



**A Report to the
Audit Committee**

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**Audit of The Davidson County
Sheriff's Office Firearms and
Equipment**



November 6, 2014

Metropolitan
Nashville
Office of
Internal Audit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

November 6, 2014



Why We Did This Audit

The audit was initiated based on the significance and risks associated with firearms, ammunition, and other inherently dangerous items.

What We Recommend

The Davidson County Sheriff's Office can enhance its control environment by segregating asset custody and record keeping responsibilities, improving documentation over firearms obtained by the Warrant Division, and strengthening documentation over disposals of ballistic vests. Visibility of ammunition usage could be enhanced.

AUDIT OF THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE FIREARMS AND EQUIPMENT

BACKGROUND

The Davidson County Sheriff's Office plays a critical role in the public safety sector as it is responsible for booking and housing all inmates under Metropolitan jurisdiction, serving warrants, and operating a number of rehabilitation programs. The ability of this office to effectively carry out its mission is directly correlated with the public's trust and confidence. Effective management and oversight of firearms and other weapons is very important to the Sheriff's Office goals and objectives.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objectives of the audit were to determine:

- If controls and procedures ensured firearms and equipment inventory were secured and tracked.
- If firearms and equipment policies and procedures conformed to standards of the American Correctional Association.

The audit scope included July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2014.

WHAT WE FOUND

The Davidson County Sheriff's Office had effective controls and procedures in place to ensure firearms were procured, received, identified, recorded, tracked, secured, and disposed of in a reasonable manner. These procedures were in conformity to those set by the American Correctional Association.

The Davidson County Sheriff's Office could enhance its control environment by implementing a number of suggested control activities and documentation additions. No weapons or ammunition were found to be unaccounted for during the audit.

GOVERNANCE

The Davidson County Sheriff is a constitutionally elected official. All weapons belonging to the Sheriff's Office but not yet assigned to an individual are under the control of the Special Operations Response Team Commander. Specifically, the commander is responsible for the accountability, security, and control of these weapons and ammunition. Weapons, once assigned to individual officers and employees, are the responsibility of the individual. The Training Division maintains control of ammunition and other equipment used in the training process.

OBJECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

1. *Were controls and procedures in place to ensure firearm and equipment inventory at the Davidson County Sheriff's Office were secured and tracked?*

Yes. Controls and procedures pertaining to firearms were designed and operating as management intended. Opportunities for control enhancements related to segregation of duties and completeness of records exist. (See observations A through D.)

2. *Did firearms and equipment policies and procedures conform to American Correctional Association standards?*

Yes. Policies and procedures related to firearms conformed to standards established by the American Correctional Association as evidenced by their continued accreditation and periodic audits by the granting organization.

AUDIT OBSERVATIONS

The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, Internal Control – Integrated Framework, Control Environment component recommends management and the board of directors establish mechanisms to communicate and hold individuals accountable for performance of internal control responsibilities and implement corrective action as necessary. The audit observations listed are offered to assist management in fulfilling their internal control responsibilities.

Observation A: Segregation of Duties

The Davidson County Sheriff's Office designated individual maintaining the inventory listing also retained custody of assets. While the assigned individual was competent and diligent, these particular duties are incompatible in a sound control environment whereby the same individual should be prevented from performing any two of the authorization, custody, or recording or asset functions.

Criteria:

The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, *Internal Control – Integrated Framework (2013 Framework)*, Control Activities – Principle 10

Recommendation for management of the Davidson County Sheriff's Office to:

Ensure that the person who has custody of firearms and ammunition assets is not the same person, or under the authority of, the individual responsible for maintaining the inventory listing.

Observation B: Firearms Submitted to Property and Evidence

There were no procedures in place to ensure that all firearms submitted by the Warrants Division to Metropolitan Nashville Police Department Property, Evidence, and Facilities were verified as having been received or entered into the inventory system. Prevalent business practices as well as the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury's Internal Control and Compliance Manual recommend developing procedures to provide assurance that all assets stated as being received are verified as received and entered into inventory.

Criteria:

The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, *Internal Control – Integrated Framework (2013 Framework)*, Control Activities – Principle 10

Recommendation for management of the Davidson County Sheriff's Office to:

Develop procedures whereby greater assurance is given that all firearms submitted to the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department Property, Evidence, and Facilities are verified as received and placed into the inventory system.

Observation C: Tracking of Ballistic Vests

There were no clear cut procedures for disposal or donation to other agencies of serialized ballistic vests. Supporting documentation for previous disposals and donations was not available for review. Tracking could be enhanced.

