

City of Mesa Fire Department Accreditation Project 2006

Executive Summary



Commission on
Fire Accreditation
International

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City of Mesa Fire Department Accreditation Renewal 2006 Executive Summary

Introduction

The City of Mesa is the 2nd largest City in the Phoenix Metropolitan, 3rd largest in Arizona, and 40th largest City in the nation. Over the past decade, Mesa has grown by 38 percent compared to the nation average of 13 percent. The current population is 453,495 (reference CityofMesa.Org Fast Facts) covering over 170 land base miles in the East Valley. The City is now larger than Minneapolis, Miami, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Atlanta in terms of population.

The Mesa Fire Department was organized in 1897. It has grown to 17 stations that house 18 Engines, 5 Ladders, 2 Utility Trucks, 1 Hazardous Materials Unit, 1 Rapid Response Team Unit, and 4 airport Aircraft Rescue Firefighting (ARFF) Units at two airports (Falcon Field and Williams Gateway). The fire companies and stations are divided into 3 battalions (201, 202, 203) and supervised by a Battalion Chief in each battalion. All Engine and Ladder companies are constant staffed with Captain, Engineer (Operator/Driver), and 2 firefighters, 2 are Paramedics and the other 2 are EMT's.

Fire Chief Harry Beck serves as the leader of the department, he previously served 29 years with the Phoenix Fire Department. The Mesa Fire Department is over 450 members strong and is organized into 5 Divisions consisting of Community Services, Emergency Management, Emergency Services, Support Services and Training/Special Operations/Medical Services/Department Communications.

The 06/07 Operating Budget is over 61 million dollars, 7.3 percent of the City Operating Budget. The department is progressive with programs in Emergency Services, Prevention, and Fire and Life Safety. These programs continue to be effective in preventing the loss of life and property every day. As emergency response call volumes increase the department will be challenged to continue to meet the demands to provide quality customer service to it's citizens and visitors.

This document is an Executive Summary of the achievements and success of the Accreditation Renewal 2006 project. The Accreditation process has proven to be a "valuable tool" to continue quality customer service through Performance Measurements and Standards of Response Coverage standards.

Accreditation Renewal Process

The Mesa Fire Department received Accreditation status through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) in August 2001. The department was the 78th fire agency in the world to be accredited. In the past 5 years the department has experienced numerous changes as well as continued growth.

As the Accreditation renewal time approached the Fire Chief and his Senior Staff selected Battalion Chief Ward Fleger and Captain Bruce McGregor to manage the project. In August 2005 Chief Fleger was assigned as Accreditation Manager and placed on a day assignment. A Steering Team was established consisting of Assistant Chief Gary Bradbury, Chief Fleger, Captain McGregor, and Jan Ulrich. The team met twice monthly to “touch base” on the project. An Action Plan was established and updated as needed. The Action Plan identified Goals and Objectives on completion of the project.

The Steering Team formed an Accreditation Team, this team consisted of Division Supervisors that would be responsible for writing Performance Measurements in the 10 CFAI Categories. The Accreditation Team met monthly again to “touch base” and resolve issues to make sure that they were meeting the team goals that were identified in the Action Plan. This proved to be extremely beneficial to ensure deadlines were being met.

One of the critical components that resulted in the success of completing the Self-Assessment Manual was a database created by the Information Services Division (ISD). This database has enabled the department to maintain the “snap shot of today” by providing a system that can be updated at anytime. The database also provides revision dates, authors of the Performance Indicators (PI), and approvers of the PI. Special thanks to Chris Dalamaggas and John Cheney for their expertise in computer software programs and helping our department.

An “educational component” was delivered to the work force (Power Point Presentations) to inform all personnel the rational and importance of Accreditation Renewal. This also proved to be beneficial in efforts to gain the support of the department personnel at all levels.

In April 2006, the Self-Assessment and Standards of Response Coverage Manuals were completed and delivered to the CFAI. The documents were completed in CD and hard copy format. One of the goals of the Steering Team was to create an electronic library with the references/exhibits. Bruce McGregor was able to “hyperlink” the references to reduce the costs of printing and duplicative work.

Upon receiving the Self-Assessment and Standards of Response Coverage documents the CFAI coordinated and scheduled a Lead Peer Assessor, Peer Assessment Team, and a tentative date for June 4-9, 2006.

