

*Submitted by:*

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**Borough of Greenville  
Fire Department Peer Assessment  
for Act 47 Recovery Plan**

**August 4, 2011**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This act 47 Update and Assessment of the Operation of the Greenville Fire Department was conducted by Nicholas Sohyda, peer fire consultant for the Department of Community and Economic Development, Governor's Center for Local Government Services, as requested by the Greenville Borough Governing Body in July of 2010.

Careful analysis of the information and data collected has resulted in the conclusion that the Greenville Fire Department is lacking sufficient personnel to provide an effective level of fire protection to the community. In addition, the department is not meeting recommended training standards and best practices, as evidence of their poor rating for training during their most recent ISO evaluation. These shortcomings open both the community and the department to potential liability regarding service delivery and provide unsafe conditions for existing fire fighters.

While it is necessary for the borough to examine all of its delivery options, including reducing staff and delivering services in a more efficient manner, the lack of a strong volunteer department does not afford the borough the luxury of eliminating any full or part-time positions in an already severely understaffed organization. It also does not; however, force the borough to add staffing as its only alternative.

While national staffing standards focus strictly on deployment by career fire departments, there is a realization that this is but one component of a total community fire protection planning process. Other components adopted by the borough that can reduce the risks of fire include strict adherence to and enforcement of building and fire prevention codes and the delivery of life safety education, both of which are generally not available in communities with all volunteer organizations.

Because every community has a distinct heritage, politics, and social/ cultural environment, it is impossible to prescribe a universal formula for the effective delivery of fire services. Ultimately, however, it is up to the borough to decide what level of risk is acceptable. This decision should be based on a community fire risk analysis that defines the levels of risk within the borough. These acceptable levels of risk will determine the extent of fire department capabilities that must be available.

Some communities are expecting their FD to "win" - although a "win" is generally as predictable as a loss. When the "hometown football team" only has 6 players, they don't expect many, or any, wins. The community and the elected officials need to decide what they want and have an obligation to make clear what the fire department generally can and cannot do, based upon what the community wants and is willing to fund, career or volunteer (Goldfeder, 2010).

Based on this research and current economic conditions, the peer consultant's recommendation is for the borough and the fire department to work collectively to significantly increase their efforts to recruit and retain a volunteer force of 15 to 20 volunteers by implementing an aggressive marketing campaign and incentive program and developing a partnership with Thiel College.

The borough should be aware that while there is significant cost savings associated with an all volunteer fire department, there are also significant drawbacks:

- Delayed response of an average of five minutes
- Elimination of quick response emergency medical services
- Lack of a guaranteed response
- Lack of local control over the fire department
- Lack of or lack of quality of proactive services including inspections, life safety education, emergency management, plans review, acceptance testing, hydrant maintenance, apparatus maintenance, building maintenance, etc.

The combination model currently in place is often considered the most effective model for fire services delivery in small to mid-size communities as it maintains a limited number of on duty staff to ensure an immediate response to emergencies and to deliver a wide-range of proactive services while having a large pool of volunteers to respond to major incidents. The problem in Greenville is that there are only two active volunteers to augment the limited on-duty staff.

Several immediate actions items should include:

- Developing a recruitment and retention plan, including working with Thiel College and establishing incentives.
- Implementing a comprehensive fee schedule for fire department services.
- Eliminating the street light and traffic signal maintenance and hydrant maintenance from the fire department to provide the fire chief with more time to perform administrative and management functions, including recruitment and retention, and thereby protecting the borough from potential liability or legal action.
- Selling the reserve ladder truck.
- Providing public works employees with an incentive to attend fire training and be able to respond to structural fires and drive fire apparatus during normal working hours.

Additional recommendations for improving fire services delivery while containing costs include:

- Opening a dialogue with tax exempt properties to establish an annual user fee for fire, police, and public works services.

- Continuing to explore the feasibility of billing for emergency medical first responder services.
- Establishing a dialogue with surrounding communities regarding a consolidated or regional fire department.
- Implementing a capital improvement program for fire apparatus replacement.
- Implementing an on-duty training program.

These action items and recommendations are discussed in greater depth in the body of this report. This report, while critical at some points, is intended to improve the organization, operations, deployment and management of the Greenville Fire Department. The primary focus of this report is the future of fire service delivery to the residents of Greenville Borough within the constraints of Act 47.

Many of the weaknesses and shortcomings identified are not the product of one person or groups of persons, but have developed over a long period of time due to a combination of declining volunteerism and commitment, increased service demands, and economics. During the course of this evaluation, the peer assessor found members of the fire department to be friendly, cooperative, and professional.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## **BACKGROUND**

This assessment of the Greenville Borough Fire Department was conducted by Nicholas W. Sohyda, peer fire consultant for the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development, Governor's Center for Local Government Services, as part of the Borough's Act 47 Recovery Plan. Mr. Sohyda has served in numerous leadership roles in both volunteer and career fire service organizations throughout his twenty-five year fire service career. Sohyda is currently the fire chief of the Mt. Lebanon Fire Department, located in Southwestern Pennsylvania, a combination department often recognized for its superior customer service, well-trained staff, and delivery of a wide range of both proactive and reactive fire service programs.

Chief Sohyda holds an Associate's Degree in Fire Science Technology from the University of Cincinnati and a Bachelor's Degree in Fire Administration from the Empire State College, in addition to being a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program, an initiative to provide senior officers and others in key leadership roles with enhanced executive-level knowledge, skills, and abilities. Chief Sohyda is certified as a Fire Fighter II, Fire Officer IV, Fire Instructor II, Incident Safety Officer and Fire Inspector I by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications. Chief Sohyda has also served in numerous fire service organizations.

Chief Sohyda has provided fire service management and consulting services for the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Governor's Center for Local Government Services and Delta Development Group since 2007. Chief Sohyda's body of work has focused on Act 47 Early Intervention Plans, Act 47 Recovery Plans, Management Audits, Consolidation, Strategic Planning, and Service Delivery.

To complete this assessment, the peer consultant conducted fieldwork and site investigations, analyzed data, gathered information from comparable local government operations, and conducted extensive research. Personal interviews were held with the borough manager, fire chief, and representatives from organized labor. The International City / County Managers Association (ICMA) *Standards for Effective Local Government*, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards, the Insurance Service Office (ISO) Grading Schedule, and the Center for Public Safety Excellence's Fire & Emergency Services Self-Assessment Manual were utilized as part of the review of fire services delivery. The recommendations contained in this assessment are based on recognized standards, accepted best practices, and government mandates.

The scope of services for this assessment included the following elements:

- 1) Authorization – Review of the legal establishment of the fire department including services authorized by borough ordinance.

- 2) Vehicles-Review and evaluate the type and condition of existing vehicles.
- 3) Equipment-Review and evaluate the type and condition of existing equipment.
- 4) Capital Improvements and Purchases-Review and evaluate future capital needs of the Fire Company relative to facilities, vehicles and equipment.
- 5) Fire Operations-Review and evaluate scheduling, productivity, staffing levels, response time (type of fires, number of volunteers to respond, mutual aid capacity), ISO rating, and compliance with recognized best practices.
- 6) Fire Administration-Review and evaluate sources of funding including municipal allocations, ability to generate revenue, level and types of expenditures, budgeting practices, by-laws, standard operating procedures, purchasing practices, reporting and record-keeping practices.
- 7) Volunteer Recruitment & Retention – Examine opportunities to recruit and retain volunteers, including external system relationships and incentives.
- 8) Examine the feasibility of regionalization with other departments.

## **LEGAL ESTABLISHMENT**

Neither the peer assessor nor the fire chief was able to locate a specific borough ordinance establishing a career fire department; however, this is not uncommon. Most borough ordinances authorize a volunteer fire department and delegate the supervision of the fire department to the fire chief who is responsible for reporting to council. The hiring of a fire chief by a municipality generally provides local government with a level of control over fire department activities and administration.

In minutes from the Greenville Borough Council Meeting, dated January 6, 1904, a committee on the fire department recommended a re-organization of the existing volunteer fire department on the basis that 1) the existing fire department be disbanded and that one be created with one chief, one 1<sup>st</sup> assistant chief, one 2<sup>nd</sup> assistant chief, four pipe men, four ladder men, two axe men, three chemical men, two plug men, three line men, and one driver, all to be selected by council; and 2) the chief be paid \$50.00 per month, the driver be paid \$50.00 per month, and all other members be paid \$25.00 per year.

In minutes from the Greenville Borough Council Meeting, dated January 7, 1904, it was resolved that it “shall be the duty of the chief of the fire department to make monthly sworn reports in writing to Council at its regular meeting” and the fire chief and 17 members were sworn in by council. A memorandum of agreement, also dated the 7<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1904, duly authorized the Greenville Fire Department, including compensation for members.

Ordinance 158, approved May 11, 1907, provides for the appointment of a fire marshal for the Borough of Greenville and empowering him to enter and inspect buildings and prescribing



penalties. The Council is authorized, at its discretion, to appoint the fire marshal, and whenever no specific appointment of the fire marshal shall be made, the fire chief, ex officio, shall perform the duties of and may exercise the powers of the fire marshal.

The Greenville Volunteer Fire Department was chartered in the court of common pleas of Mercer County on March 22, 1969 in accordance with the provisions of the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1933.

If at some point the borough wished to replace the paid department with an all volunteer force, there is legislation that stipulates that “No county or municipality employing paid firefighters, including but not limited to paid fire drivers, may disband its paid fire force in favor of having the services performed by volunteers unless approved by the voters in a referendum (53 P.S. 751: 1974 PL. 802.) This referendum requirement applies only to actions taken to disband an entire paid fire force. It does not apply where one station is closed and its paid firefighters transferred to another station (*Maher v. County of Allegheny*, 675 A.2d 378, Pa. Cmwlth., 1996, appeal denied 687 A.2d 380, 546 Pa. 697).

The question may be initiated by an ordinance of the governing body, or by a petition signed by at least twenty percent of the registered voters of the municipality. The ordinance or petition must be filed not later than the thirteenth Tuesday prior to the next general, municipal or primary election. All petitions must be signed, filed and adjudicated subject to the Election Code provisions relating to nomination petitions, so far as applicable. Petitions may be circulated no earlier than the twentieth Tuesday before the election, nor later than the thirteenth Tuesday prior to the election. The question may be placed on the ballot at a general, municipal or primary election. The wording of the question is contained in the act. The election is to be conducted under the provisions of the Election Code.”

### **MISSION, FUNCTION, AND TASKS**

The Mission of the Greenville Fire Department is to provide essential emergency and non-emergency services to the residents and visitors of the Borough of Greenville. To accomplish this mission, the department provides a wide-range of reactive and proactive fire and life safety services, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, from a single fire station located at 111 East Avenue. The department’s current staffing consists of five full-time, six part-time, and two active volunteer members who deliver fire suppression, basic rescue, and first responder services.

One of the departmental strengths identified by the peer consultant is the organization’s utilization of personnel to deliver a wide-range of programs and services. In addition to emergency response, the department also conducts public education programs, fire prevention inspections and enforcement, fire detection and suppression system acceptance testing, plans review, fire origin

and cause investigations, smoke detector installations, apparatus and equipment maintenance, fire hydrant maintenance, fire and life safety education programs, and traffic signal and street light repair and maintenance.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The fire department is organizationally structured as a three platoon system consisting of a fire chief, one platoon of two personnel, and two platoons of one person. Currently, four of the authorized six part-time firefighter positions are filled. The part-time firefighters fill the minimum staffing requirement of two personnel on the two platoons that are staffed with one person on nights and weekends while the fire chief fills this position on day shift during the week.

The volunteer department consists of seven volunteers, two of which are active firefighters that respond to calls. The volunteer company is comprised of a board of directors. A separate relief association and board also exists.

### **HISTORICAL CALL VOLUMES**

The Greenville Fire Department responded to an average of 831 calls annually during the previous 3-year period ending December 31, 2009. In 2009, the department responded to 842 emergency incidents, an average of 2.4 calls per day and a record number for the department.

Greenville's fires per 1,000 population of 5.5 are consistent with national averages of 5.8 fires per 1,000 population for communities with populations between 5,000 and 9,999. Greenville's 2009 property loss of \$16.50 per capita was less than half the national average of \$38.40 per capita. Greenville's average loss per structure fire in 2009 was \$12,138.00 while the national average loss per structure fire in the United States was approximately \$24,000.

