



JPOIG Overview

East Bank Consolidated Fire Department
Off-Duty Sick Leave #2023-0006

July 23, 2025

Why We Did This Audit

The purpose of the audit was to determine whether the East Bank Consolidated Fire Department (“EBCFD”) complied with applicable laws and regulations e.g., Jefferson Parish Personnel Rules of the East Bank Consolidated Fire Department (Red Book) and the Louisiana Revised Statutes, for usage of their fire off-duty injury/illness (“FODI”) leave. The JPOIG also assessed whether there were indications of fraud, waste, or abuse of sick leave benefits.

The scope period was 01/01/2020 through 12/31/2023 and included all off-duty sick leave and payroll expenditures during that period.

What We Recommend

The EBCFD should:

- Develop a structured claims process to minimize any abuse of FODI leave.
- Review the Red Book regarding Sick and FODI leave to ensure compliance with State Law and establish clarity between the two.
- Stop using Workers’ Compensation to determine eligibility for FODI.
- Adopt policies to discourage abuse of FODI leave.

The EBCFD should implement usage of signed medical release forms, disclosures by employees regarding the injury/illness, and require additional documents from licensed physicians, etc.

What We Found

The EBCFD is a 200-member full-time paid fire department which **employs firefighters, investigators, training officers, records clerks, and other classifications** of employees within a designated fire civil service system. La. R.S. 33:1995 provides that EBCFD personnel are entitled to full pay during sickness or incapacity not brought about by their own negligence or culpable indiscretion for a period of no less than fifty-two weeks, commonly referred to as **52-week leave**.

JPOIG identified 78 employees who received pay for **off-duty injuries or illnesses**. This cost the Parish an estimated **\$3,023,579 (\$2,076,878 in gross salaries plus \$946,701 in employer benefits)**.

The JPOIG reviewed personnel files for 28 of the 78 employees. These employees had a total of 36 instances of off-duty injuries/illnesses and accounted for 60,303 FODI hours (80% of all FODI hours) costing approximately \$2,445,929 (\$1,681,902 in gross salaries plus \$764,027 in benefits).

The JPOIG found that:

- ❖ EBCFD paid employees for off-duty illnesses/injuries **without assessing employee negligence or responsibility**. EBCFD paid employees **without obtaining any—or sufficient medical documentation to verify the cause or the nature of the injury/illness**. The Parish paid employees for off-duty injuries without knowing what the injury was, how it happened, or if it qualified for compensation under the law.
- ❖ EBCFD paid employees for more than 52 weeks when fire civil service personnel rules only allow 52 weeks.
- ❖ The EBCFD incorrectly used workers’ compensation claims as a means of validating whether an employee was eligible to use FODI leave due to an injury/illness.
- ❖ The department did not comply with basic internal controls established in the Red Book.

The At-Large Parish Council Members and Fire Chief met with the JPOIG to discuss the findings and recommendations. The Parish President was offered to opportunity to discuss the report, but she did not respond to our requests. She provided a written response.

The JPOIG recommendation to “develop a structured claims process to minimize abuse of FODI leave” went unanswered by the Parish.

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