

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS
(Report No. A09-009)

DATE: June 12, 2009

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT: Final Report – Follow-Up of Audit Recommendations, Environmental and Health Services Division of Vital Statistics, Fiscal Year 2006

The Department of Environmental and Health Services (EHS) has responded to seven recommendations resulting from the “*Audit of the Vital Statistics Birth and Death Certificate Imaging System*”, dated November 11, 2005. *Attachment A* provides detailed information for the recommendations included in this audit¹ report.

Summary of Follow-up Audit Results

Fiscal Year Audit Report Issued	Number of Report Recommendations	Recommendations Implemented	Recommendations Partially Implemented	Recommendations Not Implemented
2006	7	2	4	1

EHS has considered the implementation of electronic logging of issued birth and death certificates and found it unfeasible. To streamline the download of electronic certificate data from Texas Electronic Registry (TER), EHS requested state cooperation in equipment and software upgrades, however, as of May 2009, the State has not positively responded to the request. In the meantime, the procedure used by Vital Statistics to download birth certificate data from TER still requires printing and manual scanning of the certificates.

The safety of electronic certificates presents issues for the City. The electronic images of birth and death certificates had not been archived since May 25, 2008.

¹ This audit was conducted under the authority of the City Charter, Chapter IX, Section 3 and in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. The audit objective was to verify that management has taken corrective action(s), the corrective action(s) are achieving the desired results, or management has assumed the risk of not taking corrective action(s). This performance audit was conducted 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 objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

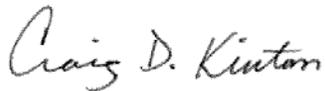
Because of our follow-up audit, Communication and Information Services (CIS) corrected this problem on March 17, 2009. However, CIS has not documented the backup procedure and has not taken steps to enable offsite storage of archive data tapes.

Management has accepted the risks associated with partially implementing four recommendations and not implementing one recommendation. The City Auditor's Office will not conduct any further follow-up on these recommendations, but will consider the risks in determining future audit coverage as part of the annual audit plan.

We appreciate the cooperation of EHS Vital Statistics personnel. This report was discussed with EHS and CIS management, but a written response was not requested.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at 214-670-3222 or Gary Lewis, Assistant City Auditor, at 214-670-5347.

Sincerely,



Craig D. Kinton
City Auditor

Attachment A

C: Mary K. Suhm, City Manager
Forest Turner, Interim Assistant City Manager
Ramon F. Miguez, P.E., Assistant City Manager
Karen Rayzer, Director – Environmental and Health Services
Worris Levine, Director – Communication and Information Services
Kris Sweckard, Director – Efficiency Team

ATTACHMENT A

Audit Report	Audit Issues	Audit Recommendations	Audit Follow-Up Results
<p>Audit of the Vital Statistics Birth and Death Certificate Imaging System (November 11, 2005)</p>	<p>Security, preservation and restoration of electronic copies of birth and death certificates</p>	<p>- Develop, implement, and document a data backup plan for the Fortis image server</p>	<p>Partially Implemented. Currently, CIS does perform a backup of the Fortis image server and the Fortis index database, although the procedure has not been documented. Also, due to CIS oversight, Vital Statistics data tapes are currently not stored offsite, and new data was not archived during the period of May 26, 2008 through March 17, 2009.</p>
		<p>- Develop and implement a plan to reduce the outstanding backlog of certificates in a timely manner</p>	<p>Partially Implemented. At the time of the original audit, close to 900,000 birth and death certificates were stored in paper form, which made them vulnerable to fire or water damage. The work to convert BIRTH certificate paper records into electronic images was completed in November 2008. However, approximately 260,000 DEATH records remain un-imaged. In addition, Vital Statistics does not have a reliable register of all birth certificates.</p>
		<p>- Require that all Vital Statistics employees have a routine background check completed prior to employment with the City, file documentation of the background checks in the employees' HR files, and require employees to sign confidentiality agreements annually</p>	<p>Implemented. The original audit found that background checks on new employees were performed after the employees started working. Currently, background checks on all new full-time employees, hired after the audit, are performed and filed prior to the date of hire as recommended. Vital Statistics relies on Eurostaff to perform background checks on temporary employees. The recommendation to have Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreements signed by all employees has been implemented as of March 10, 2009.</p>

Audit Report	Audit Issues	Audit Recommendations	Audit Follow-Up Results
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that Vital Statistics adhere to the annual internal control reporting requirements as specified in Administrative Directive (AD) 4-9 	<p>Implemented. The original audit found that Vital Statistics did not prepare and submit Internal Control Reports for Fiscal Years (FY) 2002 to 2003. The follow-up audit showed that Internal Control Reports were prepared by Vital Statistics for FY 2006 to 2008.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement workstation, printer, and network configurations that will allow for multi-purpose uses 	<p>Partially Implemented. At the time of the original audit, the electronic database of birth and death certificates, as well as a network printer, could not be accessed from every workstation resulting in slower customer service because staff had to travel between stations to complete a customer request. Currently, all workstations can access the FORTIS database and the network printer. However, the task of printing wallet-size certificates and certificate transcripts still relies on non-networked dot-matrix printers, which are in danger of becoming obsolete.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase additional software applications that facilitate the conversion of manual processes to automated processes 	<p>Not Implemented. Vital Statistics has considered automating the logging procedure, but found it unfeasible. Therefore, customer service personnel still manually log the number and type of issued certificates. This procedure remains inefficient.</p>

Audit Report	Audit Issues	Audit Recommendations	Audit Follow-Up Results
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make a formal request to the State Registrar of the TDSHS to provide electronic birth certificate data to the City of Dallas	<p>Partially Implemented. The download of birth certificate data from Texas Electronic Registry into Vital Statistics image database bypassing manual printing and scanning requires equipment and software upgrades from both the City and the Texas Electronic Registry (TER). Vital Statistics requested TER cooperation, however, as of May 2009, TER has not positively responded to the request. In the meantime, the procedure used by Vital Statistics to download birth certificate data from TER still requires printing and manual scanning of the certificates. This procedure has not improved since the original audit.</p>
