienced several failures in the past that have resulted in lost incident radio traffic. Second, the new CAD software has caused minor problems. Integral software features such as the address / Emergency Service Number (ESN) interface was not installed. ESNs are used to determine apparatus dispatching. As a result, dispatching errors have occurred. Furthermore, dispatcher training has not allowed for thorough familiarity with the software which has slowed call processing times and created response time errors.

Plan

The E-911 Director will meet with the software vendor to address software and training issues.
The Director will address the recording/playback system issue with the Lowndes County E-911 Communications Board.

References

Lowndes E-911 Renovation records

Lowndes E-911 Equipment Inventory Record

9B.4 The uninterrupted electrical power supply for the communications center is reliable and has automatic backup capability.

Description

The Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center's (LCCC) power is provided by Columbus Light & Water. The center has an automatic emergency electrical back-up system provided by an uninterrupted power supply (UPS) and emergency generator. The agency's repeater system is located at a separate location. This system also has a UPS and emergency generator. Both generators are capable of meeting electrical service demands. Power transition procedures are outlined in the LCCC's standard operating guideline.

Appraisal

The UPS and emergency generator has adequately met center needs by providing an uninterrupted, automatic backup electrical supply. These alternate power sources are tested on a weekly basis. Dispatchers have been trained in the event of power failures and power transition procedures. Reliability is maintained through weekly tests, weekly maintenance checks, and yearly preventative maintenance.

Plan

The communication center will continue to maintain an UPS and emergency generator as an alternative, uninterrupted power supply. Lowndes County Maintenance will continue to provide for UPS and generator emergency weekly maintenance checks. Annual preventative maintenance will continue to be provided by an outside vendor.

References

Lowndes County E-911 Communication SOGs
UPS and generator Maintenance Schedules

**9B.5 Standard operating procedures or general guidelines are in place to direct all types of dispatching services provided to the agency by the communications center(s).
(CC)**

Description

The Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center maintains SOGs from each jurisdictional agency. These SOGs provide criteria for emergency and non-emergency dispatching. The following agencies provide SOGs to the communication center:

- Columbus Fire and Rescue
- Columbus Police Department
- Lowndes County Sheriffs Office
- Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Departments
- Baptist Memorial Hospital Ambulance Service

The agency also maintains directives governing wrecker rotations and animal control.

Appraisal

Each agency has identified specific dispatching protocols and procedures to be followed in their dispatching SOGs. These SOGs have adequately met both agency and E-911 needs. SOGs are evaluated on an annual basis to maintain dispatching efficiency and effectiveness. The center is in the process of updating their Emergency Medical Directive protocols concerning pre-arrival instructions. Dispatchers are indoctrinated to SOG content during their initial in-house training period.

Plan

The E-911 Director and agency administrators will conduct annual reviews of dispatching SOGs. The E-911 Director will ensure that dispatchers will be trained in SOG protocols.

References

Lowndes County E-911 SOG Manual

Lowndes County E-911 Dispatching Directives

9B.6 Adequate numbers of fire or emergency dispatchers are on duty to handle the anticipated call volume.

Description

The Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center is authorized a staffing level of 16 full time dispatchers and 2 part time dispatchers. The LCCC operates on a 4 shift rotation with 4 dispatchers per shift. Shift hours are 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Off-duty dispatchers are assigned to an “on-call” rotation schedule allowing for a recall of dispatchers to supplement normal staffing levels for anticipated and unanticipated events that increase call volume.

Appraisal

The LCCC currently has full staffing levels. This staffing level has been able to meet normal call volumes. A staffing analysis was conducted by PTS Solutions (CAD software provider) from October 2011 through October 2012. This analysis indicated an emergency call volume of 78,752. Non-emergency calls add approximately 30,000 calls per year to this total. These totals indicated an average of 12 calls per hour with 8 being emergency related. Call volume was heaviest from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.

To accommodate vacation and other absences (sick leave, training, etc.), the Director has offered overtime and used part time employees to maintain full staffing levels. However, there are times when full staffing is not met. The Director has attempted to limit these times to low volume periods as indicated by the staffing analysis.

Plan

The Director will continue to maintain full staffing levels consistent to meet call volumes. The Director will monitor call volume identifying peak and low call volume times.

References

Lowndes E-911 Call Volume Report: 2009 – 2010
Lowndes E-911 Dispatcher Work Schedule
PTS Call Volume / Staffing Analysis

9B.7 An adequate maintenance program is in place with regularly scheduled system tests.