Of the 842 calls to which the department responded in 2009, eight were classified as structure fires, slightly less than the national average of 13 structure fires for communities with populations between 5,000 and 9,999. Of these structural fires, seven occurred in residential dwellings and one in a detached structure.

False alarms accounted for 127 calls per year or an average of 15% of the total call volume, slightly above the national average of 9.8% of the total call volume for fire departments serving communities with populations between 5,000 and 9,999. The incident types for 2007 through 2009 are broken down as follows (Table 1):

TABLE 1 – GREENVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT CALL VOLUME, 2007-2009

INCIDENT TYPE	2007	2008	2009
Structure Fires	34	19	12
Other Fires – Vehicle, Trash, Etc.	32	17	20
Rescue & Emergency Medical	405	467	446
Hazardous Condition	78	56	75
False Alarms	127	120	127
Service/Good Intent Calls	151	145	144
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>842</b>

Over the previous 15-year period, the call volume has increased over 100%, from 398 calls in 1995 to 842 calls in 2009. It is generally recognized that the “typical” volunteer department is unable to handle calls in excess of 250 annually before volunteers start to experience burnout and begin to scratch on calls. Large volunteer departments (80+ members), combination, and career departments are generally found in communities with call volumes in excess of 250 per year.

### **SCHEDULING**

The full-time staff, excluding the Fire Chief, works a schedule that consists of 24-hour shifts and averages a 56-hour work week. Part-time firefighters work on an as-needed basis to maintain minimum staffing levels. The schedule consists of 24 hours on, 24 hours off, 24 hours on, 24 hours off, 24 hours on, 48 hours off, 24 hours on, 24 hours off, 24 hours on, 96 hours off. A minimum of two firefighters are assigned at all times. The fire chief often fills one of the two firefighter positions, Monday – Friday, day shift.

Regardless of how the hours are scheduled, the 56-hour work week is considered to be the most cost-effective schedules for communities in the United States.

### **UNION REPRESENTATION**

The full-time firefighters, with the exception of the fire chief, are unionized and are represented by the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 1976. The union is working under a contract that expires December 31, 2011.

## II. OBSERVATIONS

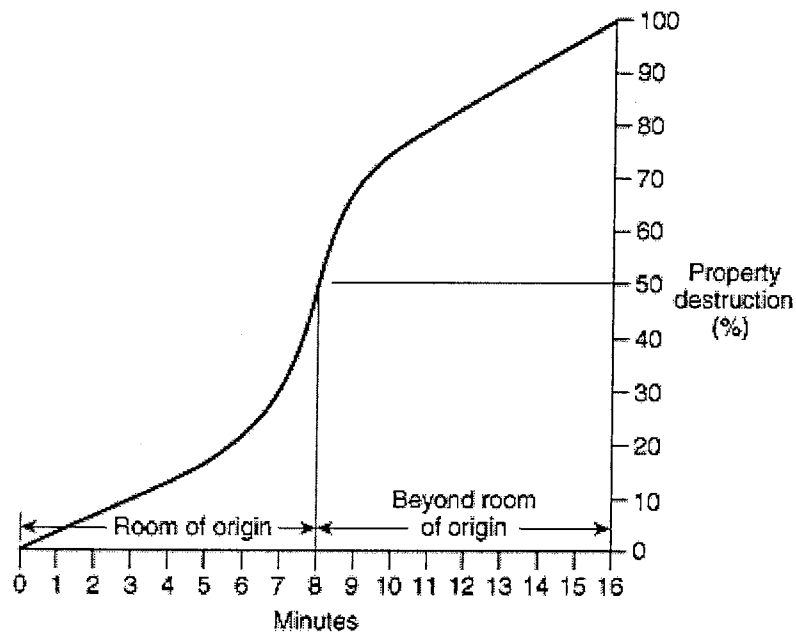
### **DEPLOYMENT**

Staffing levels range from a maximum of three to a minimum of two personnel. In general, each of the department's two pumpers is staffed with one person, and the truck is staffed by off-duty personnel. The fire chief accounts for the third person when one of the three shifts that has two full-time personnel assigned is on duty. Three-person staffing averages 13 hours per week or approximately 8% of the average staffing levels cited in the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) survey for fire performance data for communities with populations under 100,000. Overall, staffing levels range from 50% to 75% of the recommended Standard of Cover.

The basic premise behind Standard of Cover (*National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, 2010 edition) is that in order to control a building fire with minimal life and property loss, a fire department must be able to place an adequate number of firefighters and amount of equipment on the fire scene, ready to engage an emergency, within a given time frame.

The resource needs and time frame are driven by the growth process of a typical fire. Once ignition occurs, a fire doesn't not grow in a linear fashion; it grown exponentially. Unchecked, it Ultimately reaches a point known as "flashover." At flashover, a fire changes from involvement of a limited area of the room to a full fire involvement of the space. This event occurs almost explosively. Flashover is a critical stage of fire growth for two reasons. First, a person in a flashover room cannot survive. Others within the building will likely be injured and possibly trapped. Second, the rate of combustion and fire spread increases dramatically, making victim location and rescue far more difficult. Fire control will require more hose lines and water flow.

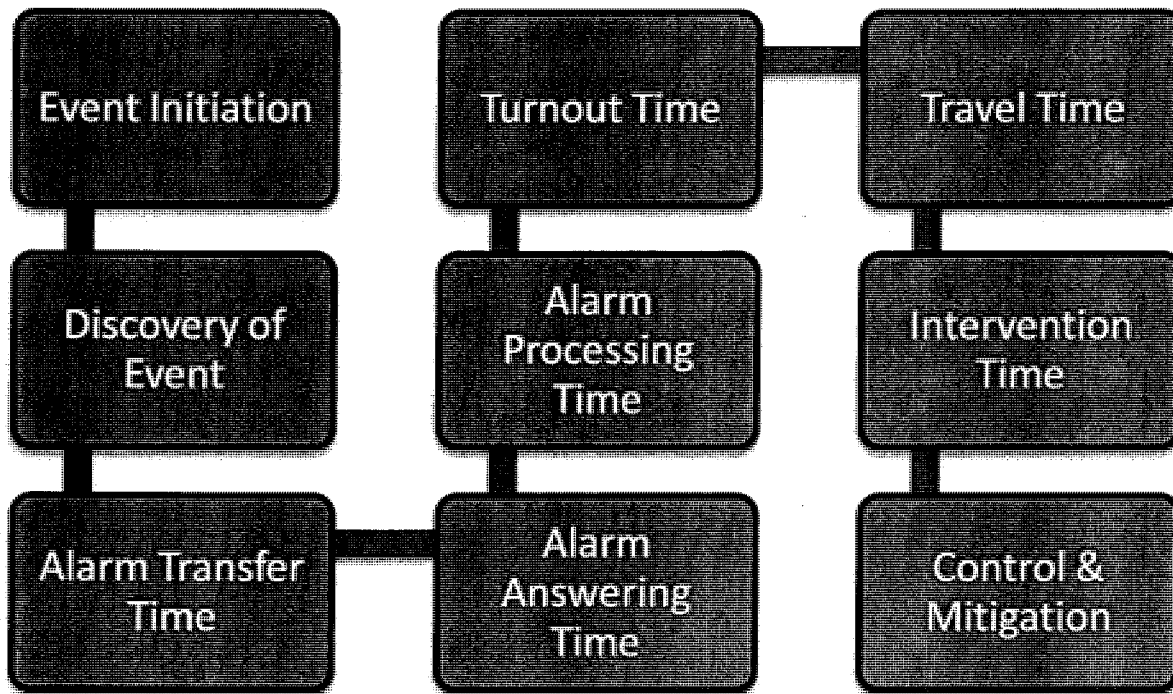
FIGURE 1: FLASHOVER TIME –TEMPERATURE CURVE



Control of a pre-flashover fire can be safely accomplished with a minimal amount of resources. When a small crew of firefighters is able to begin fire control activities on a small appliance fire, a cooking accident, an overheated motor, a smoldering mattress, or a similar incident prior to flashover, the chance of injury or loss of life is low and damage is usually minor.

On the other hand, once a flashover occurs, a large complement of firefighters will be needed for fire control, and the likelihood of death or injury to both occupants and firefighters is high. Damage will be substantial, often resulting in total destruction of the building and contents. Clearly, a fire department's best opportunity to alter the course of the emergency, stop loss, and minimize the negative consequences is to intervene as early as possible in the fire timeline. The continuum below illustrates the necessary steps for fire department intervention (Figure 2):

FIGURE 2: STEPS TO FIRE DEPARTMENT INTERVENTION



The only three elements of this continuum that are within fire department control are turnout time, travel time, and intervention time. Recognizing that a quickly arriving unit may be able to engage a fire before flashover, Standard of Cover establishes two time benchmarks, one for the arrival of the first unit, and a second for arrival of the remaining resources. Therefore, the standard expects an initial firefighting unit staffed with a minimum of four personnel to have a turnout time of eighty seconds or less and a travel time of five minutes or less for a total response time of six minutes and twenty seconds (Level 1 Response).

Subsequent firefighting units (second-due engine and a truck, staffed with a minimum of four fire fighters each) should arrive within a total of eleven minutes and 20 seconds from dispatch (Level 2 response). Setup time is a function of the magnitude of the fire upon arrival, the ease of deployment of hose lines, and the number of firefighters arriving and their level of skill and training. Thus, setup time will be longer for more serious incidents and in situations with personnel shortages.

A recent study conducted by the National Institute of Standards & Technology, Report on Residential Fire Ground Field Experiments, investigated the effects of varying crew sizes, first

apparatus arrival time, and response time on firefighter safety, overall task completion, and interior residential tenability using realistic residential fires. The findings of the study concluded that:

- Four-person crews operating on a low-hazard structure fire completed all the tasks on the fire ground seven minutes faster – nearly 30% - than the two-person crews and five minutes faster – nearly 25% - than 3-person crews.
- Four-person crews put water on the fire 16% faster than two-person crews and 10% faster than three-person crews.
- Four-person crews completed laddering and ventilation 30% faster than two-person crews and 25% faster than three-person crews.
- Four-person crews started and completed a primary search 30% (3 minutes) faster than two-person crews and 6% faster than three-person crews.
- Four-person crews stretched a hose line 87 seconds faster than two-person crews and 76 seconds faster than three-person crews.

Substantial research on resource needs for fire control has also been conducted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), and several large city fire departments. The data collected determined that at a fire in an occupied structure, a minimum of eight tasks must be simultaneously conducted to stop the loss of civilian lives, stop further property loss, and keep the risk to firefighters at a reasonable level.

The critical tasks on the initial alarm for a response to a structural fire in a typical 2,000 square foot, two-story, single-family occupancy without a basement and with no exposures (detached home) are as follows:

1. Establishment of incident command outside of the hazard area for the overall coordination and direction of the initial full-alarm assignment. A minimum of one individual shall be dedicated to this task.
2. Establishment of an uninterrupted water supply of 400 gallons per minute (gpm) for 30 minutes. Supply line(s) shall be maintained by an operator who shall ensure uninterrupted water flow application.
3. Establishment of an effective water flow application rate of 300 gpm from two handlines, each of which shall have a minimum of 150 gpm. Each attack and backup line shall be operated by a minimum of two individuals to effectively and safely maintain the line.
4. Provision of one support person for each attack and backup line deployed to provide hydrant hookup and to assist in line lays, utility control, and forcible entry.
5. A minimum of one victim search and rescue team shall be part of the initial full-alarm assignment. Each search and rescue team shall consist of a minimum of two individuals.
6. A minimum of one ventilation team shall be part of the initial full-alarm assignment. Each ventilation team shall consist of a minimum of two individuals.

7. If an aerial device is used in operations, one person shall function as an aerial operator and maintain primary control of the aerial device at all times.
8. Establishment of a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) that shall consist of a minimum of two properly equipped and trained individuals.

