



City of Gainesville Office of the City Auditor



Public

Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) Fire Inspections



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City of Gainesville

Office of the City Auditor

Transmittal of Audit Findings for Gainesville Fire Rescue Fire Inspections

September 17, 2024

Dear Audit Committee Members,

We are pleased to transmit the results of the Gainesville Fire Rescue Fire Inspections audit. The audit assessed the operating effectiveness of controls related to fire inspections, invoicing, and collections through inquiry, observation, and substantive testing. The scope of our audit included governance, inspection database maintenance, inspections and reporting, invoice initiation, fee collections, and IT application controls, and we identified opportunities for improvement in six areas as follows:

- 1) *Database Maintenance and Inspection Prioritization:* The Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) formula to determine the total number of persons that might occupy a building or portion thereof at any one time (occupant load) for some occupancy categories does not align with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines. Additionally, the Risk Reduction Bureau (RRB) database is not effectively maintained to provide reliable information for fire inspection prioritization.
- 2) *Oversight and Monitoring:* There are no formal policies or procedures for oversight and monitoring activities. In addition, there are no supporting documents that detail the identification of issues within the inspection processes, remediation of deviations for key metrics, and tracking of any corrective actions.
- 3) *Staffing:* GFR does not currently have enough fire inspectors to meet the needs of the department.
- 4) *Invoicing Procedures and Billing Practices:* The GFR invoicing procedures are insufficient to ensure that invoices are initiated for all inspections and businesses are charged appropriate rates. Additionally, the GFR process for invoice initiation is not documented. GFR did not charge some businesses for fire inspection. The Risk Reduction Bureau database included 970 inspections from January 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. There was no fee charged for 143 of the 970 inspections.
- 5) *Fire Inspection Procedures and Frequency:* The GFR fire inspection procedures are incomplete and do not provide adequate guidance for scheduling building inspections. Additionally, the GFR inspection frequency for some occupancy classifications does not align with NFPA guidelines.
- 6) *Database, Identity, and Access Management:* Due to the confidential nature of this issue, it is excluded from this public report, pursuant to Florida Statute 119.0725(2).

Our recommendations for corrective action and management action plans are detailed in this report. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the city manager, management, and personnel of Gainesville



Fire Rescue and Department of Financial Services for their cooperation and professionalism during this audit.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Stephen Mhere, CIA, CISA, MBA, MS, City Auditor

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BACKGROUND

Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) protects and serves its neighbors through community involvement, education, prevention, and rapid intervention. The services it provides include fire suppression, medical and rescue services, fire safety inspections and investigations, fire and life safety public education, emergency management, and special hazard mitigation.

GFR's Risk Reduction Bureau is responsible for fire prevention, safety inspections, and investigations. The legal authority and responsibilities for fire safety inspections are contained in Florida Statutes, Chapter 633, Fire Prevention and Control, and the City of Gainesville Ordinance, Chapter 10. Fire inspectors assigned to the Risk Reduction Bureau inspect new commercial buildings after one year of occupancy, periodically inspect existing commercial structures, and inspect occupancies presenting potential safety concerns. Per section 218, it is the duty of the State Fire Marshal to ensure that high-hazard occupancies are inspected at least annually.

GFR uses National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards as part of the risk determination process. Among other things, the NFPA provides standards for fire prevention, safety from hazardous materials, and public safety.

Fire inspection fees are approved by the City Commission and outlined in the City of Gainesville Code of Ordinance Appendix A. They are based on the size of the building and its fire protection and life safety systems. The current minimum fee for initial inspection is \$84.50 for businesses with a square footage of up to 3,000 square feet.

GFR maintains a database of approximately 7,000 business entities or city buildings and assigns a risk rating to each building for fire inspection purposes. Although the department has an approved budget for four fire inspector positions, only three positions were filled as of August 13, 2024.

The Office of the City Auditor conducted a benchmarking survey in June 2024, to compare GFR operations with other fire departments in Florida. Six of twenty-one fire departments contacted for the survey responded. Key results are highlighted below.

