



**Commission on  
Fire Accreditation  
International®**

# **Accreditation Report**

**Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical  
1911 Stewart Ave.  
Lawrence, KS 66046  
USA**

**This report was prepared on January 9, 2023  
by the  
Commission on Fire Accreditation International**

**This report represents the findings  
of the peer assessment team that visited the  
Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical  
on December 11 – 14, 2022**

**Peer Assessment Team  
John Binaski, Team Leader  
Andrea Glass, Peer Assessor  
Ryan Schubert, Peer Assessor  
Philip Giannattasio, Peer Assessor**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
OBSERVATIONS .....	7
Category 1 — Governance and Administration.....	7
Category 2 — Assessment and Planning .....	7
Category 3 — Goals and Objectives.....	9
Category 4 — Financial Resources.....	10
Category 5 — Community Risk Reduction Program .....	11
Criterion 5A – Prevention Program .....	11
Criterion 5B – Public Education Program .....	11
Criterion 5C – Fire Investigation, Origin and Cause Program .....	12
Criterion 5D – Domestic Preparedness Program .....	13
Criterion 5E – Fire Suppression Program.....	13
Criterion 5F – Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Program .....	14
Criterion 5G – Technical Rescue Program .....	16
Criterion 5H – Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Program .....	16
Criterion 5L –Tactical Medic Program.....	17
Criterion 5M –Coroner Scene Investigations Services .....	17
Category 6 — Physical Resources .....	18
Category 7 — Human Resources.....	19
Category 8 — Training and Competency .....	22
Category 9 — Essential Resources .....	23
Criterion 9A – Water Supply .....	23

Criterion 9B – Communication Systems .....	24
Criterion 9C – Administrative Support Services and Office Systems .....	24
Criterion 9D – Information Technology .....	25
Category 10 — External Systems Relationships .....	25
Category 11 — Health and Safety .....	26

## **PREFACE**

To the citizens and the governing body of the agency: This report represents a thorough review of the organization to verify and validate how this agency is executing its stated mission in accordance with universally accepted practices for a contemporary fire and emergency services organization. Quality improvement can only be initiated and realized by those agencies that challenge themselves through a comprehensive self-assessment. This report documents that this agency is seeking organizational improvements and discovering elements of excellence. Please note that the recommendations by the peer assessment team are opportunities for improvement provided from professionals in the fire and emergency service industry.

To the agency: This report communicates the outputs and outcomes of your dedication and commitment to quality improvement. Your self-assessment, community risk assessment/ standards of cover, and strategic plan amount to years of work to understand your community, establish accountable goals, institute transparency, and factually comprehend what you did not know about your organization. The verification and validation of your agency by a team of peers represents a major accomplishment. The recommendations in this report are opportunities to become better and stronger in your community. Finally, take this report and communicate to your community the areas you identified during your self-assessment that were outstanding and those that represent improvement opportunities.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 1996, the city of Lawrence entered into an inter-local agreement with Douglas County to merge the existing Lawrence Fire Department and the Douglas County Ambulance Service into one combined agency. This combined agency was named Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical (LDCFM). Since then, the agency has grown into an all-hazards organization which provides fire suppression, emergency medical services (EMS), technical rescue, and hazardous materials response. The agency is a career organization with 148 sworn and 5 non-sworn (civilian) personnel. LDCFM provides all fire suppression services to the city of Lawrence, Grant Township, University of Kansas, and Haskell Indian Nations University. The city of Lawrence encompasses 34.86 square miles and in 2020 had a population of 94,934. Additionally, the agency provides EMS to all residents within the 475 square miles of Douglas County and in 2020, had a population of 118,785. This includes Baldwin City, city of Eudora, and city of Lecompton.

The agency's operational infrastructure consists of five stations in the city of Lawrence, two ambulance stations in Douglas County, three engines, two quints, one rescue apparatus, and seven advanced life support (ALS) ambulances. All fire suppression apparatus are staffed with four firefighters and equipped to provide ALS service. All ambulances are staffed with two firefighters, and with one being a certified paramedic. The community risk reduction/public education program is staffed with three sworn employees in the prevention division and supported by an additional six employees in the operations division who receive the public education incentive. Three sworn employees are assigned to the training division and are responsible for providing both fire and EMS training.

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) has completed a comprehensive review and appraisal of the LDCFM based upon the tenth edition of *Quality Improvement for the Fire and*

*Emergency Services.* The commission's goals are to promote organizational self-improvement and to award accreditation status in recognition of good performance. The peer assessment team's objectives were to validate the department's self-assessment study, identify and make recommendations for improvement, issue a report of findings, and conclude if the department is eligible for an award of accreditation.

The peer assessment team followed CFAI processes and the Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical demonstrated that its self-study accreditation manual, community risk assessment/standards of cover (CRA/SOC), and strategic plan met all core competencies and criteria. The peer assessment team recommends accredited agency status for the Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.

The peer assessment team observed a renewed commitment by the agency to the CFAI accreditation process and to ensuring appropriate succession training for the accreditation manager position. Several members of the agency have either started or recently completed the peer assessor training for CFAI. These approaches ensure continuity, more direct access to quality improvement with similar organizations, and the engagement of a broader spectrum of the department.

The peer assessment team had meetings or conversations with the assistant city manager, county administrator, fire chief, and International Association of Fire Fighter's Local 1596. Individually and collectively, they expressed commitment to the accreditation process and support the implementation of identified opportunities for improvement.

The peer assessment team identified opportunities for improvement that are provided below. These recommendations flowed from discussions, interviews, and a review of supplied documentation to support its self-assessment conclusions.

The following represents a synopsis of the recommendations that were made by the peer assessment team during the on-site visit. Additional details for each of these recommendations can be found in the Observations Section of this report. For each of the recommendations, the performance indicator from the model is provided, including notating if it is a core competency (CC).

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations were developed from the evaluation of criterion, core competencies, and performance indicators.

1. It is recommended the agency continue to develop the use of geographical planning zones and corresponding data from both internal and external sources to identify trends and opportunities for service delivery. ([2A.6](#))
2. It is recommended the agency revisit the number of risk categories assigned to each hazard classification to ensure they effectively serve the agency needs and assets at risk. ([CC 2B.4](#))
3. It is recommended the agency incorporate fire protection and detection systems into the risk analysis and development of appropriate response. ([2B.5](#).)
4. It is recommended that the agency review and update critical tasks for each response program. ([CC 2B.4](#))