Description

Lowndes County E-911 entered into a maintenance agreement with AT&T to provide service and repair to the center's radio and CAD hardware. AT&T sub-contracts this agreement to multiple outside vendors. The city and county Information Technology Departments provide general maintenance to the CAD software system with technical support provided by the software vendor.

The communication center performs internal radio/systems tests. These tests involve a 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. radio tests with the Columbus Fire & Rescue Department, 1 p.m. pager tests involving the county volunteer fire departments, and weekly and yearly checks of the emergency generator.

Appraisal

The maintenance agreement and internal system tests have adequately met agency needs. The agreement has specifically identified which radio and CAD hardware components are under warranty and under what conditions. The agreement has transferred repair costs to outside vendors. For example, the system has been struck by lightning several times in the past two years with no repair cost being incurred by the agency. The daily radio and pager tests have ensured proper operation for less used systems.

Plan

There is no plan to cancel the radio and CAD hardware maintenance agreement with AT&T. The communication center will continue to conduct internal system tests. The county will continue to conduct weekly generator tests and contract for yearly preventative maintenance on the emergency generator.

References

AT&T Maintenance Agreement

Lowndes County E-911 Weekly and Yearly Generator Tests

9B.8 The communications center(s) has/have adequate supervision and management.

Description

The governing authority of the Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center is the Lowndes County E-911 Communications Board as authorized by MS Code of 1972 §19-5-307. The Board is comprised of 7 members that include 5 citizens (one from each supervisor district) and 2 at-large members. The at-large members are typically selected from municipal or county emergency agency department heads (i.e. Sheriff, fire chief, police chief). All board members are approved by the Lowndes County Board of Supervisors. The LCCC Director reports directly to the Communications Board. The management of the LCCC is the responsibility of the LCCC Director. The Director is assisted by 4 shift supervisors that oversee shift operations. The senior supervisor serves as “Acting Director” when required.

Appraisal

The governing authority and management/supervisory structure of the agency have been effective. The Director reports directly to the Communication Board during monthly meetings. The Board provides guidance to the Director. The governing board represents a diverse group of individuals that includes both municipal and county emergency agency department heads and members from the community. This representation has ensured that decisions are based on the overall welfare of the community. Shift supervisors have provided a “24/7” presence which has resulted in efficient and effective operations.

Plan

The Lowndes County E-911 Communications Center will continue to operate under the current governing board and management structure presently being used.

References

MS Code of 1972 §19-5-307

Lowndes County E-911 Communications Board Organization

9B.9 A communications training program for emergency dispatchers is in place that ensures adequate, timely, and reliable fire agency emergency response.

Description

MS Code 1972 §19-5-353 establishes minimum training and certification requirements for public safety dispatchers (PSDs). PSDs complete a basis instruction course as well as in-house training. In-house training includes general procedures (i.e. phone/radio procedures, call taking, NCIC, etc.) and agency specific dispatching protocols. PSDs complete a check-off list for acquired job related knowledge and skills. PSDs also complete an agency “ride along” to acquaint personnel with agency districts, resources, and personnel.

Appraisal

The training curriculum has provided the PSD with the basic skills, knowledge, and abilities required of the position. PSDs are required to successfully complete a 40 hour Basic Dispatcher and a 24 hour Emergency Medical Dispatcher course. After 3 years, the PSD must attend a 16 hour re-certification course in addition to having obtained 48 hours of continuing education. Thereafter, PSDs must complete 48 hours of continuing education every 3 years. The in-house training period and skills check-off list has been effective at serving as a probationary period to determine PSD competency. However, one improvement can be made. The Director acknowledges that the appointment of a Training Officer would aid in dispatcher training.

Plan

The agency will continue to follow State and in-house minimum training requirements for PSDs. The Director will research the feasibility for a Training Officer position.

References

MS Code 1972 §19-5-353

LCCC Dispatcher Skills Check-off List

LCCC Training files

9B.10 The interoperability of the communications system is evaluated and documented.

Appropriate procedures are implemented to provide for communications between the agency and other emergency responders.