Based on this scenario, the hazards of which are not unusual, a minimum of 15 fire fighters are needed to accomplish these tasks. Regardless of career or volunteer, the faster these resources can be assembled, the less likely a fire is to extend, limiting the potential for fatalities, injuries, and property loss. Other occupancies and structures in the community that present greater hazards should be addressed by additional firefighter functions and additional responding personnel on the initial full alarm assignment, ranging from 24 firefighters for high hazard occupancies and 36+ firefighters for special hazard occupancies.

The ability of adequate fire suppression forces to greatly influence the outcome of a structural fire is undeniable and predictable. Data generated by the NFPA provides empirical proof that rapid and aggressive interior attack can substantially reduce the human and property losses associated with structural fires.

TABLE 2 – FIRE EXTENSION IN RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES 1994–1998

Rate per 1000 Fires	
Civilian Injuries	Dollar Loss per Fire
35.19	3,185
96.86	22,720
63.48	31,912

Residential structures include dwellings, duplexes, manufactured homes (also called mobile homes), apartments, row townhouses, hotels and motels, dormitories, and barracks.

Combining the time benchmarks and resource needs, a fire department should be able to place at least one firefighting unit and a minimum of four firefighters at a fire scene within six minutes and 20 seconds of dispatch (80 second scramble time and five minutes travel time) 90% of the time. Grenville’s Turnout time, travel time, and total response time performance for emergency responses for the first arriving unit is as follows (Tables 3 - 5). The benchmark is the performance objective and the baseline is the maximum acceptable variation.



TABLE 3 - GREENVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT TURNOUT TIMES

	Unit	Expectation	Greenville Performance
<b>Benchmark</b>	80 seconds	90%	53%
<b>Baseline</b>	90 seconds	90%	54%

The Greenville Fire Department's 90<sup>th</sup> percentile turnout time of 2:22 is not within the recommended performance range or the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of 2:03 as determined by the NFPA's (May 2010) *Quantitative Evaluation of Fire and EMS Mobilization Times*.

TABLE 4 - GREENVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAVEL TIMES

	Unit	Expectation	Greenville Performance
<b>Benchmark</b>	5:00	90%	99%
<b>Baseline</b>	6:30	90%	100%

The Greenville Fire Department's 90<sup>th</sup> percentile travel time is 3:30, well below the recommended benchmark of 5:00.

TABLE 5 - GREENVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT TOTAL RESPONSE TIMES

	Unit	Expectation	Greenville Performance
<b>Benchmark</b>	6:20	90%	95%
<b>Baseline</b>	8:00	90%	100%

The Greenville Fire Department's 90<sup>th</sup> percentile total response time (turnout time + travel time) is 5:15, over a minute below the recommended benchmark of 6:20.

Additionally, other units with 11 additional firefighters should arrive within five additional minutes. These response goals should be met at least 90% of the time. It must also be noted that these are minimum acceptable standards and they are based on a fire in a relatively small detached dwelling.

The challenge that any community faces is how to achieve the above level of fire protection for its citizens at a cost that is affordable. Greenville Borough is like countless cities nationwide that are struggling with this issue. Until the department is able to develop a stable volunteer force consisting of 15 to 20 active members, it should not consider any reductions in its already dangerously low staffing levels.

Due to the fact that Greenville is only 5.1 square miles, emergency responses times consistently meet the travel time and total response time benchmarks, as defined by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), for a suburban community (population density between 1,000 and 2,000 people per square mile).

The department is unable; however, to assemble the recommended 15 firefighters within 11-1/2 minutes of notification due to a lack of personnel and the distribution and reliability of mutual aid departments. An average of 6 personnel responds to structure fires. This is only 40% of the recommended 15 responders necessary to meet Standard of Cover needs and **safely** perform critical fire ground tasks at single-family dwellings.

While automatic and mutual aid can be utilized when calculating the assembly of an effective response force, it is necessary for the automatic and/or mutual aid to respond with adequate staffing in the prescribed time period. Due to the fact that the surrounding departments are all volunteer, an adequate response cannot be guaranteed. In fact, both the Hempfield and West Salem Volunteer Fire Departments have failed to respond on at least a dozen incidents over the past year. Responses from Hempfield Township are estimated at 8 minutes from the time of alarm and responses from West Salem Station 2 are estimated at 12 minutes from the time of alarm; however, these are under ideal circumstances and staffing (if any) varies.

If the department were to become predominantly volunteer, it would then be evaluated based on the requirements of NFPA 1720, Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments. Based on a suburban demand zone, the fire department would be required to deploy a minimum of ten firefighters within 10 minutes of the time of alarm 80% of the time.

### **ISO PUBLIC PROTECTION CLASSIFICATION RATING**

The second measure of fire department service is the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification Rating System. Using a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the best, 10 being no fire protection), the ISO rates fire protection in thousands of communities throughout the country. The rating is used by insurance companies to set premiums on properties it insures. Commercial, industrial, mercantile, institutional, and multifamily dwellings are the most highly impacted properties when a city's rating changes. On average, each increase or reduction in class equates to 4% on insurance premiums.

The ISO conducted a community classification survey in December of 2009. These classifications have been developed for use in property insurance premium classifications for properties in

Greenville Borough. The fire department received an ISO Public Protection Classification of 4. The credits assigned are as follows (Table 6):

TABLE 6 - GREENVILLE ISO GRADING SHEET

	Actual Credit	Maximum Credit
Receiving and Handling Fire Alarms	7.03	10.00
Fire Department	26.15	50.00
Water Supply	34.05	40.00
*Divergence	-6.56	-
<b>Total Credit</b>	<b>60.67</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Each component is evaluated using a fractional point scale and the cumulative points are added together to establish the community point total. Additionally, points are subtracted, known as divergence, when the water supply is relatively better than the fire department or vice versa. The thinking is that a good water supply would be underutilized with an ineffective fire department, and conversely, the best fire department would be less effective with a substandard water supply. Greenville's divergence is relatively low due to a high water supply score (relative classification for water supply = Class 2) and a slightly less than average fire department score (relative classification = Class 5).

When an ISO representative conducts a community assessment, areas examined include record keeping practices; pumper, aerial, and hose tests; apparatus equipment; personnel training; and deployment protocols.

TABLE 7 – GREENVILLE GRADING FOR RECEIVING AND HANDLING FIRE ALARMS

Category	Actual Credit	Maximum Credit
Credit for Telephone Service	2.00	2.00
Credit for Operators	2.28	3.00
Credit for Dispatch Circuits	2.75	5.00
<b>Total Credit</b>	<b>7.03</b>	<b>10.00</b>

The "receiving and handling fire alarms" portion of the evaluation reviews the facilities provided for the general public to report fires, and for the operator on duty at the communications center to dispatch fire department companies to the fires. This category is an evaluation of the Mercer County 9-1-1 Center (Table 7).

TABLE 8 – GREENVILLE ISO GRADING FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

	Actual Credit	Maximum Credit
Credit for Engine Companies	9.17	10.00
Credit for Reserve Pumpers	0.50	1.00
Credit for Pump Capacity	5.00	5.00
Credit for Ladder Companies	3.96	5.00
Credit for Reserve Ladders	0.67	1.00
Credit for Distribution	3.89	4.00
Credit for Company Personnel	2.06	15.00
Credit for Training	0.90	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.15</b>	<b>50.00</b>

The fire department section reviews the engine and ladder-service companies, equipment carried, response to fires, training, and available firefighters. Based on required water flow and number of buildings four stories or greater in height, two engine (pumpers) companies and one ladder company is needed for maximum credit. Two engines and a ladder are currently in service.

Distribution is based on the premise that all sections of the borough with hydrant protection should be within 1 1/2 miles of a fully equipped engine company and 2 1/2 miles of a fully equipped ladder. This distance is measured along all-weather roads. Distribution is adequate based on the location of Greenville’s fire station.

The most important factor is fire fighter response to structural fires. The grading schedule’s premise, much like the Standard of Cover, is that fires will be controlled more quickly and with less damage when large numbers of fire fighters are available in a short time frame. As such, the single largest point factor is awarded for fire fighter response. Because of immediate availability, full credit is given for on-duty fire fighters. Since it is assumed that any fire fighter not on duty will have a longer response time, only one-third credit is given for any fire fighter who is not on duty. In Greenville, based on an average of 1.83 on duty personnel and 1.92 volunteers responding to structural fires, the fire department received a personnel credit of 2.06 out of 15. Based on the ISO requirement of two engines and one truck, ISO-required staffing for Greenville would be 18 on duty fire fighters per call for maximum credit.

The requirement of 18 fire fighters is based upon an interactive relationship between a first alarm assignment of two engine companies and one ladder company and the credit assigned for fire fighters responding with these companies. Full credit for company personnel is awarded when six firefighters with each company, including company officers, respond with two engines and one ladder on the first alarm to structure fires.

The ISO evaluation advised that the training program should be improved. The fire department received only 0.90 out of a maximum of 9.0 for its training program and use of facilities. Total fire department credit was 26.15 out of a maximum of 50.00.

TABLE 9 – GREENVILLE ISO GRADING FOR WATER SUPPLY

	Actual Credit	Maximum Credit
Credit for Supply System	29.23	35.00
Credit for Hydrants	1.82	2.00
Credit for Hydrant Inspection	3.00	3.00
	34.05	40.00

Water supply includes the supply works, water main capacity, hydrant distribution, types of hydrants, and frequency of inspection of hydrants and their condition. The total credit for water supply for Greenville Borough is above average (Table 9).

The total credit for handling fire alarms, fire department, and water supply is 60.67, which equates to a very low Class 4 Rating. There are several steps the fire department can take to strengthen its current rating; however, it is unlikely that it can improve enough to result in a Class 3 Rating. It is; however, likely, that the rating will decline back to a Class 5, or even lower, based on an inadequate number of personnel.

In 2010, the ISO Fire Suppression Rating Schedule will be revised. Some of the recommended changes, if adopted, could have a negative effect on the Borough's ISO rating. Discussions regarding some of these revisions include:

- A requirement that, for a rating better than 10, the fire department must have sufficient membership to assure response by at least six members (including the chief) to fires in structures.
- A possible revision to include training and credentialing for fire officers in accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and NFPA 1021. ISO will strongly recommend that recognition be provided for Chief Fire Officer credentialing awarded by the Commission on Professional Credentialing (CPC) and Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE).
- A possible revision for implementation of master and/or strategic planning that provides recognition in the schedule to a CPSE-accredited agency or to an agency that can demonstrate equivalent achievement of all core competencies outlined in the Self Assessment Model, and that are related to operations and firefighting procedures. The ISO will also strongly recommend that the assessment and documentation of risk be included for consideration either in strategic planning or in preplanning.

- Training for fire apparatus drivers and operators in accordance with NFPA 1002 and NFPA 1451.
- No credit for training without proper documentation.
- General revisions in all areas to strengthen requirements for documentation, safety and health issues, interoperability, industry standard and/or best practice compliance, and increased recognition for technology-based systems

While a favorable ISO Rating does reduce insurance costs an average of 4% for a portion of the community's property owners, receiving a favorable ISO Rating should not take precedence over delivering efficient, cost-efficient services to residents.

## **REGIONALIZATION**

The primary goal of any plan of consolidation or merger should revolve around and focus upon public safety considerations with a secondary consideration being economics.

Unfortunately, over the last 30 years, the emergency services in Pennsylvania have been tasked with greater demands to address additional knowledge and skill sets required (i.e. hazardous materials, terrorism, technical rescue) as well as responding to an increasing number of calls. Although the number of serious fires has decreased nationwide, the number of required responses and related demands on service providers has increased. Additionally, in recent years, Pennsylvania has had the unfortunate experience of being at the top of the list in the number of emergency responders killed in the line of duty.

The bottom line is that the emergency services in many communities are being tasked to provide greater levels of service with very limited resources and decreasing financial assistance. The need exists to develop a cost effective method for emergency services delivery throughout the Commonwealth.

The reality is that each community is left to determine:

“What do I need to protect the community?”

“How much will it cost?”

“What are my funding sources?”

“How do I deliver these services?”

