GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Special Evaluation:

CONDITIONS IN FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT FIRE STATIONS

CHARLES J. WILLOUGHBY
INSPECTOR GENERAL

OIG No. 07-I-027 FEMS

OCTOBER 2007

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Inspector General

Inspector General

October 25, 2007

Dennis L. Rubin
Fire Chief
D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department
1923 Vermont Avenue N.W., Suite 201
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Chief Rubin:

Enclosed is the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) special evaluation entitled *Conditions in Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department Fire Stations*. This report documents the physical condition and work environment at 31 of the 33 Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS) fire stations[1] and the fire boat facility. An OIG Inspections and Evaluations (I&E) team observed and recorded significant deficiencies in key areas such as general infrastructure, employee accommodations, and communication systems.

The comments that FEMS provided in response to the draft report are included verbatim as Appendix 7 to the final report. As we advised when we presented you with the draft report, because the I&E team only identified easily observable problems, you should not construe the findings in this special evaluation as a full accounting of all deficiencies that might exist within FEMS fire stations.

If you have questions about this report or if we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me on (202) 727-2540.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Willoughby
Inspector General

CJW/ef

Enclosure

cc: See **Distribution List**

[1] Two fire stations were under renovation during the OIG's review.

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ACRONYMS

ACRONYMS

ACM	Asbestos-Containing Material
DCRA	D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
FEMS	D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
FY	Fiscal Year
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
I&E	Inspections and Evaluations Division
MAR	Management Alert Report
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OPM	D.C. Office of Property Management
PMO	FEMS Property Management Office
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
ROI	Report of Inspection

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS) is responsible for providing fire protection, accident response, and emergency medical services (EMS) throughout the District of Columbia (District). Every day FEMS employees respond to approximately 400 calls for emergency assistance.[1]

The Inspections and Evaluations Division (I&E) of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted an initial inspection of FEMS during fiscal year (FY) 2001 and published a Report of Inspection (ROI) in October 2002. The OIG inspection process includes follow-up with inspected agencies on previous OIG findings and recommendations and is designed to help District managers in their efforts to continuously improve the delivery of services to residents and other stakeholders. I&E began a re-inspection of FEMS in December 2006.

As part of its re-inspection fieldwork, the re-inspection team (team) visited several fire stations in order to ascertain FEMS' efforts to comply with recommendations made in the October 2002 ROI.[2] During these initial site visits, the team observed conditions and spoke with employees about problems such as improperly functioning heating and cooling systems, leaking roofs, and inoperative toilets, sinks, and showers. Based on the team's observations of these conditions at several fire stations, the team visited all 33 fire stations[3] and the Fire Boat facility to observe and record conditions in key areas such as general infrastructure, employee accommodations, and communications systems.

Scope and Methodology

The objective of the team's site visits was to observe and note the condition of each fire station and the Fire Boat facility, particularly their major systems (e.g., heating, ventilation, air conditioning, toilets, showers, kitchens, and communication equipment). OIG re-inspection team members are not licensed or trained in engineering or building inspection; therefore, the team's purpose was to identify any obvious conditions that threaten or could threaten the safety, comfort, or effectiveness of FEMS employees. The information presented in this Special Evaluation should not be construed as a full accounting of all deficiencies in FEMS fire stations.

The team developed a checklist of items in order to record a standard set of observations and collect the same type of information from each station. A copy of this checklist is located at Appendix 4.

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[1] D.C. FIRE & EMS DEPARTMENT, FISCAL YEAR 2005 ANNUAL REPORT, at 2.
[2] *See* http://www.oig.dc.gov.
[3] There are 33 FEMS fire stations, but during the team's fieldwork, two stations (Station 9 and Station 25) were under renovation. The team did not assess conditions at these two stations. Also, this report does not include an assessment of building conditions at FEMS Headquarters, the Fire and EMS Training Academy, the Apparatus Division, the Fire Prevention Division, or the Property Management Office. For a map of all FEMS fire stations, see Appendix 3.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From May 29, 2007, to June 21, 2007, team members conducted unannounced site visits at 31 fire stations and the Fire Boat facility. On each visit, team members made visual observations, recorded notes on the checklist form, photographed conditions, and spoke with FEMS employees. In addition to the site visits, the team reviewed FEMS directives and procedures, as well as facility assessments authored by the D.C. Office of Property Management (OPM) and consultants hired by OPM.

Findings and Recommendations

Building conditions at numerous fire stations threaten the health, safety, and comfort of FEMS employees and negatively impact the work environment and employee morale. (Page 10) During site visits, the team noted many potentially dangerous conditions, including: inoperative smoke detectors; unabated asbestos hazards; exposed electrical wiring; emergency alert systems that did not operate fully or properly; broken windows; damage to interior ceilings and walls; and improperly functioning heating and cooling systems. **Recommendations:** (1) That FEMS take steps immediately to properly abate the asbestos hazards at Station 5, Station 18, and Station 26, and report the status of these conditions to the Inspector General within 90 days of publication of this report. (2) That FEMS adequately monitor those stations that contain non-hazardous, asbestos-containing material (ACM) to ensure that conditions do not deteriorate and become hazardous to employees' health. (3) That FEMS, within 90 days of publication of this report, devise a strategy to identify, prioritize, and complete necessary repairs of all conditions (not just those identified in this report), that threaten the health, safety, and morale of FEMS employees, and report the status to the Inspector General. (4) That FEMS ask the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) to immediately inspect the boilers at all fire stations, and report the findings and any abatement plan to the Inspector General within 30 days of the publication of this report. (5) That FEMS coordinate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DCRA to ensure that boilers at all fire stations are inspected on an annual basis as required by the D.C. Code, and provide a copy of the MOU to the Inspector General.

Employees working in the FEMS Property Management Office (PMO) lack position descriptions and an effective mechanism for tracking maintenance and repair requests through resolution. (Page 26) Numerous employees in the PMO lack position descriptions. Without them, FEMS leadership can neither hold employees accountable nor conduct meaningful performance reviews because there are no job-specific standards. Also, the PMO's repair request tracking mechanism does not adequately record actions taken by employees and does not monitor repair requests through to resolution. **Recommendations:** (1) That FEMS develop position descriptions for all PMO positions. (2) That FEMS take steps to improve its capabilities in receiving maintenance and repair requests and tracking their status through to a timely resolution. (3) That the PMO collect additional information on the Repair Request spreadsheet, to include: actions taken by PMO employees; the date the PMO or vendor completed the repair; confirmation that the repair adequately addressed the deficient condition(s); and the cost of the repair.

Format of the Special Evaluation

This Special Evaluation includes 140 color photographs taken by OIG employees.[4] The OIG believes these photographs provide two primary benefits. First, photographs of fire station interiors and exteriors are the most efficient way to communicate conditions observed by the team. Second, the OIG hopes that these photographs will be used by FEMS and other District stakeholders as benchmarks for documenting improvements in conditions.

[4] Photographs in Appendix 2 of fire station façades were copied from reports produced by the D.C. Office of Property Management.

OVERVIEW OF FEMS FIRE STATIONS

OVERVIEW OF FEMS FIRE STATIONS

Fire Station Personnel

FEMS employees who respond to emergency calls are assigned to the Field Operations Division (Operations) and are stationed throughout the District. In FY 2006, Operations consisted of 1,421 uniformed employees and 229 civilian[5] employees. The uniformed ranks consist of firefighters, "dual role"[6] firefighter/emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and "dual role" firefighter/paramedics.[7] Uniformed employees work a 24-hour shift followed by 72 hours off duty. Civilian employees are "single role" EMTs and Paramedics. Civilian employees work two consecutive 12-hour day shifts, followed by two 12-hour night shifts, and then have four days off-duty.

Fire Station Facilities

The physical layout varies with each station building, but every fire station generally contains the following:

- an apparatus floor where vehicles such as ambulances, fire engines, and ladder trucks are parked;[8]

- an emergency alert system that consists of:

    - a network of wall-mounted and/or overhead loudspeakers that broadcast both an audible alert tone and verbal announcements of emergency call information;
    - "trip" lights located throughout the station that, when activated, illuminate various areas within the station as a visual alert that a call has been dispatched to the station;
    - a terminal with a printer that generates a paper print-out of call information, such as the location, type of emergency, and the number and type of units required to respond;
    - an electronic message board that displays emergency call information;

[5] Within FEMS, the term "civilian" denotes two categories of employees. First, Operations employees who do not fight fires, (i.e., paramedics and EMTs,) are not considered "uniformed" employees even though they do in fact wear FEMS uniforms. They are commonly referred to as "civilian" employees. Second, the term "civilian" is also used to denote those employees who work in areas such as administrative support, budget and accounting, human resources, and information technology.

[6] A "dual role" FEMS employee is one who has been trained in and is able to provide both fire suppression services and emergency medical services. A "single role" provider refers to either (1) a firefighter who is not trained in and is therefore not authorized to provide emergency medical services, or (2) an Emergency Medical Technician or a Paramedic who has no fire suppression training and is therefore not authorized to provide such services during a tour of duty.

[7] The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in their document titled "National EMS Scope of Practice Model" defines an EMT as the minimum licensure level required for personnel to transport patients in ambulances. The EMT scope of practice consists of basic non-invasive interventions. Paramedics have an advanced license and their scope of practice consists of basic and advanced skills.

[8] A "fire engine" pumps water to extinguish fires and a "ladder truck" has a ladder for fires that occur at heights that cannot be accessed using conventional ladders.

- a watch desk that is staffed 24-hours-a-day (unless all employees are responding to emergencies) by an employee who monitors a computer terminal and the emergency alert system for incoming emergency calls;
- bunkrooms where employees rest and sleep during their shifts;[9]
- a kitchen;
- a "sitting room" that is used for employee meetings and meals;
- offices for completing paperwork and other administrative duties;
- bathrooms and locker rooms with toilets, sinks, and showers; and
- a tool room to repair equipment, and various storage and utility rooms.

Fire Station Amenities

On their own initiative, fire station employees use personal funds to provide certain amenities. For example, employees typically maintain a "house fund" and contribute a specified amount, $5 or $10, of personal money to the fund during each pay period. An employee is not required to contribute to the fund but most do. "House funds" are typically used to purchase bulk food items and beverages, to acquire a new television for use in the station, or to pay the station's monthly cable television bill. In addition to food purchases made using the house fund, one or two employees may prepare a meal for members of their shift.

Cleaning, Maintenance, and Repair of Fire Stations

Fire station employees are responsible for cleaning and maintaining their stations. The employees assigned to each station clean the facility daily as part of their assigned duties. Standard tasks include: washing the emergency response vehicles; sweeping and mopping floors; cleaning bathrooms, bunkrooms, the kitchen, and the sitting room; mowing the lawn; shoveling snow; painting; and basic repairs. For example, employees informed the team that ceiling tiles are routinely delivered to their stations and they are instructed to install them.

Employees in the FEMS Property Management Office (PMO) are responsible for ensuring that each station's supply needs are met, and for resolving maintenance and repair requests referred to the PMO by fire station employees. The PMO, which is also referred to as the Facilities Maintenance Office or Division in some FEMS documents, is staffed with planning officers, project managers, maintenance mechanics, inventory specialists, and supply technicians. In addition to coordinating and overseeing repair work performed by contractors, the PMO plays a significant role in FEMS' capital improvement projects. PMO's Capital Project Management

[9] Captains and lieutenants, who are called "company officers," use bedrooms and bathrooms that are separate from those used by the employees under their command.

team monitors the planning, design, and execution of full-scale station renovations and other complex construction projects.

Findings and Recommendations:

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS IN FEMS FIRE STATIONS and PROPERTY MANAGEMENT OFFICE

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS IN FEMS FIRE STATIONS AND PMO

1. Building conditions at numerous fire stations threaten the health, safety, comfort and effectiveness of FEMS employees and negatively impact the work environment and employee morale.

Title 7 DCMR § 2009.1 states that "[e]mployees have a right, to the maximum extent possible, to a safe and healthful working environment." During the inspection, the team visited 31 fire stations and the Fire Boat facility to observe conditions and speak with employees. The team also reviewed FEMS documents and facility assessment reports prepared by the District's Office of Property Management (OPM) and consultants hired by the District to conduct building assessments. The team noted the following conditions:

- **Inoperative smoke detectors** – The team found non-working smoke detectors in living quarters and work areas of multiple fire stations.[10] Although the majority of employees are trained in and have expertise in suppressing fires, inoperative smoke detectors could pose a particular risk to employees during overnight hours or other periods of the day when employees are resting or sleeping. Many FEMS stations are large buildings with multiple floors, so it is vital that smoke detectors throughout those stations operate properly.

- **Unabated asbestos hazards** – The team reviewed reports prepared in 2002 by a contractor for OPM. These reports cited the presence of hazardous asbestos-containing material (ACM)[11] in three locations currently occupied by FEMS employees: Station 5, Station 18, and Station 26.

  - **Station 5** (3412 Dent Place, N.W.) – The contractor found "ACM pipe insulation and fittings…in the boiler room. Most of the piping and elbows were in fair condition with some small areas of localized damage. These areas pose a significant risk to human health due to the friable nature of this type of ACM."[12]

  - **Station 18** (414 8th Street, S.E.) – According to the contractor, "ACM pipe fittings were identified in the boiler room, [bathroom], coat room and main engine room. Some of these elbows and joints were in poor condition. They pose a significant risk to human health due to the friable nature of this type of ACM."[13]

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[10] The OIG alerted FEMS leadership to this safety problem in a Management Alert Report (MAR 07-I-007), dated June 15, 2007. The OIG provides a management alert report when it believes a serious matter requires the immediate attention of District of Columbia government officials. Copies of the MAR and FEMS' response are at Appendix 5.

