Michigan

Office of the Auditor General

REPORT SUMMARY

Performance Audit
Bureau of Fire Services and State Fire Marshal
Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)

Report Number:
641-0434-13

Released:
April 2014

The mission of the Bureau of Fire Services is to protect life and property by fostering a fire safe environment through inspections, plan review, enforcement, regulation, firefighter training, data collection, and public fire education. The Bureau includes the State Fire Marshal, State Fire Safety Board, Firefighters Training Council, Fire Safety Inspection Program, Fireworks Program, Underground and Aboveground Storage Tank Programs, and Fire Safe Cigarette Program.

Audit Objective:
To assess the effectiveness of the Bureau's efforts to perform statutorily required fire safety inspections.

Audit Conclusion:
We concluded that the Bureau's efforts to perform statutorily required fire safety inspections were not effective. We noted three material conditions (Findings 1 through 3) and six reportable conditions (Findings 4 through 7, 16, and 17).

Material Conditions:
The Bureau had not established a comprehensive process to assess the effectiveness of its operations (Finding 1).

The Bureau did not conduct timely storage tank inspections and reinspections. Also, the Bureau did not maintain sufficient documentation to support the completion of storage tank inspections. In addition, the Bureau did not attempt to obtain facility owner names and addresses for facilities with missing contact information (Finding 2).

The Bureau did not ensure that places of public assemblage obtained certification of maximum capacity and compliance with the Fire Prevention Code prior to establishment or operation. Also, the Bureau did not ensure that it conducted annual fire safety inspections of all places of public assemblage and did not seek amendatory legislation regarding the inspection of places of public assemblage (Finding 3).

Reportable Conditions:
Our audit also disclosed reportable conditions related to annual inspections of adult foster care homes, preliminary inspections, conflicts of interest, inspector continuing education, fireworks facility inspections, and consistent and full use of authority for enforcement actions (Findings 4 through 7, 16, and 17).

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Audit Objective:
To assess the effectiveness of the Bureau's oversight of firefighter training throughout the State.

Audit Conclusion:
We concluded that the Bureau's oversight of firefighter training throughout the State was not effective. We noted three material conditions (Findings 1, 8, and 9) and five reportable conditions (Findings 10 through 14).

Material Conditions:
The Bureau did not monitor State-funded training activities conducted at the county level. Also, the Bureau recorded passing grades on student examinations without obtaining and reviewing course examinations (Finding 8).

The Bureau did not effectively preclude conflicts of interest among Firefighters Training Council members, training instructors, training coordinators, county training committee chairpersons, and regional supervisors involved in the firefighter training process (Finding 9).

As presented under the fire safety inspection audit objective, the Bureau had not established a comprehensive process to assess the effectiveness of its operations (Finding 1).

Reportable Conditions:
Our audit also disclosed reportable conditions related to monitoring of training funds, confidential and sensitive information, Information Management System user access, instructor payments, and hourly instructor wage (Findings 10 through 14).

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Audit Objective:
To assess the effectiveness of the Bureau's efforts to administer the Fireworks Program in accordance with statutory requirements.

Audit Conclusion:
We concluded that the Bureau's efforts to administer the Fireworks Program in accordance with statutory requirements were not effective. We noted one material condition (Finding 1) and four reportable conditions (Findings 11 and 15 through 17).

Material Condition:
As presented under the fire safety inspection audit objective, the Bureau had not established a comprehensive process to assess the effectiveness of its operations (Finding 1).

Reportable Conditions:
Our audit also disclosed reportable conditions related to confidential and sensitive information, fireworks applications, fireworks facility inspections, and consistent and full use of authority for enforcement actions (Findings 11 and 15 through 17).

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Audit Objective:
To assess the effectiveness of the Bureau's efforts to collect funds from statutorily authorized funding sources and allocate funds in accordance with statutory requirements.

Audit Conclusion:
We concluded that the Bureau's efforts to collect funds from statutorily authorized funding sources and allocate funds in accordance with statutory requirements were moderately effective. We noted three reportable conditions (Findings 10, 17, and 18).

Reportable Conditions:
Our audit disclosed reportable conditions related to monitoring of training funds, consistent and full use of authority for enforcement actions, and cash receipts (Findings 10, 17, and 18).

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Audit Objective:
To assess the Bureau's compliance with statutory reporting requirements.

Audit Conclusion:
We concluded that the Bureau was not in compliance with statutory reporting requirements. We noted one material condition (Finding 19).

Material Condition:
The Bureau did not submit statutorily required annual reports to the Governor and the Legislature (Finding 19).

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Agency Response:
Our audit report contains 19 findings and 30 corresponding recommendations. LARA's preliminary response indicates that the Bureau agrees with all of the recommendations.

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A copy of the full report can be obtained by calling 517.334.8050 or by visiting our Web site at: http://audgen.michigan.gov

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