

# LOS ANGELES FIRE COMMISSION

July 2, 2019

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May 24, 2019

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. BFC 19-067

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: Independent Assessor

SUBJECT: UPDATE REGARDING AUDIT OF RECRUIT PROGRESS IN SPECIFIED DRILL  
TOWER CLASSES

FINAL ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

## SUMMARY

On April 2, 2019, the Independent Assessor (IA) presented a quarterly report to the Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC or Commission) discussing research related to two audits (BFC No. 19-043). At that time, the BOFC asked the IA to report back in June, specifically about the Audit of Recruit Progress in Specified Drill Tower Classes. This report is prepared in accordance with that request.

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Board approve the report.

## DISCUSSION

The IA previously reported that the OIA is presently engaged in research pertaining to an audit examining the progress of recruits in Drill Tower classes 2013-1 through 2017-3.

### A. Preliminary Scope and Methodology and Preliminary Objectives

The preliminary scope and methodology and preliminary objectives remain the same as reported by the OIA in BFC No. 19-043, and are again listed in this report.

#### *Preliminary Scope and Methodology*

Review and assess data extracted from examinations and recruit evaluations for Drill Tower classes 2013-1 through 2017-3.

*Preliminary Objectives<sup>1</sup>*

- Determine if similar audits or reviews have been conducted of other fire department recruit academies.
- Identify any nexus between recruit progress through the drill tower and gender/race/ethnicity.
- Determine if inconsistencies existed in the grading process.
- Identify any nexus between recruit performance and background (e.g., high school or college athlete, military service, prior fire service experience).
- Identify any nexus between drill tower performance and a recruit's height/reach or weight.
- Determine effectiveness of remediation "class."
- Determine effectiveness of reassignment.
- Determine the ratio of substandard performance in academic coursework versus substandard performance on manipulative skills.

**B. Progress on selecting a sample of the audit population**

At the last meeting, the IA reported that the Office of the Independent Assessor had plans to meet with the Citywide Data Science and Predictive Analytics Team (data scientists) to narrow the scope of the audit and determine a meaningful sample of the audit population. That meeting occurred and further discussions will be necessary because of the status of the data, discussed below.

After reviewing the data that was originally provided by the Los Angeles Fire Department (Department) to the OIA, the OIA had concerns that it was not complete. Subsequently, the Department re-ran the data in a mutually agreed upon format. The OIA is currently working with the Department to ensure that the data is comprehensive so that an accurate sample of the population can be extracted. Once the OIA is confident in the data, the OIA will again consult with the data scientists to determine the best way to obtain a viable sample.

The OIA would like to thank Battalion Chief Steve Skelly and Captain Tim Lambert from Recruit Services Section, as well as Ron Corona and Roy Cheung from Management Information Systems Division, for their invaluable assistance.

Additionally, the OIA initially determined that the audit population will consist of data from recruit classes 13-1 through 17-3. However, the Department has provided data for all classes from 13-1 to 18-2. The OIA is contemplating expanding the audit population to include classes 18-1 and 18-2.

I am available to provide any additional information the Commission may require.

Respectfully submitted,



SUE STENGEL

Independent Assessor  
Board of Fire Commissioners

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<sup>1</sup>Objectives are subject to change based on the research.