In February of 2008, amending the Act of February 1, 1966 (1965 P.L.1656, No. 581) entitled “An act concerning boroughs, and revising, amending and consolidating the law relating to boroughs,” providing for specific powers of boroughs relating to emergency services, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth enacted House Bill No. 1133 (Appendix C), adding a clause that “the borough shall be responsible for ensuring that fire and emergency medical services are provided within the borough by the means and to the extent determined by the borough, including the appropriate financial and administrative assistance for these services. The borough shall consult the fire and emergency medical service providers to discuss the emergency service needs of the borough. The borough shall require any emergency services organization receiving borough funds

to provide to the borough an annual itemized listing of all expenditures of these funds before the borough may consider budgeting additional funding to the organization.” Similar amendments were also made for first and second-class townships, placing the responsibility for providing fire protection on the local governing body.

The joining of fire and rescue organizations is a means by which an increasing number of municipalities are responding to a variety of issues. These issues include fiscal constraints, increasing workload, new and increasing demands for service, and the need to become more cost efficient and productive. Cooperative service comes in a variety of forms from a simple intergovernmental agreement like mutual aid to a complex merger. Other forms of cooperation may include automatic aid agreements or functional, partial, and operational consolidations. Each form of cooperation has its advantages depending on the conditions and the departments it may serve.

**Administrative Consolidation** – Two or more fire departments maintain separate operations while some administrative/staff functions, such as clerical and personnel, are combined. An example would be a single Fire Chief, Administrator, or Business Manager overseeing both fire departments.

**Partial Consolidation** – Each department remains legally separate but a group is formed to perform special functions. This group would provide service to both communities but are members of their respective organization. An example would be the sharing and staffing of a single fire station.

**Functional Consolidation** – Each fire department remains legally separate but performs special functions as if they were one department. An example would be combined training or maintenance programs.

**Operational Consolidation** – Each fire department remains legally separate but join together both administrative and operations functions, delivering services as if they were one department.

**Full Consolidation** – Two agencies completely merge into a single legal agency. All service demands in each community are looked at as a single function of the department and political boundaries become invisible.

Ranked as the most important service level issues when considering consolidation include:

1. The amount of time it takes fire units to respond to fires and medical emergencies
2. Provision of advanced and basic life support services
3. Number of firefighters and paramedics who respond to a call
4. How costs will be shared
5. Response by “back-up” units

6. Equipment at fire stations

7. Minimum training levels

Typically, the consolidation or merger of two or more fire departments results in the following:

- One fire department;
- One employer;
- One set of rules, regulations, and operating guidelines;
- One personnel management system;
- One chain of command.

The national experience regarding fire department consolidation indicates major improvement in service and internal efficiencies that have a positive impact on the public. Several key improvements typically include:

- Improved fire ground communications;
- Improved fire ground operations by following the same standard operating guidelines and working together as a team;
- Reduced response time of apparatus by dispatching the closest unit;
- Improved firefighter safety; and,
- Improved ISO Rating

The peer consultant believes that there could be significant benefits and long-term cost-reduction and avoidance opportunities that would benefit the residents of Greenville and its surrounding communities if there were a regional approach to fire services delivery. The challenge is; however, that most of the surrounding communities are probably satisfied with or unaware of the level of service that they are receiving due to the fact that they are served by all volunteer departments and fire protection is relatively inexpensive. Until the surrounding communities begin questioning the level of service they are receiving, they are unlikely to want to pay more for fire protection. It is incumbent upon borough officials to begin having dialogue with surrounding communities regarding the regionalization of fire services delivery.

The Commonwealth law authorizing intergovernmental cooperation is codified in Title 53 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes. It authorizes two or more local governments to “jointly cooperate in the exercise or in the performance of their respective governmental functions, powers, or responsibilities.”

According to Title 53, this cooperation is to be authorized by ordinance, which must specify the conditions, duration, purpose, manner, and extent of any financing, organizational structure, in which property will be acquired, managed, or disposed. The ordinance must also specify that the entity created will be empowered to enter into certain employee-related contracts.

According to the statutory authority, implementation of a consolidated fire agency would involve the execution of a separately adopted resolution or ordinance by the participating governments.



That resolution/ordinance would authorize the execution of a joint contract for the joint provision of fire and rescue related services through a jointly established fire rescue department.

**APPARATUS & EQUIPMENT**

The average apparatus replacement cycle for fire apparatus ranges from 5 to 20 years of front-line service based on usage, terrain, climate, and technology. The optimum life-cycle for front-line apparatus for a department with Greenville’s call volume, terrain, and rough climate should be approximately 15 years for a pumper and 20 years for an aerial.

The Greenville Fire Department’s fleet consists of (Table 10):

TABLE 10: GREENVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT FLEET

Year	Type	Pump	Tank	Condition
1985	Pumper	1,500	750	Poor
2000	Pumper	1,500	750	Good
1973/1994	Aerial	None	None	Satisfactory
1966	Aerial	None	None	Poor
1998	Squad	None	None	Good
2007	Staff Car	None	None	Good

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard on Automotive Fire Apparatus, Guidelines for First-Line and Reserve Fire Apparatus, recommends that apparatus greater than 15 years be placed in reserve status and upgraded to incorporate as many features as possible of the current fire apparatus standard. The recommended age for reserve apparatus is between twenty and twenty-three years, with applicable upgrades.

**Definition of first-line fire apparatus:** First-line fire apparatus must be manufactured to NFPA 1901, 1991 (2003 editions) and must be maintained in accordance with NFPA 1912 and 1915.

**Definition of reserve fire apparatus:** Reserve fire apparatus is defined as apparatus manufactured to applicable NFPA 1901 editions, after 1979 and prior to the 1991 edition. Such apparatus must have been **upgraded to include as many of the features as possible** found in 1991 or newer units.

To meet the NFPA Standard, maintaining a fleet of two pumpers and an aerial, fire apparatus would need to be replaced on the following intervals (Table 11):

TABLE 11: NFPA COMPLIANT REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE

Apparatus	Replacement Year 1	Projected Cost	Replacement Year 2	Projected Cost
1985 Pumper	2010	\$400,000	2025	\$475,000
2000 Pumper	2015	\$425,000	2030	\$500,000
1994 Aerial	2014	\$600,000	2034	\$700,000
1966 Aerial	Eliminate	-	-	-

The cost of fire apparatus over the next 25 years, based on maintaining the current inventory, less the 1966 aerial, and meeting NFPA Standards would be approximately \$3,100,000. Over the next 5 years, the borough would need to spend \$1,425,000.

To meet community risks, maximize fire fighter capabilities, minimize risk of injuries to fire department personnel and the public, and meet Insurance Services Office (ISO) apparatus requirements, the Greenville Fire Department should maintain a first-line engine, a reserve engine, and a quint apparatus, an apparatus that serves the dual purpose of an engine and an aerial truck.

The peer consultant’s recommended fleet replacement schedule for major fire apparatus for Greenville Borough is as follows (Table 12):

TABLE 12: RECOMMENDED FLEET REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE

Apparatus	Replacement Year 1	Projected Cost	Replacement Year 2	Projected Cost
1985 Pumper	2011	\$50,000 (Partial Refurb)	2021	\$125,000 (Used)
2000 Pumper	2019	\$445,000	2034	\$520,000
1994 Aerial	2014	\$750,000	2034	\$850,000
1966 Aerial	Eliminate	-	-	-

The 1985 pumper is in poor condition and should be addressed immediately. It is recommended that approximately \$50,000 be invested into this pumper to maintain it as a second-line / reserve fire apparatus to meet community fire flow and ISO needs, as well as to have available when other apparatus might be out of service for maintenance and / or repairs. Under the proposed replacement schedule, this piece of apparatus will respond infrequently after the quint is purchased in 2014. It is recommended that, with a quality pumper and quint, the reserve engine could be replaced, as necessary, with a used piece of fire apparatus based on the apparatus’ reserve status.

The 1994 aerial should be replaced with a quint apparatus, an apparatus that serves as both an aerial and a pumper. Since the early 1990’s, quint apparatus have become especially popular in

smaller departments with limited staffing. Although quints are more expensive than either a pumper or an aerial apparatus separately, the fact that they are a combination of aerial and an engine allows many departments to carry out operations more efficiently while realizing a long-term savings of \$360,000 based on Table 12. It should be noted; however, that based on the recommended apparatus replacement schedule, two pieces of apparatus will be due for replacement in the same year, 2034, and should be planned for. It is recommended that the borough set aside approximately \$90,000 per year for apparatus replacement. The borough should also explore the feasibility of lease / purchase options.

Twelve of the eighteen self-contained breathing apparatus are in excess of 15-years old, the typical service life of self-contained breathing apparatus, while 6 units were purchased in 2009. It is recommended that at least 6 additional self-contained breathing apparatus be replaced in the very near future.

Personal protective clothing is in good condition. Personal protective clothing should be replaced every five years and should never exceed the maximum service life of ten years.

All other tools and small equipment are in good condition. Capital improvements should be planned for accordingly and may be funded through operating funds, bond issues, lease purchase plans, and/or another dedicated funding source.

**OVERTIME USE**

Overtime is used to supplement contractual minimum staffing levels to fill in for sick time and vacations. Additional overtime is incurred for training and callbacks when a part-time firefighter cannot be utilized.

TABLE 13 – GREENVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT OVERTIME & PART-TIME COSTS

Category	2007	2008	2009	2010 (8 mos.)
Regular	\$15,775	\$33,756	\$40,827	\$14,000
Call-Back	\$5,207	\$5,885	\$3,128	\$2,719
Part-time Costs			\$36,599	\$30,145

The increase in overtime costs is due to two full-time vacancies. In 2009, the fire department exceeded its overtime budget by \$26,500. As of August 31, 2010, the fire department has exceeded its overtime budget by 2,080. The borough should analyze whether or not it would be more cost-effective to continue to pay contractual overtime and approximately \$36,000 per year in part-time costs or to hire an additional full-time fire fighter.

## **RECOGNIZED STANDARDS**

As part of the evaluation process, the consultant relied on standards, benchmarks, and “best practices” commonly used to measure fire service delivery. These included the following:

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) - The NFPA is an organization that develops, publishes, and disseminates timely consensus standards covering all areas of fire safety. These NFPA standards have been adopted by numerous state and federal authorities, giving them the force of law. In Pennsylvania, NFPA standards are recognized as voluntary consensus standards.

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission’s (SPC) Standards for Effective Local Government – These standards are designed to assist local elected and appointed officials in determining the capacity and effectiveness of municipal operations in all areas of government, including fire operations, emergency medical services, and emergency management.

Insurance Services Office (ISO) - The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) is a manual containing the criteria ISO uses in reviewing the firefighting capabilities of individual communities. The schedule measures the major elements of a community's fire-suppression system and develops a numerical grading called a Public Protection Classification (PPC).

Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) - The CPSE, a nonprofit organization developed through a cooperative effort of the ICMA and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), establishes and promotes recognized professional standards to help fire agencies move beyond tactical deployment to continuous strategic improvement.