Description

Interoperability is maintained at a jurisdictional and agency level through fixed and mobile equipment. The Lowndes County E-911 Communication Center operates the fixed radio system featuring UHF and VHF radio frequencies used by city and county fire, law enforcement, and public works as well as Baptist Memorial Hospital Ambulance Service. The communication center is equipped with an ACU 2000, a gateway device capable of linking various jurisdictional and regional agency radio frequencies.

All Columbus Fire and Rescue apparatus and vehicles are equipped with mobile radios. All command staff and line personnel are issued personal hand held radios. These UHF radios are programmed with agency specific and city/county common frequencies that allows for interoperability. The department also maintains a mobile communications van capable of supporting interoperable field communications through UHF and VHF radios, a UHF repeater system, an ACU 1000 gateway device, (1) aviation radio, (1) 800 MHz radio, and (1) satellite phone.

City and county agencies maintain fixed and mobile radio equipment that is interoperable compliant. The interoperability of the communication system is tested on an annual basis through multi-agency exercises involving both local and regional assets.

Appraisal

The current processes used have been effective at maintaining communication interoperability. Multi-agency exercises have provided for an effective evaluation tool. Communication issues have been identified during the exercise critique phase. Changes to communication plans and/or procedures have been made based upon these critiques and are tested in the following year's exercise. The department has purchased equipment with interoperability being a critical performance consideration. The department has been successful in communicating with various agencies during actual events.

Plan

Jurisdictional agencies will continue to purchase radio equipment that is interoperable compliant. The jurisdiction and department will continue to participate in local and regional exercises that test interoperable communication capabilities. The communication center and fire department will continue to maintain communications equipment necessary for interoperable communications.

References

Lowndes County E-911 Board Minutes

Lowndes County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Lowndes County Annual Exercises and Post Exercise Critiques

Lowndes County Jurisdictional Frequency List w/interoperable channels

Criterion 9C: Administrative Support Services and Office Systems

Administrative support services and general office systems are in place with adequate staff to efficiently and effectively conduct and manage the agency's administrative functions, such as organizational planning and assessment, resource coordination, data analysis/research, records keeping, reporting, business communications, public interaction, and purchasing.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains an organizational structure to support department administrative needs. The Fire Chief serves as the administrative manager of the department and is assisted by the department's command staff. The command staff serves as program managers and implements department policy established by the Fire Chief. The organizational chart and command staff job descriptions is found in department policy. The department uses both hardcopy and electronic formats for administrative forms, manuals, and documents.

The department maintains clerical supplies and equipment necessary for administrative operations. Furthermore, the department maintains technological equipment that supports department operations. The department utilizes an electronic records management system, online subscription services, and analysis software to support program and administrative needs. The city's Information Technology Department is responsible for technology related recommendations, purchases, and repair.

The department uses various mediums to keep the public informed. The department's web page provides general information and contact information. The use of pamphlets, brochures, and public safety announcements has been effective in delivering fire safety messages. The department's quarterly magazine has been well received in the community.

9C.1 The administrative support services are appropriate for the agency's size, function, complexity, and mission, and are adequately staffed and managed. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue has one administrative assistant position. This position is a full time, permanent position within the department. CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions list major responsibilities and duties that include but not limited to:

- Maintains personnel files
- Maintains administrative files
- Manages the department's payroll system
- Issues purchase orders from appropriate line items
- Maintains meeting minutes

The Administrative Assistant reports directly to the Fire Chief.

Appraisal

The administrative assistant position has met the clerical management duties of the department. The Administrative Assistant's duties and responsibilities are consistent with the department's size and complexity. The Fire and Life Safety Educator has been crossed trained in the department's payroll system when the Administrative Assistant is absent.

Plan

The Fire Chief will evaluate the administrative assistant position on an annual basis to determine duties and responsibilities. Any changes will be reflected in an amendment to CFR Policy 102.02.

References

CFR Policy 102.01: Organizational Chart

CFR Policy 102.01: Job Descriptions

CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 – 2018.

9C.2 Sufficient general office equipment, supplies and resources are in place to support departmental needs.

Description

The department employs one Administrative Assistant. The Administrative Assistant is a full-time, permanent position within the department reporting directly to the Fire Chief. CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions outlines job duties and responsibilities.

The department maintains general office equipment (i.e. filing cabinets, desks, book cases, storage, etc.) to support administrative tasks. Clerical supplies are obtained once per month from local office supply vendors. Clerical supplies are requested and provided to each station at the first of each month.

