

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



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FIRE CHIEF

May 3, 2022

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 22-045

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Kristin Crowley, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: RISK MANAGEMENT SECTION OVERVIEW

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 Withdrawn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

As requested by the Los Angeles Fire Department Board of Fire Commissioners, the Fire Department is providing an overview of the organizational goals and objectives for the Risk Management Section (RMS). RMS is part of the Administrative Operations Bureau. The goals delineated on the attached maximize efficiencies, promote safety and a positive work environment.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Receive and file this report

Board report prepared by Battalion Scott Quinn, Commander of the Risk Management Section.

Attachment

Los Angeles *City* Fire Department

Risk Management Section



Fire Commission Report 2022



Introduction

The Los Angeles City Fire Department's Risk Management Section (RMS) was originally created in 2003, with the primary mission focused on fiscally accounting for liabilities to the Department in the areas of litigation, workers' compensation, firefighter safety in addition to reducing the fiscal impact in these areas. As we approach the twenty-year anniversary milestone of the RMS, the Section Commander and assigned staff have remained steadfast with the commitment to account and report on the founding risk management principles and core values. In recent years, the RMS has significantly expanded to meet the demands and address the complex issues of a contemporary fire service in a large Metropolitan City. The RMS Battalion Chief reports directly to the Administrative Operations Chief Deputy for administrative affairs and directly to the Fire Chief as the Command Staff Safety Officer for significant incidents such as the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The expanded scope and responsibilities of the RMS include the creation and management of a first-of-its kind injury prevention program, the development of the LAFD Records Unit, a data collection system designed to provide analysis of trends of current and potential future liabilities, a responsible process to investigate significant firefighter injuries and near misses, the establishment of professional relationships with City entities designed to improve claim management and defense strategies to internal and external litigation, and lastly, programs to address and respond to workplace violence and employee assessments.

In early 2020, the City of Los Angeles was met with a new and unexpected challenge. The COVID-19 global pandemic descended upon the City and its workforce; this pandemic demanded a two-fold response from the LAFD. First, provide exceptional emergency medical services, COVID testing and vaccination to the City; secondly, provide for the safety and health of the LAFD workforce with preventing the spread of COVID-19 and treating those who become ill with the disease. The RMS was largely responsible for the safety of all members and caring for the workforce. The Battalion Chief assigned to RMS is the Department's Health and Safety Officer. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a member of the Fire Chief's Command Staff, the Battalion Chief is responsible for developing a myriad of safety strategies and control measures designed to prevent the spread of COVID+19 within the workforce, ensure community contacts and emergency services are provided safely, as well as ensuring the workers' compensation process and treatment for the affected members is appropriately managed. The threat and management of COVID-19 continues today; RMS continues to evaluate the threat and current polices for effectiveness and adjust when warranted in preventing the spread of the disease and caring for the ill.

In review of the efforts of the entire RMS relating to the scope and responsibility to the COVID-19 pandemic, meritorious recognition is appropriate for every member assigned to the section as they worked tirelessly over two years, 24/7 managing the 2120 positive case results, providing care and direction for those who became and remain seriously

ill, documenting and tracking every exposure, outbreak, and developing and preparing required reporting documents. Sadly, two of LAFD's finest succumbed to the disease recognized as Line of Duty Deaths (LODD). without reservation members of RMS and Medical Liaison Unit (MLU) put forth their best efforts to arrange care and compassion to the members and their surviving families.

Risk Management Section

Vision Statement

Deliver effective risk management to all levels of the Department with focus on both trends and current liabilities using information tools, relationships between internal and external partners, and analytics.

Mission Statement

Responsibly identify, manage, and respond to internal and external exposure to risks; In terms of Department reputation, operational integrity, fiscal liability, firefighter health and safety.

The Risk Management Section's vision and mission statements outline the responsibility and operating principles of the Section. The two highest priorities are ensuring that the fire department establishes the best safety practices for its most prized capital, the men and women who carry out the mission of the fire department and secondly, manage risk and exposure to the Department fiscally and by reputation.

Organizational Structure and Staffing		
Risk Management Section		
1	Battalion Chief	Section Commander / Department Health and Safety Officer
1	Secretary	
1	Captain II	Chief Litigation Officer / Incident Safety Officer (on-call)
1	Captain I	Department Safety Coordinator / Incident Safety Officer (on-call)
Records Unit		
1	Captain I	Legal Liaison – Unit Supervisor / Incident Safety Officer
2	Senior Administrative Clerk	
1	Administrative Clerk	
Injury Prevention Unit		
1	Captain I	Unit Supervisor / Incident Safety Officer
1	Certified Athletic Trainer	
Medical Liaison Unit		
1	Captain II	Unit Supervisor
4	Captain I	
1	Administrative Clerk	Vacant**