Table 1: Ratio of Fire Inspectors to Businesses and Population

Cities	2020 Population	Full-time Fire Inspectors	Part-time Fire Inspectors	Businesses	Population/ Inspectors	Businesses/ Inspector
Gainesville	141,085	4	0	7,000	35,271	1,750
City 1	63,591	4	0	8,500	15,898	2,125
City 2	97,422	10	0	13,000	9,742	1,300
City 3	105,691	7	4	6,800	9,608	618
City 4	112,641	5	0	6,900	22,528	1,380
City 5	117,292	7	0	15,450	16,756	2,207
City 6	182,760	15	0	13,513	12,184	901

Source: City Auditor's Survey and Population- [US Census Bureau](#)

Our benchmarking showed that services offered included fire prevention inspections, code enforcement, plan review, investigations, and public education. Categories of inspections conducted included new and



existing buildings, change of occupancy, complaints, and investigations. All the other six survey respondents provide new building inspections. GFR does not.

Two of the jurisdictions in our survey inspect all their businesses annually, one inspects triennially, and one inspects businesses based on the availability of personnel. Two of the remaining jurisdictions in the survey, as well as Gainesville, base the frequency of conducting fire inspections on a risk rating. Table 2 below shows the inspection frequency for those jurisdictions:

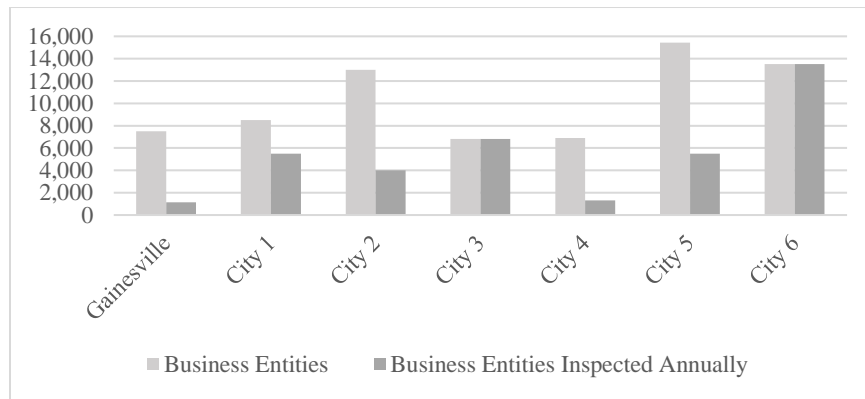
Table 2: Risk Rating and Frequency of Inspections

City	High	Moderate	Low
Gainesville	2 Years	4 Years	5-10 Years
City 1	Annually	2 Years	3 Years
City 4	Annually	2 Years	3 Years

Source: Data obtained from benchmarking survey conducted by Office of the City Auditor

Figure 1 below shows the number of businesses inspected relative to the total number of businesses in the jurisdiction. GFR inspections are the lowest in this metric.

Figure 1: Businesses Inspected Annually



Source: Data obtained from benchmarking survey conducted by Office of the City Auditor

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

This audit was conducted according to the City Auditor’s FY 2024 annual audit plan. Its objectives were to determine whether:

- 1) The internal control system for fire inspections is operating effectively to reduce fire risk.
- 2) Fire inspection operations comply with relevant statutes and city ordinances.
- 3) GFR is collecting appropriate fees for fire inspection services.



AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The scope of this audit included the areas detailed below for fire inspection activities for the period January 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024. We conducted the audit through inquiry, observation, and substantive testing as follows:

Governance

- Reviewed the adequacy and completeness of policies and procedures governing fire inspections, invoicing, and fee collections.
- Assessed the adequacy of oversight and monitoring.

Inspection Database Maintenance

- Reviewed the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls around fire inspection database maintenance.
- Assessed the completeness and reliability of data relating to buildings for fire inspection.

Inspections and Reporting

- Reviewed the adequacy of resources for fire inspections.
- Assessed the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls and processes for fire inspection scheduling and reporting.

Inspections Invoice Initiation and Fees Collections

- Reviewed the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls and processes around fire inspection fee invoicing.
- Reviewed the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls and processes around fire inspection fee collection.

IT General and Application Controls (Confidential)

- This is excluded from the report pursuant to Florida Statute 119.0725(2).

AUDITING STANDARDS

We conducted this audit engagement in accordance with *Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards* and the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*. Those standards require that we plan and perform the engagement to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives.