[11] According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "The mere presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of building occupants is endangered. ACM which is in good condition, and is not damaged or disturbed, is not likely to release asbestos fibers into the air. When ACM is properly managed, release of asbestos fibers into the air is reduced, and the risk of asbestos-related disease is thereby correspondingly reduced." U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY and U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, BUILDING AIR QUALITY A GUIDE FOR BUILDING OWNERS AND FACILITY MANAGERS, 147 (Dec. 1991), *available at* http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/pdfs/iaq.pdf.

[12] PEER CONSULTANTS, P.C., ASBESTOS SURVEY FOR ENGINE COMPANY # 5, at 4 (Aug. 2002).

[13] PEER CONSULTANTS, P.C., ASBESTOS SURVEY FOR ENGINE COMPANY # 18, at 4 (Aug. 2002).

- **Station 26** (1340 Rhode Island Ave., N.E.) – The contractor found that "[t]he boiler room and tunnel/crawl space contain thermal system insulation that has tested positive for asbestos. The insulation is not in good condition in some places in the basement. Abatement is highly recommended. At minimum, the damaged insulation and insulation in poor condition should be cleaned up and/or abated."[14]

The team did not find evidence that the conditions cited in these 2002 reports have been abated. In fact, the team queried multiple FEMS officials and requested information about asbestos abatement projects in progress, completed, and planned for affected fire stations, but received only delayed responses that lacked substantive information.

- **Exposed electrical wiring** – The team observed exposed wiring, some of it in areas exhibiting significant water damage, which, if live,[15] could cause accidental shock or generate a spark that ignites a fire.

- **Emergency alert systems that did not operate properly** – The team noted inoperative loudspeakers, message boards, and printers. Employees rely on these systems to respond quickly and accurately to emergencies. Although redundancy is designed into each emergency alert system (i.e., emergency call information is delivered to each fire station audibly, visually, and through a paper print-out), a malfunction in any element of the system could delay an emergency response.

- **Broken windows** – The team documented numerous broken windows, which, judging by the condition of temporary repairs, seemed to have been broken for quite some time. In general, broken windows not only lead to injuries, but also limit the effectiveness of a building's heating and cooling systems and provide an entry point for insects and rodents. Broken ground-floor windows pose an additional safety problem because they compromise building security.

- **Holes and cracks in interior walls and ceilings and exterior façades** – The team observed and photographed numerous flaws in interior and exterior building surfaces. Unsightly holes in interior walls and ceilings also exposed plumbing pipes, electrical wiring, and insulating materials. Significant flaws in building façades could compromise the structural integrity of a building, and endanger employees and passersby should part of a façade break free.

- **Improperly functioning heating and cooling systems** – The team noted and station employees commented upon ineffective heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. In addition to the obvious impact on employee comfort, malfunctioning systems are inefficient and; therefore, more expensive to operate compared to properly maintained and functioning systems.

[14] PEER CONSULTANTS, P.C., ASBESTOS SURVEY FOR ENGINE COMPANY # 26, at 4 (Aug. 2002).
[15] The team did not attempt to determine whether any of the wires were carrying an electrical current.

- **Leaking roofs and walls** – The team noted interior water damage in a number of stations. Water from a leaking roof can weaken the integrity of interior walls and ceilings, and damage and eventually destroy electrical systems and hard-wired smoke detection systems. In several instances, station employees informed the team that rain regularly leaks into living and working areas of their station.

The team used a checklist (see Appendix 4) during the site visits to record observations and collect data in five primary areas:

I. Building Security and General Infrastructure
II. Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)
III. Restrooms, Bathing Facilities, and Employee Comfort
IV. Food Storage and Preparation
V. Technology and Communication Tools

I. Building Security and General Infrastructure

The team used the first section of the inspection checklist to record whether exterior doors and windows worked properly and whether there were any noticeable interior or exterior structural flaws. Some of the major issues the team found include the following:

- Thirty stations[16] (94 percent) exhibited damaged interior walls and ceilings, some of which appeared to be caused by water entering through the building's roof and walls.
- Six stations (19 percent) exhibited noticeable damage to exterior walls.
- Eleven stations (34 percent) presented broken locks on ground-floor windows.
- Broken windows, exposed wiring, and damaged apparatus floors were frequently observed.

Table 1 on the following page is a summary of observations related to building security and general infrastructure. Photographs of some conditions are included as Figures 1 through 5.

[16] In this Special Evaluation, the Fire Boat facility is considered a "fire station" in order to simplify the presentation of statistics, titles of tables, etc.

Table 1: Summary of Observations of Building Security and General Infrastructure Conditions at 32 Fire Stations[17]

Inspection Item	Yes		No	
	Number of Stations	Percent of Total	Number of Stations	Percent of Total
Do all exterior doors (excluding doors for equipment egress) latch and lock properly?	23	72%	9	28%
Do all exterior doors for equipment egress function properly?	30	94%	2	6%
Do all exterior windows appear to latch and lock properly?	21	66%	11	34%
Are there visible problems[18] with interior floors, walls, ceilings, staircases, or handrails?	30	94%	2	6%
Are there visible problems with exterior façades?	6	19%	26	81%

[17] In this Special Evaluation, the Fire Boat facility is considered a "fire station" in order to simplify the presentation of statistics, titles of tables, etc.
[18] Includes mold, water damage, holes, and instability.

Figure 1: Photographs of Damage to Interior Walls and Ceilings – Stations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 12

Station 3 – wall

Station 4 – ceiling

Station 5 – ceiling

Station 5 – wall

Station 6 – ceiling

Station 7 – ceiling

Station 10 – ceiling

Station 10 – wall

Station 12 – ceiling

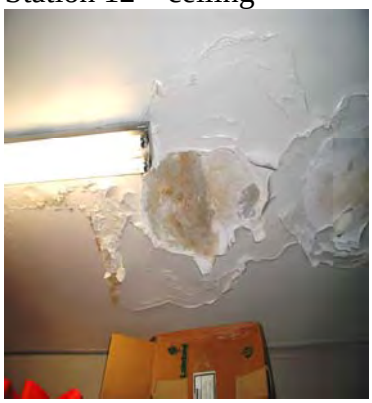


Figure 2: Photographs of Damage to Interior Walls and Ceilings – Stations 16, 19, 21, 23, 26, 29, and 30

Station 16 – ceiling

Station 19 – ceiling

Station 21 – ceiling

Station 21 – ceiling

Station 23 – wall

Station 26 – ceiling, wall

Station 29 – wall

Station 29 – wall

Station 30 – ceiling

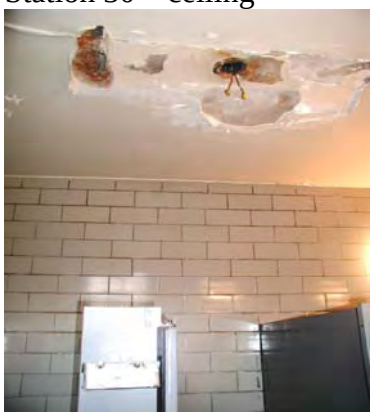


Figure 3: Photographs of Exposed Wires – Stations 3, 4, 5, 12, 16, and 29 and Inoperable Smoke Detectors – Stations 19 and 22

Exposed Wires

Station 2

Station 3

Station 4

Station 5

Station 12

Station 16

Station 29

Missing Smoke Detector

Station 19

Broken Smoke Detector

Station 22

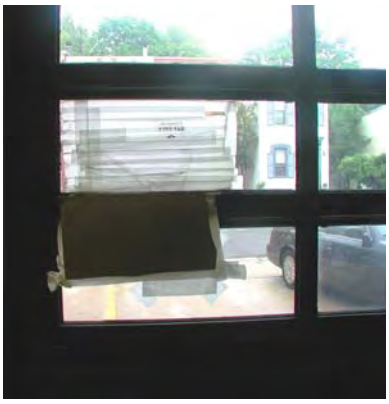
Figure 4: Photographs of Broken Windows – Stations 1, 5, 10, 19, 22, 26, and 29 and Broken Apparatus Door – Station 6

Broken Windows

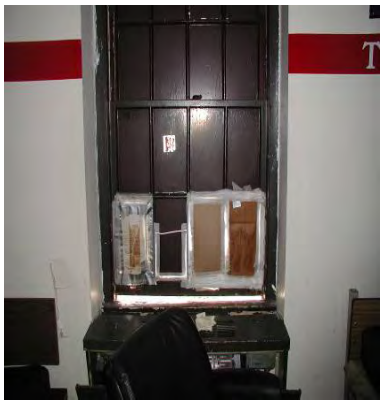
Station 1

Station 1

Station 5



Station 10



Station 19

Station 22

Station 26

Station 29

Broken Apparatus Door

Station 6

Figure 5: Photographs of Damage to Façades – Stations 7, 8, 18, and 24 and Damaged Apparatus Floors – Stations 5, 15, and 30

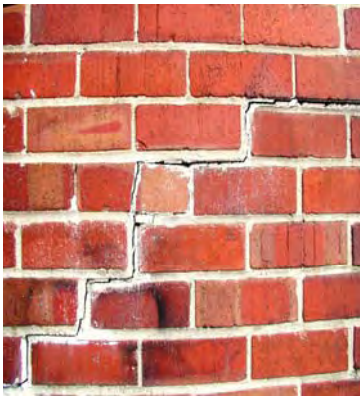
Damage to Façades

Station 7

Station 7

Station 8

Station 8



Station 18

Station 24

Damaged Apparatus Floors

Station 5

Station 15

Station 30

II. Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

The team used the second section of the inspection checklist to record whether each station contained a functional[19] heating system, a functional cooling system, and evidence of inspection by a certified HVAC professional. Based on both visual inspection and conversations with station employees, the team found the following:

- sixteen stations (50 percent) did not have a functional heating system;
- seventeen stations (53 percent) did not have a functional cooling system; and
- twenty-four stations (80 percent) displayed no evidence that the HVAC systems had been inspected within the past year.

D.C. Code § 2-107 (Repl. 2006) requires annual inspections of all boilers by the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) and that the inspection certification be placed in close proximity to the boiler. In some instances, the team found no evidence of a boiler inspection, and in others the date of the last inspection was either over a year old or was not consistently recorded. Table 2 is a summary of observations related to HVAC system functionality. Photographs of some conditions are included in Figure 6.

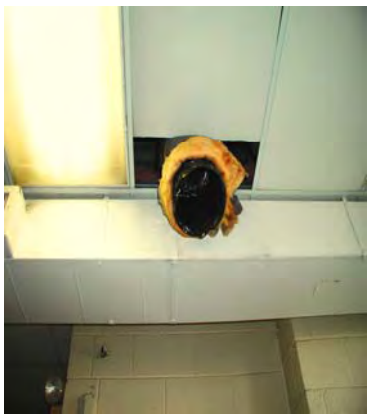
Table 2: Summary of Observations of HVAC Conditions in 32 Fire Stations

Inspection Item	Yes		No	
	Number of Stations	Percent of Total	Number of Stations	Percent of Total
Do all living/working areas have a functional heating system? (If no, which areas do not?)	16	50%	16	50%
Do all living/working areas have a functional cooling system? (If no, which areas do not?)	15	47%	17	53%
Is there any evidence that the HVAC system has been inspected by a certified professional within the past year? [20]	6	20%	24	80%

[19] As part of its determination of whether a system was "functional," the team took into consideration comments from station employees regarding a system's reliability. Where repeated complaints were received from employees that the system's functions were irregular or unreliable, the team did not consider the system to be "functional."
[20] At two stations, the team was not able to assess the HVAC system due to a lack of convenient access to the system. Therefore, two stations were not included in the results of this checklist item.

Figure 6: Photographs of Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) Problems in Fire Stations – Exposed Ductwork

Station 7



Station 16

Station 19

III. Restrooms, Bathing Facilities, and Employee Comfort

A standard shift for fire station employees is 24 hours. Given the extended periods of time that employees are stationed in these buildings, properly functioning toilets, showers, and other facilities integral to employee cleanliness and comfort are vital. The team used the third section of the inspection checklist to record the conditions in each station's restrooms, bathing facilities, locker areas, and laundry facilities. The team found that:

- seven stations (22 percent) had at least one inoperative toilet;
- nine stations (28 percent) had at least one toilet that did not provide adequate privacy;
- ten stations (31 percent) contained at least one inoperative shower;
- at nine stations (28 percent), employees use their own money to purchase cleaning supplies;
- fifteen stations (47 percent) lacked a functional clothes washer; and
- fourteen stations (44 percent) lacked a functional clothes dryer.[21]

Table 3 is a summary of observations of station restrooms, showers, and other facilities related to employee comfort. Photographs of some of these conditions are included in Figure 7.

[21] Employees typically use standard washers and dryers to clean bedding, kitchen, and bath towels as well as to clean and remove odors from the clothing they wear beneath their turnout coats and turnout pants. (The term "turnout gear" refers to the fire resistant outer garments worn by firefighters. Specialized appliances called gear washers are used to clean turnout gear. Three fire stations - Station 1, Station 11, and Station 15 - contain gear washers. Employees at stations that do not have a gear washer either travel to a station that has the appliance, or have their turnout gear cleaned by a contractor hired by FEMS to provide this service.) Employees commented to the team that FEMS does not furnish fire stations with standard clothes washers and clothes dryers. In some instances, funds collected from station employees were used to purchase an appliance. In other instances, FEMS employees said that it is common practice for an employee to bring an old appliance from his or her personal residence to the station.