The staff assigned to RMS have an exceptionally broad area of responsibility making it difficult to neatly categorize essential elements or tasks and responsibilities within

organized and/or recognizable Units. The Section Commander is the Department Custodian of Record and oversees the duties and responsibilities of the following:

Risk Management Section
LAFD Records Unit / Legal Liaison Officer(s)
Injury Prevention Unit
Medical Liaison Unit
Department Safety Coordinator
On-Call Safety Officer

LAFD Records Unit

On January 11, 2021, a six-month trial program was initiated with the objective of evaluating the efficiency of moving the incident record production, subpoena control, and California Public Records Act (CPRA) responsibilities to the RMS centralizing record and legal responsibilities. The clerical support staff and related duties and responsibilities were dovetailed with the Unit within the RMS which has similar responsibilities. Overwhelmingly, the pilot program netted significant improvements with oversight, supervision, and accountability. With a recommendation to permanently reside in RMS, the LAFD Records Unit has been established. Additionally, the responsibilities of the Custodian of Record were transferred from the Arson Counter Terrorism Section to the Battalion Chief assigned to the RMS.

The LAFD Records Unit and the Legal Liaison Officer(s) have the primary responsibilities of the following:

- Liaison with the City Attorney's Office
- Record production, replying to interrogatories and demands, scheduling depositions, and representing the Department as the "person most knowledgeable"
- Subpoena management and processing
- Producing completed fire incident reports
- Data collection related to claims, accidents, negligence, and complaints,
- Satisfying all CPRA requests,
- The supervising Captain I is also an on-call Incident Safety Officer.

Data analysis during first four months	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Total
CPRA NextRequest	137	130	130	298	695
Subpoena for Records Requests	140	213	155	176	684
Monthly Fees Collected	\$7,862	\$5,237	\$3,623	\$4,568	\$21,974
Fire Report Quantity	92	172	171	145	580
Subpoena for Personal Appearances	143	124	116	143	526
Request for Representation	3	3	4	9	19

Injury Prevention Unit

Vision Statement

The Los Angeles Fire Department Injury Prevention Unit will be a foundational element of an overall wellness culture shift that is committed to increasing performance and reducing costs by providing early injury intervention, treatment, management, and rehabilitation; injury prevention education; and firefighter specific fitness programs.

Mission Statement

To improve the functionality, performance, and physical resiliency of Los Angeles Fire Department members by providing accessibility to high quality injury prevention, evaluation, treatment, and injury management, promoting the concept of professional preparation, recovery and a lifetime commitment to wellness.

On June 30, 2014, the City of Los Angeles Controller's Office released the findings of the "Performance Audit of the Workers' Compensation Claims Management for fire and police personnel." The audit recommended that the fire department identify ways to reduce workers' compensation costs. Analysis of the findings of this report by the RMS identified that injury prevention provided the best approach at reducing workers' compensation costs while improving firefighter health, resilience, and recovery post injury.

In 2018, the Department was awarded a grant from the Mayor's Innovation Fund to develop and cultivate the Department's Injury Prevention Unit. Approximately \$350,000 in seed funds were approved to launch the first-of-its-kind program directly aimed at preventing injuries through specific applications directed to firefighters or "tactical athletes." Additional funding was provided through the LAFD Fire Foundation and Cal-JAC funds. The program officially began on October 13, 2020, it is managed by a Captain I with a physical fitness background and a non-sworn contract based Certified Athletic Trainer. Centrally located at the Frank Hotchkins Memorial Training Center, the program is available to all firefighter recruits and incumbent firefighters and focuses on the following essential areas:

- Conduct a "functional movement screening" FMS to all firefighter recruits to evaluate physical readiness and triage for injury susceptibility
- Provide personal and tailored physical fitness programs to recruit and incumbent firefighters
- Develop and publish educational training programs as a qualifying component of the health and wellness bonus outlined in MOU 22 and 23
- Triage and evaluate minor injuries in a pre-worker's compensation setting for issues that do not meet Cal/OSHA treatment or reporting requirements

- Provide personal one-on-one physical fitness evaluations and form-function exercises to improve physical fitness
- Assist all firefighters who are returning to duty from extended leaves of absence including those who are returning from FMLA pregnancy leave, long-term IOD and NIOD injuries

The LAFD's Injury Prevention Unit and related scope of practice is a popular and growing trend throughout the nation in the fire service. Many reputable fire departments in the region and nation are regularly reaching out for advice and assistance in developing similar in-house programs.