5. It is recommended that the agency adjust its adopted benchmark when the baseline performance exceeds the benchmark measure. ([2C.7](#), [CC 5F.1](#))
6. It is recommended that the agency conduct a workforce analysis of the fire prevention division to meet the program goals and objectives. ([CC 5A.3](#))
7. It is recommended that the agency review its inspection frequency schedule based on the occupancy type and risks associated with the occupancy. ([5A.5](#))
8. It is recommended the agency analyze the workload and workforce of the public education program to meet community expectations and goals of reducing risk. ([CC 5B.2](#))
9. It is recommended that the agency continue to evaluate critical tasks and necessary personnel to meet effective response force benchmark goals to fire suppression incidents. ([CC 5E.1](#))
10. It is recommended that the agency develop formal training and documentation for the training of trench, confined space and water rescue. ([CC 5G.1](#))
11. It is recommended that the agency implement a formal apparatus inspection and documentation process. ([CC 6D.5](#))
12. It is recommended that the agency identify a process and timeframe to review human resources policies. ([7A.1](#))
13. It is recommended that the agency review and revise the orientation and mentorship program to meet intended program goals and objectives. ([CC 7B.6](#))
14. It is recommended the agency review and implement a consistent appraisal process that aligns with the city's overall employee appraisal system. ([7D.3](#))
15. It is recommended that the agency identify and develop a succession planning process that incorporates mentoring and training for its employees at all positions. ([7D.6](#))
16. It is recommended that the agency establish and maintain a current inventory list of all training equipment and resources. ([8C.6](#))
17. It is recommended that the agency explore mutually beneficial relationships and cost recovery opportunities. ([10A.3](#))
18. It is recommended that the agency review or enter into formalized agreements with allied agencies. ([CC 10B.2](#))
19. It is recommended that the agency establish a consistent system to report and address unsafe work conditions or hazards to improve risk reduction. ([11A.3](#))
20. It is recommended that the agency develop a plan for tracking and compliance for annual screenings that meets the agency's goals and objectives. ([CC 11B.1](#))

The department responded to a total of 14,560 emergencies in 2021 including: 267 fire calls (1 percent); 9,380 emergency medical service (EMS) calls (66 percent); 318 hazardous condition (1 percent) and 4,595 miscellaneous calls (32 percent).

In 2016, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) visited the city to rate its public protection classification. The outcome of the visit was the public protection classification of Class 1. In late 2022, the agency was reviewed and are currently waiting for the official results.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

### **Category 1 — Governance and Administration**

The governing body and/or agency manager is legally established to provide general policies to guide the agency, approved programs and services, and appropriated financial resources. The city of Lawrence was chartered in 1854 and is currently governed by a commission-manager form of government. Five commissioners are elected at large and then select a mayor annually. Fire protection in Lawrence was first organized in 1857 as the *Free State Engine Company #1*. The legal charter from the state of Kansas declares the city of Lawrence as a city of the first class. The agency is legally established and organized within the city's charter and ordinances.

The city of Lawrence has all governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers to provide municipal services. The city commission is the governing body for the city of Lawrence. The city commission appoints a city manager as the chief executive officer of the organization. The city manager is responsible for carrying out city commission policies and the administration of city.

On December 16, 1996, the city of Lawrence entered into an inter-local agreement with Douglas County to merge the existing Lawrence Fire Department and the Douglas County Ambulance Service into one agency. This combined agency was named Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical. Pursuant to this inter-local agreement, the city of Lawrence adopted Chapter VIII, Article I, section 8-101 of the municipal code that legally establishes within the city of Lawrence, Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical.

The organizational structure aligns with or supports the agency's mission, purposes, goals, strategies and objectives. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical has an organizational structure that has five divisions each of which are led by a division chief who reports to the fire chief to manage daily functions. These divisions include operations, emergency medical services, training, prevention, and administration.

### **Category 2 — Assessment and Planning**

The agency collects and analyzes data specific to the distinct characteristics of its legally defined service area(s) and applies the findings to organizational services and services development. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical has a clearly identified fire suppression response area which includes the city of Lawrence, Grant Township, University of Kansas, and Haskell Indian Nations University. In addition, Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical provides emergency medical services and hazardous materials response to all of Douglas County.

The agency has identified 14 geographical planning zones. This has provided the basis for agency staff to analyze characteristics such as topography, geography, population density, social economic, and human-induced factors such as transportation, development, and critical infrastructure. The planning zones also include relevant populations, land use, and other infrastructure use that is unique and reflects the characteristics of the community served.

During interviews, staff stated they believe the creation of additional geographic planning zones to reduce the overall size of each existing planning zone will serve not only to assess risk in the community, but also as a basis for other aspects such as community risk reduction factors to guide



efforts to mitigate identified hazards and risks. It is recommended the agency continue to develop the use of geographical planning zones and corresponding data from both internal and external sources to identify trends and opportunities for service delivery.

The agency identifies and assesses the nature and magnitude of all hazards and risks within its jurisdiction. Risk categorization and deployment impact consider factors such as cultural, economic, historical and environmental values, as well as operational characteristics. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical uses the three-axis risk assessment methodology to classify the nature of the hazards and associated threats. Once established, the process was used to categorize the relative level of risk by assessing considerations such as loss/save data and historical service demands over the previous five years. The agency has performed risk analysis for all programs and identified low, moderate, and high response requirement for most programs. The fire suppression hazard classification has three categories of risk, but the highest risk only has 16 firefighters needed to accomplish critical tasks and does not match the assets at risk. During the recent update to the agency's community risk assessment/standard of cover (CRA/SOC) and in interviews, staff reported the need to reevaluate certain risk classifications and needed critical tasks. It is recommended the agency revisit the number of risk categories assigned to each hazard classification to ensure they effectively serve the agency needs and assets at risk.

The agency does not include in the risk analysis or response matrix if an occupancy has fire protection or detection systems in place. The agency has this information in a geographical information system and can display this information in planning zone maps. It is recommended the agency incorporate fire protection and detection systems into the risk analysis and development of appropriate response.

As a part of its risk assessment, the agency conducted a critical task analysis to identify and quantify the necessary resources to safely mitigate the risk categories/classification in the response area. This was done under the expectation those resources are appropriately trained for the level of risk of the incumbent incident and are located such that they can respond in a timely manner to meet the expectations of the community and agency. Agency critical tasking for EMS and hazardous materials is consistent and valid. The peer assessment team identified room for improvement in the high risk levels of fire suppression and hazardous materials. It is recommended that the agency review and update critical tasks for each response program.

The agency identifies and documents the nature and magnitude of the service and deployment demands within its jurisdiction. Based on risk categorization and service impact considerations, the agency's deployment practices are consistent with jurisdictional expectations and with industry research. Efficiency and effectiveness are documented through quality response measurements that consider overall response, consistency, reliability, resiliency and outcomes throughout all service areas. The agency develops procedures, practices and programs to appropriately guide its resource deployment.

The agency has outlined the methodology used for a consistent service level in all program areas. The agency refers to national standards, such as National Fire Protection Association 1710: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*. The CRA/SOC document contains established benchmark response times for all service program areas to maintain a constant and measurable level of response services. The agency furthers this with documented expectations for response time components to support a consistent service delivery level. The use of data is

continuously evaluated with at least an annual review to appropriately analyze service and response coverage.

The agency has an established methodology for the consistent delivery of emergency services and monitoring the program performance on an ongoing basis. This includes tracking the components of the response time continuum, call processing, turnout, and travel time. The agency's standards of cover baseline performance for all components are documented when enough data points are available. Fire, emergency medical services, hazardous materials, and technical rescue data sets for the five-year reporting period provide a reliable quantity of data points to report a baseline performance measure. Other program areas and risks are of lower incident quantity which limits the ability to accurately create a baseline for effective response force (ERF). Benchmark performance goals are established for all components but need to be reviewed since in many areas, baseline performance exceeds the established benchmark. It is recommended that the agency adjust its adopted benchmark when the baseline performance exceeds the benchmark measure.

The agency has assessed and provided evidence that its current deployment methods for emergency services appropriately address the risk in its service area. Its response strategy has evolved to ensure that its deployment practices have maintained and/or made continuous improvements in the effectiveness, efficiency and safety of its operations, notwithstanding any external influences beyond its control. The agency has identified the impacts of these external influences and communicates them to the authority having jurisdiction.