Table 3: Summary of Observations of Restrooms, Bathing Facilities, and Employee Comfort in 32 Fire Stations

Inspection Item	Yes		No	
	Number of Stations	Percent of Total	Number of Stations	Percent of Total[22]
Are there separate bathroom facilities for male and female employees?	32	100%	0	0%
Are all toilets in the building functional?	25	78%	7	22%
Do all the toilets provide adequate privacy?	23	72%	9	28%
Do all restroom/locker room sinks have hot water and cold water?	20	63%	12	38%
Do all restroom/locker room sinks drain properly?	28	88%	4	13%
Are all showers in the building functional and usable?	22	69%	10	31%
Does every employee have his/her own locker/secure area for storing personal items?	21	66%	11	34%
Do employees purchase cleaning supplies (e.g., disinfectant, brushes) or restroom supplies (e.g., soap, toilet paper) using their own money?	9	28%	23	72%
Does anyone other than engine company personnel (i.e., a contracted cleaning company) provide any cleaning services at this location?	0	0%	32	100%
Is there a functional clothes washer?	17	53%	15	47%
Is there a functional clothes dryer?	18	56%	14	44%

[22] Percentages may not all equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Figure 7: Photographs of Problems in Restroom and Bathing Facilities in FEMS Stations

Inoperative shower
Station 7

Inoperative shower
Station 19

Improperly attached sink
Station 13

Sink with missing knob
Station 28

Inoperative toilet
Station 5

Missing restroom stall
Station 19

IV. Food Storage and Preparation

The team observed conditions in the kitchen area of each station and found that all stations contained a functional full size refrigerator/freezer, a stove/oven for cooking, and a kitchen sink with hot and cold water. However, employees at five stations commented to the team that the ovens were not working properly. The team did not observe any evidence of rodents, but at six stations, employees cited the presence of rodents in kitchens and other areas of the stations. Table 4 is a summary of observations related to food storage and preparation facilities.

Table 4: Summary of Observations of Food Storage and Preparation Facilities in 32 Fire Stations

Inspection Item	Yes		No	
	Number of Stations	Percent of Total	Number of Stations	Percent of Total
Is there a functional full-size refrigerator/freezer?	32	100%	0	0%
Is there a functional stove?	27	84%	5	16%
Is there both hot and cold water in the kitchen sink?	32	100%	0	100%

V. Technology and Communication Tools

The team used the fifth section of the inspection checklist to record its observations of each station's vital technologies and communication tools. The team found that:

- twenty-one stations (66 percent) did not have a functioning facsimile machine;
- twenty-two stations (69 percent) lacked a functioning photocopier;
- six stations (19 percent) were experiencing problems with the loudspeakers that are part of the emergency alert system; and
- at twenty-four stations (75 percent), the message board of the emergency alert system either was not working on the day of the team's visit or was deemed unreliable by FEMS employees.

Hard-wired telephone service in each station appeared to be reliable. All 32 stations contained at least two working computers and printers, as well as e-mail and Internet capability. Table 5 is a summary of observations related to key technologies and communication tools.

Table 5: Summary of Observations of Technology and Communication Tools in 32 Fire Stations

Inspection Item	Yes		No	
	Number of Stations	Percent of Total	Number of Stations	Percent of Total
Does the station have a working fax machine?	11	34%	21	66%
Does the station have a working photocopier?	10	31%	22	69%
Do all computers have e-mail and Internet functionality?	32	100%	0	0%
Do the emergency alert system loudspeakers appear to be functioning properly?	26	81%	6	19%
Does the message board (i.e., visual display of emergency call information) of the emergency alert system appear to be functioning properly?	8	25%	24	75%

Additional Observations

FEMS employees opined that the District has not dedicated sufficient resources to maintain and improve conditions in the stations. Employees expressed skepticism that improvements would be made because they were told their stations were scheduled to be renovated many years ago, but repairs and upgrades have not begun. Employees believed, however, that over the last few years, FEMS management has been more responsive in addressing maintenance issues in the stations, but still does not complete repairs in a timely fashion.

FEMS employees also displayed a strong sense of pride in their jobs and in the appearance of their stations. As a result, employees said they often do not wait for FEMS management to schedule and complete necessary repairs and maintenance work. On multiple occasions, employees described their stations as a “second home,” and stated that they would not allow their personal residences to fall into disrepair. Some employees stated that they work part-time outside of FEMS as plumbers, electricians, and carpenters, and are capable of completing

many station repairs themselves. Employees told the team that they regularly perform duties such as painting walls and ceilings, replacing ceiling tiles, and working on the HVAC systems. Employees also said that on past occasions when they purchased equipment and materials needed to conduct repairs, they would request reimbursement from FEMS. Often, these employees said, months would pass before they received reimbursement and sometimes they would not receive reimbursement at all. Some employees stated that they continue to purchase materials for station repairs and maintenance, but no longer request reimbursement.

Conclusions

The OIG's most immediate concerns are the threats to health and safety created by the conditions previously noted in FEMS fire stations, such as the existence of deteriorated asbestos-containing material, non-working smoke detectors, exposed electrical wiring, poorly functioning and uninspected HVAC systems, and broken windows.

The OIG is also concerned, however, about the effect these conditions have on the readiness and morale of FEMS employees. Employees who are physically active during their tour of duty in cleaning the fire station and conducting facility maintenance and repair tasks may compromise their energy levels and stamina to the point where their response capabilities on an emergency call are affected.

Given the fact that the standard shift in a fire station is 24 hours, it is quite reasonable to assume that inoperative showers, bunkrooms with broken windows and leaking roofs, and toilets that afford no privacy have a significant impact on morale. The OIG found such conditions, some of which appear to have existed for a considerable period of time, inexcusable and disheartening to employees who must work in these fire stations.

Recommendations:

(1) That FEMS take steps immediately to properly abate the asbestos hazards at Station 5, Station 18, and Station 26, and report the status of these conditions to the Inspector General within 90 days of the publication of this report.

(2) That FEMS adequately monitor those stations that contain non-hazardous asbestos-containing material to ensure that conditions do not deteriorate and become hazardous to employees' health.

(3) That FEMS, within 90 days of the publication of this report, devise a strategy to identify, prioritize, and complete necessary repairs of all conditions (not just those identified in this report) that threaten the health, safety, and morale of FEMS employees, and report the status to the Inspector General.

(4) That FEMS ask DCRA to immediately inspect the boilers at all fire stations, and report the findings and any abatement plan to the Inspector General within 30 days of the publication of this report.

(5) That FEMS coordinate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DCRA to ensure that boilers at all fire stations are inspected on an annual basis as required by the D.C. Code, and provide a copy of the MOU to the Inspector General.

2. Employees working in the FEMS Property Management Office (PMO) lack position descriptions and an effective mechanism for tracking maintenance and repair requests through to resolution.

Employees in the FEMS PMO are responsible for ensuring each station's supply needs are met and resolving maintenance and repair requests referred to the PMO by station employees. Other responsibilities include management and oversight of FEMS building renovations, and researching and evaluating new products and technologies for potential application in FEMS facilities.

FEMS' General Order book[23] outlines the process for requesting and completing emergency and routine repairs.[24] Typically, the company officer at the station initiates the request in order to prevent multiple requests from station employees concerning the same condition. When a company officer identifies an emergency repair during PMO office hours (7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday), the officer should telephone the PMO and, immediately thereafter, fax the PMO an FEMS Form 17.[25] When an officer identifies an emergency repair after PMO office hours, the company officer telephones the Office of the Deputy Fire Chief for the Fire Fighting Division, which then contacts an on-call PMO employee. Company officers should initiate routine repair requests by faxing a Form 17 to the PMO.

The Planning section of the PMO[26] reviews each repair request and contacts a vendor who will perform the repair. When the vendor arrives at the station to begin work, he or she should report to the company officer. The company officer is responsible for recording the following information in the Company Journal: [27] the times of vendor arrival and departure, the number of vendor representatives who performed the work, the type of service provided, and the results of the work. Once the work is completed, the company officer signs a work order/receipt that the vendor generates at the station. The following steps should then be taken:

1) the company officer either telephones or emails the PMO to notify the office that the repair was completed. The company officer then submits to the PMO an FEMS Form

[23] D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, GENERAL ORDER BOOK, Art. XXII, § 2.
[24] An apparatus door that does not open and close properly is considered an emergency repair; a clogged sink drain is an example of a routine repair.
[25] A blank FEMS Form 17 is included at Appendix 6.
[26] The Planning section of the PMO is staffed with a Planning Officer, Facilities Manager, a Foreman, and Maintenance Mechanics and Workers. The PMO also has a Capital Project Management section that is staffed by several project managers. The staff of the Logistics section includes a management officer, an inventory manager, and supply technicians.
[27] The Company Journal is a log book used by station employees to record daily activities (e.g., responses to emergency calls, visitors to the station) and conditions in the station.

1.[28] Form 1 captures the same information that was recorded in the company journal: name of the vendor, hours of work completed, tasks performed, etc.

2) the vendor submits an invoice to the PMO; and

3) PMO employees review the signed work order/receipt, the Form 1, and the vendor invoice. A PMO employee should then reconcile this information with information captured in the PMO repair request spreadsheet before approving the invoice for payment.

For routine repairs, such as a clogged sink drain, a PMO employee relies upon feedback from station employees to determine whether the repair was completed correctly and whether the condition has been abated. For larger projects, such as a roof repair, a PMO employee visits the station to review the vendor's work and verify the repair.

According to information provided by FEMS, the PMO logged 549 repair requests in FY 2005, 436 repair requests in FY 2006, and 100 during the first 4 months of FY 2007.

a. Numerous employees in the FEMS Property Management Office lack position descriptions.

Human resources best practices recommend the development of formal job descriptions that define each employee's specific duties and responsibilities. The FEMS Human Resources Management Division could not provide the inspection team with written position descriptions for the following jobs within the PMO: Planning Officer, Facilities Manager, Capital Projects Manager and Officer, Supply Technician, and Maintenance Mechanic.

Due to the lack of position descriptions, the team could not gain an accurate understanding of the roles each PMO employee is expected to fill or the skills and experience each employee is expected to bring to his or her position. Furthermore, without position descriptions, FEMS leadership can neither hold employees accountable nor conduct meaningful performance reviews because there are no job-specific standards.

b. The PMO's repair request tracking mechanism does not adequately record actions taken by employees and does not monitor repair requests through to resolution.

The team reviewed copies of the PMO's FY 2005, FY 2006, and FY 2007 (through January 2007) repair request spreadsheets, the tool by which the PMO keeps track of repair requests made by station employees. Overall, these spreadsheets captured the following information: the date and time of the repair request; the station where the repair is needed; the name of the person who requested the repair; a very brief description of the problem; and the name of the PMO employee who took the call for repair.

[28] A blank FEMS Form 1 is included at Appendix 6.

The FYs 2005 and 2006 spreadsheets contained a field of information entitled "Action Taken." For nearly every call recorded on these spreadsheets, this field captured only the name, or in many instances an incomplete name of a vendor. This field contained no additional data such as vendor contact information, the date(s) an action was completed, or the name of the PMO employee who took action on the repair. In place of an "Action Taken" field, the FY 2007 spreadsheet contained a field entitled "Vendor" that captured only the name, or partial name, of a vendor. The FY 2005 spreadsheet contained a field entitled "Service Date" but for approximately 95% of the calls logged, no information was entered into this field. The FYs 2006 and 2007 spreadsheets do not have a field to capture date-of-service information.

The repair request spreadsheets also contained no indication of whether a repair logged by the PMO was completed. In order to determine whether a requested repair has been completed, PMO employees must search through paper files that presumably contain a work order/invoice signed by a station employee who witnessed the repair, a completed Form 1, and an invoice that accurately reflects the location of the work and the tasks completed. A PMO employee said that station employees rarely complete a Form 1.

Inspectors reviewed PMO files and found record retrieval extremely difficult and time-consuming. For example, in an attempt to compile a history of repairs completed at a particular station, the inspection team had to search through files containing records for all stations that were organized only by date.

To ensure accuracy and efficiency, the same tool that captures repair request information should also capture meaningful information about actions taken to complete the repair, and confirmation that the problem that necessitated the repair was resolved. Without a mechanism to quickly identify those repair requests that have been completed and those that remain unresolved, PMO employees cannot manage their workload effectively and ensure that station maintenance and repair issues are addressed in a timely fashion.

Recommendations:

(1) That FEMS develop position descriptions for all PMO positions.

(2) That FEMS take steps to improve its capabilities in receiving maintenance and repair requests and tracking their status through to a timely resolution.

(3) That the PMO collect additional information in the repair request spreadsheet, to include: actions taken by PMO employees; the date the PMO or a vendor completed the repair; confirmation that the repair adequately addressed the deficient condition(s); and the repair costs.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

APPENDICES

List of Findings and Recommendations

1. **Building conditions at numerous fire stations threaten the health, safety, and comfort of FEMS employees and negatively impact the work environment and employee morale.**

   (1) That FEMS take steps immediately to properly abate the asbestos hazards at Station 5, Station 18, and Station 26, and report the status of these conditions to the Inspector General within 90 days of the publication of this report.

   (2) That FEMS adequately monitor those stations that contain non-hazardous asbestos-containing material to ensure that conditions do not deteriorate and become hazardous to employees' health.

   (3) That FEMS, within 90 days of the publication of this report, devise a strategy to identify, prioritize, and complete necessary repairs of all conditions (not just those identified in this report) that threaten the health, safety, and morale of FEMS employees, and report the status to the Inspector General.

   (4) That FEMS ask DCRA to immediately inspect the boilers at all fire stations, and report the findings and any abatement plan to the Inspector General within 30 days of the publication of this report.

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2. **Employees working in the FEMS Property Management Office (PMO) lack position descriptions and an effective mechanism for tracking maintenance and repair requests through to resolution.**

   (1) That FEMS develop position descriptions for all PMO positions.

   (2) That FEMS take steps to improve its capabilities in receiving maintenance and repair requests and tracking their status through to a timely resolution.

   (3) That the PMO collect additional information in the repair request spreadsheet to include: actions taken by PMO employees; the date the PMO or a vendor completed the repair; confirmation that the repair adequately addressed the deficient condition(s); and the cost of the repair.