## **COMPENSATION & FRINGE BENEFITS**

The average 2007 hourly rates for staff members of \$13.80 were below the national average of \$17.84 to \$27.59. The average salary nationally for fire fighters for 2007 was \$50,094. The average salary for fire fighter in the benchmark Pennsylvania Communities for 2007 was \$48,187. Greenville’s salaries are approximately 24% below the national average and 11% below the average for benchmark Pennsylvania Communities (Table 14):

TABLE 14: 2007 STAFFING AND AVERAGE FULL-TIME WAGES FOR PA. COMMUNITIES:

Municipality	Population	Full-Time Personnel	Part-Time Personnel	Volunteers	Avg. F/T Wage
Chester	36,854	62	N/A	No	\$57,300
Norristown	31,282	22	N/A	Yes	\$58,000
Williamsport	30,706	38	N/A	No	\$48,750
New Castle	26,309	23	N/A	No	\$55,225
Easton	26,263	48	N/A	No	\$62,660
Lebanon	24,461	21	N/A	Yes	\$50,990
McKeesport	24,040	22	12	No	\$44,450
Johnstown	23,906	44	N/A	No	\$41,720
Pottstown	21,859		N/A	Yes	\$44,328
Wilkesburg	19,196	28	3	No	\$41,200
Sharon	14,746	22	N/A	No	\$49,605
Jeanette	9,851	3	28	No	\$40,176
Greenville	6,055	5	6	Yes	\$38,054
Farrell	5,694	2	12	Yes	\$42,156

### BUDGET AND FINANCIAL TRENDS

For comparative purposes, combination fire departments located throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania serving populations of less than 11,000 and with full-time fire chiefs were chosen. A comparison of 2007 fire protection expenditures, retrieved from the Department of Community and Economic Development's Municipal Statistics, are included in Table 15:

TABLE 15: COMPARISON OF 2007 FIRE PROTECTION EXPENDITURES FOR BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES

Municipality	Population	Total Expenditures	Fire Expenditures	Fire Exp./Capita	Fire Exp. / % Total Exp.
Swissvale	9,653	6,201,996	531,720	\$55	9%
Dormont	9,305	6,988,041	374,186	\$40	5%
Bellevue	8,770	5,196,598	238,547	\$27	5%
Wyomissing	2,568	12,241,185	471,513	\$183	4%
E. Whiteland	9,553	9,974,693	1,178,593	\$123	12%
Carbondale	9,804	9,392,563	493,318	\$50	5%
Ellwood City	8,668	10,803,610	375,137	\$43	3%
Pittston	8,104	8,225,520	723,200	\$89	9%
Plains	10,906	7,988,638	1,041,617	\$96	13%
Farrell	6,050	5,141,201	455,111	\$75	9%
Greenville	6,380	5,257,873	459,000	\$72	9%
Wilson	7,682	7,085,128	518,221	\$67	7%
S. Strabane	7,987	4,530,974	330,603	\$41	7%
Jeannette	10,654	6,003,177	296,303	\$28	5%
N. York	1,689	1,060,597	168,425	\$100	16%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>7,831</b>	<b>7,072,786</b>	<b>510,366</b>	<b>\$65</b>	<b>8%</b>

Based on 2007 Municipal Statistics, Greenville’s Fire Expenditures are consistent with other like-sized communities, based on both per capita costs and percentage of overall budget. The per capita cost for fire protection in Greenville for 2009 actually decreased to \$64 per capita while the Consumer Price Index increased 3.9% in 2008 and decreased 0.4% in 2009 for a total increase of 3.5% over the two-year period.

Sources of fire department revenues include (Table 16):

TABLE 16: GFD REVENUES

Category	2007	2008	2009
Fire Prevention Permits	\$125	\$100	\$100
Fire Alarm Permits	\$10	\$40	\$20
Fire Reports	\$20	\$45	\$10
Insurance Reimbursements	\$1,940	\$1,399	\$1,235
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,095</b>	<b>\$1,584</b>	<b>\$1,365</b>

## **MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION**

The fire department is well run and managed, delivering many services often delivered only in much larger departments. Rules, regulations, guidelines, policies, and practices are legally sound and consistent with best practices. The fire chief provides monthly and annual reports to elected officials and the public. Data including incident response, fire loss, injury and life loss, property loss, and other associated losses and activities are recorded. The department's information system allows for documentation and analysis of program goals and objectives.

The peer assessor was impressed with the number and amount of programs, activities, and collateral duties that are performed by the fire department staff. Generally, apparatus maintenance, hydrant maintenance, and street light and signal maintenance are not functions performed by fire service personnel.

A fire chief's duties generally include estimating the department's needs and preparing the budget, controlling expenditures, implementing fire prevention education programs, recruiting personnel, evaluating their performance, and administering disciplinary action when needed. The fire chief is responsible for setting the goals and objectives of the fire department, developing the policies for administration, and providing administrative leadership. He directs and oversees the department's activities, delegating authority to capable subordinates. He implements fire prevention and fire control policies, procedures, and techniques and ensures that firefighters are trained adequately. He ensures that fire stations and firefighting equipment are in proper working order and are well-maintained and available when needed. When purchase, repair, or replacement of facilities or equipment is needed, the fire chief makes the appropriate recommendations.

Because the fire chief is often required to respond to low priority calls as the 2<sup>nd</sup> fire fighter on duty during the day and perform street light and traffic signal maintenance, in addition to performing a large number of inspections, there is the potential for the management and administrative portion of the fire chief's job to suffer, potentially opening the department and borough to litigation.

The borough should place the responsibility for street light, traffic signal, and apparatus maintenance in the public works department and hydrant maintenance in the water authority, allowing the fire chief to focus on the management and administration of the fire department, including more emphasis on recruitment and retention of volunteers.

## **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION**

According to Marinucci (2003), “no fire department can function or survive without adequate staffing. The most important responsibilities of volunteer, on-call, and combination departments is to recruit and retain enough qualified volunteers to provide the required services. There is a direct correlation between recruiting and retention, in that the reasons that current members stay are very often because of the same benefits that attract potential recruits.”

To recruit members, a fire department needs to know what they are offering potential members. Recruiting for the fire department should not be all that difficult because the service has a lot to offer: excitement, friendship, respect, a chance to help others, and a whole host of other positives.

Next, departments must establish the criteria for the position of volunteer firefighter. There should be some physical as well as academic requirements. While there may be some typical profiles and target groups for members, it is important to leave the target group as large as possible to enhance the selection field. Eliminate stereotypes and begin to look outside the traditional volunteers. The department should investigate ways to attract females, minorities, or others not typically associated with volunteer fire departments. Having a variety of members enhances service to the public.

A target group in Greenville with a lot of potential for enhancing fire department staffing is Thiel College students. Numerous fire department located in college towns take advantage of the student population.

- Live-in programs provide the student (preferably with previous fire training and experience) with free room and board, free uniforms, and free training in exchange for 48 hours per week of staffing, usually two 12 hour evening shifts during the week and one 24-hour shift on the weekend. An ideal number of live-ins would be eight to ten; however, the department currently does not have dormitory space to accommodate such a program. Considerations could be for Thiel College to waive the room and board fees for individuals participating in such a program, for the borough to purchase a residence near the fire station, or to add a dormitory to the existing fire station.
- Student volunteer programs provide the student with some type of incentive, usually discounted tuition and college credit, for volunteering in the community. Students would respond the same as if they were resident volunteer fire fighters. Students must maintain a minimum GPA and respond to a minimum number of calls and training sessions. In addition, communities generally provide a per call stipend (pay per call) to encourage a high level of participation.

Even with the college as a resource for recruiting volunteers, the recruitment and retention of volunteers from the community needs to be a priority. There are many avenues for reaching the public and advertising the fire department’s needs. Local media, informational meetings, signs,



posters, newsletters, and websites are all potential possibilities. There is, however, no more effective tool for recruitment than personal contact between department members and potential recruits. Open houses, citizens fire academies, explorer programs, safety fairs, recruit nights, and other community-oriented events are excellent opportunities to “show off your product.”

The borough needs to provide an incentive for residents to volunteer. Volunteer firefighters are not free, just less expensive than career firefighters. In an effort to compete for people’s time, many departments have created a package of incentives and rewards. Some of the components a total benefits package might include are:

- Reduced property or earned income taxes or waived occupational privilege taxes are possibilities. Recently, Pennsylvania passed legislation providing a \$100 state income tax credit for volunteer firefighters. Similar legislation is pending at the federal level. Local tax relief would further this incentive.
- Free use of local recreation facilities.
- Education/tuition assistance plans.
- Length of service (LOSAP) remuneration plans.
- Life and health insurance policies.
- Wellness programs and memberships at fitness facilities.
- Training and fire conference attendance.
- Clothing and uniform provisions.
- Fire call reimbursement.
- Annual picnics, banquets, and family gatherings.
- Reimbursement for initial and on-going training.

The department should designate a recruitment and retention coordinator/committee, develop a recruitment and retention plan, and monitor volunteer participation. Typical costs associated with recruiting and retaining a volunteer firefighter generally include:

- |                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| • Entry level physical evaluation    | \$500   |
| • Reimbursement for initial training | \$1,600 |
| • Personal protective equipment      | \$2,000 |
| • Call reimbursement                 | \$800   |
| • Uniforms                           | \$100   |

The SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations in order to help them increase the number of trained, "front-line" firefighters available in their communities. Specifically, SAFER funds should assist local fire departments to increase their staffing and deployment capabilities in order to respond to emergencies whenever they may occur. Examples of the types of initiatives that may receive assistance include:

- Insurance packages such as disability, health, life, dental
- Reimbursement to the member for attending required basic training, i.e., compensation

- for lost wages, mileage, tuition, lodging, per diem.
- Marketing costs to recruit new volunteers.
- Physicals
- Explorer, cadet, and mentoring programs
- Tuition assistance for higher education (including college tuition) and certifications.
- Length of service awards

With proper justification, applications for assistance could include activities that would require as many as four years to complete. There is no local match requirement for this funding; however, a plan should be developed to maintain these programs beyond the initial four-year period.

Research suggests that a volunteer's first few months of service are the most critical because it is during this time when they are most likely to drop out. Volunteer mentors need to be sufficiently involved with new volunteers to monitor and address problems as they arise. To maintain the commitment of volunteers, it is important to offer intrinsic rewards – that is jobs that are challenging, interesting and important. Being given “busywork” is unlikely to prompt high commitment. Volunteer who believe they are capable of helping and that their investment is worth their efforts are much more likely to continue their work than those that feel frustrated, rejected and incompetent.

The main priority in building a health volunteer organization should be to provide a safe, effective, fire fighting force. If the only motivation is to reduce career staffing and save money, the program is more than likely to fail. To be successful, the volunteer program needs the support of the fire chief and organized labor, with an overall goal of an increased level of fire services delivery. Even under ideal conditions, it is likely take a minimum of five years to build a healthy volunteer organization.

### III. FINDINGS

#### **ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL DEFICIENCIES**

The Greenville Fire Department is not getting enough firefighters on scene in an acceptable timeframe to **safely** handle structural fires. Even with automatic and mutual aid agreements, the response time of the surrounding volunteer departments is in excess of ten minutes and the Greenville Fire Department is only averaging six fire fighters per structural call.

Although the term "mutual aid" is widely used to refer to nearly all forms of cooperative effort in the emergency response realm, it also describes the single most common type of cooperative effort among fire service entities. According to the ICMA (2002), the key thing to remember about mutual aid is that it implies “as needed” to specify assistance requested during an incident or activity because of observable, suspected, or possible conditions that would exceed the capabilities of local resources. The purpose of mutual aid should always be to help a community meet its customer service goals through quality service (ICMA, 2002). One of the downfalls of mutual aid

agreements is the lack of attention to mutuality (ICMA, 2002). In the book *Managing Fire Services, Second Edition*, a phenomenon cited as “the Robin Hood Syndrome” describes an attitude portrayed by the “haves” concerned that the “have nots” will attempt to buffer lacking emergency services through the implementation of liberal mutual aid policies.

Because of the Greenville Fire Department lacks sufficient personnel, mutual aid is critical to handling emergencies that exceed local capabilities. The problem is that surrounding communities are also facing challenges recruiting and retaining volunteers and may take advantage of Greenville’s full-time staffing to cover for their own staffing shortfalls. A regional approach to delivering fire protection is a possibility and should be discussed with the leaders of surrounding communities.

Maintaining the competency of fire department personnel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can challenge departments of all sizes. It’s a challenge that last throughout each member’s career. Recruits need to learn the basics. Firefighters with proven operational skills need additional instruction to take on supervisory roles (Buckman, 2006).

As the fire service becomes more complex and diversified, required knowledge, government regulations, and professional standards all lead to increases in overall training needs for a department. Documentation and records management are essential elements of this process. It is the responsibility of the fire chief or designated training officer to organize and schedule training.

According to the ISO, the minimum hours of on-going training a volunteer fire fighter should receive is four (4) hours per month. These hours must be documented and kept on file for a period of at least three years. This training can be conducted by anyone qualified to instruct regardless of certification but must be documented and must be a departmental priority.

Additionally, for the department to receive full ISO credit, annual drills must be conducted to test firefighter skills competency and the fire department must participate in eight half-day (3 hour) drills, four multiple company (3 hour) drills, and two night drills (3 hours). Two days per year (12 hours) is required of all officers to train on supervisory skills, management, and strategy and tactics. Driver/operators are required to attend four half-day sessions per year (12 hours) to train in pump operations, hydraulics, and safe driving practices. New driver/operators are required to have a minimum of 40 hours of documented training. New firefighters are required to participate in 240 hours of documented introductory-level training.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DELIVERY**

An evaluation of the Greenville Fire Department’s proposal to provide ambulance services while generating income to support operations was conducted by Mr. Todd Pritchard, EMS Director for Medical Rescue Team South Authority (MRTSA). MRTSA serves approximately 74,000 residents in 6 communities, covering 14.38 square miles. MRTSA has a field staff of both full and part-time personnel consisting of 5 Shift Supervisors, 26

Paramedics, 23 Emergency Medical Technicians and 18 volunteers responding to over 9,600 calls annually.