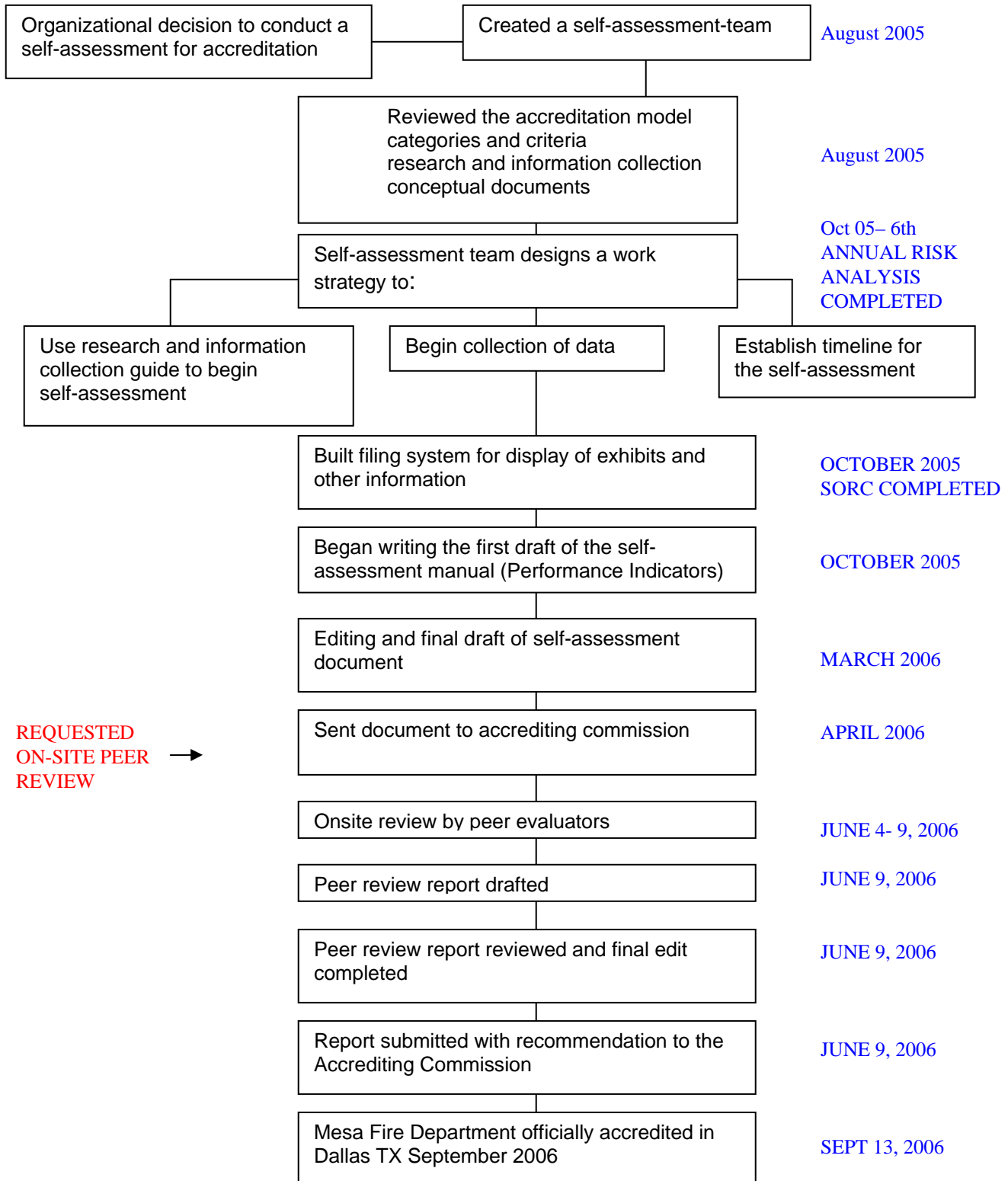
The Peer Visit was well coordinated and successful, all of the Peer Assessors were fair and worked very well with the Category Sponsors. The Mesa Fire Department has been recommended for Accreditation renewal status, the official renewal will be conducted by the CFAI at the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Conference in Dallas on September 14, 2006.

The following provides detailed information as it relates to the Accreditation Achievements of the past year, Peer Visit, Strategic and Specific Recommendations by the CFAI, and Closing comments.

