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OIG Publishes Audit of CFD Fire And Medical Incident Response Times

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) has completed an audit of the Chicago Fire Department's (CFD) fire and medical incident response times for calendar year 2012. Fire and medical emergency response is the core service provided by CFD, which is the second largest fire department in the nation. It is imperative that Chicago residents and City management have accurate and reliable measures of performance, especially in matters of public safety.

CFD agrees with one of the audit's main findings, that CFD is not strictly meeting National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1710. It argues that NFPA standards are useful as guidelines rather than stringent rules for fire departments. OIG does not have an opinion about the usefulness of NFPA standards. We simply encourage CFD to set and state its goals clearly and to regularly check its status in meeting those goals. The audit also found that CFD's internal reports lacked the elements necessary to accurately assess whether the Department was in fact meeting or exceeding the national standards it claimed to be meeting.

Inspector General Joseph Ferguson says, "I commend CFD's commitment to clarifying its public accounts of standards and achievements in the future."

OIG hopes that the audit results will be useful to the Mayor's Office, City Council, and CFD in the shared effort to clarify CFD's performance metrics and improve the accuracy and integrity of its performance reports, as well as provide a baseline analysis for efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided to City residents.

The full audit, and response to its findings, can be found online at the OIG website: www.ChicagoInspectorGeneral.org.

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