

Audit

Follow-up

As of September 30, 2007



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Emergency Management Program

(Report #0707 issued January 8, 2007)

Report #0803

December 4, 2007

Summary

This is the second follow-up on the action plan steps originating from the Emergency Management Program Audit (#0707) issued on January 8, 2007. The Fire Department and Department of Management and Administration completed 10 of the 13 (77%) action plan steps due during the period April 1, 2007, through September 30, 2007. Two action plan steps are behind schedule and one was deleted by management. Additionally, two action plan steps will be due in the next follow-up period.

In audit report #0707, we identified issues related to the administration of the Emergency Management (EM) program and the EM planning and preparation activities. We provided specific recommendations to address these issues.

Between April 1, 2007, and September 30, 2007, the following actions have taken place:

- The EM coordinator implemented many activities to meet National Incident Management System (NIMS) requirements, including adopting NIMS, providing training for employees, and conducting periodic self-assessments.
- StarMetro developed an evacuation plan that was accepted by the County EM program for bus transportation during emergency preparation, response, and recovery.

- The City Manager and staff evaluated the organizational structure and determined that management support within the current organizational structure provides the EM coordinator with the needed responsibility and authority to effectively coordinate the EM operations in the City.
- Fire management indicated that the level of communications and effectiveness between the City and County EM personnel continues to improve.
- The EM coordinator solicited and received feedback from County EM personnel on the City's EM plan prior to the plan being presented to the City Commission for approval.
- The EM team reexamined the structure and composition of the EM teams and recruited additional members to fill team gaps. [Note: The Planning team is still in need of additional staff.]
- The EM coordinator and team members offered NIMS training to all leaders, managers, team members, and emergency response personnel. All key responders were trained in fire, police, public works, water and sewer, electric, Public Information Office, and aviation areas.
- The Radio Communications Division developed and implemented a backup communications plan for EM to ensure that there is adequate backup communications equipment available

and educated users to operate the equipment should the primary communications systems be damaged and/or destroyed.

- The Assistant City Manager and staff evaluated the primary and secondary EOC locations. They feel that these locations are adequately equipped, tested, ready for fast activation (within one hour of need), and are the best locations available at this time.
- The Fire Department developed, implemented, and communicated standard operating procedure #608 that will help guide staff regarding emergency and non-emergency responses during periods of inclement and severe weather.

The two action steps behind schedule relate to: 1) periodically reevaluating the City's identified "critical applications," and prioritizing the order in which applications will be restored during a catastrophic event; and 2) evaluating and determining a cost-effective and beneficial method to identify and track costs associated with all EM associated activities.

Scope, Objectives, and Methodology

We conducted this audit follow-up in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit follow-up to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit follow-up objectives.

Report #0707

The scope of report #0707 included a review of the City's EM planning and implementation activities as of September 30, 2006. The

primary objectives were to determine whether the City's Emergency Incident Management Plan and activities: 1) adequately addressed federal and state criteria, best practices, and lessons learned; and 2) were adequately implemented, as applicable.

Report #0803

This audit follow-up is to report on the progress and status of efforts by the Fire Department, EM Advisory Team, and Department of Management and Administration to complete action plan steps due for completion during the period April 1, 2007, through September 30, 2007. This is our second follow-up on action plan steps identified in audit report #0707. To determine the status of the action plan steps, we interviewed staff and reviewed relevant documentation.

Background

Tallahassee is the largest metropolitan area within the surrounding eight-county area and the largest city between Jacksonville and Pensacola. The City offers the majority of businesses and regional services, including a regional airport and two regional hospitals. In addition, the majority of businesses in Leon County are located in the City; we noted that 79% of the public schools and 79% of the hotels in Leon County are also within the City limits. In the event of a disaster, the City will be expected to be able to respond to damage and restore services to customers and residents in a timely and efficient manner. Services to be restored would include electric, water, and sewer, stormwater, solid waste, and natural gas. Additional City services that would be called upon include Police, Fire, Public Works, and StarMetro.

In 1992, the City initiated an EM program, but it is not recognized as a municipal EM program as defined in the Florida Statutes. The City has an active EM program with a full-time EM coordinator, citywide EM and Continuity of Operations Plans, and operates an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for monitoring conditions and controlling City resources

during disaster situations. It is modeled after the systems and structure of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS "establishes a uniformed set of processes and procedures that emergency responders at all levels of government will use to conduct response operations," and promotes the ability to effectively coordinate response and assistance during large-scale or complex incidents. City staff applied these processes when providing assistance to assist other local governments during the 2005 hurricane season.