APPENDIX 2

Station 1
Address: **2225 M Street, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20007
Number of assigned FTEs:[29] 68
Year constructed:[30] 1960

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 1, at 1 (May 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Broken ground-floor and second-floor windows.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Slide pole[31] was out-of-service.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.

Employees stated that the HVAC system operates at one extreme or the other (i.e., too hot or cold). The team did not find any visible evidence that the HVAC systems had been serviced recently.

Broken windows

[29] The team used the *District of Columbia Fire and EMS Department Roster*, dated July 8, 2007, to obtain the number of full-time equivalents, or FTEs, assigned to each station.
[30] Information in this appendix regarding the age of each fire station was obtained from OPM building assessments, dated 2000, provided by FEMS.
[31] A slide pole is a traditional fixture in fire stations and allows personnel to descend rapidly from an upper floor to a lower floor. It should be noted that in some jurisdictions, their use has been discontinued out of concern for injuries.

Station 2
Address: **500 F Street, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20001
Number of assigned FTEs: 77
Year constructed: 1979

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 2, at 1 (June 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Electrical wires hanging from ceiling.
- Missing ceiling tiles.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.

The team observed multiple wires hanging from a ceiling in an office area. Employees stated that the hallways are very hot in the summer and that the air vents in the restrooms provide no relief.

Wires hanging from ceiling

Missing ceiling tiles

Peeling paint in a shower

Missing bathroom tiles

Station 3
Address: **439 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20001
Number of assigned FTEs: 40
Year constructed: 1916
(Renovated in 2000)

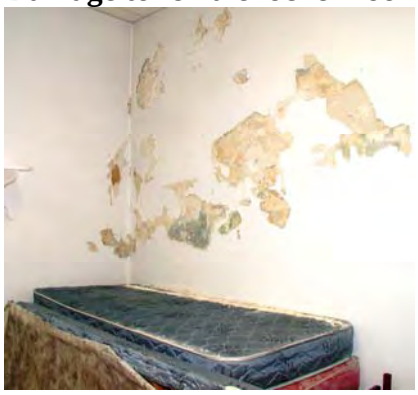
Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 3, at 1 (June 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Peeling paint and exposed electrical wires in a bedroom/locker room.
- Live, pigeon-sized bird in the building's top floor.

Paint and plaster on a wall in an unused bedroom/locker room had extensive damage. Paint chips and plaster littered the mattress and floor. Several electrical outlets and light switches in the room did not appear to be functional or properly covered. Employees stated that the bedroom/locker room was not used; however, it appeared this space could be used by employees if repairs were made.

Damage to female locker room/bedroom



Exposed electrical wiring

Broken window

Station 4
Address: **2531 Sherman Avenue, NW**
Washington, D.C. 20001
Number of assigned FTEs: 59
Year constructed: 1976

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 4, at 1 (June 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

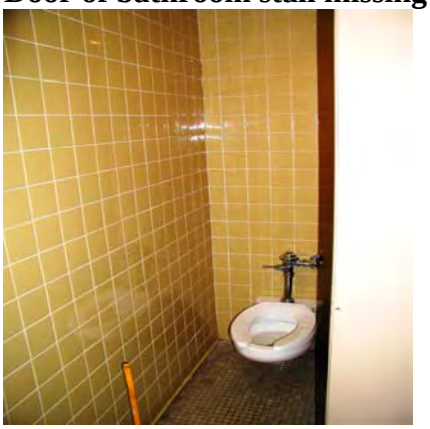
- Leaking ceiling in bunkroom.
- Exposed electrical wiring.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Mice and mosquitoes.

Employees stated that the bunkroom ceiling leaks. Employees also believed that there is mold in the carpet. The team observed wires hanging from the ceiling in an office space. Employees did not know whether the wires posed a danger but explained that the wires have been a problem for an extended period of time and they avoid contact with them.

During the site visit, the team observed two instances in which the message board of the emergency alert system did not display the address of an incoming emergency call, and no audible alert tones were broadcast. Employees stated that there have been instances when the audible alert tone, the dispatch printout, and message board have not worked for an entire day.

Exposed electrical wiring

Door of bathroom stall missing



Station 5
Address: **3412 Dent Place, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20007
Number of assigned FTEs: 28
Year constructed: 1900

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 5, at 1 (Feb. 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit, Through Document Review

- Unabated asbestos hazards.
- Broken windows.
- Damaged walls and ceilings.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.

The team reviewed a 2002 building inspection report in which a contractor found that hazardous asbestos-containing material was present and posed a significant risk to human health.[32] The team did not find evidence that the conditions have been abated.

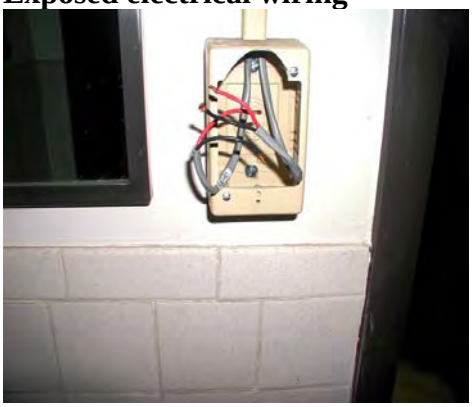
Broken window

Damaged ceiling

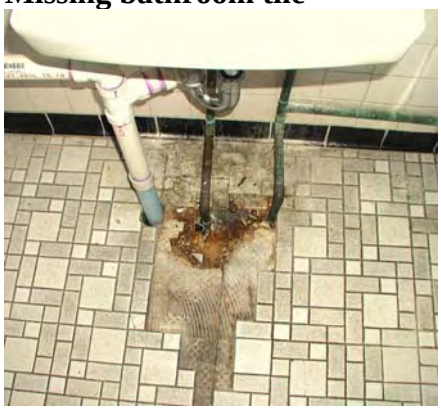
[32] PEER CONSULTANTS, P.C., ASBESTOS SURVEY FOR ENGINE COMPANY # 5, at 4 (Aug. 2002).

Station 5 – continued

Exposed electrical wiring



Missing bathroom tile



Station 6
Address: **1300 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20001
Number of assigned FTEs: 65
Year constructed: 1974

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 6, at 1 (June 2000).

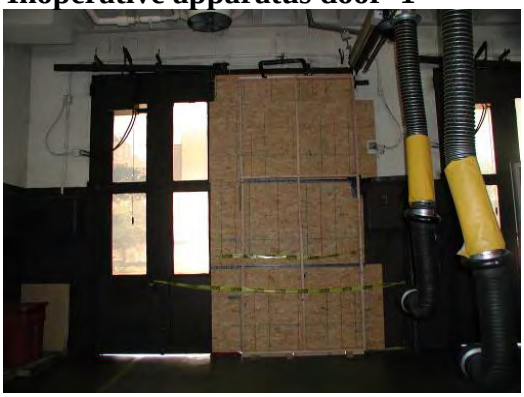
Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Two apparatus doors cannot be opened for departing emergency vehicles.
- Leaking roof.
- Crack in an interior wall.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Insufficient lighting of the apparatus floor.

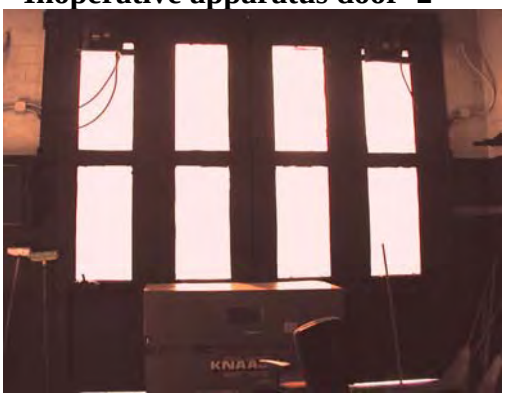
There are six apparatus doors at Station 6: three in the front of the building and three in the rear. Employees stated that one of the rear doors is inoperative and welded shut. In addition, employees said that one of the front apparatus doors was damaged in December 2006 and has not been repaired. Employees, therefore, must park fire trucks and ambulances behind these two apparatus doors that cannot be opened, and move vehicles around on the apparatus floor in order to be prepared for emergency responses. This poses a challenge to employees because the vehicles are large, the lanes are narrow, and employees must maneuver vehicles around support columns throughout the space. The team observed employees moving vehicles on one occasion.

The team observed damaged ceiling tiles throughout the station, including the bunkroom. Employees stated they removed many ceiling tiles because the tiles had been damaged by water from the leaking roof and that they used buckets to catch water when it rains. The team observed a crack in a wall of the exercise room.

Inoperative apparatus door 1



Inoperative apparatus door 2



Station 6 - continued

Crack in interior wall

Water damaged, missing ceiling tiles

Station 7
Address: **1101 Half Street, S.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20024
Number of assigned FTEs: 40
Year constructed: 1961
(Renovated in 1990)

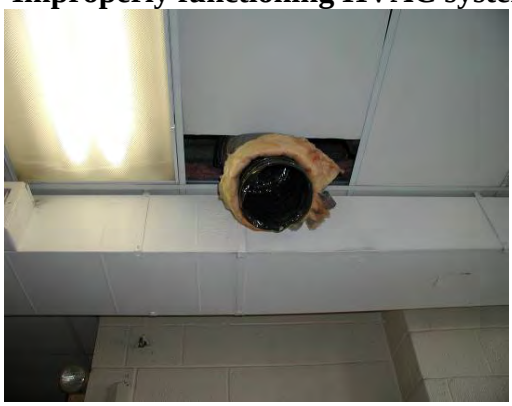
Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 7, at 1 (June 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Crack in an exterior wall.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Water damaged ceiling tiles.

The team observed a lengthy crack in an exterior wall that appeared to stretch to the roofline. Employees expressed concern that it could "shear off." In the men's locker room, the team observed plastic tubing hanging from the ceiling. While there was some cool air flowing from this tubing, it did not appear to be an efficient or proper way to cool a room. The team also observed numerous water damaged ceiling tiles.

Improperly functioning HVAC system



Water damaged ceiling tiles

Station 8
Address: **1520 C Street, S.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20003
Number of assigned FTEs: 55
Year constructed: 1964

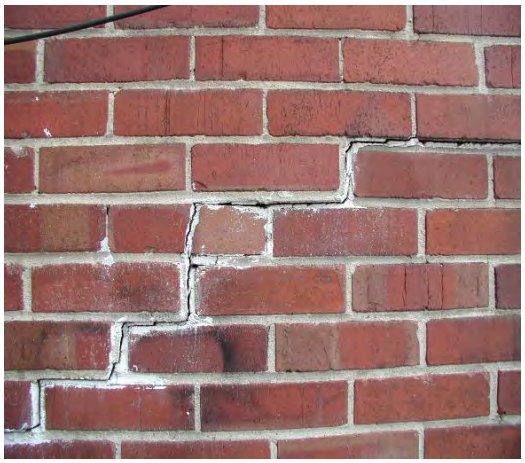
Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 8, at 1 (Feb. 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Cracks in exterior walls.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Rodents and mosquitoes.

The team observed multiple cracks in exterior walls. Employees stated that there is a room that contains a machine used for filling air tanks and speculated that the vibrations from the machine caused or exacerbated the cracks.

Crack in an exterior wall



Crack in another exterior wall

Station 9
Address: **1617 U Street, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20009
Number of assigned FTEs: 60
Year constructed: 1967
(renovation in-progress during 2007)

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 9, at 1 (March 2000).

During the time of the team's fieldwork, this fire station was under renovation. Consequently, the team did not evaluate conditions therein.

Station 10
Address: **1342 Florida Avenue, N.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20001
Number of assigned FTEs: 60
Year constructed: 1925
(most recent renovation in 1976)

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 10, at 1 (June 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Damage to interior walls and ceilings.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Rodents.

The team noted extensive ceiling damage in the officers' workspace. Employees commented that water drips from the ceiling. Employees also said that the message board of the emergency alert system does not function consistently. Some employees estimated it is out-of-service several times each month, while others explained they have "lost track" of the number of times that the message board malfunctions. Employees said they see rodents daily on the first floor, and on occasion in the second floor bunkroom.

Damage to ceiling in office

Damage to wall near sitting room

Station 10 - continued

Damage to wall in bunk room

Broken window panes

Station 11
Address: **3420 14th Street, N.W.**
Washington, DC 20010
Number of assigned FTEs: 68
Year constructed: 1984

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 11, at 1 (July 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Water damage to the walls.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.

Employees stated that sometimes the roof drains become clogged, a condition that causes water to flow down interior walls and into the stairwells. The water has damaged the walls and caused the paint to chip. Employees stated that the emergency alert system is not reliable.

Station 12
Address: **2225 5th Street, N.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20002
Number of assigned FTEs: 72
Year constructed: 1987

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 12, at 1 (July 2000).

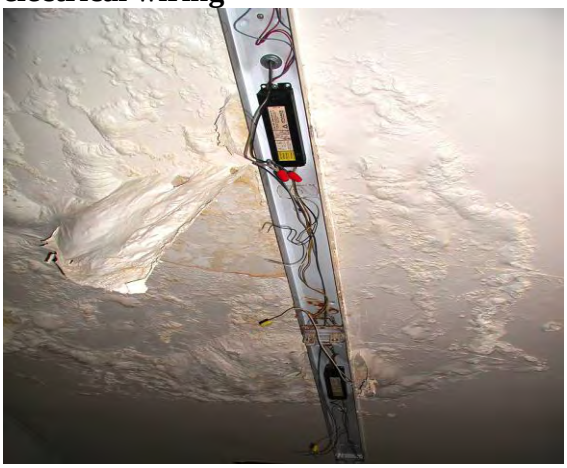
Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Water damaged bunkroom ceiling.
- Water leak in the kitchen.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.