The agency's performance monitoring includes aspects that identify external influences which could affect the agency and its ability to provide an effective and reliable service level. The methodology it utilizes includes an annual assessment of altering conditions, population growth, development trends, new risks and changing risks.

### **Category 3 — Goals and Objectives**

The mission, vision and values of the agency are incorporated into a strategic plan. Once a strategic plan is in place and resources are available, the strategic plan provides direction, determines initiatives, and guides the goals and objectives of the agency.

In 2021, Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical conducted a facilitated three-day work session to obtain input from internal and external stakeholders to develop a community-based strategic plan, which identified six overall goals. The mission, vision, and values of the organization are incorporated into the strategic plan. Each of these statements and values were developed by a diverse team of professionals from all levels of agency.

The strategic plan defines the agency's general goals and S.M.A.R.T. objectives, directs its activities in a manner consistent with its mission and is appropriate for the community it serves. The agency's strategic plan provides a structure for the specific goals and objectives that outlines both a short- and long-term direction. The goals developed by the stakeholders align the priorities of the organization to best reflect the priorities of the internal and external stakeholders, while focusing on achieving the goals and objectives of the organization. These goals and the following objectives follow the formulation of S.M.A.R.T. goals in that they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound. Goal statements are broad in nature and supported with specific objectives. The agency's strategic goals vary in life span, where some may have a life contained within a fiscal year, while other goals may span multiple fiscal planning cycles.

The agency uses a management process to implement its goals and objectives. The agency is commended for its efforts in community driven planning, ensuring that agency personnel, external stakeholders, and community members' input were an integral component of the 2021-2026 strategic plan. The agency can demonstrate tangible achievements with the development of goals and objectives, financial planning, and then the acquisition of the resources forecasted through the strategic planning process.

Processes are in place to measure and evaluate progress toward completion of goals and objectives and overall plan performance. The goals and objectives are re-examined and modified periodically. The agency uses a management process to track the progress of its goals and objectives during the annual planning period. The process entails reviews with each of the divisions and a review of the many programs. The plan outlines responsibility for completion of various objectives and tasks by team or individual as assigned. Once approved, the plan is published to the agency's website and in hardcopy for distribution to city administration. Agency personnel are encouraged and provided the opportunity for feedback on the goals and objectives through participation in the many workgroups or committees.

The agency's command and administrative staff meet to evaluate and adjust the goals and objectives in a formal process which is supported by an informal reporting process. These review sessions are then utilized to prioritize the activity within the next year and re-examined and modified the goals and objectives as needed. Processes are in place to measure and evaluate progress toward completion of goals and objectives and overall plan performance.

#### **Category 4 — Financial Resources**

Agency planning involves broad staff and community participation in financial planning and resource allocation. The agency's financial planning and budget process reflects sound strategic planning and a commitment to its stated goals and objectives. The agency prepares a balanced budget, which adequately maintains level of service and personnel resources.

The city of Lawrence has policies in place which direct the budget process that include the creation and distribution of appropriate financial reports for both the city commission and the administrative staff. The primary conduit for budget requests is via cadres, annual appraisals, and/or labor input. The city finance director works directly with the chief and department's administrative division to ensure expenditures are consistent with projected financial resources. In addition, contingency plans to cover budget shortfalls are in place.

Agency financial management demonstrates sound budgeting and control, proper recording, reporting and auditing. The peer assessment team confirmed that the city of Lawrence is in receipt of the most currently available Distinguished Budget Presentation and Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (certificates) from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States for its budget and their Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). The agency has submitted its most recent GFOA certificates as prima facie compliance with this criterion.

Appropriately allocated financial resources support the organizational mission, stated long-term plan, goals and objectives and also maintain the quality of programs and services. The agency service levels are evaluated and approved by the fire chief, who works closely with the finance director and city manager. The finance director coordinates the review and production of financial reports on a

monthly and annual basis. These reports are then submitted to the city commission and administrative staff. The checks and balances process in place has served the agency well.

Capital improvement projects and large expenditure maintenance and operations costs are evaluated for long-term impact, alignment with the strategic plan, and sustainability. Typically, the agency avoids incurring long-term debt. The standard practice is to determine that sufficient revenue sources exist before encumbering any long-term debt. Annual budget analysis ensures appropriate funding for anticipated maintenance.

## **Category 5 — Community Risk Reduction Program**

### **Criterion 5A – Prevention Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective and efficient program as identified in the community risk assessment and standards of cover. The approach is comprehensive and includes both prevention and mitigation strategies such as life safety, hazard risk reduction, plan review, code compliance, and the detection, reporting and control of fire and non-fire risks.

Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical administers its community risk programs and fire prevention through the fire marshal's office, which is referred to as the prevention division. The prevention division has three full-time personnel which includes one division chief who serves as the fire marshal. In addition, one captain and one lieutenant serve as plan reviewers, fire inspectors, and investigation program managers. The prevention division is under the leadership of the division chief who reports to the fire chief. The prevention division is tasked with compliance of all fire safety, prevention, and related building codes. The agency utilizes the 2018 edition of the International Fire Code as supplemented and amended by the Fire Code Board of Appeals and is established in Chapter 8, Section 2, of the city of Lawrence Code of Ordinances, ordinance number 9636. The city has transitioned to a code adoption schedule that is updated on a six-year cycle.

The agency's fire marshal is the designated chief fire code official that directs fire code compliance. The prevention division receives support from the operations division personnel to provide annual inspections of commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential occupancies. The prevention division works in partnership with the planning and development services department for site planning, building and mechanical, and electrical code inspections. It is recommended that the agency conduct a workforce analysis of the fire prevention division to meet the program goals and objectives.

While the peer assessment team observed the agency is delivering a comprehensive program that includes both prevention mitigation strategies such as life safety, hazard risk reduction, plan review, and code compliance of fire and non-fire risks. It was discovered during site visit interviews that the agency needs to formally update and document its prevention program to identify the frequency schedule occupancies are inspected. It is recommended that the agency review its inspection frequency schedule based on the occupancy type and risks associated with the occupancy.

### **Criterion 5B – Public Education Program**

A public education program is in place and directed toward reducing community risks in a manner consistent with the agency's mission and as identified within the community risk assessment and standards of cover. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical has a public education program that is

directed toward reducing community risks in a manner consistent with the agency's mission and as identified within the community risk assessment/standard of cover document (CRA/SOC). The public education program is multi-faceted and targets all age groups, specifically identified risks, behaviors, and audiences. The agency utilizes its annual appraisal to address trending risks for the upcoming year. The agency also uses external community partners to assist with the program. The training division chief oversees the program in collaboration with an operations captain who helps with coordination. Six incentivized operations employees conduct the educational session while on duty. The agency has identified an opportunity through Haskell Indian Nations University, located within the jurisdiction, to build a strong relationship with public education and recruitment.

The agency has utilized data from previous calls for service, national data, and the CRA/SOC process to identify local trends to help develop public education programs. The agency teaches age and risk-specific programs, including a mobile safety house for school-aged children, slip trip and fall avoidance for seniors, and cooking safety for college-aged adults. The prevention division utilizes on-duty sworn personnel to deliver this education. The agency has identified that staffing shortages have impacted its ability to provide all its programs. The lack of a consistent point of contact for public education has proven to impact the agency's ability to deliver uninterrupted public education sessions. It is recommended the agency analyze the workload and workforce of the fire prevention division program to meet community expectations and goals of reducing risk.