Appraisal

The Administrative Assistant position has adequately supported department administrative needs. The department has maintained office equipment and supplies to meet administrative needs. The Administrative Assistant is responsible for maintaining sufficient clerical supplies necessary to meet department needs.

Plan

The department will continue to provide for a full-time permanent Administrative Assistant position within the department. Office equipment and clerical supplies will be maintained at a level to support department operations.

References

CFR Policy 102.02: Job Descriptions

CFR Monthly Supply List

CFR Annual Budget: Supply Line Items

9C.3 Technological resources (e.g., telecommunications equipment, computer systems, general business software, etc.) and the information management system are appropriate to support the needs of the agency. Access is available to technical support personnel with expertise in the systems deployed by the agency.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains technological hardware and software resources to support department needs. Each station is equipped with technological hardware that includes a telephone system, copier/fax machine combination, and desk top computer. The computers are Internet accessible, contain basic MicroSoft Office® software packages, and connect to the department's intranet network and city wide server. The Administrative Assistant maintains payroll software that is linked with biometric (fingerprint imaging) time clocks placed at each station. Each program manager is issued a desk or lap top computer and cell phone.

The department maintains Fire Programs as its Record Management System (RMS). This management system is used to complete electronic incident reports, personnel training files, and risk management (inspections/occupancy records). The department subscribes to online services that include the NFPA (codes/public education) and StatsFD, the department's incident analysis software. ARC View GIS software was purchased using federal grants. The city's IT department currently has this software.

The city's Information Technology department is responsible for recommending IT related purchases as well as analyzing and solving issues related to hardware and software problems. IT personnel interact with vendor support services.

Appraisal

The department has provided technological equipment and software necessary to support department needs. Station technology allows for Internet as well as city intra-net connection. The recent addition of web cameras has allowed the Battalion Chief to conduct daily meeting with station company officers. The department's RMS and analysis software has allowed for incident review and response time analysis through system and customized reports. The Fire Chief reports any technology problems to the IT department. There are several recommendations to improve this performance indicator. Firstst, the Arc View GIS system was given to the city's IT

department. This software would be a valuable tool in community risk assessments. Second, the various modules and designed functionality of the department's RMS is not being fully utilized.

Plan

The department will continue to use all available technological resources in department operations. The Fire Chief will coordinate with the city's IT department in acquiring future resources. The Accreditation Manager will incorporate ArcView GIS into future community risk assessment planning. The department will attend RMS training (September 2013) to fully utilize RMS software functions.

References

CFR equipment inventory

Fire Programs Record Management System

StatsFD Analysis Program

9C.4 Public reception and public information components support the customer service needs of the agency.

Description

The captain's watch desk at Station 1 serves as the department's primary public reception area.

The watch desk performs the following tasks:

- Maintains an incident log that is used to provide information to the various media outlets regarding incident response
- Answers citizen questions or directs citizens to proper departments
- Maintains Request for Public Information forms that are used by citizens to obtain aid from local relief agencies after fires

The department provides incident reports to insurance investigators for a nominal fee. The department complies with any requests made under the "Freedom of Information Act." CFR also provides public information through other mediums that includes the department's web page, department pamphlets and brochures, public safety announcements, and the department's quarterly magazine.

Appraisal

The current processes used have met customer needs. The watch desk has been used to provide numerous customer requests. The department's utilization of the web site, pamphlets, and PSAs has informed the public on department events or public safety messages. The department's magazine, featuring various articles about the department and fire safety, has been extremely popular in the community.

However, several improvements are recommended. First, the captain's watch desk has not been staffed with dedicated personnel. On occasion, no personnel have been available to assist with customer needs. In these instances, the command staff or administrative assistant must aid citizens. Second, administrative personnel work Monday through Thursday. Any requests made on Friday involving these personnel must wait until the following Monday. Third, the department does not provide customer feedback forms, thereby missing an opportunity to solicit customer comments to the services/programs being provided.

Plan

The department will continue to provide customer services as identified. The Fire Chief will assess the need to provide customer feedback forms as an evaluation tool for customer service.

The Fire Chief will assess the need to maintain a presence in the watch desk during customer hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). The department will address customer feedback when accomplishing Goal 5G of the department's Strategic Plan.

