



# JPOIG Overview

EBCFD/VFC Drug Policy #2021-0019

October 10, 2024

## Why We Did This Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess whether policies and procedures were in place to test and identify substance use among fire persons; evaluate whether policies and procedures satisfied state law to support negative employment action; and determine the effectiveness of implementation. The scope period of the investigation was 01/01/2017 through 09/20/2021.

## What We Recommend

Volunteer fire companies (VFCs) should:

- Develop an understanding and receive training on state law concerning drug testing; and
- Develop and implement policies and procedures compliant with state law to support negative employment action.

Parish should:

- Amend contracts with VFCs to include required drug testing policies and procedures that comply with state law;
- Develop and provide model language for VFC's adoption; and
- Mandate that VFCs quarterly report on drug testing practices.

## What We Found

### East Bank Consolidated Fire Department (EBCFD)

The evaluation of EBCFD's policies and procedures concluded that EBCFD maintained and implemented policies and procedures to test and identify substance use among fire persons as part of their fire civil service system. The evaluation found these policies and procedures satisfied state law mandates and would support negative employment action. The evaluation found that the policies distinguished between prohibited substances and medications. Finally, the evaluation found that EBCFD maintained an adequate rate of random drug testing.

### Volunteer Fire Companies (VFCs)

The evaluation of VFCs' policies and procedures found:

- ❖ 12 of the 13 VFCs did not have policies and procedures in place, as permitted or required by state law, to test and identify substance use or abuse among fire persons;
- ❖ 6 out of 13 VFCs' policies did not address the use of medication while on duty which poses a risk of firefighters operating under the influence of drugs;
- ❖ 10 out of 13 VFCs' policies did not meet state law requirements necessary to support negative employment action;
- ❖ 10 out of 13 VFCs did not conduct drug testing in a manner compliant with state laws and incorporated regulations, which could lead to liability issues for the VFC and the Parish.

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