The agency's CRA/SOC is inclusive of community risk and identified high-risk populations. The agency has plans to form a taskforce to continually review and make recommendations for opportunities to increase risk reduction efforts and enhance response to community risks. The agency also conducts a formal and documented annual program appraisal that is data-driven to ensure the program remains effective and focused.

#### **Criterion 5C – Fire Investigation, Origin and Cause Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, and efficient program directed toward origin and cause investigation and subsequent classification of fires, explosions, and other emergency situations that endanger life or property to drive community risk reduction activities. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical conducts origin and cause investigations independently, or as part of a collaborative with local, state, and federal partners based upon circumstances. The agency uses a three-tier system to classify fire investigations which determines whether company officers, fire investigators, or other authorities are required to be involved. The agency follows local, state, and federal regulations and fulfills its legislated responsibilities. All investigations and fire investigators follow applicable National Fire Protection Association standards when conducting fire cause and origin investigations.

The agency's fire investigation program is adequately staffed with cross-trained suppression personnel. Two personnel per shift are trained and qualified to investigation level 1 and 2 fire incidents and work alongside the city of Lawrence Police Department or law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

Annually, the agency publishes a performance appraisal of the fire investigation program which determines the program's effectiveness. The agency uses outcomes-based measures to assist with informing the following year's goals and objectives.

### **Criterion 5D – Domestic Preparedness Program**

The agency operates an all-hazards preparedness program that includes a coordinated multiagency response plan designed to provide the community preparedness and resiliency in response to terrorist threats or attacks, major disasters, and other large-scale emergencies occurring at or in the immediate area. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical participates in the local emergency planning committee (LEPC) in conjunction with Douglas County emergency and management (DCEM) and local agencies to provide an all-hazards preparedness program that includes a coordinated multi-agency response plan designed to protect the community from terrorist threats or attacks, major disasters, and other large-scale emergencies occurring in the immediate area. The emergency manager (EM) for Douglas County is the designated EM for the county and the city of Lawrence. DCEM has a robust emergency operations plan (EOP) that has been tested and used. The city of Lawrence is currently working with DCEM to develop a citywide EOP and the agency has a current continuity of operations plan. Recent progress has been made with the DCEM and partners creating a fully incorporated incident action plan (IAP), with all partners included in one plan for the first time, in preparation for University of Kansas men's basketball progression in the National Collegiate Athletic Association championship pursuit. This IAP will be the template for future large-scale events and strengthens the coordination and collaboration among multiple agencies.

The agency and county have activated the emergency operations center for multiple incidents over the past three years, which include a F4 tornado, 500-year flood, and a countywide response to the coronavirus pandemic. The agency maintains two regional response trailers for the northeast region of Kansas which is capable of rendering aid for up to 100 patients of differing levels of injury or illness severity for prolonged operation periods. A hazards vulnerability assessment is current and located in the Kansas Homeland Security K Hazard Mitigation Plan. The county and agency partner with additional entities to form a public information group, which is comprised of other cities, universities, and school districts. The public information group meets monthly and has plans in place for a robust crisis communication response to disasters.

### **Criterion 5E – Fire Suppression Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, efficient and safe fire suppression program directed toward controlling and/or extinguishing fires to protect the community from injury or death, and reduce property loss. The program meets the needs of the community to protect citizen and visitors from death, injury, and for property conservation. The agency operates a three-shift system and requires a minimum of 39 uniformed personnel on-duty. The agency staffs three engines, two quints, one rescue apparatus, and seven advanced life support ambulances. The agency is in the process of adding a tiller apparatus to replace the rescue apparatus, and is expected to improve overall response time within certain portions of the community. The agency has deployed resources based on their current critical task model which aligns and satisfies the agency's goals and objectives. The agency updated their dispatch matrix to improve aligning resources with critical tasking and effective response forces. In addition, the agency has established processes for upgrading a response when additional resources are required and/or cancelling a response which contributes to safety and availability. It is recommended that the agency continue to evaluate critical tasks and necessary personnel to meet effective response force benchmark goals to fire suppression incidents.

The agency has invested in incident command training for a portion of their supervisory suppression personnel. The consistent utilization of the incident command system has been successful for the agency and there are written policies to guide personnel at emergency incidents.

Annually, the agency publishes a performance appraisal of the suppression program which determines the program’s effectiveness. The agency uses outcome-based measures to assist with informing the following year’s goals and objectives.

Performance Gap Analysis

The following table represent the agency’s actual performance (baseline) versus the goal (benchmark). The gaps are provided in red (representing improvement opportunities), and green (when actual performance exceeds the goal).

2017 - 2021 Moderate Risk Fire Suppression Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	9:36	6:30	<b>03:06</b>
		n=32		
1st Due	Rural	16:03	12:30	<b>03:33</b>
		n=3		
ERF	Urban	13:14	10:30	<b>02:44</b>
		n=7		
ERF	Rural	13:59	18:30	<b>04:31</b>
		n=2		

**Criterion 5F – Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Program**

The agency operates an EMS program with a designated level of out-of-hospital emergency medical care that protects the community from injury or death. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical EMS program operates within the State of Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services and the Douglas County medical director. The agency provides EMS service to the city of Lawrence and all of Douglas County. The agency operates out of seven stations providing advanced life support (ALS) with seven paramedic units. The agency also staffs six fire apparatus capable of providing ALS care. The system operates with a minimum of one paramedic per transport apparatus. The agency has implemented a program for all new hires to obtain their paramedic certificate within three years of hire to facilitate more paramedics within their agency. The agency has recently been allocated an EMS logistics position as part of its latest budget process.

The EMS service model for the agency is a cooperative agreement with Douglas County and the City of Lawrence. This agreement was completed in 1997 and added rural responses to what was primarily an urban agency. The agency noted in its community risk assessment/standard of cover document that it reviews and recently identified some potential changes to its call handling benchmarks. It is recommended that the agency adjust its adopted benchmark when the baseline performance exceeds the benchmark measure.

The agency and the medical director recommend protocol changes and standard practices for delivering EMS to the citizens of the response district. Recently the agency published protocols online, allowing the agency members to have reliable and easy access to mobile devices and computers. A newly formed standing EMS committee also reviews and updates orders and protocols and reviews medical equipment for potential purchase. The agency has implemented a process that will provide more access to the medical director, with a minimum of six hours per month dedicated to

onsite training or interaction. This practice should help to strengthen the relationship between operational members and the medical director.

The agency utilizes *ESO record management* software for the EMS records management system and electronic patient care reporting which is compliant with National EMS Information System and Kansas prehospital EMS tracking and reporting system. It also employs a program through *ESO* software to exchange patient information between the agency and the receiving medical facilities. The agency has policies and procedures to ensure medical record security and privacy.

The agency follows required Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations and has designated the division chief of EMS as the HIPAA compliance officer. Annual training is assigned to all members through the agency’s tracking software, *Vector Solutions* and is adequate in meeting the needs of the members and agency.

The agency uses a team that includes billing personnel, the medical director, and the division chief of EMS to manage its quality improvement/quality assurance (QI/QA) program. The agency has begun repurposing some of its administrative staff to help with the QI/QA process and is seeing positive results. The agency does onsite billing for EMS responses and has used this process to help with its QI/QA process.