References

Request for Public Information forms

CFR brochures and pamphlets

CFR Incident Logbook

CFR web site

CFR Quarterly magazine

9C.5 Organizational documents, forms, and manuals are maintained and current.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains documents, forms, and manuals necessary to support department administrative and operational needs. The majority of the department's administrative forms are in hardcopy format. These forms include station daily journal, apparatus daily checks, Friday apparatus checks, and request forms. Manufacturer manuals are in both electronic and hardcopy formats. The department's Policy and Procedures Manual is accessible at each station in both hardcopy and electronic format. Incident and annual inspection reports are maintained in both hardcopy and electronic format. The department maintains an online subscription to NFPA for its fire prevention and code enforcement publications. A department's intranet network is established to exchange electronic files and for Fire Programs. The intranet is set up for three security levels; department, command staff, and executive. Each level is progressively restricted to those with a need to access the information contained within each level.

Appraisal

The department's administrative forms and documents have adequately supported the department's administrative and operational needs. Hardcopy records are kept in accordance with State record retention requirements. Data on the department's RMS is stored on the vendor's server. The use of online subscription services has been effective at reducing replacement costs of fire prevention and code enforcement manuals. One improvement can be made in this performance indicator. The department has the resources (intranet, Fire Programs) to provide for a "paperless" environment. Many of the forms and documents could be formatted in an electronic format and placed on the intranet.

Plan

The department will continue to use forms, documents, and manuals in its current format. With the aid of the city's Information Technology Department, the Fire Chief will research the requirements for transitioning forms, documents, and manuals into an electronic format.

References

CFR Policies and Procedures Manual

CFR Administrative forms (examples of)

 Captains Daily Journal

 Apparatus Inventory

 Apparatus Daily and Friday Maintenance Forms

 Fuel Logs

 Inspection Records

 Request forms

Pierce and E-One Manufacturer's Manual

Fire Programs RMS

NFPA Code Subscription Service

Category X: External Systems Relationships

External systems relationships are defined as the relationships with agencies that act together as an integrated system. The growth of multi-unit systems and the increase of interagency agreements between various types of government necessitate increasing attention to these relationships and the agreements between legally autonomous operating units.

Criterion 10A: External Agency Relationships

The agency's operations and planning efforts include relationships with external agencies and operational systems that affect or may influence the agency's mission, operations, or cost effectiveness.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue has developed external relationships with public and private agencies. These relationships are found at the local, regional, state, and federal level. These relationships are based upon mutual development and implementation of agreements which benefits both parties. These collaborative relationships have resulted in improved service delivery which supports the department's mission. Several agreements and programs have proven to be cost effective in terms of both service delivery and department operations. Columbus Fire and Rescue's Strategic Plan has identified the importance of external relationships and encourages finding new partners for the betterment of the community and the department.

10A.1 The agency develops and maintains outside relationships that support its mission, operations, or cost effectiveness. (CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue develops and maintains external relationships with jurisdictional and regional agencies through in-kind services, mutual aid agreements, and memorandums of understanding. Locally, these relationships include but not limited to:

- City agencies (Columbus Police Department, Columbus Public Works)
- Jurisdictional agencies (Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Department, Emergency Management Agency, Lowndes County E-911, Columbus Air Force Base)
- Regional (Golden Triangle Hazardous Material Team, MS OHS Task Force II, State Mutual Aid Compact)
- Private organizations (American Red Cross, Water Associations, Baptist Memorial Hospital, Mississippi University for Women [MUW], etc.).

These relationships enable the department to meet its mission and cost effectiveness through direct or indirect emergency incident support, training opportunities, specialized resources, and in-kind services. CFR's Strategic Plan supports relationships with external partners to promote improved services.

Appraisal

These relationships have adequately supported department operations in support of its mission and provided cost effective measures that has allowed the department to re-allocate funding to other program areas. As an example, the use of annual multi-agency drills have been effective in the development of department protocols and promoted an improved communication process. The department has established training and professional development opportunities with private organizations free of charge which has led to cost effectiveness. MUW has established a "bank" of college credits that provides free tuition to department members in pursuit of professional degrees. Additionally, training has been provided by Baptist Memorial Hospital that otherwise would have been taught by private vendors for a fee. The combined funding provided by the Golden Triangle Regional Hazardous Materials Team has effectively allowed purchase of team equipment and materials that otherwise would have been financially restrictive for a single entity.

Plan

The department will continue to maintain current relationships as well as developing new partnerships through mutual aid agreements, memorandum of understandings, or in-kind services.