AUDIT CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the work performed, and as shown in Table 3 below and explained in the Audit Issues and Management Action Plans section of this report, our conclusions are as follows:

- 1) The GFR established internal controls for fire inspections. However, they are not adequate to effectively reduce fire risk.
- 2) Fire inspection operations are not consistently compliant with relevant statutes and city ordinances.
- 3) GFR generally collects appropriate fees. However, there were instances where fees were not collected.

RATING OF RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH AUDIT ISSUES

We identified six audit issues and assigned each of them a risk rating, as shown below.

Table 3: Audit Issue Risk Rating

RISK RATING	RISK RATING DESCRIPTION	Issue # 1	Issue # 2	Issue # 3	Issue # 4	Issue # 5	Issue # 6
High	<i>Key controls do not exist or are not effective, resulting in an impaired control environment. High Risk control weaknesses require immediate corrective action detailed in the management action plan.</i>						✓
Moderate	<i>Adequate control environment exists for most processes. Moderate risk control weaknesses require corrective action detailed in the management action plan.</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Low (non-reportable)	<i>Satisfactory overall control environment with a small number of low risk control improvement opportunities that do not require corrective action or a management action plan.</i>						

NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The GFR was reaccredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) on February 29, 2024.

As a result of the audit, we identified the following internal controls within the scope of our review that were established and working as designed. We express kudos to management on designing and effecting good controls as follows:

- GFR developed a database of businesses for inspection and a risk-based approach to fire inspections to ensure that limited resources are utilized to minimize fire safety risks.
- GFR tracks inspections and follow-up activities and includes them in the agenda for discussion at their monthly meetings.
- GFR requires personnel to adhere to the City's code of Ethics and Union Agreement regarding outside business activities. GFR inspectors disclose conflicts of interest.



ISSUE #1: Database Maintenance and Inspection Prioritization

Risk rating: Moderate

Observation: The Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) formula to determine the total number of persons that might occupy a building or portion thereof at any one time (occupant load) for some occupancy categories does not align with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines. Additionally, the Risk Reduction Bureau (RRB) database is not effectively maintained to provide reliable information for fire inspection prioritization:

1. **Inspection Prioritization.** The GFR prioritizes entities for fire inspection based on legal requirements and risk (target hazard score). Components of the target hazard score include exposure hazard, square feet, occupant load, occupancy hazard, and occupancy class. The formula for determining occupant load was inconsistent with NFPA standards for some occupancy categories. Three of the nine categories, namely, business, health care, and daycare, differed from NFPA standards. For the business and healthcare categories, the GFR occupant load is 100 square feet per person, and for daycare, the GFR occupant load is 20 square feet per person. Additionally, the occupancy hazard for 64% of the entities in the RRB database was classified as having low-hazard contents (light). This does not align with NFPA standards, which state that few occupancies qualify as having low-hazard contents.
2. **Database Maintenance.** The GFR Risk Reduction Bureau database is not adequately maintained to ensure completeness and reliability of data needed to prioritize buildings for fire inspection. Only 5,750 of the 6,974 records in the database were actual entities. For the remaining 1,224, the business name field was either blank, listed as vacant, or a testing record. GFR assigns entities a target hazard score to prioritize buildings for fire inspections. The target hazard formula for 194 of 5,750 entities was incorrectly reflected in the database, and the data required to compute the target hazard score (risk rating) for 137 of 5,750 entities needed to be updated in the database. Additionally, the square footage and/or occupancy classification for 20 of the 48 entities sampled required updating.

Criteria: Per NFPA 101 chapter 7, the occupant load in any building or portion thereof shall be no less than the number of persons determined by dividing the floor area assigned to that use by the appropriate occupant load factor. The occupant load factors for businesses, daycares, and healthcare facilities are outlined in Table 4 below.



Table 4: Occupant Load Factor

USE	(Square Foot/Person) ^a
Business Use (other than below)	150
Concentrated business use	50
Airport traffic control tower observation levels	40
Collaboration rooms/spaces ≤ 450 ft ² (41.8 m ²) in area	30
Collaboration rooms/spaces > 450 ft ² (41.8 m ²) in area	15
Day-Care Use	35 net
Health Care Use	
Inpatient treatment departments	240
Sleeping departments	120
Ambulatory health care	150

^a All factors are expressed in gross area unless marked "net."

