

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOPEKA – The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) would like to make an official statement regarding our HazMat Response Team’s (HMRT) reimbursement process for local municipalities and their HazMat responses, specifically concerning the Coffeyville Fire Department’s (CFD) HazMat response team’s October reimbursement submittal.

Under our current contract with the City of Coffeyville, OSFM agrees to reimburse the City of Coffeyville at a single-time hourly rate for HazMat team members, who are on duty at the CFD when responding to an approved HazMat incident and at a double-time hourly rate for team members, who are not on duty and are on call-back. We do not pay the fire department or the team members directly, as we reimburse the municipality, and it is up to their discretion and/or policies to determine the pay rates and to issue the checks to the individual team members.

Last October, CFD submitted its billing to our office after their HMRT responded to an approved incident. That billing was processed, and the City of Coffeyville was reimbursed. An error on their submission was later discovered by our accounting personnel. The firefighter who submitted the documentation had mistakenly adjusted our fillable spreadsheet at double-time rates for all of the team members who responded to the incident. That firefighter was not the usual team member who submits HMRT billing, and we believe it was simply an unintentional error. We are not asking that the funds be returned, as it is our goal to prevent any undue expenses to a municipality for providing a HMRT.

Since this error occurred, we have locked the forms and created a more vigorous review process to ensure the correct HMRT reimbursements are processed in the future. We consider the City of Coffeyville and the Coffeyville Fire Department to be integral partners, especially for our HazMat Response Division. Our mission is protecting the lives and property of the citizens of Kansas from the hazards of fire, explosion, and natural and man-made disasters. We could not accomplish that mission without the cooperation and partnerships of the municipalities and fire departments across the state.

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