Funding for the City's EM program is accounted for in the Fire EM cost center, while costs for the program, however, are spread across departments depending upon the activities and needs within each department. The 2007 approved budget for the EM program was \$128,864.

In report #0707, we noted many strengths in the City's EM program, including: the implementation of NIMS command structure and philosophy; the existence of a full-time EM coordinator; an "all-hazards" Emergency Incident Management Plan; dedicated and knowledgeable staff to lead response efforts during emergencies; and a methodology to capture disaster related expenses.

Opportunities to improve the City's EM program exist related to:

1) The administration of the EM program, including: compliance with the federal NIMS requirements; the location and reporting of the EM coordinator position within the City's organizational structure; the tracking and reporting of EM program costs outside of the EM Division related to planning and "non-declared" emergency response activities; the continued efforts to improve the coordination of resources, cooperation and communication between the City and County EM programs; and the utilization of performance measures to evaluate the EM program's effectiveness and efficiency.

2) The EM planning and preparation activities related to: staffing and training of EM personnel and City executive management; developing and testing departmental Continuity of Operations Plans; reevaluating "critical" software applications for disaster recovery; planning backup communications; evaluating the adequacy of the City's EOCs; and defining criteria for when emergency public safety and non-public safety personnel should take shelter during major storms.

Previous Conditions and Current Status

Table 1 on the next page identifies all the action plan steps due as of September 30, 2007, and describes the current status of each.

Table 1
Action Plan Steps from Audit Report #0707
Due as of September 30, 2007, and Current Status