12 MONTH ACHIEVEMENTS

The Self Assessment Process

The self-assessment process consisted of several components:



Categories and Sponsors

The following is the list of Sponsors/Division Supervisors, Approvers/Assistant Chiefs, and Authors/Administrative Support Personnel:

Category	Title	Sponsor	Approver	Authors
1	Governance and Administration	Brady Leffler	Gary Bradbury	Jan Ulrich
2	Assessment and Planning	Ward Fleger	Gary Bradbury	Ward Fleger
3	Goals and Objectives	Bruce McGregor	Gary Bradbury	Bruce McGregor
4	Financial Resources	Diane Norman	Radona Orlando	Diane Norman
5	Programs A - Fire Suppression B - Fire Prevention/Life Safety C - Public Education Program D - Fire Investigation Program E - Technical Rescue F - Hazardous Materials G - Emergency Medical Services H - Emergency/Disaster Management I - Response to Weapons of Mass Destruction J - Aviation Rescue and Firefighting Services	Brady Leffler Bob Horn Deena Barbara Bob Horn Chuck Monroe Chuck Monroe Bill Hayes Jim Bloomer Jim Bloomer Chuck Monroe	Dan Stubbs Cliff Puckett Cliff Puckett Cliff Puckett Mary Cameli Mary Cameli Mary Cameli Gil Damiani Gil Damiani Mary Cameli	Mike Dunn Bob Horn Deena Barbara Jeff Flocken Rich Kochanski Rich Kochanski Bill Hayes Linda Hart Linda Hart Jerry Schirmer
6	Physical Resources	Mark Keough/Larry LaBarbera	Gary Bradbury	Rita Robson
7	Human Resources	Jim Frye	Dan Stubbs	Bonnie Kimmel
8	Training and Competency	Bobby Miller	Gil Damiani	Linda Shaffer
9	Essential Resources A - Water Supply B - Communication Systems C - Administrative Support Services D - Office Systems	Mark Nyhart Bob Tribbense Darla Sorrell Patricia Sanders	Dan Stubbs Gary Bradbury Gary Bradbury Darla Sorrell	Mark Nyhart Bob Tribbensee Darla Sorrell Patricia Sanders
10	External System Relations	Kurt Dana	Dan Stubbs	Kurt Dana

June 2006 Peer Visit and Assessment

Upon receiving the CFAI Manuals a final date was set for Peer Assessment. The Peer Visit was conducted on June 5-9, 2006. The Lead Peer Assessor was Steve Reid, a retired Fire Chief from the District of Columbia Fire District, with 38 years experience in the fire service. The rest of his team:

- ❑ Jeff Farris/Honolulu Hawaii Fire Department
- ❑ Philip Koenigseker/Toledo Ohio Fire Department
- ❑ Gary Warren/Westlake Texas Fire Department
- ❑ Nick Caputo/Richmond Virginia Fire Department
- ❑ Douglas McDonald/Novato California Fire Department/Observer

Each Peer Assessor was assigned to a specific category and meetings with the Sponsors were scheduled prior to the visit. The department coordinated travel and lodging arrangements, all of the Peer Assessors were picked up on Sunday June 4 in preparation for the busy week. The fire department Senior Staff members hosted a dinner during the evening of June 4 to get acquainted with each other.

On Monday June 5, an “Entrance Interview was conducted at Fire Administration with the Senior Staff, Fire Chief, and Steering Team members. The office for the Peer Assessors was set up in a conference room at Station 201, Battalion 201 Headquarters. ISD was helpful again in setting up computers and workstations for the team.

Interviews and daily activities were conducted with no incident. All of the interviews went extremely well. The references/exhibits were linked in electronic files, those that could not be placed electronically were placed physically in the Accreditation hard copy files.

All of the Peer Assessment Team was very positive and interacted in a professional manner with all of the fire department personnel.

An Exit Interview was conducted on Friday June 9 with the Senior Staff, Fire Chief, and Steering Team members. The team presented 10 Strategic Recommendations and 19 Specific Recommendations as part of the Peer Assessment evaluation.

Strategic and Specific Recommendations

The Mesa Fire Department is a progressive and dynamic public service agency. However there are always areas that need to improve as a fire service. The following is the list of Strategic and Specific Recommendations from the CFAI. These recommendations will be addressed during the next year.

Strategic Recommendations

Strategic recommendations were developed from information gathered from the on-site assessment visit and the evaluation of the criteria and core competencies.