Employees stated there are problems with a leaking ceiling in the bunkroom and a water leak in the kitchen. Employees were unsure of the cause of the leak in the kitchen, but stated that a vendor was scheduled to assess the problem on the day of the team's visit. The team observed a large puddle of water in one area of the kitchen that was approximately ¼" deep. Employees explained this leak has been an on-going problem and there have been instances during which the water spread to the apparatus floor.

Near the bunkroom, there is a room that houses part of the HVAC system. The team noticed that the door was missing from this room and that the HVAC system was loud when running. When the team asked employees why the door had been removed, they stated the door was removed to improve the efficiency of the HVAC system. Employees stated that while it is loud, they have grown accustomed to the noise.

Water damaged ceiling with exposed electrical wiring



Water damaged ceiling

Station 13
Address: **450 6th Street, S.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20024
Number of assigned FTEs: 68
Year constructed: 1960
(Partially renovated in 1984)

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 13, at 1 (March 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Water damaged office ceiling.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.

Employees stated that water drips from an office ceiling. The team noted a poorly installed window air conditioning unit in a ground floor bedroom. There were gaps around the unit, and an assortment of plastic, tape, and other materials filled the gaps.

Missing ceiling tile

Water damaged ceiling

Poorly installed window air conditioning unit in ground floor bedroom

Station 14
Address: **4801 North Capitol Street, N.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20011
Number of assigned FTEs: 40
Year constructed: 1945

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 14, at 1 (May 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Water damaged ceiling.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Rodents.

Employees stated that there are problems with water leaking from the ceiling in the men's locker room. The electronic message board of the emergency alerting system was not working during the team's visit. Employees stated they experience problems with rodents.

Missing ceiling tile

Water damaged ceiling

Missing tiles in bathroom

Bathroom stall with missing door

Station 15
Address: **2101 14th Street, S.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20020
Number of assigned FTEs: 85
Year constructed: 1969

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 15, at 1 (July 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Damaged apparatus floor.
- Unstable retaining wall.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.

Employees estimated that the station's boiler malfunctions about every 6 weeks during the winter. Employees also said the emergency alert system is not reliable. Areas of the apparatus floor were damaged. Employees commented on a retaining wall in the parking lot at the rear of the fire station; the wall was leaning to one side and looked as if it might collapse.

Damaged apparatus floor

Damaged apparatus floor

Damaged retaining wall

Station 16
Address: **1018 13th Street, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20005
Number of assigned FTEs: 81
Year constructed: 1932
(partial renovation in 2000)

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 16, at 1 (Jan. 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Water damaged ceiling.
- Exposed electrical wires.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.

The team found evidence of water damage to ceilings throughout the station. The team noted tubing from an HVAC system that was hanging from the ceiling in some areas.

Water damaged ceiling

Water damaged ceiling

Station 17
Address: **1227 Monroe Street, N.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20017
Number of assigned FTEs: 40
Year constructed: 1902
(most recent renovation in 2007)

Source: OIG

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Interior flooding due to clogged external drains.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.

Employees cited recent improvements in the effectiveness of the air conditioning in the bunkroom, but that the system did not effectively cool the kitchen or the sitting room. According to employees, the drain outside the rear door of the fire station becomes clogged with leaves and other debris and the water runs under the back door into the station. (The team observed sandbags near the back door.) Employees estimated that the message board and a printer of the emergency alert system function approximately 75 percent of the time.

Sandbags near rear door

Station 18
Address: **414 8th Street, S.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20003
Number of assigned FTEs: 60
Year constructed: 1965

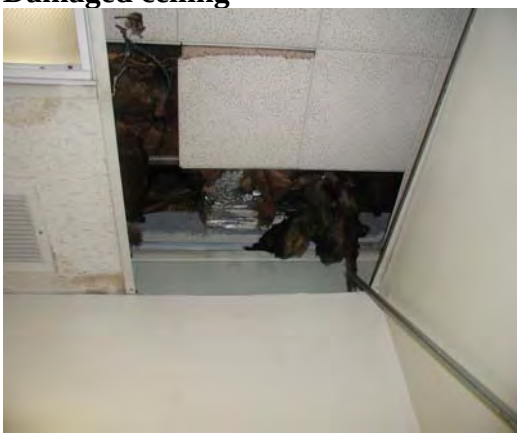
Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 18, at 1 (April 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit and Through Document Review

- Unabated asbestos hazards.
- Damage to interior walls and ceilings.
- Damage to exterior wall.

The team reviewed a 2002 building inspection report in which a contractor found that hazardous asbestos-containing material was present and posed a significant risk to human health.[33] The team did not find evidence that the conditions have been abated.

Damaged ceiling



Damaged exterior wall

[33] PEER CONSULTANTS, P.C., ASBESTOS SURVEY FOR ENGINE COMPANY # 18, at 4 (Aug. 2002).

Station 19
Address: **2813 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20003
Number of assigned FTEs: 52
Year constructed: 1911

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 19, at 1 (May 2000).

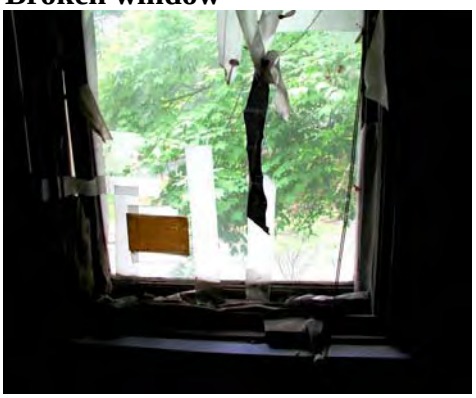
Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Water damaged ceiling tiles.
- Inoperative showers.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Broken windows.
- Extensive bird droppings in the building's hose tower.

Malfunctioning air conditioning system

Water damaged ceiling tiles

Broken window



Inoperative shower

Station 20
Address: **4300 Wisconsin Ave, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20016
Number of assigned FTEs: 69
Year constructed: 1901
(most recent renovation in 2006)

Source: OIG

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Poorly fitting doors.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Improperly installed gates to exterior trash enclosure.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Slide pole was out of service.

Employees stated that the HVAC system and the emergency alert system frequently malfunction. Employees stated that there is a "50 – 50 chance" that all elements of the emergency alert system work on a call. Employees said that the gates leading to the dumpster enclosure were not properly installed, have separated from their mounts, and may cause injury to anyone working in the area.

Slide pole out of service

Broken gates leading to dumpster

Station 21
Address: **1763 Lanier Place, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20009
Number of assigned FTEs: 42
Year constructed: 1908
(Partially renovated in 1981)

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 21, at 1 (July 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Water damaged ceilings.
- Exterior structural damage.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Rodents.

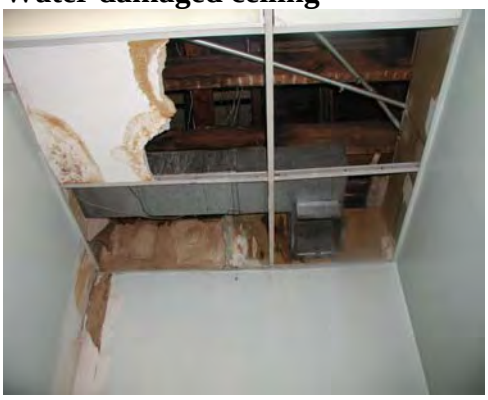
Employees said they observe rodents daily.

Water damaged ceiling

Water damaged ceiling

Exterior structural damage

Water damaged ceiling



Station 22
Address: **5760 Georgia Avenue, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20011
Number of assigned FTEs: 56
Year constructed: 1897

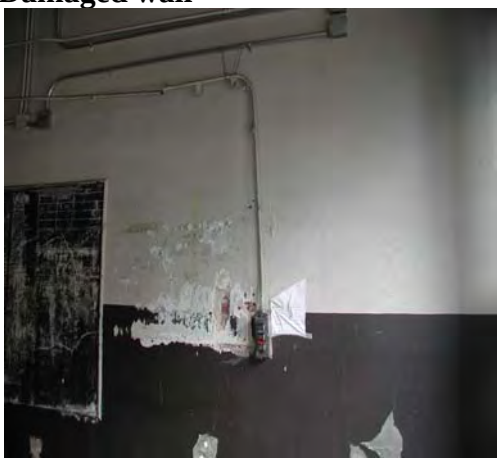
Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 22, at 1 (Feb. 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Damage to interior walls and ceilings.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Broken window.
- Water leak in boiler room.
- Unsecured fence.
- Damaged apparatus floor.
- Rodents.

Employees stated that the drain in the boiler room becomes clogged when it rains. They further explained that the Department of Public Works has fixed the drain but there is constant moisture in the boiler room.

Damaged wall



Damaged wall

Station 23
Address: **2119 G Street, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20037
Number of assigned FTEs: 28
Year constructed: 1910

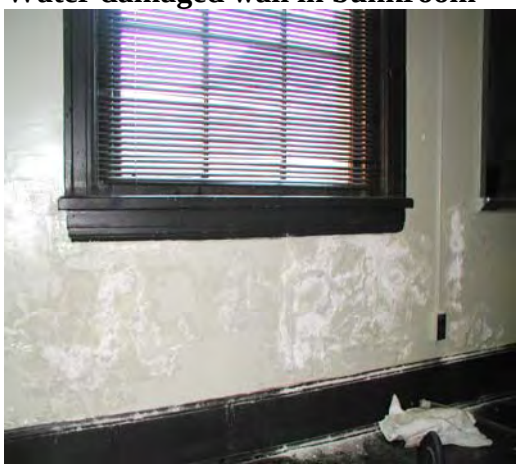
Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 23, at 1 (May 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Damage to interior walls.
- Inadequate heating system.
- Tendency for basement to flood.

Employees stated that the heating system is not reliable and that on occasion they have used the oven to provide additional heat. Employees estimated that once every year or two, water collects in the basement. Typically, they said, there is about an inch of water, but on one occasion there was about 2 ½ feet of water, and on another occasion the water was as high as the basement ceiling.

Water damaged wall in bunkroom



Station 24
Address: **5101 Georgia Avenue, N.W.**
Washington, DC 20011
Number of assigned FTEs: 76
Year constructed: 1994

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 24, at 1 (July 2000).

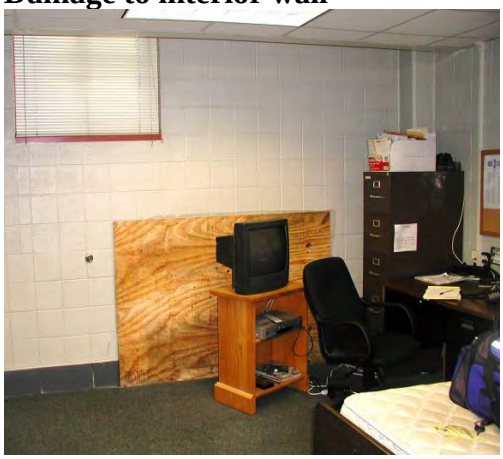
Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Damage to interior and exterior bunkroom walls.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Rodents.

On the day of the team's visit, the cooling system was not functioning and employees were using floor fans to help cool the interior of the fire station. Employees stated that problems with the cooling system are common. Employees said that in December 2006, a car struck the exterior of the fire station. They stated that station employees secured plywood to the interior and exterior of the wall to cover the damage. Employees said they were informed that the collision did not compromise the building's structural integrity. However, employees said that mice enter the fire station through gaps around the plywood. The team observed a musty odor in a bunkroom.

Damage to exterior wall

Damage to interior wall



Station 25
Address: **3202 Martin Luther King Ave, S.E.**
Washington, DC 20032
Number of assigned FTEs: 60
Year constructed: 1903
(Renovation in Progress)

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 25, at 1 (March 2000).

During the time of the team's fieldwork, this fire station was under renovation. Consequently, the team did not evaluate conditions therein.

Station 26
Address: **1340 Rhode Island Avenue, N.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20018
Number of assigned FTEs: 56
Year constructed: 1937

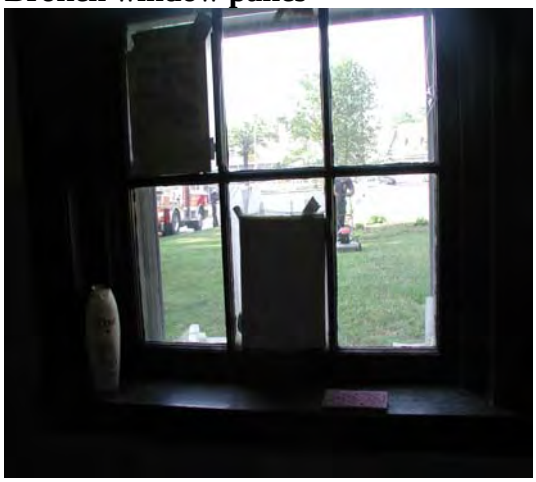
Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 26, at 1 (Feb. 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit and Document Review

- Unabated asbestos hazards.
- Broken ground-floor windows.
- Damage to walls and ceilings.
- Mosquitoes.

The team reviewed a 2002 building inspection report in which a contractor found that hazardous asbestos-containing material was present and recommended abatement.[34] The team did not find evidence that the conditions have been abated. The apparatus floor had a small area in which the concrete was breaking up and the floor appeared to be sinking.

Broken window panes



Damaged wall, exposed wiring

[34] PEER CONSULTANTS, P.C., ASBESTOS SURVEY FOR ENGINE COMPANY # 26, at 4 (Aug. 2002).