Program Analysis and Metrics 10/20 – 3/22

METRICS				
New visits – injury evaluations (Including 114 FF recruits)	590		Station Visits	85
Follow-up treatments (Including 45 FF recruits)	367		Drill tower visits	38
Telehealth Appointments	27		Home exercise programs distributed	295
Total injury related visits	984		Follow up email (to update progress)	548
Functional Movement Screen Tests	581			
Total Member Contacts	1565			
ANALYSIS				
Number of members who did not seek “W/C care	*54	Estimated number of sworn members that would have likely would have been off in the W/C process		
Cost savings	\$216,000	Estimated \$4000 per save		
Recruit saves	*4	Number of recruit FF’s that would have likely gone in for “first care / WC system		
Cost savings	\$400,000	Estimated at \$100,000 / recruit		
Cost estimate for rendered injury evaluation, rehabilitation, and treatment costs: \$78,460				

Medical Liaison Unit

Vision Statement

A workers' compensation system that advances the productivity and health of our Los Angeles City Firefighters.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Medical Liaison Unit is to assist injured workers in the fair, equitable, and expeditious resolution of workers' compensation claim issues. Our goal is to ensure continued service to you, provide education and support for the continuation and betterment of the workers' compensation benefits of all members.

The MLU is responsible for managing the Department's workers compensation program; the responsibility and specialty of this position cannot be overstated. The members assigned to MLU are tasked with the highest responsibility of the Department, caring for those who have been injured or become ill while carrying out their duties as a firefighter. Comprised of only one Captain II and four Captain I's, the MLU manages and processes an estimated 1200 injury/illness claims annually which accounts for approximately *\$53,000,000 (FY 2018 – 2019) in total claim costs, 4850 benefits, disability payments, and related expenses.

FY 19/20: \$59.8 M

FY 20/21: \$63.1 M

Introduction and key areas of responsibility:

- Manage, process, and track every workers' compensation claim
- Liaison between the member and the third-party administrator in managing a member's workers' compensation claim
- Provide oversight and management of members assigned to "Accounting"
- Support injured and ill members as they navigate the workers' compensation process
- Manage and track all members assigned to light duty, restricted duty, and those whose permanent restrictions require they move into the interactive dialogue process
- Fulfill the 24/7 on-call responsibilities of responding to significant firefighter injuries and hospitalizations
- Liaison between the Department and the family for significant injuries, illnesses, and LODD's

- Represent all members on behalf of the surviving family for all LODD related matters
- Liaison with Los Angeles County Public Health

Department Safety Coordinator

The Department Safety Coordinator (DSC) is tasked with managing and evaluating department safety procedures, personal protective equipment (PPE), responding to major incidents and accidents involving firefighters as an Incident Safety Officer. The DSC is the liaison with California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) and manages complaints of hazards, complies with reporting mandates, and manages Cal/OSHA Log 300 and 300A. On June 3, 2017, Firefighter Kelly Wong suffered a fatal fall during a training exercise. The Cal/OSHA investigation and final report levied significant fines and policy changes upon the LAFD; the citations and recommendations were appropriately challenged by the DSC and the City Attorney. Due to collaborative efforts, all citations and policy changes were dismissed. The DSC is responsible for managing updating required documents in the LAFD library including the Injury and illness prevention program, heat illness prevention program, hazard communication program and mandatory workplace postings.

On-Call Safety Officer (SOFR)

The Officers assigned to RMS are responsible to report to significant incidents and firefighter injuries on a 24/7 availability. Operationally, they report directly to the Incident Commander assisting with identifying health and safety risks to firefighters and developing mitigating measures aimed at reducing potential risks. In the event there is a significant firefighter injury or fatality, these qualified Officers initiate the investigation. This process satisfies the Cal/OSHA responsibility as well as the internal investigation requirement. The most recent and notable incident was the Boyd Street Fire that occurred on Saturday, May 16, 2020, resulting in injuries to 12 LAFD firefighters. For this incident, RMS provided initial on-scene support, dispatched five MLU Captains to UCLA to liaison with the injured members, and initiated the Serious Incident Review Team. The on-call SOFR's are all-risk qualified and have responded to other significant incidents including the Barrington Residential High-Rise Fire Incident, the Slauson Incident, Hazardous Materials Incident in the Valley, and the Civil Disturbance in 2020.

Risk Management Section 2022 Goals

In 2022, the RMS and subordinate Units conducted a critical evaluation of current emergency and administrative operations in an effort to identify key areas of potential improvement in efficiency and accountability. The following goals have been identified as areas of improvement to support the future mission of the Section.

Risk Management Section

- Goal #1:** Develop RMS Operational Manual
- Goal #2:** Risk Management Database Application
- Goal# 3** Records Unit Buildout
- Goal #4** Safety Officer Program

Injury Prevention Unit

- Goal #1:** Reduce Fire Department Costs
- Goal #2:** Increase morale through Department culture prevention and fitness initiatives
- Goal #3:** Interact with other LAFD Divisions to increase awareness and efficiency

Medical Liaison Unit

- Goal #1:** Develop and implement best practices and control measures
- Goal #2:** Developed and finalize internal documents and tracking processes