Action Plan Steps Due as of March 31, 2007	Current Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to pursue NIMS compliance by meeting all requirements within the City's control and responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed. While this is really an ongoing process, many NIMS compliant activities were implemented. For example, the City Commission adopted using NIMS in December 2006, NIMS training has continually been offered to employees, and the EM coordinator has implemented a process to periodically assess the City's compliance with NIMS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and execute a mutual aid agreement with the County for bus transportation that will be provided during emergency preparation, response, and recovery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed. StarMetro has developed an evacuation plan that was accepted by the County EM and has met with the County to assure that it can be implemented accordingly. Additionally, the County has incorporated StarMetro into its EM Plan for evacuation services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reevaluate the location and reporting of the City's EM coordinator position within the City's organizational structure and give consideration to assigning EM responsibilities at an executive level in the government's organizational structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed. The City Manager and staff evaluated the organizational structure and determined that management support within the current organizational structure provides the EM coordinator with the needed responsibility and authority to effectively coordinate the EM operations in the City. Based on their evaluation, no changes to the organizational structure will be made at this time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a process to periodically gather input from City executive management or those persons that can best convey how effectively the EM coordinator works in their respective departments to incorporate into the EM coordinator's performance evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed in prior period.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and determine the most cost-effective and beneficial method to identify and track costs directly associated with EM planning and response activities for declared and "non-declared" emergencies in order to determine the total cost and effort for EM activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Behind schedule. No changes have been made from the prior way of tracking costs. <u>Audit Comment:</u> Without a method to identify EM program costs, including planning and "non-declared" response activities, management will not be able to evaluate the costs and benefits of that program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management continue efforts toward improving the level of communication and effectiveness of working relationships between the City and County EM personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed. While this is an ongoing action plan item, Fire management indicated that the level of communication has greatly increased between the County and City EM programs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City periodically (annually or as necessary due to changes in the plan) request the County review the City’s EM Incident Management Plan to ensure that the plan is coordinated and agrees with the County’s EM plan, and to adjust the plan accordingly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed. Feedback was solicited and received from the County EM program on the City's EM plan prior to the plan being presented to the City Commission for approval.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, obtain management approval, and implement appropriate performance measures to provide City management information on the program's performance, impact, costs, and benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed in a prior period.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reexamine the structure and composition of the EM teams to determine the most beneficial composition of team members to provide the necessary skill sets among the teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed. Minor changes were made to the team structure. The Planning and Administration/Finance Chief positions have been passed to new members. The Section Chiefs have evaluated staff and made some section modifications. There are approximately 94 team members at this time. However, more members are still needed on the City's EM Planning team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a process to ensure that all required training courses have been completed by City leaders, managers, team members and emergency response personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed. Management reports that training has been offered to all leaders, managers, team members, and emergency response personnel. There are still some gaps, but minor depending upon their role in an event. All key responders have been trained in fire, police, public works, water and sewer, electric, PIO, and aviation areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a process to periodically reevaluate the City’s identified “critical applications,” consider additional applications, and then prioritize and sequence the applications that will be needed to operate during emergencies for restoration. The results of each evaluation should be shared with the ISS Steering Committee for consideration and be incorporated into the ISS Business Recovery Plan as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Behind Schedule. In February 2007, the ISS Steering Committee reaffirmed that the top four applications to be recovered in a catastrophic event will be Human Resources, Financial Management, Utility Customer Information System, and e-mail. Minutes from the February 2007 meeting indicate that ISS will work with the EM coordinator in Phase II of prioritizing applications. In Phase II, staff will identify a second tier of four applications to be restored after the top four identified applications and will bring the recommended applications to a future ISS Steering Committee meeting for approval. Phase II of prioritizing applications has not taken place as of this time.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a backup communications plan for Emergency Management to ensure that there is adequate backup communications equipment available and to educate users how to operate the equipment should the primary communications systems be damaged and/or destroyed. 	<p>✓ Completed. ISS Radio Communications Division has drafted a disaster plan and is working on further refining it. (This is in conjunction with the 800 MHz follow-up audit.) RCD has conducted two practice exercises related to "fail-soft" conditions with 800 MHz radio users. The fail-soft condition provides for backup communication services when the 800 MHz system experiences power outages. During a recent catastrophic lightening strike that temporarily disabled the 800 MHz system, users were able to continue communicating using the fail-soft features.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the needs of the City’s EOC and review City locations to identify a primary and secondary EOC. 	<p>✓ Completed. The Assistant City Manager and staff evaluated the primary and secondary EOC locations. Management feels that these locations are adequately equipped, tested, ready for fast activation (within one hour of need), and are the best locations available at this time.</p> <p><u>Audit Comment.</u> The audit risk remains in that the primary and secondary EOCs are located in facilities that do not meet the recommended structural requirements to withstand catastrophic weather.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a plan to fund and make existing or new EOC locations operational. 	<p>✗ Deleted by management. Based on management’s evaluation of the primary and secondary EOC noted in the above step, management decided not to make any changes to the existing EOC or pursue a new EOC location at this time.</p> <p><u>Audit Comment:</u> The audit risk remains as long as the EOC(s) are not physically capable of withstanding catastrophic weather conditions.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, implement, and communicate (via training and written guidance) general criteria for when emergency personnel should take shelter to be out of harm’s way during emergency events. 	<p>✓ Completed. Standard operating procedures (SOP #608) were developed and approved that will help guide staff regarding emergency and non-emergency responses during periods of inclement and severe weather.</p>

Table Legend:

- - Issue addressed in the original audit ✓ - Issue addressed and completed ○ – Behind schedule ✗ - Deleted by management

Conclusion

As described in Table 1 above, management has completed 10 of the 13 (77%) action plan steps due during the period April 1, 2007, through September 30, 2007. Two steps are behind schedule and one step was deleted by management based on the results of another completed action plan step.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by EM program staff, Fire management, and Department of Management and Administration staff during this audit follow-up and commend their efforts to implement steps addressing the issues identified in the audit.

Appointed Official's Response

City Manager: I'm pleased with the continued progress of this follow-up audit. City departments have completed many of the items during this period and are making outstanding progress on others. Staff will continue to address the two outstanding items and evaluate any improvements that may be made in those areas. We appreciate the work on this follow-up by staff from the Auditor's Office and I'm confident that the improvements already implemented will enhance emergency preparedness for our community.

Copies of this audit follow-up #0803 or audit report #0707 may be obtained from the City Auditor's website (<http://talgov.com/auditing/index.cfm>) or via request by telephone (850 / 891-8397), by FAX (850 / 891-0912), by mail or in person (Office of the City Auditor, 300 S. Adams Street, Mail Box A-22, Tallahassee, FL 32301-1731), or by e-mail (auditors@talgov.com).

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