Station 27
Address: **4201 Minnesota Avenue, N.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20019
Number of assigned FTEs: 46
Year constructed: 1908
(Renovated in 1999)

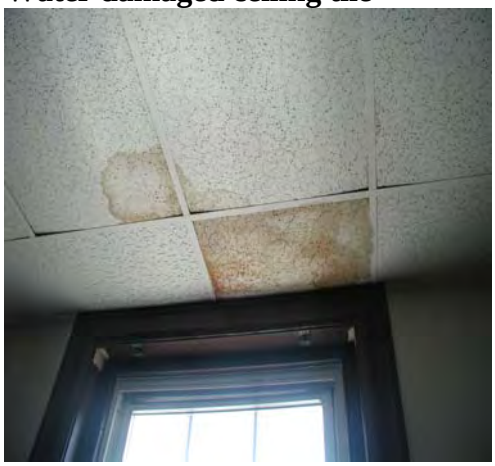
Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 27, at 1 (May 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

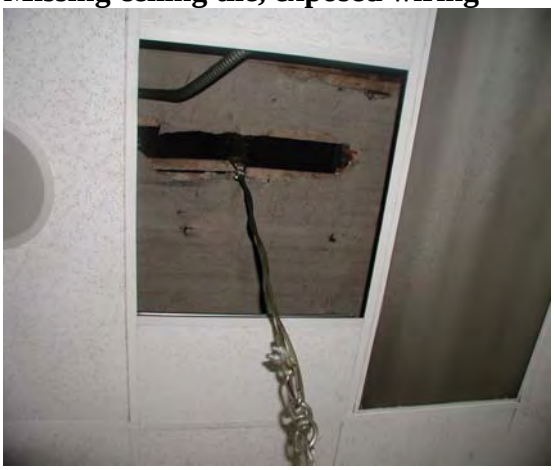
- Damaged ceiling tiles.

The team observed numerous examples of water damaged ceiling tiles.

Water damaged ceiling tile



Missing ceiling tile, exposed wiring



Station 28
Address: **3522 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20008
Number of assigned FTEs: 56
Year constructed: 1916

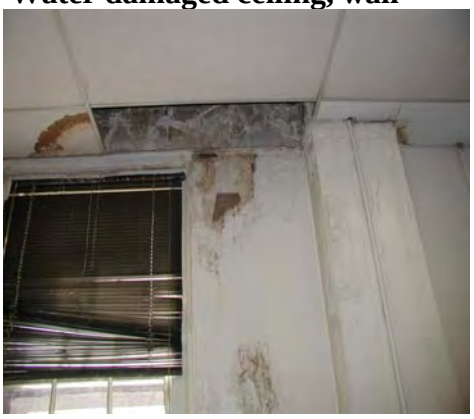
Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 28, at 1 (Feb. 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Water damaged ceilings and walls in bunkroom.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.

The team observed water damage, peeling paint, and mold in the bunkroom. Employees stated that because the station's cooling system does not function properly, window air conditioning units were installed. The station has a kitchen, but it is not large enough to accommodate a table; employees, therefore, eat their meals at a table on the apparatus floor. Employees also said that the bay door entrances to the apparatus floor are very narrow. As a result, employees have damaged side view mirrors while driving vehicles in and out of the station.

Water damaged ceiling, wall



Evidence of interior leak

Station 29
Address: **4811 MacArthur Boulevard, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20007
Number of assigned FTEs: 68
Year constructed: 1925

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 29, at 1 (April 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Water damage in bunkroom, bathroom, and locker room ceilings and walls.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Rodents and mosquitoes.

Several employees estimated that the message board of the emergency alert system functions "50 percent of the time."

Damage to bunkroom wall

Damage to bathroom wall

Damaged locker room wall

Evidence of leak in locker room

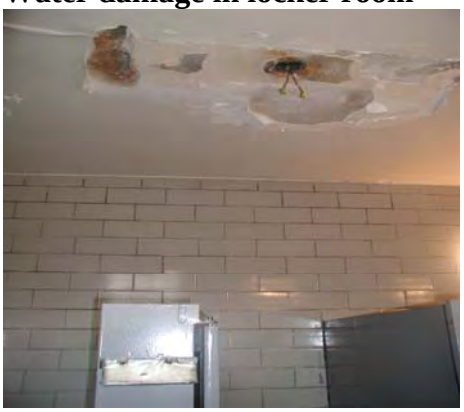
Station 30
Address: **50 49th Street, N.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20019
Number of assigned FTEs: 71
Year constructed: 1953

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 30, at 1 (Feb. 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Damaged ceiling in the bathroom of the men's locker room that, according to employees, leaks during rain storms.
- Inoperative locks on ground floor windows.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Damage to apparatus floor.
- Rodents.

Water damage in locker room



Damage to apparatus floor

Station 31
Address: **4930 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20008
Number of assigned FTEs: 42
Year constructed: 1930
(Partial renovation in 1976)

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 31 at 1 (Feb. 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Improperly functioning HVAC system.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Damage to apparatus floor.

Employees said the HVAC system is new but unreliable. Employees, therefore, installed a window air conditioning unit in a bunkroom. Instead of venting to the building's exterior, the unit improperly vents out to the apparatus floor.

Improperly vented window air conditioning unit

Damaged apparatus floor

Station 32
Address: **2425 Irving Street, S.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20020
Number of assigned FTEs: 60
Year constructed: 1957
(Renovated in 2005)

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE ENGINE COMPANY 32, at 1 (2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Water damaged ceiling tiles.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Rodents and ants.

Water damaged ceiling tiles

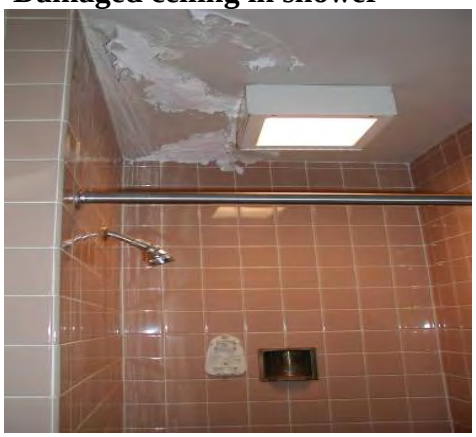
Station 33
Address: **101 Atlantic Street, S.E.**
Washington, D.C. 20032
Number of assigned FTEs: 72
Year constructed: 1987

Source: OPM, D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FIRE COMPANY 33, at 1 (July 2000).

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Evidence of leak inside kitchen ceiling.
- Water damage and peeling paint on locker room ceiling.
- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.

Damaged ceiling in shower



Fire Boat Facility
Address: **550 Water Street, S.W.**
Washington, D.C. 20024
Number of assigned FTEs: 28
Year constructed: 1989
(Renovated in 2003)
Note: This building is not an FEMS building. The Fire Boat is co-located with the Metropolitan Police Department's Harbor Patrol Unit.

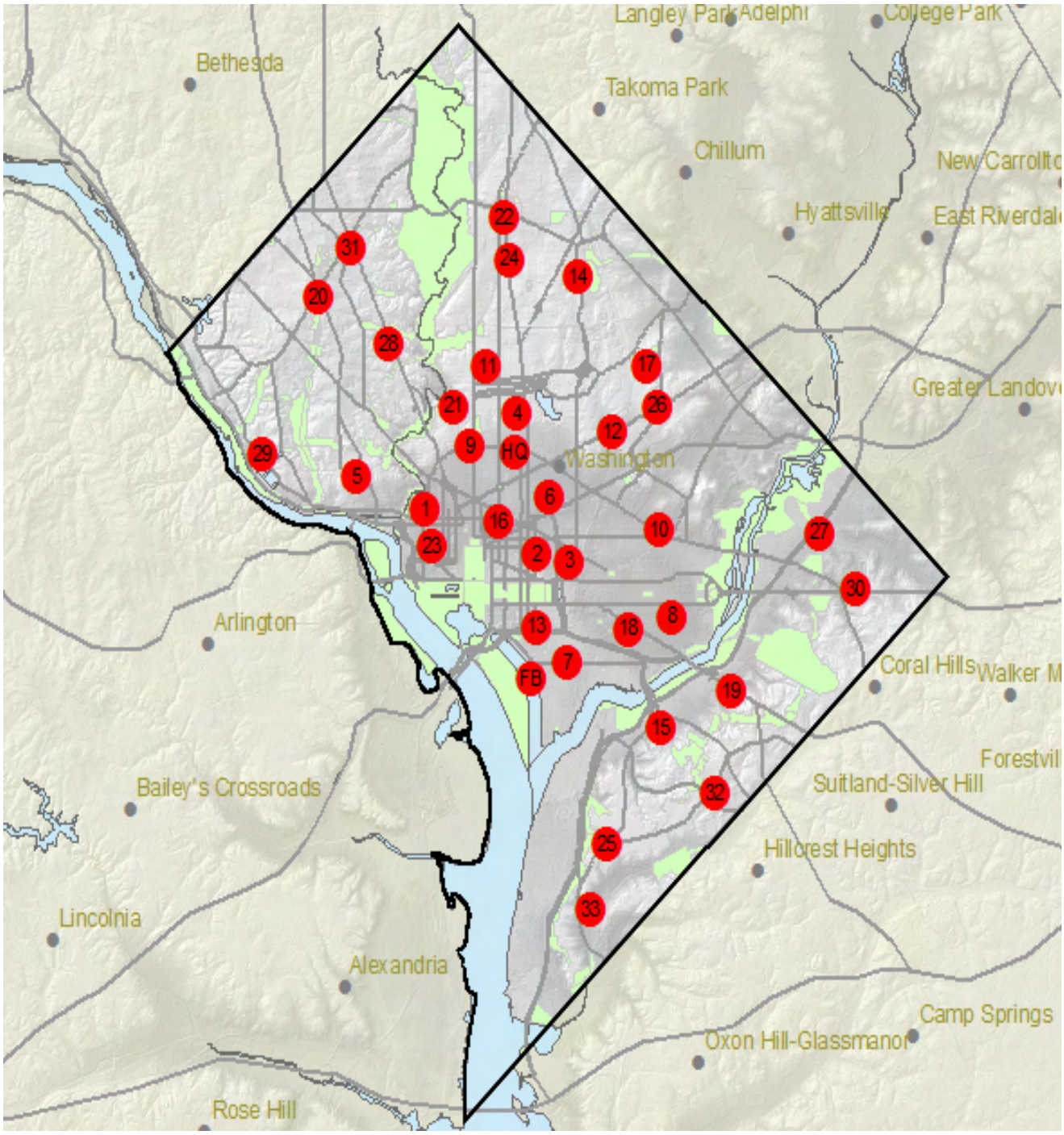
Source: OIG

Conditions Noted During Site Visit

- Elements of emergency alert system did not operate properly.
- Improperly functioning HVAC system.

APPENDIX 3

Map of all FEMS Fire Stations and the Fire Boat Facility



Source: D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department website, http://www.fems.dc.gov/fems/cwp/view,a,3,q,526088,femsNav,|31511|.asp

APPENDIX 4

Checklist for I&E Inspection of FEMS Engine Companies

Location: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Inspector: _____

Check list Item	Yes	No	Comments
Building security, general infrastructure			
Do all exterior doors (excluding doors for equipment egress) latch and lock properly?			
Do all exterior doors for equipment egress function properly?			
Do all exterior windows appear to latch and lock properly?			
Do you see any problems (e.g., mold, water damage, holes, instability) with interior floors, walls, ceilings, staircases, or handrails? (If yes, note examples and photograph.)			
Do you see any problems with exterior façades? (If yes, note examples and photograph.)			
Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC)			
Do all living / working areas have a functional heating system? (If no, which areas do not?)			
Do all living / working areas have a functioning cooling system? (If no,			

which areas do not?)			
Is there any evidence (e.g., a dated record of inspection affixed to the equipment) the HVAC systems have been inspected by a certified professional within the past year?			
Employee comfort			
Are there separate bathroom facilities for male and female employees?			
Are all toilets in the building functional?			
Do all the toilets provide adequate privacy?			
Do all restroom / locker room sinks have hot water and cold water?			
Do all restroom / locker room sinks drain?			
Are all the showers in the building functional and usable?			
Does every employee have his/her own locker / secure area for storing personal items?			
Do employees purchase cleaning supplies (e.g., disinfectant, brushes) or restroom supplies (e.g., soap, toilet paper) using their own money?			
Does anyone other than Engine Company personnel (i.e., a contracted cleaning company) provide any cleaning services at this			

location?			
Is there a functional clothes washer?			
Is there a functional clothes dryer?			
Food Storage and Preparation			
Is there a functional full-size refrigerator / freezer?			
Is there a functional stove?			
Is there both hot and cold water in the kitchen sink?			
Technology, communication			
How many functional hard wired telephones does the Engine Company have?			
How many functional fax machines does the Engine Company have?			
How many functional computers does the Engine Company have?			
Do all computers have email and Internet functionality?			
How many functional photocopiers does the Engine Company have?			
How many functional computer printers does the Engine Company have?			
Do the dispatch loudspeakers appear to be functioning properly?			

Does the dispatch message board (visual display of information) appear to be functioning properly?			

Additional comments:

APPENDIX 5

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Inspector General

Inspector General

CONFIDENTIAL

June 15, 2007

Via Hand Delivery

Dennis L. Rubin
Chief
D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department
1923 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 201
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Chief Rubin:

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) provides a Management Alert Report (MAR) when we believe a serious matter requires the immediate attention of District of Columbia government officials. This MAR (**MAR 07-I-007**) is to alert you to a safety problem that may put D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS) employees at risk of injury. The OIG has found non-working smoke detectors in living quarters and work areas of FEMS engine company buildings. This issue came to our attention during our re-inspection of FEMS.

Background

FEMS provides fire protection and medical services from 33 engine companies, located throughout the District, and the Fire Boat station. Each of these buildings, in addition to the fire apparatus, contains work and storage spaces, sleeping areas, kitchen appliances and dining space, and restroom and bathing facilities.

As part of the OIG's ongoing re-inspection of FEMS, Inspections and Evaluations Division inspectors are currently assessing the living and working conditions in all engine companies. To date, our inspectors have visited a majority of the engine companies and plan to complete assessments of the remaining facilities in the near future.