EMS delivery is a very complex issue with many areas to consider:

- 1) The Pennsylvania Department of Health requires all ambulance service to be licensed before they can begin operations, i.e. transport a patient. A document detailing the licensure process is attached to this report. In short, the service must apply for licensure through the appropriate regional office, in this case EMSI. The application is then forwarded to the PA DOH Bureau of EMS for approval. Upon approval of the application, the service must apply for a licensure inspection which may take several weeks to complete. Upon completion of a successful inspection, the DOH has 60 days to issue the license. To complete a successful inspection, the service must be fully equipped, have all of their policies and procedure in place, and have a documentation program in place – basically be ready to respond. In speaking with Tom McElree, the Director of EMSI, the process can take 2 to 3 months if everything goes smoothly.
- 2) There will be considerable expense before any reimbursement for the provision of service is realized. As noted in section 1, to complete the licensure process all equipment needs to be in place. Start up cost to consider:
  - a. The price of a new medic unit, depending on the style desired can exceed \$120,000 unequipped. A new type II (van style) is less expensive at around \$75,000. A quality used vehicle can be purchased for approximately \$50,000 - \$70,000, once again depending on style. A significant question that will require consideration will be the purchase of a spare or second unit to use if the first unit is down for maintenance or otherwise unavailable. The purchase of a vehicle can be achieved through a loan with a \$120,000 vehicle translating to a \$22,000 annual expense at a 4% interest rate.
  - b. The price of equipment can be a significant expense, approximately \$32,000 to equip an ALS unit with the minimum equipment for licensure. Equipping a basic life support unit is considerably less expensive, costing out at approximately \$10,000. If a second or spare unit is utilized, cost of equipping is minimal as most of the equipment can be transferred from unit to unit if necessary. A table with approximate pricing is attached for consideration.
  - c. The expense associated with operating a facility are most likely to be minimal in this situation as it is assumed that existing facilities will be utilized. It will be necessary to have minimal office space, and secured storage for patient related documentation as required under the HIPPA laws. The PA DOH requires electronic patient care reporting utilizing an approved software package. Most billing vendors will assist with the

acquisition of patient reporting software that will interface with the vendors billing software.

- d. The department would need to hire a minimum of four firefighter/paramedics, one per shift, to allow for two person ambulance staffing and leaving one firefighter to staff and respond to other emergencies. The average full-time salary for a firefighter / paramedic would be in the range of \$42,000 per year or 3% higher than the current firefighter / EMT salary, not including benefits. Additional personnel costs would range from \$200,000 to \$220,000.
- 3) The generation of sufficient revenue (cash) to support an ambulance service is questionable. There are two major areas for revenue generation that must be considered:
- a. Most community ambulance services conduct an annual membership drive to assist with offsetting expenses. In return for the annual membership contribution, the ambulance service agrees to write-off unpaid balances of ambulance bills, usually deductibles and co-pays many insured individuals have on their coverage. Most services will offer a single person membership which covers only the named or a household membership covering all members of the family or parties visiting the residence should a medical emergency occur. Based on an average collection of \$40 and 30% of 2700 households approximately \$32,400 may be generated by a membership drive.
  - b. The majority of revenue may be generated by fee for service or billing patients who are transported to the hospital. Transport rates vary widely and should be determined based on cost of providing service including anticipated bad debt, desired retained earnings etc... Typically labor costs consisting of salaries and benefits comprise the majority of the expense. For example purposes, \$575 will be used as the fee for an ALS transport. Based on 400 transports, gross billing of \$230,000 will be generated. Typically, a service will collect approximately 60% of what is billed out due to contractual allowances, bad debt, etc... In this case, actual cash of around \$138,000 may be a realistic expectation. Payer mix and ALS vs. BLS transports are key factors in determining actual reimbursement potential. This is the mix of Medicare, Medicaid, Private Insurance, and Self Pay (uninsured).
  - c. Another factor affecting reimbursement is the billing cycle. This does not affect the amount of reimbursement but rather the speed with which claims are paid:
    - i. Medicare: A service must apply to become "Medicare participating" and a billing service will help with the application. To apply, the service must be licensed and the application may take 60-90 days to be approved. Once approved – submitted claims

are paid electronically and are usually processed within several weeks. Combined with the DOH licensure process, it may be 6 months before reimbursements are realized from Medicare.

- ii. Most private insurers do not require a service to be participating to submit claims for reimbursement but they do often take 90-120 days to pay a claim. Highmark will not pay a service provider directly unless they are under contract. Instead the payment is sent to the insured party who then must pay their bill from the service provider. It is not unheard of for individuals to retain this money and not pay their bill. A service can sign a contract with Highmark to receive direct payment but agrees to accept a lower payment. There are advantages to contracting with Highmark and also UPMC – primarily the ability to perform non-emergency transports.
- d. A simple cash budget is attached to demonstrate potential cash flow

4) Other areas of consideration:

- a. Billing for QRS service. In most cases, insurance companies only pay for transport services and not QRS services. It is unlikely the fire department would have much success billing for QRS service and being reimbursed by an insurance provider. However, if the current transport provider relies on the fire department QRS service to meet response times and allow them to be out of service for non-emergency transports, it sounds perfectly reasonable to charge the ambulance service for QRS. This would have to be included in any contract signed with an ambulance provider. A fee of \$50 per QRS response would generate approximately \$12,000 based on 55% of responses being Medicaid/Medicare or treat an no transport calls for which the EMS service is getting a set fee or no fee and will likely not pay the additional QRS fee and/
- b. Using the existing fire personnel to operate the ambulance may cause more operational issues than benefit gained:
  - i. Fire units not available or response is delayed due to personnel on an EMS run. The typical EMS run has several time periods that must be considered – response time, scene time, transport time, and time spent transferring care and returning to service at hospital. May result in unstaffed station or need to recall off duty personnel resulting in added expense.
  - ii. Is there reliable mutual aid that will respond in a timely fashion if the fire department unit is unavailable? This will have to be considered for both fire and

EMS response. How often do simultaneous calls occur in the primary response area?  
Multiple patient calls?

- c. How will the existing provider react to being replaced? The fact that the fire department is moving towards providing ambulance service will be a public issue. What is the obligation, legal or otherwise for the existing service to continue operations? Can they discontinue providing coverage and thus create a delivery void until operations are up and running? Is there a neighboring service that can fill the void if necessary?

In conclusion, establishing a transport service within the fire department can be done but the time and expense of doing so may make this an unattractive option. It may take 3-6 months to establish the service and several more months until revenue generated by providing service turns into cash. Utilizing existing fire department personnel may leave the station unstaffed for fire calls. The expense of operating an ambulance will be \$131,630 in year one, \$105,000 in years 2 – 4, and \$78,000 thereafter (Table 17):

TABLE 17: PROJECTED EMS REVENUES & EXPENSES

<b>Fund Drive</b>	\$32,000	Based on \$40 @ 30% population
<b>Response</b>	\$120,000	Based on 400 transports and 60% collection
<b>Net Revenue</b>	\$152,400	
<b>Medic Unit</b>	\$27,000	Based on 4-year loan at 4% interest
<b>Equipment</b>	\$26,000	Based on equipment needed for licensure
<b>Supplies</b>	\$2,400	Disposable Supplies
<b>Personnel</b>	\$210,000	Based on 4 fire fighter / paramedics
<b>Maintenance</b>	\$1,000	Routine Maintenance
<b>Insurance</b>	\$7,400	May be covered under existing policies
<b>Billing Service</b>	\$10,230	May be used to fund part-time secretary
	\$284,030	
<b>BALANCED</b>	(\$131,630)	

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

### STAFFING, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, AND SCHEDULING

The combination model of fire services delivery, a limited full-time staff augmented by volunteers, is often cited as the most effective fire services delivery model for small to mid-size communities. Many communities are going to this model as the number of volunteers in Pennsylvania has declined from approximately 240,000 in the 1970's to approximately 50,000 today.

The advantages of a combination fire department are that it provides for an immediate and guaranteed response and many of the programs and services offered by larger departments while controlling costs. The Borough of Greenville is in a very difficult position regarding fire services delivery. While most communities with populations of less than 10,000 are served by volunteer departments, the borough lacks a sufficient number of volunteer members to consider eliminating the full-time staff.

Currently, the fire chief cannot focus on fulfilling the fire chief's role, while responding daily to low priority calls, conducting inspections, and maintaining traffic signals, street lights, and fire hydrants.

### **REVENUE GENERATION & INCREASED EFFICIENCY**

The borough should adopt a comprehensive fee schedule for fire department services, including an annual operational permit program, a false fire alarm fee, plan review fees, etc. An example of a fee schedule is included in Appendix B.

Routine annual building inspection fees could generate \$10,000 - \$20,000. Fees for these inspections should range from \$25 - \$100+ based on building occupancy and/or size. Operational permits averaging \$30 per permit could generate an additional \$2,100. Fees for plans reviews and testing of fire protection systems could generate in excess of \$1,300. AN annual operational permit for private fire alarms could generate \$1,750. There is easily the potential to generate an additional \$15,000 - \$20,000 for services that the fire department is already performing that are billed for in other communities.

The borough should work with tax exempt properties to establish an annual user fee for fire, police, and public works services. In many communities, larger tax exempt institutions are heavy service users of municipal services while exempt from paying for these services. One to three percent of the total property value is generally what is negotiated. In lieu of user fees, the college could offer attractive incentives for students to volunteer.

The borough should continue to explore the feasibility of billing for emergency medical first responder services which could generate an additional \$12,000. This fee would need to be negotiated with the ambulance provider.

Overall, there is potential for the fire department to generate an additional \$25,000 - \$50,000 in revenue. One item that should be taken into consideration is the administrative work that is associated with billing for services. A part-time administrative position may need to be created.

The borough should work with the College to provide incentives for college students to become volunteers. These incentives should; however, be limited to students who have some fire service background and/or training as it takes approximately two years to train a volunteer to a level where they would be an asset to the department.



The borough should work with the fire chief and volunteer department to determine what additional incentives they could provide to entice members of the community to join the volunteer department. As discussed previously, these may include tax breaks, tuition assistance, medical insurance, use of recreational facilities, pay per call, etc.

The department needs to implement a structured on-duty training program incorporating ISO and NFPA training requirements. All members should receive a minimum of 10 hours of on-duty training per month. A designated training officer should oversee the training program and provide training topics and materials and ensure consistency. All training should be documented.

The borough should establish a dialogue with surrounding communities regarding a consolidated or regional fire department. This should include a presentation for elected officials and residents as to the potential benefits and possibly an additional study.

## **COMMUNITY RISK ANALYSIS**

Each type of service provided by a fire department has associated risks which must be considered as a community judges its level of protection and projects the protection level it would like to have. Just as obvious is the knowledge that cost must be considered. This is a major reason why risk management is so closely tied to the assessment of community protection levels.

The first service category one thinks of is fire suppression. The issuance of NFPA Standards 1710 and 1720 provide the first national, consensus-developed documents that address staffing levels and response times. These standards, one for substantially “career” and the other for substantially “volunteer” fire departments, have set a benchmark for how departments will respond. The issuance of these standards triggered an outcry that staffing levels and response times are a “local” jurisdictional prerogative. If that is true, then that level is where the discussion of “acceptable level of risk” needs to occur. However, what continues to occur is that fire department budgets are based strictly on a financial bottom line, without consideration for risk, and typically without input from citizens. The educational process of identifying the risks and the cost to provide services to address those risks usually never occurs.

The borough needs to determine what it believes to be an acceptable level of risk. For example, is it acceptable for a fire truck to arrive 5 minutes later than what it currently does, is it acceptable to make residents wait for an ambulance that may be 10 miles away and eliminate first responder services, is it acceptable to not provide for annual fire inspections of buildings. To accomplish this, the borough should (1 conduct a community-wide risk analysis, (2 seek feedback from residents and property owners regarding what type and level of service they are willing to fund, and (3 understand what type and levels of service can be delivered at alternate funding levels.