1. The department relies upon the issuance of bonds for station development and construction. The projected Standard of Response Coverage relies upon construction of new facilities. The department should consider the development of alternative sources of funding as a contingency for failure of a bond issue. The department also will need to address its Standard of Response Coverage if funding is not available.
2. The department should consider development of a formal and all inclusive program analysis that is tied to the department's Operational Plan and quality assurance measures, especially related to Category 5: Programs. Formal program analysis starts with: the establishment of service level expectations; development of performance objectives relative to expectations; capturing of performance data related to program operation; analysis of performance data in comparison to expected levels of service; and, adjustments to the program required to meet and maintain expected levels of service. To maintain a current and applicable program, this process also requires that levels of service expectations be re-evaluated along the same cycle.
3. The department should consider the adoption of a centralized department-wide document control process that formalizes the review and update of all department documentation. This control process should include policies, procedures, and memoranda of agreements, contracts, and regulations. This formal process should be established, documented, and practiced on a regularly scheduled basis (institutionalized).
4. The department should constantly monitor and evaluate their Standard of Response Coverage and deployment model as related to fire suppression, EMS, technical rescue, hazardous materials and ARFF.

5. The department should continually analyze call processing and turnout times and develop improvement methods for each as needed to ensure Standard of Response Coverage statements.
6. The department should establish and utilize a formal benchmarking process to evaluate the outputs and outcomes of the specific objectives that are adopted within and as a result of the department's Operational plan.
7. The department should update their Self-Assessment Manual to more positively depict the wide array of service delivery programs and activities.
8. The department should purge and update their hard copy exhibit system and reference manual, and continue to expand upon their electronic CFAI manual and exhibit cataloging system.
9. The department should develop a formal inspection, documentation, tracking and replacement process relative to key special operations equipment. Examples include, but are not limited to, Hazmat suits, detection and monitoring equipment, rope, harnesses, etc.
10. The department will need to constantly explore alternative service delivery and deployment models in order to maintain and enhance service levels and compliance with the Standard of Response Coverage statements and future deployment response goals.

Specific Recommendations

Specific recommendations were developed from the appraisal of performance indicators in each of the ten categories.

Category II Assessment and Planning

Criterion 2A: Documentation of Area Characteristics

Performance Indicator

2A.3 Demographics, such as population, land use, topography, climate and occupancy groups should be identified and documented.

- a. The department should consider a planning program to take into account changes in the fire record and risk factors in the community.
- b. The department should consider coordinating the planning program with the city land use department.

Category V Programs

Criterion 5B: Fire Prevention/Life Safety Program

Performance Indicator

5B.3 There is adequate staffing to meet agency objectives.

It is recommended that staffing be identified for use in conducting fire safety inspections frequently enough to meet the department's goals in the targeted occupancies.

5B.4 There is a plan check system in place to insure buildings are built in accordance with adopted codes and ordinances.

It is recommended that the department be included in the Certificate of Occupancy release process so that any fire safety concerns of the department members can be addressed before occupants are allowed to utilize the new or remodeled structure.

Criterion 5C: Public Education Program

Performance Indicator

5C.2 The agency has staffing to accomplish the program's mission, goals, and objectives.

It is recommended that a personnel specialist be identified for full-time assignment to the FALSE program to assist in providing a focused risk management program that will be able to meet its current goals in wellness and fitness as well as accident and injury protection.

5C.5 The agency's information system allows for documentation and analysis of its public education program.

It is recommended that the Public Education section establish a comprehensive set of data points that can be reliably collected and analyzed to clearly establish public education needs and the priorities of those needs. This will help the section stay focused on its goals and objectives as established by the department during times when the supporting resources become strained.

Criterion 5D: Fire Investigation Program

Performance Indicator

5D.2 The agency has adequate staffing to accomplish its stated objectives.

It is recommended that an additional investigator be identified for full-time assignment to the Investigation's section to assist in providing 24-hour coverage for all three shifts.

This will allow the section to achieve the stated objectives that have been approved by the department.

Criterion 5F: Hazardous Materials

Performance Indicator

5F.3 There is adequate apparatus and equipment to meet the stated level of Hazmat response.

The department will need to monitor and evaluate the service life and operational efficiency of the current HazMat tractor-trailer and develop a replacement plan as feasible.

Criterion 5H: Emergency/Disaster Management

Performance Indicator

5H.1 There is a published disaster plan that defines roles and responsibilities of all participating departments and/or agencies.