Observations

During recent, unannounced visits, the team found non-working smoke detectors in living quarters and work areas of engine company buildings. The inspectors observed and photographed missing or inoperative smoke detectors at multiple locations, including: a storage room at Engine Company 13; a sleeping area at Engine Company 22; a restroom at Engine Company 26; and a sleeping area at Engine Company 31.

717 14th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 727-2540

Some detectors appear to have been inoperative for some time, and there may be detectors at some locations that do not show obvious defects, but may in fact also be inoperative. In a number of instances, FEMS employees confirmed to the inspectors that the smoke detectors were not working.

Recommendation

In light of the observations of our re-inspection team, I would recommend that immediate action be taken to: determine the exact number of inoperative or missing smoke detectors in all engine company facilities; assign high priority to their repair or replacement; and install additional detectors if deemed necessary in order to ensure adequate coverage of engine company personnel and buildings.

I would appreciate a response to this message by close of business June 25, 2007, that includes actions planned, or any disagreements or concerns you have with the information presented here. If you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Alvin Wright, Jr., Assistant Inspector General for Inspections and Evaluations on (202) 727-8452. Thank you for your continued cooperation

Sincerely,

Charles J. Willoughby
Inspector General

cc: Daniel M. Tangherlini, Deputy Mayor and City Administrator
Kelly Valentine, Interim Director, Office of Risk Management

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA L.S.
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

ADDRESS REPLY TO
"FIRE CHIEF"

July 9, 2007

Charles J. Willoughby
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
717 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

RE: MAR 07-I-007

The Fire and EMS Department (FEMS) has taken several steps to immediately address the problem of missing or inoperable smoke detectors in firehouses. A survey was conducted at each facility to assess the situation. Smoke detectors were tested and if they were found to have any problems were supplemented with a battery powered smoke detector to ensure protection to that area. This survey and remedy was completed on June 29, 2007.

A permanent solution to defective smoke detector equipment is now in progress starting with an assessment of the integrated hard wired systems now in the firehouses. FEMS has tasked the electrical contractor company J.E.S. Electric to determining the condition of the systems in all facilities starting with the ones sited in the Management Alert Report. Once the first firehouses are assessed and the conditions of these systems are determined a plan will be formulated to perform permanent repairs. The reports and cost estimate to repair or replace the systems are due from the contractor by July 12, 2007.

I hope that the above information has sufficiently addressed the concerns listed in your letter to me dated June 15, 2007. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns at 202-673-3127.

Dennis L. Rubin

Sincerely
Dennis L. Rubin
Fire/EMS Chief

APPENDIX 6

District of Columbia Fire and EMS Department

Form -17
Rev. 10/01

REQUEST FOR REPAIRS

Requested by: _____ Date: _____
Name / Company / Division

Requested repairs (Be as specific as possible as to the nature and location):

Was previous telephone call made? ☐ Yes ☐ No Date: _____

_____
Company / Division Commander

All requests for repairs, both emergency and non-emergency in nature, shall be made in accordance with Article XXII of the Fire and EMS Department Order Book. Mark all emergency repairs with an asterisk (*).

Distribution: Original Facilities Maintenance
Office One (1) copy - company/division file

F.O. Form 1
Revised 1958

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FIRE DEPARTMENT
RECEIPT FOR PROPERTY

№ 027017

DATE.....

Received from: .....

Procurement Order No.: .....

Quantity	Unit	Description	Unit Price	Total Value

I hereby certify that I have received the above articles

NAME: .....
Entered on Property Cards

NAME: .....

DATE .....20.....

TITLE: .....

UNIT: .....

80-F2205

APPENDIX 7

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
D.C. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

ADDRESS REPLY TO
"FIRE CHIEF"

October 23, 2007

Charles J. Willoughby
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
717 14th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: Conditions in FEMS fire stations

Dear Mr. Willoughby:

This missive is in response to your October 3, 2007, draft special evaluation entitled *Conditions in Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department Fire Stations.* It has been a challenge for the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS) to maintain its firehouses and other facilities because of their age. Identifying adequate resources is also a problem. As a result, the FEMS Office of Facilities Maintenance has had to be resourceful in addressing the deteriorating conditions in our buildings. While we have admittedly made significant strides, our work is not done.

Response to OIG Findings and Recommendations

Building Conditions

Inoperative smoke detectors:

FEMS installed battery powered smoke and CO detectors in firehouses to address the inoperative smoke detector systems noted in the report. The smoke and CO detectors were installed and completed on July 3, 2007. An enhancement has been requested to fix and maintain all of these systems because there is no operating funding allocated to address this problem. This additional funding has been requested over the past several years but has not been approved.[1]

---

[1] Please note that FEMS did not comment on the malfunctioning station alerting system in FEMS fire stations because the District of Columbia Office of Unified Communications, which operates under the direction of the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, is responsible for these communication systems.

1. Asbestos:

The FEMS asbestos abatement program has aggressively abated hazardous friable asbestos and removed non-friable during renovations in the past. A Purchase Order was created to correct the asbestos problem at Station 26. Fire and EMS Property Management Office is currently working with Volkert and Associates, the FEMS testing contractor, to identify the seriousness of the asbestos problem at Station 18. FEMS will be guided by Volker and Associates recommendations. Station 5 is currently scheduled to be completely renovated in FY 2009. Volkert and Associates feels it is safe to leave the asbestos in place until the renovation.

2. Asbestos Monitoring

Monitoring of asbestos containing materials in FEMS facilities is ongoing. FEMS' Facilities Maintenance Office is actively working on getting an annual inspection program in place, which will enable us to monitor those station that contain non-hazardous, asbestos containing materials.

3. Maintenance Strategy:

The FEMS Facilities Maintenance Office is in the process of formally articulating a strategy to address the conditions that threaten the health, safety and moral of the Department. This report will be completed by December 28, 2007.

4. Request Asbestos Inspections of Boiler by DCRA:

The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) does not inspect FEMS heating boilers for asbestos hazards. DCRA only conducts mechanical safety inspections of boilers. Consequently, FEMS uses Volkert and Associates a certified asbestos testing contractor to identify and determine the seriousness of the asbestos problems.

5. Coordinate MOU with DCRA

All of the FEMS heating boilers that require an annual safety inspection by DCRA have been inspected for this winter's heating season. DCRA has a fiduciary responsibility to annually inspect heating boilers including boilers that are in FEMS facilities. There is no fee associated with these inspections. Therefore, there is no need to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU.

FEMS Property Management Office Concerns:

1. Job Descriptions:

Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Deaton is working with FEMS Human Resource Manager in writing job descriptions for uniform members in FEMS' Property Management Office. Job descriptions for the other positions recommended are already dictated and maintained by the Office of Personnel.

2. ***Repair Request Tracking***

The Management Information Systems Office, at the direction of the FEMS Facilities Maintenance personnel, have already instituted an on line electronic repair request form to be used to request and track repair work. This form is currently available on the FEMS intranet website.

3. **Tracking Repairs:**

[redacted], Facilities Maintenance Officer has been assigned responsibility for tracking of the progress of maintenance repairs using the form mentioned above and the status of maintenance request are continually updated.

I would like to state in closing that FEMS maintenance personnel are continuously working on remedying problems in our facilities. I am pleased to report that most of the deficiencies outlined in the OIG report have been either abated or scheduled to be abated (See attached). However, funding must be identified for some of the Department's major repairs. The poor conditions noted in your office's report are a product of decades of fiscal problems. Bringing these facilities back up to standard is one of my highest priorities and I am actively working on acquiring the resources to accomplish this objective.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Herlihy
FOR Dennis L. Rubin
Fire/EMS Chief

cc: [redacted] Public Safety Program Analyst, OCA

ATTACHMENT

Response to O.I.G. Report

- The Office of the Inspector General issued a draft of a special evaluation entitled Conditions in Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department Stations on October 3, 2007. In their Executive Summary they state: " During site visits, the team noted many potentially dangerous conditions, including: inoperative smoke detectors, unabated asbestos hazards; exposed electrical wiring; emergency alert systems that did not operate fully or properly; broken windows; damage to interior ceilings and walls; and improperly functioning heating and cooling systems.

Response to O.I.G. Report

- Item 1: On July 2 and 3 battery operated smoke and carbon monoxide detectors were installed in all Fire and EMS stations. The staff of O.P.M. is working with D.C.R.A. to identify where, according to code, a hard wired smoke and carbon monoxide detector must be installed. Once all of the locations are identified, three proposals will be obtained from licensed L.S.D.B.E. contractors, and one will be awarded the contract, and installation will begin.

Response to O.I.G. Report

- Item 2: A Task Order was created to correct the asbestos problem at Station 26. Fire and EMS O.P.M. is currently working with Volkert and Associates to identify how serious the asbestos problem at Station 18 is. Fire and E.M.S. will be guided by Vlokert and Associates recommendations. Station 5 is currently scheduled to be completely renovated in FY 2009. Volkert and Associates feels it is safe to leave the asbestos in place until the renovation.

Response to O.I.G. Report

- Item 3: The exposed wiring on Page 16 at Station 3 and Station 5 are low voltage wires for the volume control for the station alerting speakers. These are the responsibility of O.U.C. We notified O.U.C. of the problems identified and they stated that the problems were rectified on October 17, 2007. Fire and EMS O.P.M. has no record of the other wires on Page 16 being reported. We will have a qualified electrician rectify these problems immediately.

- Item 4: The Emergency Alert System is the responsibility of O.U.C. Fire and EMS O.P.M. staff. After reading the IG report, FMO notified O.U.C. Director of the I.G. report via e-mail on October 16, 2007.

Response to O.I.G. Report

- Item 5: The staff at Fire and E.M.S. O.P.M. has been working to get the windows at various stations repaired. We are currently receiving proposals to replace several windows at our Engine 7 and Engine 1. A contractor has been scheduled to replace all of the casement windows at Engine 6. We will repair the other windows identified in a timely manner.

Response to O.I.G. Report

- Item 6: The staff at Fire and E.M.S. O.P.M. is aware of most ceilings and walls that need repaired. In most cases cited the repairs are the result of roof leaks. Our policy has been to get a roof repaired and then ensure the repairs have been completed thoroughly, and properly, before scheduling the repairs to the interior ceilings and walls. These repairs on occasions take several attempts before completion. Interior repairs are made after we are satisfied that the cause of the leak has been properly identified and repaired.

Response to O.I.G. Report

- With a staff of four employees, to handle the day to day , as well as the long term repairs to our 40 facilities that we are charged with maintaining, Fire and E.M.S. O.P.M does what we feel is an excellent job, considering our budget and the other agencies that we have to deal with to get some of these projects completed. We have a new tracking system that we believe thoroughly captures all of the data recommended in the report. The inspector from the O.I.G. was aware of our new reporting system before this report was submitted, so we are at a loss as to why this was even included in this report. It is our belief that if the District of Columbia wants all of these issues corrected in an expedited manner, the staff at O.P.M. requires at least double the assigned personnel, and the annual budget increased substantially.

Questions and Comments to Executive Summary "Findings and Recommendations" (page 3)

- Listed as (5) The request for FEMS to coordinate an MOU with DCRA, has been scheduled prior to the delivery of this publication. PMO contracts these inspections to a licensed HVAC Company yearly. Complying with District laws, our boilers and heating plants are disassembled, cleaned, and reassembled for a passing inspection yearly. At this time of providing answers, only one DCRA inspector has been available for field inspections. Requests for inspections with DCRA have been answered and our facilities are on schedule.

Summary of Observations in FEMS Fire Stations and PMO (page 10)

- **“Inoperative Smoke Detectors”**
- July 1, 2007 Chief Rubin ordered battery smoke and CO detectors to be properly installed to appropriate areas of every fire house. Documentation of completion was confirmed on July 3, 2007. Inspections to firehouses by contractor for additional hard wiring systems completed by August 2007 - estimated cost, $90,000. Enhancement requested in funding for FY 08 to complete project.
- Work in progress.

Engine 26 Asbestos Hazards

- Engine 26 Asbestos was identified and documented through the following pictures. Included in the pictures you will find the date in the lower right hand corner. An Asbestos abatement contractor was notified at the time this picture was taken and scheduling for abatement shall follow.

Page 13 - Table 1: lists 2 firehouses with exterior doors not functioning properly. Below 1 of the two listed and repaired. Picture was taken on July 27, 2007

Page 13: Table 1: Listing visible problems with interior ceilings. Some of the same pictures listed in the summary can be found below. Both before and after repairs were made to this firehouse.

ENGINE 10

- **Page 14: Engine 10 is scheduled to be completely renovated beginning December of 2007. Repairs have not been completed to the walls pictured for this reason. No before pictures by PMO are available for viewing.**

Page 15 - Listing photographs of damage, Specifically E-16's ceiling.

- My photo, shown on left, is similar to picture shown on page 15 of Summary of Observations. The damage has occurred from water leaking from the 3rd floor. The first repair on the 3rd floor was the leaking HVAC condensation line. After the ceiling dried, a leak above occurred from the bathroom sloan valve. That repair was preformed and the ceiling allowed to dry. The bathroom above then leaked again from the sink, again allowing the ceiling to get wet. To this date repairs have been delayed to ensure all leaks have been repaired. Notice date to left.

ENGINE 12

- **Page 14: The picture shown is the result of a leak from the HVAC. Repairs are still ongoing to this twenty year old, and very complex air conditioning unit.**

ENGINE 19

Page 15: The leak shown was caused by a roof leak. The leak has been repaired and the ceiling tile replaced.

Page 15 of Summary, specifically Engine 21 kitchen tiles.

- Most of the damage occurred during a leak from the roof. A new roof was installed and then squirrels made a home in the down spout box. This caused a 2nd leak. The area affected is located approximately 35 feet above ground. The contractor made minor modifications to the down spout box to eliminate animal nuisances, causing the additional leaks. Contractors have completed proposals prior to publication and funding is being secured to make the necessary repairs.