The agency has a robust cardiac arrest program and takes great pride in its work. The agency has followed advanced cardiac resuscitation protocols (ACR) since 2018. The agency was one of the first agencies to implement the ACR protocol and has sustained a high level of success with its program. In 2021, the return of spontaneous circulation was 36.7 percent and survivability rates were at 15 percent which were above the national average.

The agency completes an annual program appraisal of its EMS division; the appraisal is comprehensive and describes how the agency has performed against its benchmarks. It bases its findings on data and sound analysis.

Performance Gap Analysis

The following table represent the agency’s actual performance (baseline) versus the goal (benchmark). The gaps are provided in red (representing improvement opportunities), and green (when actual performance exceeds the goal).

2017 - 2021 Moderate Risk EMS Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	8:50	6:30	02:20
		n=15159		
1st Due	Rural	20:30	12:30	08:00
		n=1219		
ERF	Urban	9:45	10:30	00:45
		n=14047		
ERF	Rural	20:34	18:30	02:04
		n=1192		



**Criterion 5G – Technical Rescue Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, efficient and safe technical rescue program directed toward rescuing the community from any life-endangering causes (e.g., structural collapse, vehicle accidents, swift water or submersion, confined space, cave-in, trench collapse). Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical provides trained firefighters in various aspects of technical rescue to respond to emergencies for confined space, vehicle extrication, trench rescue, structural collapse, high-angle rope rescue, and water/ice rescue. The technical rescue team is based out of Station 5 and houses the Kansas Task Force 2 trailer with an appropriate equipment cache along with four water rescue boats. While vehicle extrication is managed by the technical rescue team, the deployment for the remaining specialties consists of a multi-unit response based on the nature of the incident.

The agency in many instances would need the support of regional technical rescue teams for complex and time-demanding operations. The technical rescue component of the agency is part of Kansas Task Force 2. Kansas Task Force 2 is a regional response team for the northeast region of Kansas, managed by the Kansas Department of Emergency Management. The often complex and dangerous nature of a technical rescue requires that responders be both highly trained and rapidly deployable. All employees assigned to Station 5 are certified in Rope 1 through Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute. Additional technical rescue training is provided at the station level, but is not in compliance with current National Fire Protection Association job performance requirements. It is recommended that the agency develop formal training and documentation for the training of trench, confined space and water rescue.

A formal, adopted program appraisal process is in place which ties the annual program performance data to the pertinent goals and objectives. The peer assessment team verified the process is in place and used by the staff in assessing the effectiveness of the program. As a part of the agency’s participation in a multi-jurisdictional technical rescue program, they can illustrate through associated reports the required elements of an annual program appraisal.

**Performance Gap Analysis**

The following table represents the agency’s actual performance (baseline) versus the goal (benchmark). The gaps are provided in red (representing improvement opportunities), and green (when actual performance exceeds the goal).

2017 - 2021 Moderate Risk Tech Rescue Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	8:30	6:30	<b>02:00</b>
		n=159		
ERF	Urban	9:03	10:30	<b>01:27</b>
		n=140		

**Criterion 5H – Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, efficient and safe hazardous materials program directed toward protecting the community from the hazards associated with the uncontrolled releases of hazardous and toxic materials. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical is staffed and equipped to respond to hazardous materials (hazmat) incidents countywide. Hazmat operations are based out of

Station 4. The agency utilizes a dual-purpose fire apparatus that carries specialized hazardous materials response equipment and a hazmat trailer that responds in tandem to incidents requiring more resources and equipment. The agency currently maintains approximately 39 members trained to the National Fire Protection Association 472 standard and International Fire Services Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) hazardous materials technician. The remaining 94 members are trained to the IFSAC hazardous materials operations level. Hazmat technicians are dispersed throughout the agency to offer a higher-level initial response to hazmat incidents.

The agency is the primary provider of hazardous materials emergency response within Douglas County and receives mutual aid from Johnson County, approximately 35 miles to the east, if needed. The agency maintains relationships with Douglas County emergency management, the University of Kansas, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Environmental Protection Agency, State of Kansas Fire Marshal’s Office, regional hazmat teams and 73rd Civil Support Team.

Performance Gap Analysis

The following table represent the agency’s actual performance (baseline) versus the goal (benchmark). The gaps are provided in red (representing improvement opportunities), and green (when actual performance exceeds the goal).

2017 - 2021 Moderate Risk Hazmat Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	10:49	6:30	<b>04:19</b>
		n=187		
ERF	Urban	11:29	10:30	<b>00:59</b>
		n=144		

**Criterion 5L – Tactical Medic Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, efficient and safe tactical medic program directed toward protecting the community from an incident occurring at or in the immediate area. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical operates a tactical medic program directed toward protecting the community by providing emergency medical care to law enforcement officers and citizens, injured or taken ill during high-risk law enforcement incidents. The program is managed by the division chief of prevention, an operations chief officer, a captain liaison, and six specially trained tactical medics who respond in a call-out capacity as a medical support component. Tactical medics train on a monthly basis with Lawrence Police Department Crisis Response Team. The tactical medic program is appropriately equipped with the proper equipment to respond safely. A formal and equitable process is established for selection to participate as a tactical medic when vacancies occur. A formal appraisal is completed annually to determine the effectiveness of the agency’s tactical medic program.

**Criterion 5M – Coroner Scene Investigations Services**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, efficient and safe coroner scene investigations program that responds to and investigates all unattended deaths in the immediate area. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical operates a coroner scene investigations program that responds to and investigates all unattended deaths in Douglas County as required by Kansas State statutes. Douglas county contracts a private partnership with Forensic Medical of Kansas, LLC., in conjunction with

the agency to provide these services. The division chief of prevention oversees the program and has six coroner scene investigators that cover each of the three shifts.

The formal appraisal is completed annually to determine the effectiveness of the agency's coroner scene investigations services, which identified the need to change the model, transitioning the program responsibility to Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

### **Category 6 — Physical Resources**

Development and use of physical resources are consistent with the agency's established plans. A systematic and planned approach to the future development of facilities is in place. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical has five stations within the city of Lawrence and ambulance stations located in the cities of Baldwin and Eudora. The agency has recently completed a station optimization analysis which will complement its current standards of coverage and future needs. The agency has demonstrated that it has been able to proactively plan for the current and future service needs of the community. Facility planning efforts have focused on functionality. Some facilities have been repurposed to provide areas for training, accommodating specialized apparatus, and specialized equipment. The agency is currently in the planning process for the prospect of annexing a geographical area which consists of a projected future population of 18,000 and will need to determine funding and location for future stations.

The agency designs, maintains and manages fixed facility resources that meet the agency's goals and objectives. The agency operates five stations in the city and two ambulance stations in the county. The stations are strategically located to meet the needs of the community and service objectives. Some station locations have changed and evolved over time to assist in meeting and improving service level benchmarks. Planned and coordinated equipment storage is required to optimize current available space. Small station projects are managed through command staff, while larger scale projects are included as part of the capital budget. Regular station audits serve as an opportunity to address facility needs and deficiencies. The city's facilities department and independent contractors maintain the agency's stations. The agency's facilities are clean, has appropriate space, and comply with building and code requirements which were in effect at the time of construction, or otherwise required.