Source: [2021 National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\) 101 Chapter 7](#)

Per NFPA 101 6.2.2.2, few occupancies qualify as having low-hazard contents.

Per 2019 NFPA 1730, the Fire Prevention Organization (FPO) shall develop a Management Information System (MIS). The MIS shall be maintained to support the FPO's management by providing the leaders with data that indicate the organization's effectiveness in its programs and procedures.

The MIS shall provide a means of measuring performance outcomes and trends for each area established through the organizational statement.

Cause: The GFR formula used for businesses was based on the 2015 NFPA 101 standard, which no longer applies. The formula for Daycare and Healthcare was erroneously simplified. The GFR revised the formula used to compute the target hazard. However, due to staffing constraints, the database update was not prioritized.

Risk: The GFR occupant load factor could result in a higher risk rating and the diversion of limited staff resources from more locations with greater risk. Additionally, the GFR may not have adequate information to prioritize higher-risk entities for inspection. If high-risk entities are not inspected in a timely manner, the risk of loss due to fire increases. If a building that was not inspected is destroyed by fire, there could be loss of human life, the city could face legal action, and possibly suffer reputational damage.

Recommendation 1: We recommend that Gainesville Fire Rescue:



- a) Update the occupant load formula to reflect the NFPA standard.
- b) Update the Risk Reduction Bureau database to reflect the correct target hazard score, occupancy classification, occupant load, square footage, and status of entities in the database.

Management Action Plan: Management agrees with the findings and will implement the following corrective action plans:

- a) As suggested, the occupant load formula will be updated to reflect the current edition of the Florida Fire Prevention Code. The department will develop a written Departmental Process to ensure the formula is updated every three years when new editions of the Florida Prevention Code are adopted.
- b) The department is committed to developing and implementing a policy to identify, review, and scrub the Risk Reduction Bureau database of duplicate, blank, vacant, or testing records. We will ensure the database is accurate, including the correct target hazard score, occupancy, occupant load, and square footage for each property. Risk Reduction Bureau staff will be responsible for accurately recording the factors needed to calculate the target hazard score.

Due date: August 1, 2025
Responsible/Accountable Party: Fire Chief



ISSUE #2: Oversight and Monitoring

Risk rating: Moderate

Observation: There are no formal policies or procedures over oversight and monitoring activities. In addition, while meeting agendas are documented, there are no supporting documents that detail the identification of issues within the inspection processes, remediation of deviations for key metrics, and tracking of any corrective actions.

Criteria: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)'s standard on the use of a management information system (MIS), NFPA-1730 4.3.4, states "The MIS shall provide a means of measuring performance outcomes and trends for each area established through the organizational statement."

Sections 12.03 and 12.04 of the Government Accountability Office Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government guide that management should document policies and procedures for each unit detailing its responsibility for operational objectives and related risks, including applicable control design to operate effectively, allowing management to effectively monitor the control activity.

Cause: There are no formalized and documented procedures for fire inspection processes that include a method to identify, track, and remediate deviations from expected performance goals and metrics.

Risk: The lack of formally documented procedures for monitoring may result in less effective fire inspections and the inability to identify and remediate issues and deviations in a timely manner. Timely identification and remediation may prevent fire and other safety issues for the community.

Recommendation 2: We recommend Gainesville Fire Rescue develop and document an internal policy and/or procedure that identifies key areas to monitor. The policy/procedure should provide sufficient details on the monitoring activities, including a method to identify and document issues and deviations that require corrective actions. The method should include documenting details of the issue, remediation efforts and supporting documents, if applicable, and the timeline, such that tracking can be performed and audited or reviewed.

Management Action Plan: Management agrees with the finding and will implement the following corrective action plan:

- As suggested, the department will develop formal Departmental Processes to monitor inspection issues and deviations in key metrics requiring corrective action. They will also provide details on monitoring methods, ensuring Management documents issues and deviations, including relevant information, provide guidance on developing remediation plans, and include a process to assess and track timely and effective results for auditing and review.