References

CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 - 2013

CFR / Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Department Mutual Aid Agreements

CFR / CAFB Mutual Aid Agreement

Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials Team Mutual Aid Agreement

MS Office of Homeland Security – Task Force Organization

SMAC Agreement

10A.2 The agency's strategic plan identifies relationships with external agencies/systems and their anticipated impact or benefit to the mission or cost effectiveness of the agency.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue's Strategic Plan identifies external agency relationships as part of the Strengths Weakness Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) Analysis and Goals and Objectives sections. The SWOT analysis lists external relationships as an opportunity to improve department operations. Goal 5, Objective 5E in the strategic plan supports the development of external relationships that support and improve department programs and services.

Appraisal

The Strategic Plan has been effective at identifying external resources that support department operations. Table 11: Support services identified 25 external agencies that potentially have a positive effect on department operations. These relationships have proven to be effective in supporting the department's mission or providing cost effective benefits as evidenced by the Appraisal section in Performance Indicator 10A.1.

Plan

The department will continue to provide, as part of its Strategic Plan, a list of external relationships that impact department operations. As part of the SWOT analysis opportunity section, the department will investigate new relationships to support department operations.

References

CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 - 2018

10A.3 A process is in place for developing, implementing, and revising interagency policies and agreements.

Description

The department maintains five mutual aid agreements and memorandum of understanding with external agencies. Each party is involved in the development and implementation of these agreements in which the provisions are clearly defined. Agreements are reviewed on set cycles (State Mutual Aid Compact [includes Lowndes County volunteer fire districts], District 2 VFD, Columbus Air Force Base) or contains provisions that necessitates document revision (Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials agreement). Mutual aid support to MS Homeland Security is identified in the administrative section of the grant agreement. Internally, all agreements are subject to review by the command staff to determine department commitments.

Appraisal

The set cycle review processes in place have adequately met department and external agency needs. The original agreement with the Lowndes County volunteer fire departments was superceded by the SMAC agreement. The SMAC and District 2 VFD agreements are reviewed on an annual basis. The Columbus Air Force Base agreement has a two year review cycle. The Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials agreement explicitly states that the agreement will remain indefinite precluding the need for review unless one of the parties involved decides to terminate the agreement. At this time, the agreement will be amended to reflect the changes made.

Additionally, state law was changed that allowed Columbus Fire and Rescue to become the lead agency in overland and urban search and rescue rather than the Lowndes County Sheriff's Department due to a tornado event that occurred in the county in 2008.

Plan

The department and external agencies will continue to assess all policies and agreements within the set review cycles established. The Fire Chief will ensure that all agreements remain current.

Each party will ensure that processes are in place to amend agreements or memorandums of understanding. The Fire Chief and City Attorney will review each agreement. All agreements are subject to approval by the governing body.

References

CFR / CAFB Mutual Aid Agreement

Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials Team Mutual Aid Agreement

Lowndes County CEMP: Emergency Service Function (ESF) 9

[SMAC](#)

[District 2 VFD Aid Agreement](#)

[MS Homeland Security Grant Agreements](#)

10A.4 A conflict resolution process exists between the organization and external agencies with whom it has a defined relationship.

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains defined relationships with external agencies. These relationships are identified through mutual aid agreements and/or memorandums of understanding. When a problem occurs, conflict resolutions are addressed through meetings with the agencies involved. There are no provisions in current agreements that identify formal procedures to be followed to address conflict resolution.

Appraisal

The department has maintained defined relationships through mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding. Presently, there is no formally written resolution processes in place between the department and external agencies. The department has maintained close working relationships with all external agencies with any conflicts having been addressed through meetings between department heads of the agencies involved. As an example, CFR and MS Department of Environmental Quality resolved an issue that occurred during a hazardous materials event through direct meetings with those involved. However, to protect all parties, future amendments of mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding should include language to address conflict resolution.

Plan

All future mutual aid agreements and memorandum of understandings will include provisions for conflict resolution. These changes will be made during set review cycle periods with conflict resolution processes added into the documents.

References

CFR / Lowndes County Volunteer Fire Department Agreement

CFR / CAFB Mutual Aid Agreement

Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid Agreement

Criterion 10B: External Agency Agreements

The fire service agency has well-developed and functioning external agency agreements. The system is synergistic and is taking advantage of all operational and cost effective benefits that may be derived from external agency agreements.