The department should continue to pursue the revision of their Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) through to completion and issuance. The EOP should be revised annually to accurately reflect the roles and responsibilities of the department as well as to assure effective integration with outside agencies and departments.

Criterion 5J: Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Services

Performance Indicator

5J.2 There is adequate staffing to meet the agency's ARFF objectives.

As growth develops around the WGA, the department should analyze the level of supervision available at the WGA fire station to ensure that key ICS functions can be achieved to effectively manage an ARFF incident.

5J.3 There is adequate apparatus and equipment to meet the stated level of ARFF response.

As growth develops around the WGA, the department will need to monitor and evaluate the service life and operational efficiency of the oldest ARFF response vehicle and develop a replacement plan as feasible.

Category VII Human Resources

Criterion 7A: Personnel Administration

Performance Indicator

7A.2 The personnel program has staffing to accomplish the agency's mission, goals, and objectives.

It is recommended that an additional, full-time person be identified for assignment to the Wellness section to allow that section to be able to accomplish the goals and objectives that have been established by the department for that section.

Criterion 7B: Recruitment, Selection, Retention and Promotion

Performance Indicator

7B.9 There is an employee/member recognition program in place.

It is recommended that the “STAR” recognition program be revamped and remodeled to allow continued implementation at an acceptable funding level.

Criterion 7F: Risk Management and Personnel Safety

Performance Indicator

7F.1 There is a specific person or persons responsible for implementing the risk management program.

It is recommended that the different aspects of risk management located in the safety and wellness and personnel sections be brought into alignment with the designated risk manager so that accident and injury trends can be identified and addressed in a focused and comprehensive manner. The department currently designates the Safety Captain as the risk manager even though the injury management program is delegated to the Wellness Captain.

7F.2 There is a system for identifying and evaluating workplace hazards.

It is recommended that a reliable system for the identification of workplace hazards be put in place and a system for accountability be instituted to monitor its execution. This recommendation is specific to the station safety checklist program referred to in the Human Resources overview section of this report but can apply to any other area requiring safety and readiness checks.

Category VII Training and Competency Programs

Criterion 8C: Training and Education Resources

Performance Indicator

8C.5 There is a current inventory of training equipment and resources

The inventory system alluded to in this indicator should be instituted in order to insure proper control of training equipment and resources.

Category IX Essential Resources

Criterion 9A: Water Supply

Performance Indicator

9A.8 The fire agency should periodically evaluate the maintenance, inspection and testing to ensure the adequacy and availability of public or private water for fire protection.

The department should evaluate the benefits of transferring the responsibility to service, maintain and test private and public fire hydrants to the Utilities Water Division. The Utilities Water Division currently maintains hydrants located in the customer service zones of fire companies with heavy call volumes, such as E202 and E203. Evaluations of the services being provided by the Utilities Water Division will confirm or deny their ability to effectively perform this responsibility. Should the maintenance and testing be performed satisfactory, the department could utilize the additional time saved to perform other fire related services deemed more beneficial.

Criterion 9C: Administrative Support Services

Performance Indicator

9C.4 The administrative services functions and activities are adequately staffed and managed.

The department should consider allocating a person designated to the planning and research program in order to better identify planning or policy issues.

Category X External System Relations

Criterion 10A: External Agency Relationships

Performance Indicator

10A.2 There is a process for interagency policy development, revision, and the implementation of agreements.

The department should develop a systematic process with time specific dates of review, for inter-agency agreements to ensure that agreements remain up-to-date and reflect current conditions.

Criterion 10B: External Agency Agreements

Performance Indicator

10B.2 The agency has given consideration to other functional agreements...

The department should explore further discussions with service provider(s) for the unincorporated county response areas to ensure that a mutual understanding is developed relative to the service delivery that will or will not be provided by MFD. The feasibility of establishing a formal written agreement should be explored to legalize the agreed upon level of service.

Closing Comments

The Accreditation process is a valuable survival tool for the Mesa Fire Department. Conducting a Self-Assessment allowed the department to “step out of the box” and identify its weaknesses as well as its strengths. We will utilize the new data software programs to keep better track of response times, turnout times, and other critical fire data information.

The Mesa Fire Department will be challenged to maintain the standard it has set as the City continues to grow, emergency service demands increase, and budgets are reduced. This dynamic agency will not only meet but also exceed the challenges it faces in the future to provide its customers with the highest quality of service.