The community-wide risk analysis should include an assessment of available and needed fire flow, an evaluation of the likelihood that a particular event will occur, an assessment of consequences, life safety, economic impact, environmental risk, and occupancy risk. Conducting a risk analysis is a difficult and time consuming planning task, but is the most primary and critical foundation upon which community policy decisions should be made (Center for Public Safety Excellence, 2009).

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## **Appendix A - MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Fire protection is among the most basic of services provided by a local government. It is expected to be available to citizens seven days a week; 24-hours a day. There is no one model used for delivering fire protection. Large local governments can be expected to have a fully paid fire department, operating under the supervision of a municipal manager and/or elected officials. Small local governments most frequently, but not always, operate with all-volunteer fire companies. In between are models which have both paid and volunteer firefighters. Some have a paid driver and volunteers. In some cases two or more local governments may enter into a formal agreement to cooperate in providing fire service. Many times cooperation among municipal fire companies is informal. When additional help is needed, neighboring companies respond. Regardless of the method of delivery, every effort should be made to meet the basic standards for fire suppression and fire prevention which follow.

The fire standards are designed to accomplish the objectives of accountability, and an acceptable level of adequacy in the delivery of fire service. Several of the standards draw upon those developed by the National Fire Protection Association. Others reflect effective administrative practices.

Meeting fire management standards when volunteer companies are involved can present significant challenges to municipal officials. Often they function independent of regular municipal supervision and municipal processes. It is critical, then, that means, mutually acceptable to all parties, be established to facilitate communication, coordination, and cooperation among the parties. This need is especially important in establishing accountability when public money is involved in providing support to a volunteer company.

Since fire personnel are among the first responders in most emergencies, it is critical that the fire service, whether paid or volunteer, be fully integrated into the Emergency Management Plan of the municipality. The importance of this is more fully explained in Section IX of this publication – The Management of Emergencies.

# MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

## FACTOR: BASIC FIRE STANDARDS

### Standard No. 1

The municipality has received at least a mid-point rating of 5 (a rating of 6 for more rural municipalities) from the Insurance Services Office (ISO).

#### Commentary

The ISO regularly rates fire service delivery for each local government for the sole purpose of fire insurance rate-making. The rating is on a scale of 1 - 10. A Class 1 community is considered most capable of coping with a fire. A Class 10 municipality has no fire department or water supply meeting the Grading Schedule requirements of the ISO. Insurance rates on identical risks would normally be lower in a Class 1 local government and highest in Class 10. Since insurance rates for residents and businesses are affected by the ISO rating, local officials need to be knowledgeable about this rating and the factors which affect it. Water supply counts for 40% of the rating; equipment, 26%; personnel, 15%; alarm and dispatch, 10%; and training, 9%.

#### Rating Scale

Standard is:

1.  Met, and is effective. ( verified  not verified)
2.  Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3.  Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

Reason:

Not relevant    No interest    Lack resources  
 Lack administrative capacity/initiatives    Other

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

The fire department has an ISO rating of 4.

## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

### FACTOR: BASIC FIRE STANDARDS (Continued)

#### Standard No. 2

**All fire personnel, whether paid or volunteer, have received basic, certified, training in firefighting and have regular and mandatory in-service training and drills. Training goals are based on the standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).**

#### Commentary

The standards developed by the NFPA impact upon a local government, whether fire service is provided by volunteer or paid personnel. NFPA publishes standards covering a wide range of topics which are seen as essential safeguards against loss of life and property from fire, including training. NFPA Standard 1500, the Health and Safety Standard, places 100-plus requirements on fire departments, including volunteer companies. The International Association of Fire Fighters has established as a national goal total compliance with 1500.

In other words, NFPA requirements have become the standard for the industry. Although not mandatory upon local governments, the fact that they have been recognized nationally allows it to be argued that any equipment or operating procedure that does not comply is unsafe and substandard. Liability can, then, attach to a local government not meeting the standard. Compliance with these standards carries a financial impact, and raises the level of management and professionalism that are needed as fire service evolves from its traditional fire suppression role to one of involvement in a full range of emergency and life safety services, hastened by new and emerging federal and State mandates arising from the 9-11 attack and emerging homeland security efforts.

#### Rating Scale

#### Standard is:

1. \_\_\_ Met, and is effective. (\_\_\_ verified \_\_\_ not verified)
2. \_\_\_ Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. X Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

#### Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant    \_\_\_ No interest    \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives    \_\_\_ Other

#### EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Department does not have an in-service training program. Recommendation to implement monthly training requirements.

## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

### FACTOR: BASIC FIRE STANDARDS (Continued)

#### Standard No. 3

Fire equipment is adequate, and suited to the needs/experience of the municipality. Basic fire apparatus, and personal equipment and clothing of firefighters, meet NFPA standards.

#### Commentary

Fire equipment needs will vary from local government to local government. Community characteristics, such as population size, land area, density, terrain, and type of structures, will have an effect of what is needed. Municipal officials should seek a briefing from fire officials on equipment needs, and ISO and NFPA standards. See, also, the Commentary for Standard 2, above.

#### Rating Scale

#### Standard is:

1. \_\_\_ Met, and is effective. ( \_\_\_verified \_\_\_not verified)
2. X Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. \_\_\_ Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

#### Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

#### EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Borough needs to implement a capital improvement plan to replace fire apparatus at specified intervals.

## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

### FACTOR: BASIC FIRE STANDARDS (Continued)

#### Standard No. 4

Water, and water pressure, and pumper capacity, always are sufficient to meet firefighting needs.

#### Commentary

Again, ISO and NFPA set standards for water supply. Municipal officials should inquire about these standards and be satisfied that the municipal water supply is adequate. Rural areas should establish dry hydrant sites whenever practical, and this should be done on a regional, cooperative basis.

#### Rating Scale

#### Standard is:

1. \_\_\_ Met, and is effective. (\_\_\_ verified \_\_\_ not verified)
2. \_\_\_ Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. X Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

#### Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

#### EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Areas of the community have an inadequate water supply.



## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

### FACTOR: FIRE SUPPRESSION

#### Standard No. 1

**Adequate firefighting service is available seven days a week, 24-hours a day.**

#### Commentary

Meeting this standard generally is not a problem for a local government with a full-time, paid, department. For volunteer companies the standard may be more difficult to meet at times, particularly as these companies experience difficulty in recruiting volunteers. Particular attention should be paid to the ability of volunteer companies to cover, adequately, morning and afternoon hours.

The standard is met if the municipality and its volunteer companies have entered into formal mutual aid agreements with neighboring communities which can guarantee needed coverage.

#### Rating Scale

Standard is:

1. \_\_\_ Met, and is effective. ( \_\_\_ verified \_\_\_ not verified)
2. \_\_\_ Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. X Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

The fire department is not capable of assembling an adequate number of fire fighters within the required timeframe(s).

## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

### FACTOR: FIRE SUPPRESSION (Continued)

#### Standard No. 2

Fire manpower is sufficient to provide a minimum of three persons on each apparatus responding to a fire.

#### Commentary

This manpower standard can be open to question, and may vary depending on a number of factors such as whether volunteers report directly to the fire scene. However, in weighing the adequacy of fire manpower, the following should be kept in mind. The NFPA standard calls for 4 persons on each apparatus. Both safety and the manpower requirements at the fire scene support this standard. For example, there are distinct and specialized duties which should be performed simultaneously to minimize loss of life and property -- locate fire, plan attack, develop lines, raise ladders, rescue, ventilate, etc. For water flow of 150 GPH it takes two individuals to maneuver the hose line, and there needs to be an operator at the pumper. Two to 4 individuals are needed to raise ladders for rescue, depending on the length of the ladder.

#### Rating Scale

Standard is:

1. \_\_\_ Met, and is effective. ( \_\_\_verified \_\_\_not verified)
2. \_\_\_ Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. X Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

The fire department staffs one to two fire fighters per apparatus.

## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

### FACTOR: FIRE SUPPRESSION (Continued)

#### Standard No. 3

The response time to a first alarm is within approximately 8 minutes.

#### Commentary

The bottom line is whether or not firefighters and equipment arrive in time to minimize loss of life and property. A key factor is the time from ignition to flashover (simultaneous ignition of all combustibles), at which time the spread of the fire will increase dramatically. Studies show that the time to flashover in a structural fire varies from 5 to 9 minutes.

#### Rating Scale

Standard is:

1. \_\_\_ Met, and is effective. (\_\_\_ verified \_\_\_ not verified)
2. X Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. \_\_\_ Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Response times are within acceptable standards; however, ineffective due to a lack of personnel.

# MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

## FACTOR: FIRE PREVENTION

### Standard No. 1

The municipality has adopted a nationally recognized fire code or the equivalent--the latest edition.

#### Commentary

A comprehensive fire code is fundamental to public safety, and provides necessary standards for safety for both established and new construction. Examples of fire codes include that of the Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA), and of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

#### Rating Scale

Standard is:

1.  Met, and is effective. (  verified \_\_\_ not verified)
2. \_\_\_ Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. \_\_\_ Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Enforced by the fire department.

## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

**FACTOR: FIRE PREVENTION** (Continued)

### Standard No. 2

**Responsibility for enforcement of the fire code has been placed with an individual certified by the State as a fire inspector, and the fire code is regularly enforced.**

#### Commentary

The individual charged with fire code enforcement might be a general code enforcement officer, a fire Marshall, or other responsible individual.

#### Rating Scale

#### Standard is:

1.  Met, and is effective. (  verified \_\_\_ not verified)
2. \_\_\_ Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. \_\_\_ Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

#### Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

**FACTOR: FIRE PREVENTION** (Continued)

### Standard No. 3

**The fire code enforcement officer participates in the review of construction plans, at the initial/early stage, to provide input as to compliance with the fire code.**

#### Commentary

In fairness to builders, it is important for them to know early-on whether or not their plans are in compliance with the fire code. It saves many problems later when it may be very costly to correct a mistake, or a code violation may be permitted to stand. If a municipal official cannot handle these duties, an outside contractor can accomplish the task for a fee.

#### Rating Scale

Standard is:

1.  Met, and is effective. (  verified  not verified)
2.  Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3.  Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

Reason:

Not relevant    No interest    Lack resources  
 Lack administrative capacity/initiatives    Other

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Fire alarm and sprinkler system plans are reviewed by the fire department. There should be a fee for this review, based on square footage.

## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

**FACTOR: FIRE PREVENTION** (Continued)

### Standard No. 4

**Under the direction of the appropriate fire official, fire lanes and fire hydrant placement have been established in accordance with recognized professional standards.**

#### Commentary

In municipalities with volunteer fire service, this standard requires close cooperation and communication between the appropriate fire official and municipal officials.

#### Rating Scale

Standard is:

1.  Met, and is effective. (  verified \_\_\_ not verified)
2. \_\_\_ Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. \_\_\_ Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

## MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

### FACTOR: FIRE PREVENTION (Continued)

#### Standard No. 5

There are regular inspections and fire drills in such areas as schools, hospitals, and other public buildings.

#### Commentary

Fire officials should schedule and conduct these tasks.

#### Rating Scale

Standard is:

1.  Met, and is effective. (  verified \_\_\_not verified)
2. \_\_\_ Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. \_\_\_ Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources

\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:



# MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

## FACTOR: RECORDS

### Standard No. 1

Whether fire service is provided by a full-time or volunteer staff, or combination of the two, the governing body has available to it on a regular basis information on the number, day and time of fires; property loss data, fire response time, fire prevention activities, training, etc.

#### Commentary

This standard is important, if not essential, in keeping municipal officials informed about the fire delivery service in the community. Good records also are a critical element in the ISO rating schedule. For example, as mentioned in an earlier standard, the ISO schedule equates the response of three volunteers to one paid firefighter. If fire companies have no records available, the grading schedule requires that the ratio of 6:1 be used to rate response time. Municipalities should be aggressive in ensuring that fire companies serving them participate in NFIRS (National Fire Incident Reporting System), administered through the State Fire Commissioner's Office. This centralized reporting system is crucial to recording incident response, and establishes a permanent record of each company's capabilities.