Apparatus resources are designed, purchased and maintained to adequately meet the agency's goals and objectives. The current complement of apparatus resources operationally and functionally support the services provided by the agency. The agency has a planned replacement system which includes both timelines for frontline and reserve functions. Only on occasion, has the agency deviated from the replacement cycle based upon special situations and circumstance. Apparatus are currently sole sourced and align with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. In advance of planned and forecasted apparatus replacements, a project team is assembled with representation from across the agency and fleet maintenance division. Those involved consider numerous factors that improve the development of apparatus specifications based on operational needs.

The inspection, testing, preventive maintenance, replacement schedule and emergency repair of all apparatus are well established and meet the emergency apparatus service and reliability needs. The agency utilizes the city's fleet maintenance services for the majority of inspections and repairs. Fleet maintenance has a complement of emergency vehicle technicians (EVTs) who specialize in emergency vehicle repairs and service. Frontline personnel utilize the electronic process *Asset Works*

for requesting apparatus diagnostics and service. An apparatus status spreadsheet is also maintained which provides the agency with information regarding the status of an apparatus. The maintenance area is adequate, but limited for efficiently managing the current volume of maintenance needs and requirements. Plans are in place for a new maintenance facility in 2026. The number of EVT qualified mechanics is sufficient to support the current maintenance and repair program. It was noted that the agency does not have a formalized apparatus inspection and documentation process in place. It is recommended that the agency implement a formal apparatus inspection and documentation process.

Equipment and supplies are adequate and designed to meet the agency's goals and objectives. The agency's fleet maintenance has sufficient quantities of inventory to support minor repairs and maintains access to specialized parts and service via the local apparatus dealer. The agency replaces equipment and supplies as needed and maintains inventories of regular consumables. The agency aligns with NFPA standards for apparatus equipment inventories and complies with state requirements for ambulance units. Equipment is evaluated at least annually and replaced as needed unless otherwise regulated to do so on a different schedule. A budget for small equipment and small tools supports the needs of the agency. A combination of in-house personnel, qualified agency personnel, and third-party companies maintain, record, and report on the status of the agency's equipment. Apparatus equipment inventories are maintained and accessible on the intranet.

Safety equipment is adequate and designed to meet agency goals and objectives. The agency issues adequate and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to all agency personnel. Specialized safety equipment is issued and available to those who participate in specialized operations with unique risks and hazards. The agency recently issued second sets of structural firefighting gear to prevent additional exposures and to enable thorough decontamination and laundering. The agency has written policies to support this important function. All safety equipment meets or exceeds the NFPA standards and is replaced based upon need or life cycle. The agency has internal personnel who are qualified and maintain an adequate complement of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Software systems are in place to appropriately track and record SCBA inventory and repairs. Clearly defined replacement cycles along with appropriate budgetary funding is in place to meet the needs of the agency.

### **Category 7 — Human Resources**

General human resources administration practices are in place and are consistent with local, state/provincial and federal statutory and regulatory requirements. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical has human resource administration practices in place that are consistent with local, state, and federal requirements. The city has a human resources department with managers specializing in benefits administration, worker's compensation, Family Medical Leave Act and employee relations. The agency assigns the administrative division chief the responsibility of human resource management, who is the primary point of contact for the human resource department (HR). The agency also has two administrative support staff that assist the administrative division with human resource issues.

The agency follows policies established in the city of Lawrence Employee Handbook, which the city's HR department maintains. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 1596 and the city of Lawrence also adheres to local, state, and federal requirements. The agency has identified some gaps within its organization. The agency

has noted that a review of policies has not been able to be completed on an annual basis. It is recommended that the agency identify a process and timeframe to review human resources policies.

Systems are established to attract, select, retain and promote qualified personnel in accordance with applicable local, state/provincial and federal statutory requirements. The agency has mechanisms to identify and announce entry-level and promotional positions. Currently, the agency is experiencing challenges with recruiting qualified applicants. The agency has recently formed a public information group that will assist its recruiting team and create greater visibility of job opportunities. Agency members have traditionally been part of the recruitment process led by the division chief of emergency medical services. The agency is committed to maintaining a progressive and diverse approach as part of its recruitment and selection process.

Processes are in place and used to ensure that all candidates for hiring or promotional processes comply with local, state, and federal laws. A newly formed recruitment team represents a diverse background of current agency members who have begun recruiting locally and regionally. This is a proactive approach to recruitment and engagement of the community. The agency has successfully attracted a diverse candidate pool, which has enabled the agency to closely mirror the ethnic population of the city.

The agency provides new members with an orientation that begins with the human resources department and continues through an agency delivered mentorship program. The agency also has a mentoring process to evaluate newly promoted paramedics, acting officers, and acting operations chief officers. The agency utilizes an officer development handbook to assist employees that are promoted. The agency has noted that its mentorship program and orientation are not meeting program expectations. It is recommended that the agency review and revise the orientation and mentorship program to meet intended program goals and objectives.

The agency has a well-developed employee recognition program that highlights its members' accomplishments and is well-received. The city of Lawrence employs an Americans with Disabilities Act compliance manager to ensure that working conditions and employment opportunities meet federal, state, and local standards. The agency has established annual employee surveys to help improve the morale of its members. In addition, all members who leave the agency meet with supervisors in an exit interview to collect information to help improve member engagement. The agency has recently seen a significant amount of turnover in administrative personnel which has resulted in the need for improved succession planning.

Documented personnel policies and procedures are in place to guide both administrative and personnel behavior. The agency has a well-documented standard operating procedure (SOP) manual which is communicated to all personnel. Each new agency member is given an online copy of the employee handbook and agency SOPs. The agency has stated the annual review of SOPs is proving to be time-consuming to complete a yearly review cycle by its administration division. SOP content changes are sent out for a two-week review by all lieutenants, captains, and the union president. Officers then facilitate a review with crews and provide feedback, comments, or questions to administrative staff. Once the command staff approves changes, the SOP will be assigned to all applicable employees in *Vector Solutions* for review and acknowledgement.

Policies include harassment, bias, and discrimination that comply with local, state, and federal laws. The agency's human resources department helps ensure training compliance and policy updates. The

city has a director of diversity, equity, and inclusion, which assists with policy development and implementation.

The agency has a comprehensive corrective action system outlined in the MOU between the city and IAFF Local 1596 and the city's employee handbook. The sources contain language on progressive discipline, grievance procedures, and performance improvement plans. The agency has a comprehensive grievance procedure process outlined which is a multi-step process.

Internal ethics and conflict of interest policies are established, published, and communicated to all employees. The city maintains these policies within the employee handbook, which is available to all employees on the city intranet. The agency also has an off-duty employment policy that addresses additional conflict of interest items.

Human resources development and utilization is consistent with the agency's established mission, goals and objectives. The human resources department regularly reviews the agency's position classification system. Job descriptions are reviewed regularly to ensure they align with actual job functions. The agency has a position description questionnaire that can be initiated by either the employee or manager to help align job responsibilities with the stated position or update as required. The city has also engaged in compensation studies and adjusted pay scales based on the analysis.

The city has a personnel appraisal system for all non-sworn personnel; however, the agency has not had a consistent process that aligns with the city's overall employee appraisal. The agency has stated it has had difficulty getting appraisals done, which has impacted its ability to get timely payroll updates and caused confusion with sworn personnel. It is recommended the agency review and implement a consistent appraisal process that aligns with the city's overall employee appraisal system.