Summary

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains agreements that support department operations. These agreements include emergency service automatic and requested mutual aid, support for the department's record management system and analysis software, and physical fitness assessments. The Fire Chief is responsible for the maintenance and review of all department agreements. A process is in place where agreements are subject to review by the City Attorney and requires the approval by the governing body prior to implementation. The department's command staff aids the Fire Chief in review and implementation of emergency service agreements.

10B.1 External agency agreements are current and support organizational objectives.
(CC)

Description

Columbus Fire and Rescue maintains 5 mutual aid agreements or memorandums of understanding with local (Lowndes County volunteer fire departments, District 2 VFD), regional (Golden Triangle Regional Hazardous Materials agreement), state (State Mutual Aid Compact, MS Homeland Security grants), and federal agencies (Columbus Air Force Base). Each of these agreements supports the department's mission and organizational objectives. The department's Strategic Plan identifies external agencies that support department operations and recognizes the need to continue to develop new relationships.

Appraisal

Agreements are reviewed on a scheduled cycle. The SMAC (includes Lowndes County Volunteer fire departments) and District 2 VFD agreement is reviewed and approved on an annual basis. The agreement with Columbus Air Force Base is reviewed and approved every two years. The Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials agreement explicitly states that the agreement remains indefinite until one of the parties involved terminates the agreement. The department's mutual aid commitment to Homeland Security has been identified in the administrative section of the grant. Each of these agreements is current and is used to support department goals and objectives

Plan

The department and external agencies will continue to ensure agreements are current. The Fire Chief will ensure that any agreements that support department programs and services are identified and developed.

References

CFR / CAFB Mutual Aid Agreement

CFR Strategic Plan: 2013 - 2018

MS SMAC Agreement

Golden Triangle Hazardous Materials Mutual Aid Agreement

MS Homeland Security Grants

District 2 VFD agreement

10B.2 The agency researches, analyzes and gives consideration to all types of functional agreements that may aid in the achievement of the goals and objectives of the agency.

Description

The department identifies the need for all types of functional agreements that support the department in achieving its organizational goals and objectives. These functional agreements include emergency response (mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding), mitigation plan reviews (Lowndes County CEMP), service agreements (Fire Programs and StatsFD), and other service agreements (North Greenville Fitness).

CFR's Strategic Plan identifies external relationships and recognizes the need to establish relationships that supports the department's mission and organizational goals.

Appraisal

The above processes have adequately met department needs by identifying gaps where functional agreements would be beneficial. Gaps identified in technical rescue capabilities of an external agency resulted in CFR becoming the lead agency in overland and urban search and rescue (see Performance Indicator 10A.3). The strategic plan has been effective in recognizing the need for functional agreements through the identification of 25 external agencies that support department operations. This plan has also recognized the need for identifying new resources.

Plan

Columbus Fire and Rescue will continue to monitor all current functional agreements. The department will continue to identify areas where service gaps occur and seek functional agreements to enable the department to accomplish its mission. Objective 5E of the department's Strategic Plan will identify outside agencies that support department programs and goals. Once identified, the department will develop mutual aid agreements or memorandums of understanding listing resource support that benefits both parties.

References

Lowndes County CEMP: ESF 9: Search and Rescue
CFR Strategic Plan

CFR / Fire Program Service Agreement

CFR / StatsFD Service Agreement

CFR / North Greenville Medical Agreement

10B.3 The agency has a process by which their agreements are managed, reviewed, and revised.

Description

The Fire Chief is responsible for managing mutual aid agreements, memorandums of understanding, and service contracts by private vendors entered into by the department. The Fire Chief is assisted by the command staff in identifying department commitments. All service contracts involving binding agreements are reviewed by the City Attorney to ensure applicable laws are met. Agreements are subject to approval by the governing body. Agreements and service contracts are reviewed and revised in processes identified in Performance Indicator 10A.3 and 10B.1. All agreements are maintained in a file kept by the Administrative Assistant for accessibility and review.

Appraisal

The review and management processes currently being used have met department and city requirements. The participation by the command staff has aided in the review process by identifying needed changes in procedures or commitment of resources.

Plan

Columbus Fire and Rescue will continue to manage each agreement and assess its effectiveness on a review cycle agreed upon by participating parties.

References

CFR Mutual Aid Agreement File
CFR Maintenance Agreements (9)
CFR / North Greenville Fitness Agreement