#### Rating Scale

#### Standard is:

1.  Met, and is effective. (  verified \_\_\_not verified)
2. \_\_\_ Met, but is not effective. (comment below)
3. \_\_\_ Not met. (Check "Reason" and provide comment below.)

#### Reason:

\_\_\_ Not relevant \_\_\_ No interest \_\_\_ Lack resources  
\_\_\_ Lack administrative capacity/initiatives \_\_\_ Other

#### EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS:

Response data is available via the fire department's record keeping software and reports are published.

# FIRE

## Construction Permit Fee

Description	2010 Permit/ Plan Review/Inspection Fee
Automatic fire-extinguishing systems	\$165.00
Commercial hood system	\$110.00
Compressed gases	\$110.00
Fire alarm and detection systems and related equipment	< 5,000 sq. ft. = \$110.00 5,000 - 19,999 sq. ft. = \$275.00 20,000 - 40,000 sq. ft. = \$550.00 > 40,000 sq. ft. = \$825.00
Fire Pumps and related equipment	\$165.00
Flammable and combustible liquids	\$125.00
Hazardous materials	\$220.00
Industrial Ovens	\$110.00
Life Safety Systems including emergency lighting, smoke evacuation systems, exit signage and fire extinguishers	\$110.00 less than 5 floors and 40,000 sq. ft. \$220.00 5 floors or over or 40,000 sq. ft. or greater
LP-gas	\$110.00
Private Hydrants	\$55.00
Spraying or dipping	\$110.00
Sprinkler System	< 5,000 sq. ft. = \$110.00 5,000 - 19,999 sq. ft. = \$275.00 20,000 - 40,000 sq. ft. = \$550.00 > 40,000 sq. ft. = \$825.00
Standpipe System	\$110.00 less than 5 floors and 40,000 sq. ft. \$220.00 5 floors or over or 40,000 sq. ft. or greater
Temporary membrane structures, tents and canopies	\$25.00

# FIRE

## Operational Permit Fee

Description	2010 Operational Permit Fee
Aerosol products (annual)	\$35.00
Amusement devices operational permit fee (annual)	\$75.00
Aviation service facilities (annual)	\$35.00
Battery systems	\$35.00
Cellulose nitrate film (annual)	\$35.00
Combustible dust-producing operations (annual)	\$70.00
Combustible fibers (annual)	\$35.00
Compressed gases (annual)	\$35.00
Covered mall buildings	\$70.00
Cryogenic fluids (annual)	\$70.00
Cutting and welding	\$35.00
Dry cleaning plants (annual)	\$70.00
Explosives	\$140.00
Fire hydrants and valves	\$35.00
Flammable and combustible liquids (annual)	\$35.00
Floor finishing	\$35.00
Fruit and crop ripening (annual)	\$35.00
Fumigation and thermal insecticidal logging	\$35.00
Hazardous materials (annual)	\$140.00
High-piled storage (annual)	\$35.00
Hot work operations	\$35.00
HPM facilities (annual)	\$140.00
Indoor exhibits and trade shows	\$70.00
Industrial ovens (annual)	\$70.00
Liquid- or gas-fueled vehicles or equipment in assembly buildings	\$70.00
LP-gas (annual)	\$70.00
Lumber yards and woodworking plants (annual)	\$70.00
Magnesium (annual)	\$70.00
Miscellaneous combustible storage (annual)	\$70.00
Open burning	\$35.00
Open flames and candles in places of assembly (annual)	\$35.00
Open flames and torches	\$10.00
Organic coatings (annual)	\$35.00
Outdoor carnivals and fairs	\$70.00
Places of assembly (annual)	\$35.00
Private Alarm System (annual)	\$70.00
Private fire hydrants	\$35.00
Pyrotechnic special effects material	\$10.00
Pyroxylin plastics (annual)	\$70.00

# FIRE

Description	2010 Operational Permit Fee
Refrigeration equipment (annual)	\$35.00
Repair garages and motor fuel-dispensing facilities (annual)	\$35.00
Rooftop heliports (annual)	\$35.00
Special Amusement buildings (annual)	\$70.00
Spraying or dipping (annual)	\$35.00
Storage of scrap tires and tire byproducts (annual)	\$140.00
Temporary membrane structures, tents and canopies	\$25.00
Tire-rebuilding plants (annual)	\$140.00
Torch applied roofing	\$35.00
Waste handling (annual)	\$70.00
Wood products (annual)	\$35.00

Note #1: Tests / inspections performed outside normal dayshift working hours will be billed at 1-1/2 times the hourly inspection / test fee of \$50.00/hour/inspector.

Note #2: Inspections and fire watches performed outside normal dayshift working hours, or which require overtime to maintain minimum staffing, will be billed at 1-1/2 times the hourly inspection/test fee of \$50.00/hour/inspector.

Note #3: Additions or modifications to existing fire protection features will be billed at 1/2 of the base permit/plan review/inspection fee.

## False Alarm Charge – Fire Alarms

A Permit Holder shall pay to the Municipality a charge for each False Fire Alarm emanating from his/her Alarm Device due to an alarm device malfunction and/or failure to take necessary precautions during construction for any calendar year, as follows:

Description	2010 False Alarm Fee
First, second, and third False Alarm	No charge - Written Warning
Fourth and fifth False Alarm	\$50.00
Sixth and seventh False Alarm	\$100.00
Each false alarm after the eighth	\$150.00
Failure to Notify - See Note #5	\$150.00

Note #5:

The Municipality shall charge for each False Fire Alarm that was caused by a failure of the Permit Holder, his/her representative, service technician, or contractor to notify the Municipal Alarm Receiving Station of work being performed on the system, a test, or a drill at the premises. The charge for this response shall be \$150.00 per occurrence.

# FIRE

## Administrative Fees

Description	2010 Fee
Fire Incident Report	\$10.00 per copy
Fire Inspection Reports	\$10.00 per copy

## Special Operations Service Fees

The fire department is authorized to collect fees for costs incurred during operations at non-fire incidents. Non-fire incidents shall include but not be limited to vehicle accidents, physical rescues, hazardous materials incidents, utility (electric, natural gas, water) incidents and stand-by requests. The fire department, or its authorized agent, shall send an invoice to the insurance carrier, owner or occupant of the property, vehicle, facility or utility at which the following fire department services are required. Payment of such fees shall be remitted in full immediately upon receipt.

### SCOPE:

**DAMAGED/DESTROYED/  
CONTAMINATED EQUIPMENT:** The following charges shall apply for equipment used by the fire department that was damaged, destroyed or contaminated as a result of its use at the incident.

Description	2010 Fee
Firefighter Boots - Leather	\$ 375.00 per pair
Firefighter Boots - Rubber	\$ 200.00 per pair
Firefighter Gloves	\$ 90.00 per pair
Hard Hat	\$ 30.00 each
Helmet	\$ 200.00 each
Hose - 1.75"	\$ 125.00 per 50' section
Hose - 2.5"	\$ 125.00 per 50' section
Hose - 3.5"	\$ 300.00 per 50' section
Hose - 5"	\$ 700.00 per 100' section
Other Damaged/Destroyed/Contaminated Equipment	Actual Replacement Cost
Portable Radio	\$ 1,100.00 each
Protective Hood	\$ 40.00 each
Self Contained Breathing Apparatus Facepiece	\$ 400.00 each
Self Contained Breathing Apparatus less Facepiece	\$4,000.00 each
Turnout Coat	\$ 1,000.00 each
Turnout Pants	\$ 800.00 each

# FIRE

**RESPONSE:** The following charges shall be charged for fire department response. Charges shall include the services of the responding vehicle(s) and manpower.

Description	2010 Fee
Absorbent Booms	\$10/each
Absorbent Pads	\$30/bag
Aerial	\$400/hour (includes staffing)
AFFF Foam	\$80/gallon
Air Bags	\$150.00
Barricade Tape	\$15/roll
Can Liners / Trash Bags	\$5/each
Chief's Vehicle	\$150/hour (includes staffing)
Class A Engine	\$400/hour (includes staffing)
Class A Foam	\$80/gallon
CO2 Extinguisher	\$50/each
Cribbing	\$75.00
Disposable Chemical Coveralls	\$50/each
Dry Chemical Extinguisher	\$50/each
Emulsifier	\$20/gallon
Foam Extinguisher	\$10/each
Hydraulic Spreaders / Cutters	\$250.00
Latex Gloves	\$2/pair
Leak Seal Kit	\$50.00
Level A Suits	\$500/each
Mobile Command Post	\$300/hour (includes staffing)
Oil Dry	\$10/bag
Other Consumable Materials	Actual Replacement Cost
Plug & Dike	\$65/each
Pneumatic Tools	\$50.00
Rascae (heavy)	\$400/hour (includes staffing)
Rescue Rope	\$100.00
Salvage Cover	\$15/each
Sawzall	\$45.00
Stair Runner	\$24/each
Support Truck	\$200/hour (includes staffing)

## Appendix C

SENATE AMENDED  
PRIOR PRINTER'S NO. 1384

PRINTER'S NO. 3179

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### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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#### HOUSE BILL

## No. 1133 Session of 2007

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INTRODUCED BY MELIO, CAUSER, CONKLIN, DeWEESE, FAIRCHILD,  
GALLOWAY, GEORGE, GIBBONS, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GRUCELA,  
HENNESSEY, HESS, JAMES, JOSEPHS, KILLION, KORTZ, MAHONEY,  
McCALL, MICOZZIE, R. MILLER, MOYER, MURT, PALLONE, PAYNE,  
SANTONI, SCAVELLO, SIPTROTH, S. H. SMITH, SOLOBAY, STABACK,  
J. WHITE, YOUNGBLOOD, FREEMAN AND CALTAGIRONE, APRIL 23, 2007

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AS AMENDED ON THIRD CONSIDERATION, IN SENATE, FEBRUARY 5, 2008

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#### AN ACT

1 Amending the act of February 1, 1966 (1965 P.L.1656, No.581),  
2 entitled "An act concerning boroughs, and revising, amending  
3 and consolidating the law relating to boroughs," providing  
4 for specific powers of boroughs relating to emergency  
5 services.  
6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
7 hereby enacts as follows:  
8 Section 1. Section 1202 of the act of February 1, 1966 (1965  
9 P.L.1656, No.581), known as The Borough Code, is amended by  
10 adding a clause to read:  
11 Section 1202. Specific Powers.--The powers of the borough  
12 shall be vested in the corporate authorities. Among the specific  
13 powers of the borough shall be the following, and in the  
14 exercise of any of such powers involving the enactment of any  
15 ordinance or the making of any regulation, restriction or  
16 prohibition, the borough may provide for the enforcement thereof  
17 and may prescribe penalties for the violation thereof or for the

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1 failure to conform thereto:

2 \* \* \*

3 (82) Emergency services. The borough shall be responsible

4 for ensuring that fire and emergency medical services are  
5 provided within the borough, and shall determine and provide  
6 the  
7 appropriate financial and administrative assistance necessary  
8 for these services in order to protect the health, safety and  
9 welfare of its citizenry. The borough shall require any  
10 emergency services organization receiving borough funds to  
11 provide to the borough an annual itemized listing of all  
12 expenditures of these funds before the borough may consider  
13 budgeting additional funding to the organization.  
14 (82) EMERGENCY SERVICES. THE BOROUGH SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE  
15 FOR ENSURING THAT FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ARE  
16 PROVIDED WITHIN THE BOROUGH BY THE MEANS AND TO THE EXTENT  
17 DETERMINED BY THE BOROUGH, INCLUDING THE APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL  
18 AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE FOR THESE SERVICES. THE BOROUGH  
19 SHALL CONSULT WITH FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDERS  
20 TO DISCUSS THE EMERGENCY SERVICES NEEDS OF THE BOROUGH. THE  
21 BOROUGH SHALL REQUIRE ANY EMERGENCY SERVICES ORGANIZATION  
22 RECEIVING BOROUGH FUNDS TO PROVIDE TO THE BOROUGH AN ANNUAL  
23 ITEMIZED LISTING OF ALL EXPENDITURES OF THESE FUNDS BEFORE THE  
24 BOROUGH MAY CONSIDER BUDGETING ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO THE  
25 ORGANIZATION.  
26 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.