ENGINE 23

- **Page 15;** The damage shown was caused by a roof leak that has been repaired. We were waiting to ensure that the roof repair was properly done. The wall will be scheduled to be repaired in the near future.

Page 15 - Specifically Engine 26's ceiling. Below, my photo is the same picture as shown in the summary. The second row of pictures show the contributing factors directly relating to the damage caused inside to the room just below the roof. Pictures dated June 13, 2007.

Additional photos of damaged roof areas of Engine 26. Photos depict several damaged areas before repairs.

Engine 26 Repairs made by roofing contractor. First repairs made to flat roof in June 2007 and then new gutter and down spouting repairs completed on July 26, 2007. Plaster and paint repairs are scheduled for November to allow time to ensure roof repairs have been completed.

ENGINE 29

Page 15; Engine 29 is scheduled for a complete renovation beginning in December of 2007. Repairs have not been done to the wall pictured for this reason.

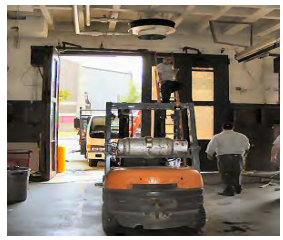
Page 15 Summary Specifically Engine 30 ceiling.

- This roof leak was first reported on April 8, 2007. Contractor was dispatched and repairs completed on April 30, 2007. June a leak was detected in the same area. The roofing contractor made additional repairs on July 3rd. Again on July 20, the same area was reported to be leaking. A plumbing contractor was dispatched to snake a roof drain. The light fixture was removed as a precautionary measure.
- Note in the below picture, the available lighting remaining to this bathroom. To date no new leaks to this area have been found. A new fluorescent fixture has been installed. Ceiling plaster and paint have been scheduled.

Continued photos of Engine 30. Several different attempts made before all damaged areas were repaired.

Page 17 of Summary Specifically Engine 6

- **Front bay door was replaced. This particular door was unique in size. The manufacture has been out of business for many years. No vendor has picked up this type/size of door. To replace this door would require a contractor to fabricate from scratch. The repairs were extensive and found to be timely in nature. No before pictures provided for this repair. The bay door was repaired and placed in service on August 30, 2007.**



Page 18 of Summary Specifically Engine 24

- This damage occurred due to a vehicle accident. The insurance company refused to pay a contractor for repairs. The money was sent to the city and deposited into the general fund. There was no funding remaining in PMO's FY 07 budget. A contractor has proposed repairs and a tentative date for repairs from FY 08 budget will occur.

Page 18 of Summary Specifically
Engine 15 and Engine 30

Engine 15 and Engine 30 presently have bid proposals from several contractors to complete the necessary repairs to their apparatus floors. No before pictures are provided from PMO.

Page 19 of Summary Specifically Table 2:
See attached schedule from HVAC contractor.

Page 21 of Summary Specifically the Inspections Item pertaining to employees purchasing cleaning supplies. These items are available through property section. Ordering done by Captains only.

BAGS - TRASH LINER - 40/45 GALLON SU1008)
BAGS - WASTEBASKET LINER - 10 GALLON (SU1009)
BELT - VACUUM CLEANER SANITAIRE (SU1010)
BROOM - CORN (SU1020)
BROOM, PUSH 24" (SU1021)
BROOM - PUSH 36" (SU1022)
BROOM, PUSH VEG FIBER (SU3016)
BRUSH - CHASISS (WHEEL) (SU1024)
BRUSH - DUSTING (SU1025)
BRUSH - SCRUB w/5" HANDLE (SU1027)
BRUSH - SCRUB w/o HANDLE (SU1028)
BRUSH - TOILET (SU1029)
BRUSH - VEHICLE WASH - (HEAD ONLY) (SU1430)
BUCKET- UTILITY - 10 QT (SU4507)
BUFFER - FLOOR POLISHER - ELECTRIC (SU3050)

CLEANER - STAINLESS STEEL - AERSOL (SU3027)
CLEANER/DEGREASER - SIMPLE GREEN - 5 GALLON (SU1002)
CLEANER/DISINFECTANT - GALLON (SU1227)
COOLER - WATER - 5GAL - PLASTIC (SU3062)
DEODORIZER - URINAL (SU4874)
DEODORIZER/DISINFECTANT - AEROSOL (SU1083)
DOLLY - TRASHCAN - 32 GALLON
DRUM PUMP - w/PAIL ADAPTER (use w/5gal containers) (SU1427)
DUSTPAN (SU1094)
GLASS CLEANER - GALLON SIZE (SU1144)
HANDLE - WOODEN w/METAL TIP THREADED END (SU1147)
HANDLE - MOP (SU1146)
ICE MELT - 50LB (SU1151)

Continued cleaning supplies available for ordering

LAMP - 500 WATT HALOGEN SECURITY BULB (SU3068)
LAMP - 150 STANDARD BULB (SU3057)
LAMP - 175 MERCURY BULB (SU3035)
LAMP - 2 PIN COMPACT FLUORESCENT F13BX (FA1002)
LAMP - 2 PIN COMPACT FLUORESCENT F9BX (FA1001)
LAMP - 25 WATT BULB (SU3065)
LAMP - 300 WATT BULB (SU3066)
LAMP - 50MERCURY (SU3022)
LAMP - 50WATT SPOT BULB (SU3029)
LAMP - FLOOD 50 WATTS (FA1000)
LAMP 2 BULB (SU1171)
LAMP -FLOURESCENT 13 WATT (SU3051)
LAMP -FLOURESCENT 4FT (SU3053)
LAMP -FLOURESCENT 7 WATT (SU3036)
LAMP -FLOURESCENT 8FT (SU3056)
LAMP -FLOURESCENT 9 WATT (SU3052)
LAMP -HALOGEN 100 WATT (SU3058)
LAMP - DESK (SU1170)

LAMP - INCANDESCENT 100 WATTS (STANDARD) (SU3054)
LAMP - INCANDESCENT 175 WATTS (STANDARD) (SU3069)
LAMP - INCANDESCENT 60 WATTS (STANDARD) (SU3021)
LAMP - INCANDESCENT 75 WATTS (STANDARD) (SU3055)
LAMP - "U" SHAPED 35 WATT BULB (SU3067)
MOP BUCKET w/WRINGER - PLASTIC (SU1188)
MOP HEAD - 32 OUNCE (SU1189)
NOZZLE - WATER HOSE - PISTOL GRIP (SU1190)
OVEN CLEANER - AEROSOL (SU1191)
BUFFER - PAD DRIVER - (SU1400)
BUFFER - POLISHING PAD -WHITE 20" (SU1031)
BUFFER - STRIPPER PAD - BLACK 20" (SU1032)
PAPER TOWELS - SINGLE-FOLD (SU1197)
PAPER - TOILET 2-PLY (SU1210)
POLISH - METAL (BRASSO) (SU1237)
POLISH - FURNITURE - AEROSOL (SU1236)

Continued cleaning supplies available for ordering

RAKE - LEAF (SU1270)
SCOURING PADS - SPONGE w/GREEN SCRUBBING SIDE - (3 per pack) (SU1306)
SCOURING POWDER - CHLORINATED (24 cans per case) (SU1307)
SHOVEL, SNOW (SU1315)
SOAP - BAR (SU1316)
SOAP - FOAMING HAND - 1.25L DISPENSER (SU3070)
SOAP- FOAMING HAND - 2ML DISPENSER (SU3071)
SPONGE - CELLULOSE (SU1317)
SPRAY BOTTLE - PLASTIC (SU1318)
SQUEEGEE - FLOOR (SU1319)
STEEL WOOL (16 pads per pack)(SU3019)

STRIPPER - FLOOR - 5 GALLON (SU1330)
SURGE SUPPRESSOR (SU1331)
TOILET SEAT COVER (SU1349)
TRASH CAN - 32GAL - PLASTIC (SU1351)
TRIGGER SPRAYER - (for use with spray bottle) (SU1426)
VACUUM CLEANER (SU1355)
WASTEBASKET, ROUND 23. 5 QUART-BLACK (SU4028)
WATER HOSE - BLACK- HEAVY DUTY - 50' Lg 5/8" diameter (SU1150)
WAX - FLOOR 5 GALLON (SU1359)

Page 22 of Summary Specifically Engine 5

- In May 07 several plumbing issues were addressed. As you can see in my picture to the right, this toilet was repaired in July 07. All damage was found to be caused by a toilet leaking and saturating the floor and ceiling below. As documented earlier via photos, the repairs were made to the floor and the ceiling below. No before picture as the summary page shows available.

Page 26 of Summary Specifically # 2, paragraph 2 and 3.

- Additional means to report/track repair requests was developed for the FY 07. A hot link (Requests for Facility Repair Form) has been provided on the defaulted home page to all FEMS station computers. This new feature allows another avenue to report defective areas to PMO via web based form.

Page 27 of Summary Specifically letter (b) pertaining to the PMO's repair request tracking.

Presently in place for tracking you will find a spread sheet containing 6 columns for tracking repairs

Date/Who called /Repairs requested / Which contractor /Date completed/ $

Pertaining to methods of reporting repairs, this spread sheet has proven to be a great tool for tracking repairs completed as well as total cost for repairs. There is only one PMO employee assigned to schedule repairs from/for contractors. The FEMS Form 17 shall be utilized for reporting, tracking repairs. The phone call is for emergency type repairs requested. This spread sheet was developed for additional tracking purposes only.

Page 34 of Summary Specifically Engine 2

- Engine 2 was serviced by a HVAC contractor a total of 4 times during the summer AC period alone. Repair dates 5/9/07, 5/29/07, 6/5/07, and 6/18/07. This particular firehouse has 5 different AC units used for cooling. These units vary from 2 ton to 10 ton each. Occasionally several repair visits are needed to ensure all areas are completely repaired. All air conditioned areas were completed as of June 07.

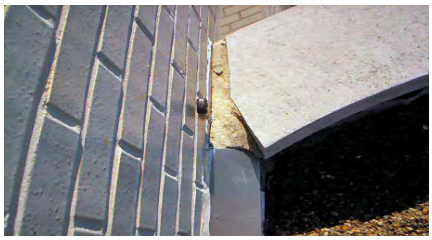
Page 38 of Summary Specifically E-5 damaged floor

Top right picture is similar to the picture shown in the summary pages. Repairs to this first floor bathroom were started and additional plumbing configurations were also completed during the repair. No after pictures are available at this time. The other picture on page 38 shows a low voltage speaker control volume knob box damaged. Not a 110 volt electrical hazard.

Page 39 of Summary Specifically Engine 6

The front ambulance repair / changeover bay door was repaired and remote open/closer installed on April 19, 2007. The front bay door for the Ambulance was replaced and returned to service on August 3rd. No before pictures are available. Slide number 14 shows the after picture for the Ambulance bay door and the date repairs were completed .

Page 46 of Summary Specifically Engine 11
Pictures are dated from September 12, 2007
Before repairs are on left and repaired on right



Page 55 of Summary Specifically Engine 20

August 20, the HVAC system was balanced and no further AC Problems have been reported. According to the request/repair spreadsheet, the gates leading to the dumpster were repaired on July 7th. No before and after pictures available for this repair.

Page 59 of Summary Specifically Engine24

Slide 15 shows the damage to this exterior brick facade. In July 07 new tile was installed to replace the musty carpet in the general sleeping bunkroom. 33 % of the HVAC system was inoperable for approximately 5 days and repairs completed on 7-25-07. New gutters/down spouts and repairs to the terracotta roof caps were completed in September.

Page 68 of Summary Specifically Engine 33.

This HVAC and the building is 22 years old. Repair parts for AC systems of that age are sometimes difficult to locate. Various times from June to August, the AC system was not operating for the entire 24 hours. As of 9-26-07, all AC repairs were complete. The evidence of water in the ceiling in the kitchen was directly related to one of the AC repairs for a clogged condensation line. A period of time is needed to ensure all repairs were complete before patching and painting are scheduled. No before and after pictures provided.

Conclusion

- Documents are available to support many other projects completed through PMO for FY2007. Pictures are not taken for all projects. Many areas in firehouses needing repair have been completed in a timely manner. The age of most firehouses provide no quick fix, or one time fix to damaged areas. The repairs preformed should be considered “work in progress” with many firehouses receiving similar repairs made to different effected areas throughout the year. Further documentation provided below shows a small depiction of additional repairs made before and after this summary report made their findings.

The following pictures shall provide other picture-documented repairs made for FY 07.

Before and after pictures documenting repairs to

Engine 2's drainage problems in the parking garage area.

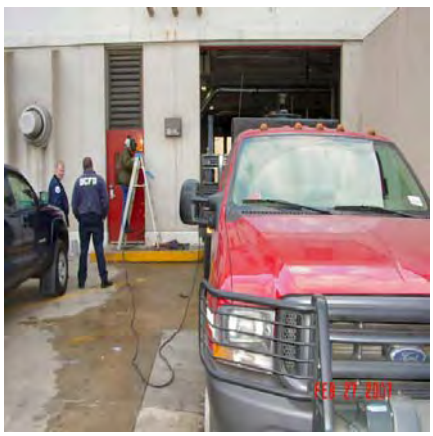
Engine 2 Old sump pumps on left and newly installed on right. These play an integral part to the parking garage.

Engine 4 Before and after pictures of side Alley wall and gate repairs

Engine 6 Before and after pictures of the Ambulance changeover parking lot fence repair

Engine 11 additional lockers installed to locker room

Engine 12 Rear door repaired and reinstalled for security



Engine 14 New sump pump and discharge line installed after original line was found collapsed.

Engine 16's Basement door and water line

Engine 26 Left before and right after pictures of gutter and down spout installed

Engine 28 Roof repair before on top and after below

Engine 32 Before Fence on top and after replacement pictures on the bottom.