Criteria:

The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, *Internal Control – Integrated Framework (2013 Framework)*, Control Activities – Principle 10

Recommendation for management of the Davidson County Sheriff's Office to :

Develop procedures for the disposal of ballistic vests to include: a documented supervisory review, signatures of the receiving parties, and signed acceptance of disclosure of the manufacturer's expiration date (recommended useful life) of the vest.

Observation D: Tracking of Ammunition

There was no mechanism in place to determine the sign out or usage of ammunition by specific individuals. Ammunition was received, secured, tracked and distributed to various officers through the Davidson County Sheriff's Office Armory section. Distribution typically entailed ammunition going to specific officers for "duty rounds" and (the largest amounts) to designated staff who then distributed the rounds to officers for mandatory re-qualification or practice at the range. Although officers sign each time they visit the range, an officer could use as little as 50 or as many as thousands of rounds at a given range visit. There was no notation of how many rounds each officer received for each range visit, preventing visibility below the first level sign-out at the armory. The risk of theft and loss were increased without the ability to track and review ammunition usage by individuals. Note: An overall computation of the average number of rounds used per year, per individual, did not produce unreasonable usage results.

Criteria:

The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, *Internal Control – Integrated Framework (2013 Framework)*, Control Activities – Principle 10

Recommendation for management of the Davidson County Sheriff's Office to:

Develop procedures whereby greater visibility and tracking is made on ammunition distribution to individuals.

GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS COMPLIANCE

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish our audit objectives, we performed the following steps:

- Interviewed key personnel within the Davidson County Sheriff's Office.
- Reviewed and analyzed documentation for compliance with the Tennessee Code Annotated, Metropolitan Nashville Code of Laws, and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- Evaluated internal controls currently in place.
- Considered risk of fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Considered information technology risks.

AUDIT TEAM

Carlos Holt, CPA, CFF, CIA, CFE, CGAP, Internal Audit Manager

Bill Walker, CPA, CIA, In Charge Auditor



DAVIDSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

DARON HALL
Sheriff

November 5, 2014

Mr. Mark Swann
Metropolitan Auditor
Office of Internal Audit
222 3rd Avenue North, Suite 401
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Mr. Swann,

I received the report outlining the findings of the Davidson County Sheriff's Office audit of firearms and equipment. We have implemented the recommendations outlined in the report and appreciate the time spent reviewing our processes and interviewing our staff. I feel it is always good to have outside eyes take a look at how we operate in order to ensure we are as efficient and accountable as possible.

Additionally, I would like to thank Bill Walker and Carlos Holt for their time, input, and suggestions concerning our procedures. If you have any further comments, please feel free to contact me directly at 615.862.8166.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daron Hall".

Daron

ACCOUNTABILITY • DIVERSITY • INTEGRITY • PROFESSIONALISM
PO Box 196383 • Nashville, TN 37219-6383 • Tel: 615-862-8166 • Fax: 615-880-3837

APPENDIX A – MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

We believe that operational management is in a unique position to best understand their operations and may be able to identify more innovative and effective approaches and we encourage them to do so when providing their response to our recommendations.

Recommendation	Concurrence and Corrective Action Plan	Proposed Completion Date
Management of the Davidson County Sheriff's Office should:		
A. Ensure that the person who has custody of firearms and ammunition assets is not the same person, or under the authority of, the individual responsible for maintaining the inventory listing.	Agree. Custody of Firearms and ammunition assets is the responsibility of the DCSO special operations response team (SORT) commander. The individual responsible for maintaining the inventory listing is the chief investigator who has no supervisory responsibility over the SORT commander.	5 November 2014
B. Develop procedures whereby greater assurance is given that all firearms submitted to MNPDP Property, Evidence, and Facilities are verified as received and placed into the inventory system.	Agree. All firearms submitted to the MNPDP property room will be properly identified and a receipt verifying transfer of custody from the DCSO to the MNPDP will be completed. The DCSO has no oversight as to the placement of the asset into the MNPDP inventory system.	5 November 2014
C. Develop procedures for the disposal of ballistic vests should include: a documented supervisory review, signatures of the receiving parties, and signed acceptance of disclosure of the manufacturer's expiration date (recommended useful life) of the vest.	Agree. Ballistic vests will be tracked from the time of receipt to the time of disposal and/or transfer of custody. When disposed of or transferred, documentation will identify the individual receiving, the date of receipt, the manufacturer's expiration date, and the DCSO employee transferring or disposing of the asset.	5 November 2014
D. Develop procedures whereby greater visibility and tracking is made on ammunition distribution to individuals.	Agree. The Process has been implemented that when officers are assigned to the range for practice, qualification, or requalification, the amount of ammo expended by that officer during the training session will be annotated on the sign in roster. The Roster includes the date, officer's name, weapons serial number, and ammunition expended.	5 November 2014