Due date: August 1, 2025
Responsible/Accountable Party: Fire Chief



ISSUE #3: Staffing

Risk rating: Moderate

Observation: Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) does not currently have enough fire inspectors to meet the needs of the department. The Risk Reduction Bureau (RRB) database contained 344 buildings required to be inspected according to Florida statute based on their categories (daycares, educational facilities, & residential board and care facilities), 1,083 buildings based on GFR's standard of cover (daycares, schools, healthcare facilities, & public assemblies), and 1,558 buildings based on National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) recommendations to inspect high-risk buildings annually. If GFR inspects the remaining buildings every 10 years, the amounts would be 541, 467, and 419 buildings, respectively. Additionally, on average, 75% of businesses require a re-inspection after the initial inspection due to violations.

Four fire inspectors have 5,969 total available hours for fire inspections when those four positions are filled and dedicating 90% of their available time to fire inspections. The total amount of hours needed to meet various different goals, including state statute, GFR targets, and NFPA recommendations, are in the Table 5 below.

Table 5: Inspection Hours Shortfall

	Businesses			Inspection Hours		
	Florida Statute	GFR Standard of Cover	NFPA Recommendation	Florida Statute	GFR Standard of Cover	NFPA Recommendation
Annual Inspection	344	1,083	1,558	595	2,896	4,381
10% Inspection of Remaining	541	467	419	970	739	591
75% of Re-inspection	663	1,162	1,483	1,173	2,727	3,729
Total	1,548	2,712	3,460	2,738	6,362	8,701
Available Inspection Hours				5,969	5,969	5,969
Shortfall				None	393	2,732

Source: Auditor calculations, Florida Statutes, and NFPA

While GFR does have enough staff to meet Florida Statute requirements, they do not have enough staff to meet their target numbers or NFPA recommendations. Additionally, one inspector position is currently vacant, further hindering GFR's ability to conduct enough fire inspections.

Criteria: GFR's stated target of wanting to inspect all assemblies, daycares, education facilities, health care facilities, and residential board and care facilities annually.

NFPA recommendations to inspect all apartment buildings, assemblies, daycares, detention and correctional facilities, education facilities, health care facilities, hotels, dormitories, lodging, rooming, and residential board and care facilities annually.



Per NFPA 1730, Chapter 4: The Fire Prevention Organization (FPO) shall have a leader and an organizational structure that facilitates efficient and effective management of its resources to carry out its mandate. The FPO shall have an organizational structure of the size and complexity required to accomplish its mission.

Per Florida statute 633.216: Each county, municipality, and special district that has fire safety enforcement responsibilities shall employ or contract with a fire safety inspector, and the fire safety inspector must conduct all fire safety inspections that are required by law.

Cause: GFR does not have enough fire inspectors. The department determined the number of inspectors (4) based on budget, not fire inspection needs.

Risk: By not employing enough fire inspectors, there is a public safety risk, including loss of life, which could also develop into a possible reputation, legal, and/or monetary risk for the City.

Recommendation 3: We recommend Gainesville Fire Rescue identify additional staffing resources to increase the number of inspections.

Management Action Plan: GFR management agrees with the findings and recommendations and, as suggested, will implement the following actions:

1. A more reasonable target shall be established based on the circumstances that currently exist. This will include a comprehensive review and determination of staff capacity.
2. GFR will work to fill vacancies in an expedited manner.
3. GFR will work with Local 2157 in revitalizing shift-based inspections. This initiative will remove the lower hanging fruit (low risk category inspections) from the assigned RRB inspector's plate.
4. GFR will continue to submit requests for funding to increase RRB staffing and capacity levels.

Due date: January 1, 2026
Responsible/Accountable Party: Fire Chief



ISSUE #4: Invoicing Procedures and Billing Practices

Risk rating: Moderate

Observation: The Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) Invoicing procedures are insufficient to ensure that invoices are initiated for all inspections and businesses are charged appropriate rates. The GFR process for invoice initiation is not documented. Additionally, the process does not include a reconciliation between the Excel report from the GFR database and Workday invoicing. Also, Revenue and Receivables is unable to verify the accuracy of rates charged.

We also found that GFR did not charge some businesses for fire inspection. The Risk Reduction Bureau database included 970 inspections from January 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. There was no fee charged for 143 of the 970 inspections. Based on a detailed review of the database information for a sample of 15 of the 143 inspections, 12 were initial inspections or re-inspections with no violations, two were re-inspections with violations, and one was an initial inspection with violations. These 15 inspections could have been billed a total of \$3,175. Eighty-one of the remaining 128 inspections were from January 2023 to September 2023, and 47 were from October 2023 to March 2024. If these 128 inspections had been charged at the lowest allowable rate, the City would have billed \$10,492. The estimated total amount not collected for the 143 inspections is \$13,667.