The city allows for employee feedback through the city's Employee Relations Council. This council is representative of all departments and meets monthly. It helps to bring projects and suggestions to help employee relations and benefits. The agency goes further by utilizing an internal task force to address gaps and find improvements. Within the task forces, the department employees contribute to the direction of projects and provide input toward recommended solutions

The agency has worked diligently to make career opportunities available to all employees, including training courses, leadership and development courses, and other opportunities. The agency prioritizes the continued advancement of its personnel which is reflected in its strategic plan. The agency has partnered with the University of Kansas to help facilitate training and education opportunities.

The agency has struggled with its mentoring and succession planning for its members. They identified this as a priority and incorporated it into their completed strategic plan. It is recommended that the agency identify and develop a succession planning process that incorporates mentoring and training for its employees at all positions.

A system and practices for providing employee/member compensation are in place. The agency negotiates its pay scale with IAFF local 1596 and publishes it annually. Pay schedules are available to employees by accessing the city's intranet. Employee benefits information is available in the city personnel policy manual and the MOU between the city and IAFF Local 1596.

Annually, the city's human resources benefits specialist communicates to all city employees regarding the benefits available to them. The agency provides up-to-date information via the city's intranet to all employees.

### **Category 8 — Training and Competency**

A training program is established to support the agency's needs. The agency provides access to and guidance on educational programs that increase advancement potential and support the agency's needs. The training program is established to support the Lawrence Douglas County Fire Medicals' mission, goals, and objectives through the training division which consists of a division chief of training, one training captain, and one training lieutenant. A training program team comprised of six International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1596 representatives and non-represented employees from all ranks meet regularly with the division chief of training to assist in the planning and development of training. The training program team reinforces the strengths, knowledge, and experience at all levels of the agency. The training programs are consistent with standards required by the National Fire Protection Association, Insurance Services Offices (ISO), Kansas Board of EMS (KBEMS), and 29 CFR 1910.120 (q) (6 through 9) for development of fire-related training. The agency uses *Vector Solutions* as a training and education document records management system which assists in annual training requirements and recertification processes.

The agency identifies minimum levels of education and training for all positions in the organization which are well documented and available to all members. Engineer qualifications to become a driver/operator occur through the University of Kansas' fire science program and are offered free to personnel interested in a promotional opportunity. An acting officer program is in place and required prior to being able to operate in an acting captain capacity. A mentorship task book is established for captains interested in promotional opportunity to battalion chief.

Training and education programs are provided to support the agency's needs. The agency conducts a 12-week recruit academy for all entry-level hires, which includes International Fire Service Training Association Firefighter I and II, Hazmat Awareness, and Hazmat Operations, as well as medical orientation and practical instruction on agency policies and procedures. Ongoing training is provided at the individual, company, shift, and agency level. Training is based on legal and administrative requirements, continuing education requirements, and assessed agency needs. Training is provided to agency employees in a wide variety of formats which include self-study, individual instruction, in-person lectures, small-group simulations, multi-company evolutions, and remote/virtual courses. The training division has faced challenges with meeting all the demands and required training as well as the coronavirus pandemic. The training division has incorporated innovative ways to meet the training needs of the agency to the best of its ability. All training is documented and tracked to ensure compliance with agency standards and requirements.

The agency ensures members receive appropriate training on an annual basis with established standards that comply with ISO standards for firefighter training. The agency creates an annual training plan for the upcoming year which is reviewed on a quarterly basis and adjusted as needed to meet the goals, needs, and abilities of the agency. The agency encourages personnel to seek additional training opportunities that complement individual knowledge, skills, and abilities. The agency maintains a training records management system through *Vector Solutions*, that meets the needs of the organization. KBEMS maintains an online portal for EMS continuing education training

records. A formal and documented program appraisal is conducted annually to determine program effectiveness and compliance with meeting the needs of the agency.

Printed and nonprinted training and education resources, library materials, media equipment, facilities and staff are available in adequate quantity, relevancy and diversity, and are current. The agency's training division maintains training and education materials for both formal training classes and informal review by individuals or companies. The training division expanded the use of technology and media resources during the coronavirus pandemic to maximize remote and virtual training opportunities. Physical resources include a dedicated training center, which includes a training field, a four-story drill tower, and two burn rooms. The training tower also includes anchors at various points to conduct technical rescue and bail out training safely. The training facility is the location for recruit training academies which are held once or twice a year. The facility may be shared during this time to ensure training occurs for all personnel. The training division is located in the administration building. Additional subject matter experts are used as a resource from operations to assist with training needs.

The agency partners with other counties through the training chief association to provide additional training, resources, skills, and simulations. The partnerships also provide the agency with tools and training concepts for internal use. Instructional materials are current, easily accessible through *Vector Solutions*, and support the training division's objectives. Additional materials are sent out through email for review. The agency makes training equipment readily accessible to instructional personnel and has a small storage room at the training facility for these items. Training materials are reviewed annually as part of the training division and training program teams' planning for the annual training calendar.

While the peer team observed the agency is providing training equipment and resources, it was identified that there is an opportunity to improve the tracking and inventory system of training equipment. It is recommended that the agency establish and maintain a current inventory list of all training equipment and resources.

## **Category 9 — Essential Resources**

### **Criterion 9A – Water Supply**

The water supply resources are reliable and capable of distributing adequate volumes of water and pressures to all areas of agency responsibility. All areas meet fire flow requirements in accordance with applicable fire flow criteria.

The water supply resources are reliable and capable of distributing adequate volumes of water and pressures to all areas of agency responsibility. All areas meet fire flow requirements in accordance with applicable fire flow criteria. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical has a water supply provided and managed by the city of Lawrence Municipal Services and Operations Department (MSO). The agency uses two water treatment plants with high-capacity pumps to feed the distribution system, which is 434 miles of water mains to supply the city. The system is comprised of 3,709 hydrants, each spaced 500 feet apart. The agency has identified high-risk areas of the city and increased hydrants and water main sizes in those locations. The agency is also responsible for firefighting in Grant Township through a protection agreement. This rural area utilizes a water shuttle using water tenders due to the lack of a hydrant system for firefighting purposes.



The system received a water supply score of 29.55 out of 30 from Insurance Services Office (ISO) in the 2016 assessment from ISO. The agency was reviewed in 2022 and is waiting the formal written report and updated scoring. The water system complies with the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and the 2018 International Fire Code. The agency reviews its documents and standard operating procedures annually for rural operations in Grant Township to ensure adequate resources are committed to any fire response.

The water distribution system meets the agency's needs for firefighting and all risk mitigation. The water system can pump 43 million gallons daily and maintains sufficient water pressure throughout the distribution system. The testing and maintenance of all city hydrants are the responsibility of the city's MSO Department. Testing, flushing, and maintenance of hydrants occur on a four-year cycle. The MSO department provides a spreadsheet of flow data for import into the agency's records management system. The agency uses *ArcGIS* to visualize accurate locations of hydrants and water mains throughout the services area. The city's MSO Department has received recognition from the AWWA for its testing and maintenance program.

### **Criterion 9B – Communication Systems**

The public and the agency have an adequate, effective and efficient emergency communications system. The system is reliable and able to meet the demands of major operations, including command and control within fire/rescue services during emergency operations, and meets the needs of other public safety agencies.

