

Highlights

Why We Did This Audit

Kansas City is at risk for emergencies including tornados, flooding, severe winter weather, terrorist attack, and pandemics. City employees performing emergency management roles must have the necessary resources, direction, and training to achieve a high level of performance in these high stress situations.

Objective

The audit focused on whether the city's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) follows recommended emergency management program practices.

We used the Emergency Management Accreditation Program's minimum program standards, Emergency Management Performance Grant requirements, and the National Incident Management System training program as the criteria to evaluate aspects of the city's emergency management program.

Background

An emergency management program provides for management and coordination of prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities for all hazards. The program is made up of all organizations, agencies, departments, and individuals having responsibilities for emergency management activities.

The city's emergency management efforts are led by the Office of Emergency Management, which is established by City Code Sec. 2-85. OEM's mission is to save life and property by taking reasonable measures to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and to mitigate the effects of emergencies and disasters.

Click [here](#) to view the full report.

To view other audit reports, please visit our website <http://kcmo.gov/cityauditor> and click on Search Audit Reports.

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Incorporating More Recommended Practices Will Strengthen City's Emergency Management Program

What We Found

The city has a number of recommended emergency management program practices in place including:

- An emergency management office, emergency manager, and incident management system;
- A local emergency operations plan;
- A training program; and
- Emergency exercises held to test skills, plans, and resources.

The city's emergency management program, however, does not have a strategic plan, which would prioritize and direct emergency management program efforts towards what the city wants its emergency management capabilities to become. The plan should address efforts of internal as well as external stakeholders to identify and develop relationships, build skills and processes, and acquire resources for mitigating risk.

While OEM staff had grant required training, including National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, other departments' response personnel may not have received the required training.¹ City departments' NIMS training records do not provide assurance that department emergency responders have received the required training. Training records for some departments/offices show that no employees hired in the last 10 years have been trained. NIMS training helps provide responders with the skills to respond in emergencies and work collaboratively with other entities. City emergency responders also do not receive recommended NIMS refresher training.

Although OEM facilitates and participates in emergency exercises along with other departments, OEM does not follow up with other city departments to ensure all necessary corrective actions identified during emergency exercises are addressed.

The city's emergency management program does not have an advisory committee to provide feedback and oversight on all aspects of the program as required by City Code and suggested by recommended practices. An advisory committee would help establish stakeholder buy-in, provide different perspectives on emergency management, and produce a more comprehensive program.

What We Recommend

We make recommendations (shown on the following page) directed towards improving the city's emergency management strategic planning, procedures, training, and oversight.

Management agreed with all of the recommendations.

¹ We did not assess the Police and Fire Departments' NIMS training status. Their NIMS training is provided by their respective training academies.

Recommendations

1. The city manager should establish a committee of emergency management stakeholders to develop the city's emergency management multi-year strategic plan that includes a vision, goals, a method for implementing the goals, and a method and schedule for evaluating and revising the plan.
2. The city manager should direct the city's emergency manager to develop a method and schedule for evaluating and revising emergency administrative and fiscal procedures.
3. The city manager should establish procedures for maintaining National Incident Management System (NIMS) training records and ensure emergency responders receive required NIMS training as well as refresher training every five years.
4. The city manager should direct the emergency manager to implement a tracking system to monitor the resolution of all city department corrective actions identified during emergency management exercises and periodically report their status to the city manager.
5. The city manager should direct the emergency manager to establish an emergency management advisory committee of internal and external stakeholders and ensure that the committee meets regularly.