Criteria: Best practice guidance from the recommends documentation of policies and procedures that communicate purpose, key process activities, key roles and responsibilities, and oversight and reporting. Also, Principle 16 of the United States Government Accountability Office’s internal control standards, management should establish and operate activities to monitor the internal control system and evaluate the results.

City of Gainesville Code of Ordinance Appendix A guides that the City's fire initial inspection fee is based on the size of the building and fire protection and life safety systems. For re-inspections, if all violations are corrected, re-inspection fee is charged at the same rate as the initial fee. However, if still not in compliance, re-inspection fee is twice the initial fee.

Cause: The invoicing process is decentralized. Department-specific processes have not been developed. The invoice backup information in the ERP system does not provide information on the square footage and fire protection systems for the Revenue and Receivables department to verify the accuracy of fees charged. Also, GFR billing procedures are not documented, and inspectors are instructed to use their discretion when billing entities for inspections.

Risk: Insufficient invoicing procedures increase the risk of revenue loss and inaccurate billing. Invoices not initiated in Workday could go undetected. Inconsistent billing may create the perception that the billing process as inequitable, resulting in reputational damage for the City. Also, the City suffers a loss of revenue when some businesses are not billed for inspection services rendered.

Recommendation 4: We recommend management:

- a) Develop standard operating procedures for fire inspection invoicing. The procedure should outline the invoice backup required to support the fees charged. (GFR)
- b) Update decentralized revenue and receivable procedures to include completeness and accuracy reviews. (REVENUE & RECEIVABLES)
- c) Review inspection activity reports periodically for anomalies and remediate issues identified.



Management Action Plan (GFR): GFR management agrees with the findings and recommendations and, as suggested, will implement the following actions:

1. GFR will develop a standard operating procedure for fire inspection invoicing by:
 - a. conducting a comprehensive internal review of invoicing procedures to ensure that:
 - i. Invoices are initiated for all inspections,
 - ii. Businesses are charged appropriate rates, and
 - iii. The GFR process for invoice initiation is well documented.
 - b. Reviewing of best practices.
 - c. Collaborating with external stakeholder.
2. The above-mentioned process shall include a reconciliation between the Excel report from the GFR database and Workday invoicing.
3. GFR will work with stakeholders to ensure verification of the rates charged.
4. GFR will establish a comprehensive Quality Assurance process to improve efficiency and reduce errors.

Due date: June 30, 2025
Responsible/Accountable Party: Fire Chief

Management Action Plan (Revenue & Receivables): Management agrees that reviewing supporting documentation related to fire inspections needs complete and accurate review before approving customer invoices. Revenue & Receivables will require the supporting documentation to include the square footage of the inspected location and, if applicable, any fire safety equipment inspected. Management will update the procedure accordingly. This action will allow Revenue & Receivables staff to ensure the fees assessed comply with the fees established in Appendix A of the procedure.

Due date: December 31, 2024
Responsible Party: Finance Operations Manager
Accountable Party: Finance Director



ISSUE #5: Fire Inspection Procedures and Frequency

Risk rating: Moderate

Observation: The Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) fire inspection procedures are incomplete and do not provide adequate guidance for scheduling building inspections. Additionally, the GFR inspection frequency for some occupancy classifications does not align with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines. The GFR Risk Reduction Bureau database does not correctly reflect the status of entities in the database:

1. Standard Operating Guide Fire Inspections: The GFR Standard operating guideline for fire inspection is in draft state and does not include a target hazard score range for each risk category or the inspection frequency based on risk. Also, the only occupancy classifications with inspection frequencies listed in the guideline are childcare facilities, assisted living facilities, adult family-care homes, and public schools.

Per GFR procedures, GFR inspects daycares and residential board and care facilities annually. As of May 13, 2024, 108 of the 272 daycares and residential board and care facilities included in the database were active. Fifty-five of the 108 active daycares and residential board and care facilities had a last inspection date of 365 days or less before May 13, 2024. Two active daycare facilities were duplicated in the GFR Risk Reduction Bureau database as educational facilities. The daycare facilities had not been inspected for more than 365 days. However, the inspections of the educational facilities were up to date.

