

City of
SACRAMENTO
Fire Department

WALT WHITE
Fire Chief

5770 Freeport Blvd., Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95822-3516

Ph: (916) 808-1300
Fax: (916) 808-1629
www.sacfire.org

Robert C. Hight, Presiding Judge
Sacramento County Superior Court
720 9th Street, Department 47
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Judge Hight,

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Sacramento Fire Department submits the following response to the Sacramento County 2014-2015 Grand Jury Investigation into the City of Sacramento's handling of narcotics:

Finding F1:

"The Fire Department's implementation of new computerized systems to replace manual inventory and tracking systems will greatly increase the accuracy and timeliness of information related to the purchase, storage, distribution and use of narcotics."

Response to Finding F1:

The Fire Department agrees with this finding and has implemented an operative IQ software system to increase the accuracy and timeliness of narcotics tracking.

Finding F2:

"The Department's implementation of coded access by authorized personnel provides better assurance that narcotics are only accessed by those with the proper and unique access codes, as referenced by the City Auditor's report."

Response to Finding F2:

The Fire Department agrees with this finding and has installed coded access vaults on each ambulance to improve the security and accountability of narcotics carried on ambulances.

Finding F3:

"No evidence was discovered to indicate drug theft or tampering."

Response to Finding F3:

The Fire Department agrees with this finding.

Finding F4:

"The Department's publically stated willingness to consider random drug testing, as stated in the City Auditor's report, is recognition of a proven program to create a safer work environment for fire personnel and to ensure better patient care."

Response to Finding F4:

The Fire Department currently has a "Reasonable Suspicion Policy" regarding drug testing that both management and labor agree with and believe is effective. The effectiveness of this policy is demonstrated by Finding F3, which made clear that the Grand Jury found no evidence to indicate drug theft or tampering. Therefore, upon further consideration and after discussion with Labor representation, we disagree that a random drug testing program will assure a safer work environment for fire personnel or ensure better patient care.

Recommendation R1:

"The City of Sacramento Fire Department should continue implementing the City Auditor's recommendations."

Response to Recommendation R1:

The Sacramento Fire Department will continue to implement the City Auditor's 2014 recommendations.

Recommendation R2:

"The City Auditor should conduct a follow-up audit to determine the adequacy of the Fire Department's implementation and operation of the systems, policies, and procedures required to properly manage narcotics under the Department's control."

Response to Recommendation R2:

The Sacramento Fire Department will fully participate in any and all follow-up audits conducted by the City Auditor's Office.

Recommendation R3:

"In consultation with the City Attorney, the Fire Department should diligently pursue discussions with firefighter union representatives to institute a random drug testing program."

Response to Recommendation R3:

The Sacramento Fire Department disagrees with Recommendation R3 and, after consultation with the City Attorney, offers the following response:

The current collective bargaining agreement does not provide for random drug testing. An opportunity to negotiate with the labor union on this matter will not arise for another two years, given the current status of the collective bargaining agreement.

Nevertheless, the department is fully committed to public safety. Our existing, successful drug policy ensures that members of the department are fully fit for duty. This policy leads to a high-performance workplace where labor and management jointly engage in problem solving and consistently provide the highest level of patient care. Neither the Grand Jury investigation nor the City Auditor's review identified any problems with the existing policy.

Random drug testing is best practice when evidence of drug abuse is present. No evidence of drug abuse was found during the auditor's review or the Grand Jury's investigation, and we are not aware of any such issues with department personnel. This fact is not in dispute.

This review brings inventory management into focus. However, there is no nexus between that and the proposed random drug testing program. Instituting a random drug testing program would not provide any significant benefits at this time and would create an unnecessary expense to the City of Sacramento. Therefore, this recommendation will not be implemented at this time.

Sincerely,



WALT WHITE
Fire Chief