The communications services provided by Douglas County adequately meet the needs of the agency. The communications system and its capabilities are reliable and support incident command at all incident types. The communications center has minimum staffing of five dispatchers who also provide services to a host of other public safety agencies. Locations, equipment, and agreements are in place to support secondary and tertiary back-up centers, if needed. The communications center's on-call processes and provisions for staffing facilitate the continuity and reliability of service to the agency. The Douglas County communications center, which serves as the public safety answering point is equipped with technologies and equipment to meet the needs of the agency and communications center. The Computer Aided Dispatch system interfaces with the agencies technologies including on board Mobile Data Computers station alerting, automatic vehicle location. The dispatch center is in the process of ensuring enhancements to the quality improvement process is a priority.

### **Criterion 9C – Administrative Support Services and Office Systems**

Administrative support services and general office systems are in place with to efficiently and effectively conduct and manage the agency's administrative functions such as organizational planning and assessment, resource coordination, record keeping, reporting, business communications, public interaction and purchasing.

The division of administration is currently organized with a division chief, fire medical data analyst, senior administrative specialist, and an administrative specialist. The position of division chief of administration is recently vacant, and a reorganization is being considered for improved efficiency and effectiveness in the various administrative and support functions.

The city of Lawrence is in the process of centralizing its resources to an internal services model where there will be liaisons with the agency. The agency has identified and designated personnel responsible for public reception, public information, and electronic communications. Personnel will support the customer service needs of the agency with plans to expand the social media platforms to increase engagement with the community. The agency has a system in place to ensure policies and procedures are reviewed and revised on a recurring cycle with input from all levels of the organization.

### **Criterion 9D – Information Technology**

Information technology resources are in place with adequate staff to efficiently and effectively conduct and manage the agency's information technology functions, such as hardware and software implementation and maintenance and data analysis. The information technology (IT) department manages all software and hardware for the agency. The agency uses agency personnel as subject matter experts (SMEs) in the use of software and technology under command staff. IT personnel and the agency SMEs assist in the data analysis and interpretation for continuous improvement. The computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system is operated and maintained by the Douglas County Sheriff's Department. The IT department has established relationships with its partner agencies to assist with CAD issues and ensure continuity for all mobile data computers (MDCs).

The IT services department maintains a replacement plan that meets the agency's needs. The agency has the hardware and software to support all areas of the technology needs. In addition, all divisions and administrative support have ample computer workspaces and all apparatus have an MDC that meet the agency's needs.

The IT department manages the cybersecurity and maintains policies for data governance, accuracy, and analysis for all personnel. The agency utilizes integrated programs that automate hydrant tracking, testing, and maintenance. A robust citywide governance committee was recently formed to help align all the partner agencies under one shared vision and plan for technology hardware and software. The agency has implemented a solid cyber security system, its members are trained, and policies and procedures exist to support sound practices to maintain security.

### **Category 10 — External Systems Relationships**

The agency's operations and planning efforts include relationships with external agencies and operational systems that affect or may influence its mission, operations and/or cost effectiveness. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical has both informal and formalized agreements in place with external agencies. These agreements are mutually beneficial and contribute to meeting the agency's operational and strategic objectives. The agency's strategic plan identifies external stakeholders who have contributed to the plan resulting in a publication that is reflective of the needs of the organization and the community. These relationships demonstrate and serve in achieving the agency's mission and goals.

The agency currently has agreements in place with city agencies, jurisdictional agencies, regional agencies, private organizations, and quasi-governmental organizations. The agency has recently established a facility usage agreement with several neighboring fire agencies which is expected to increase training facility usage and ultimately contribute to more cooperative and improved operations. The agency has a paid-service and training agreement with the University of Kansas for large-scale and planned special events. The agency has also partnered with the Douglas County

Sheriff's Department reducing community risk through a children's bike helmet program. The legal established agreements are mutually managed by the city's legal department and the agency. The agency has recently completed an audit of both formal and informal agreements. During this audit, it was discovered several practices are completed without formal agreements and there are opportunities for potential cost recovery options. It is recommended that the agency explore mutually beneficial relationships and cost recovery opportunities.

The agency maintains current agreements with those external agencies which support the identified programs. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical strives to maintain current agreements with external stakeholders. The agency has recently undertaken a concentrated effort to locate informal and formally established agreements. The agency has written policies and has identified internal staff responsible for managing and reviewing external agreements. The agency participates in automatic and mutual aid agreements with external agencies and has recently explored opportunities with other external agencies. It is recommended that the agency review or enter into formalized agreements with allied agencies.

### **Category 11 — Health and Safety**

The agency's occupational health, safety and risk management programs protect the organization and personnel from unnecessary injuries, loss, and liability. Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical's division chief of administration worked closely with the city of Lawrence's risk manager and upon vacancy of the position, the responsibilities for administration of the programs were transitioned to the division chief of emergency medical services. The city of Lawrence's risk manager pulls data and information concerning types, frequency, and locations of injuries to determine trends for improved risk management and injury prevention. The agency has a dedicated health and wellness team in place that supports adopted safety initiatives.

Annually the agency completes Occupational Safety and Health Association required training which is managed in part through the agency's *e-learning* platform. The agency collects and maintains exposures in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1500: *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*, which are secured and stored electronically. Risk management practices are in place to increase the level of decision making on emergency incidents, which are reinforced through the training division. These include annual mayday, rapid intervention team emergency traffic, and blue card training curriculum. The agency has a near miss reporting system with associated policies and reports zero near miss incidents in the past five years. Policies and plans in place to ensure accidents involving agency property or injury to personnel are investigated to determine the cause, evaluate contributing factors, and determine necessary steps to prevent additional occurrences in the future.

While the peer assessment team observed the agency is delivering an adequate program that works with risk management, opportunities were identified to improve the consistency of platforms for documenting and reporting unsafe/unhealthy conditions and work practices. It is recommended that the agency establish a consistent system to report and address unsafe work conditions or hazards to improve risk reduction.

The agency has a wellness/fitness program for personnel. The agency has a wellness and fitness program for personnel titled *BeHealthy*, which is conducted through Lawrence Memorial Health Hospital. The agency has dedicated health, safety, and peer support teams to lead internal initiatives related to health and wellness. Each station has designated physical fitness facilities and a

compliment of equipment to support the wellness and fitness program. The city of Lawrence provides employees access to Lawrence Memorial Health *WellCare* services which include an online portal to track healthy activity and provide wellness training on a variety of topics. Participation in the wellness program is incentivized through an additional health contribution from the city. Employees who are injured on duty receive worker's compensation benefits including physical therapy if deemed necessary by a physician.

The agency provides for an employee assistance program in addition to the peer support team to address needs related to critical incident stress debriefing, counseling, and other behavioral health requirements. During the contingent job offer phase of initial employment, the agency requires each potential employee be evaluated psychologically by an outside vendor. The agency provides for initial and annual medical evaluations which are facilitated by the administrative division. Annual medical physicals, including lab work, are mandatory and in accordance with NFPA 1582: *Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments*.

While the peer assessment team observed the agency is delivering an adequate program that specifies and communicates the provisions of a wellness and fitness program for personnel, opportunities were identified to improve the tracking and compliance of annual physicals with the wellness and fitness program. It is recommended that the agency develop a plan for tracking and compliance for annual screenings that meets the agency's goals and objectives.