2. Alignment with NFPA: The inspection frequency outlined in the GFR Integrated Risk Management Plan 2024 Standard of Cover does not align with the 2019 NFPA 1730 minimum inspection frequency for existing occupancy. Per the standard of cover, fire inspectors inspect businesses whose safety is of most significant consequence, such as public assemblies, health care facilities, daycare facilities, and schools. Other businesses are typically visited, on average, every five to ten years. The minimum inspection frequency for low-risk occupancy per 2019 NFPA 1730 is triennial. GFR assigns risk range entities based on a target hazard score as shown in Table 6 below

Table 6: Risk Tiers

Risk Tier Based on GFR Target Hazard	Number of Business Entities
High (Score 16 - 21)	630
Moderate (Score 10 - 15)	2,340
Low (Score 4 -9)	2,670
No Info (Score 0 - 3)	110
Total	5,750

Source: GFR Database

Six hundred and thirty of the 5,750 entities in the database would require an annual inspection based on the target hazard risk tier (high). Four hundred and sixty-six (74%) of the business entities within the high target hazard risk tier had not been inspected for over 12 months. Business entities would



require bi-annual and triennial inspections in the moderate and low-risk tier. Three hundred and twenty-eight (14%) of the business entities in the moderate risk tier had a last inspection date of 2 years or less, and two hundred and fourteen (8%) of the business entities in the low-risk tier had a last inspection date of 3 years or less.

Criteria: Per Section 4.9 of the 2019 NFPA 1730 standard, the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) is required to develop, establish, and implement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with this standard.

Per Section 6.7 of the 2019 NFPA 1730, existing occupancy fire prevention inspection and code enforcement inspection frequencies shall not be less than those specified in Table 7.

Table 7: NFPA Minimum Inspection Frequency

Occupancy Risk Classification	Minimum Inspection Frequency
High	Annually
Moderate	Biennially
Low	Triennially
Critical infrastructure	Per AHJ

Source: [2019 National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\) 1730 Chapter 6](#)

The GFR Standard Operating Guideline 808 requires that childcare facilities, adult family-care homes, and assisted living facilities be inspected annually.

Florida statute 429.435 Uniform fire-safety standards states: Uniform fire-safety standards for assisted living facilities, which are residential board and care occupancies, shall be established by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to s. 633.206. Per section (2c) of the statute, all licensed facilities must have an annual fire inspection conducted by the local fire marshal or authority having jurisdiction.

Per Florida statute 409.175, all residential child-caring agencies must meet fire-safety standards for such agencies adopted by the Division of State Fire Marshal of the Department of Financial Services and must be inspected annually.

Cause: GFR recently started updating all procedures on a new platform. Due to staffing constraints, the process was not completed. The GFR fire inspection frequency is driven by current staffing level.

Risk: Incomplete fire inspection procedures may result in less frequent fire inspections and reduce the City's ability to identify and have entities remediate violations to minimize fire risk and possibly prevent loss of life. It may also have a negative impact on economic activity. Additionally, GFR may not have adequate information to prioritize higher-risk entities for inspection if the database is not updated.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that Gainesville Fire Rescue:

- a) Complete the standard operating guide for fire inspection. The guide should include a target hazard score range for each risk category and fire inspection frequency for each occupancy classification.



- b) Review the fire inspection frequency and staffing levels for the GFR Risk Reduction Bureau for alignment with best practices.
- c) Update the RRB Database to reflect the status of entities and eliminate duplicates

Management Action Plan: GFR management agrees with the findings and recommendations and, as suggested, will implement the following actions:

- a) GFR will complete the Standard Operating Guide for Fire Inspections, which will include a target hazard score range for each risk category and fire inspection frequency for each occupant classification.
- b) GFR will review fire inspection frequency and staffing levels and work with management to implement best practices.
- c) The RRB Database will be updated to reflect the status of entities, eliminate duplicates, and add missing high-risk classifications.

Due date: January 1, 2026
Responsible/Accountable Party: Fire Chief



Issue #6: Database Identity and Access Management (Confidential)

Risk rating: Confidential

Information technology findings have been withheld from this public report, pursuant to Florida Statutes 119.0725(2).

