



**MTAS**

**Municipal Technical  
Advisory Service**

*In cooperation with the  
Tennessee Municipal League*

**COMPREHENSIVE FIRE PROTECTION  
MANAGEMENT FOLLOW-UP REPORT  
FOR  
CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE**

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Gary L. West, Fire Management Consultant  
The University of Tennessee, Institute for Public Service  
Municipal Technical Advisory Service

This report was conducted at the request of City Manager Janice Casteel and Fire Chief Chuck Atchley. The original report in 2006 was requested to assist the Cleveland Fire Department in not only daily operations but also in preparing for an Insurance Services Office (ISO) inspection. A prior study was conducted by MTAS in October, 2004. This study assessed staffing issues, station location, and a contract between the City of Cleveland and Bradley County.

The June 2006 report was written by MTAS Management Intern Honna Rogers and Fire Management Consultant Gary West. The Comprehensive Fire Protection Management Study included a total of 98 recommendations to which most of these (over 95%) have been implemented and/or considered in progress. Below is a listing of significant accomplishments.

**The accomplishments include:**

1. The Cleveland Fire Department recently completed an ISO inspection and continued to secure a strong class 3 rating. A class 3 rating for a fire department in Tennessee represents an exceptional achievement and places the department in the top 5 percent ISO ratings within the state.
2. The Cleveland Fire Department has continued to maintain the minimum staffing of 22 firefighters per shift. Overall firefighter training hours have increased thus resulting in a higher qualified and trained group of firefighters.
3. Succession planning has been established as recommended although because so many firefighters are reaching retirement age, it is a challenge to prepare internal candidates for higher positions. This was predicted and as this continues over the next several years it will continue to challenge the management staff in the Cleveland Fire Department.
4. It was recommended that a plan be developed to become more proactive in recruiting the female gender. The fire department has only had one female candidate apply for a position since the original report however the fire chief is attempting recruitment methods to attract females. The goal is to validate their entrance exams and physical ability test to make sure it is fair. The female who applied was rejected because she failed the minimum requirements in the physical ability testing. Again, the department should strive to hire the best employees, regardless of gender or race.
5. All fire apparatus was equipped with sufficient minimum equipment as required by NFPA 1901 and ISO. The department was graded on equipment at 100% compliance during the recent ISO inspection.
6. The department now conducts routine inventories and inspections as required by ISO.

7. Fire apparatus replacement has been a carefully planned process that is presently conducted at regular intervals utilizing a Fire Apparatus Replacement Program.
8. The department has purchased additional fire hose and moved extra hose from other locations to meet minimum ISO requirements on every truck or fire engine.
9. The fire department is in full compliance with annual pump testing requirements and maintains appropriate records on all fire apparatus.
10. General and routine maintenance continues at each of the fire stations. Carbon monoxide detectors have been added for firefighter safety. Housekeeping items have all been taken care of and fire station inspections by management continue.
11. It was recommended that the Cleveland Fire Department should improve services by offering vehicle extrication services. Effective April 1, 2007, the department began offering extrication services and it is expected to have a MOU in providing First Responder EMS services by the end of the year. Training and certification is required to bring a percentage of the firefighters to an advanced level. Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics are presently required to ride 4 hours per quarter on an ambulance for skills training.
12. New non-emergency services in Cleveland include a smoke detector program, expanded public education programs, and other imaginative and original ideas.
13. The department has been successful in reducing the number of structure fire calls through aggressive fire prevention efforts targeted at the causes of fires and by conducting more pre-fire plans and inspections. Fire department inspections have increased from 600 inspections to approximately 2,400 inspections annually. This aggressive approach, as well as great public fire education, will continue to reduce fires in the City of Cleveland.
14. The department continues to improve response time to incidents and although it has already done a great job in the past, it now flags extended response times and troubleshoots why there were delays so that improvements are constant.
15. The Cleveland Fire Department has improved training significantly by increasing the basic levels of firefighter certification and assuring that every active firefighter meets the basic training requirements. This past year has been the first year that every firefighter in the department has exceeded the 240 hours of annual training. Mechanisms and tracking are now in place to monitor training and assure that training hours are met. Specialized training has also been implemented for officers, apparatus drivers, and hazardous materials. Training reports are now submitted regularly to document all training activities.

16. The Cleveland Fire Department is now using the training facility on a routine basis with documentation provided.
17. The fire department has identified target hazards in the community and has taken proactive measures through preplanning, walk-through visits, and inspections to assure that all firefighters are familiar with hazards in the community.
18. The department is utilizing live internet data with laptop computers installed in command vehicles to have information available on structures while working in the field. Firefighters are in the process of preplanning every significant building in the city.
19. The Cleveland Fire Department Company Fire Inspection Program has proven to be successful with 2007 being the first year ever to have fire companies in every business in the city. This proactive approach is also used as a fire prevention tool.
20. Proper records must be kept on all inspections whether done by fire companies or the inspector.
21. The fire department has offset the need for increased revenue and funding by obtaining in excess of \$400,000 in grant funding.
22. The fire department has improved firefighter wellness by opening a new wellness center and forming a fire department wellness committee. The fire chief has also instituted a baseline physical program to monitor firefighter wellness. This total package has increased firefighter wellness significantly.
23. The data management software has been implemented to the fullest extent with training, quality assurance, and new policies.
24. The department has improved its public image in both appearance and actions. The Cleveland Fire Department is now being recognized as a progressive fire department within the state. Public image both locally and across the state has improved.

Not completed yet

1. Equipment replacement should be planned and purchased through an ongoing equipment replacement program.
2. Preplanning and inspection programs should continue.
3. Run statistical data monthly with TFIRS to determine trends and use this data to develop a Risk Plan for the City of Cleveland.

4. The fire chief should submit a five-year strategic plan with his budget request each year for consideration by the City Council.

### Summary

It is obvious that the Cleveland Fire Department has taken tremendous strides in improving service levels to the community. Improvements also include progressive management in operations to more effectively and efficiently operate the fire department. Improved training and certification of personnel has resulted in offering additional services to the community.

In review of recent accomplishments, MTAS only has two recommendations to the Cleveland Fire Department for continued improvement. They include: 1) continuing progress to implement previous recommendations and continue to maintain these improvements; 2) review, improve, or revise the present contract for service in the "fringe" area outside the city. This is a recurring issue that has been included in the past two MTAS reports.

There are two issues relating to the contract with Bradley County. They include: 1) continuation of the contract; and 2) the length of the contract for services provided. The continuation of the contract is recommended due to being able to presently supply adequate and improved services to the fringe area as well as already having the capital equipment, supplies, apparatus, stations, and manpower to provide services. If the county or any other agency chooses to take over services in this area, the infrastructure will require significant improvements and capital assets to provide the same level of service. Simply stated, it just doesn't make sense to change service providers when adequate service is being provided.

Justification of a longer contract period is recommended primarily for better planning. The present is for a period of 5 years which is a relative short time frame and does not allow for adequate long range planning for services. MTAS recommends a minimum of 10 years but would prefer a 15 year contract that would allow continuity with the ISO evaluation process within the community. Regardless, as new services are added, appropriate planning should be conducted over a longer period of years. Services provided by the Cleveland Fire Department should be the same within the fringe area as inside the city limits. People who live within the fringe area expect the same services as provided inside the city. Additionally, present services can continue without cost increases.

In summary, the Cleveland Fire Department is doing a great job and with these additional recommendations completed, the department will continue to be a premier fire department.