



**Commission on  
Fire Accreditation  
International®**

# **Accreditation Report**

**MERIDIAN FIRE DEPARTMENT  
33 E. Broadway Ave, Suite 210  
Meridian, Idaho 83642  
United States of America**

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by the  
Commission on Fire Accreditation International**

**This report represents the findings  
of the peer assessment team that visited the  
Meridian Fire Department  
on November 13-16, 2023**

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## PREFACE

To the citizens and the governing body of the agency: This report represents a thorough review of the organization to verify and validate how this agency is executing its stated mission in accordance with universally accepted practices for a contemporary fire and emergency services organization. Quality improvement can only be initiated and realized by those agencies that challenge themselves through a comprehensive self-assessment. This report documents that this agency is seeking organizational improvements and discovering elements of excellence. Please note that the recommendations by the peer assessment team are opportunities for improvement provided from professionals in the fire and emergency service industry.

To the agency: This report communicates the outputs and outcomes of your dedication and commitment to quality improvement. Your self-assessment, community risk assessment/ standards of cover, and strategic plan amount to years of work to understand your community, establish accountable goals, institute transparency, and factually comprehend what you did not know about your organization. The verification and validation of your agency by a team of peers represents a major accomplishment. The recommendations in this report are opportunities to become better and stronger in your community. Finally, take this report and communicate to your community the areas you identified during your self-assessment that were outstanding and those that represent improvement opportunities.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Meridian Fire Department (MFD) is an all-hazards career organization with 7 non-uniformed and 121 uniformed personnel, staffing 7 engines, a ladder unit, a quint unit, 2 brush trucks, and a tender from 8 fire stations. All engines are staffed with a minimum of one officer, one engineer and one firefighter. One ladder and the quint are staffed with an officer, an engineer and two firefighters. One engine, the tender and the bush trucks are cross staffed as required. All frontline firefighters are at least emergency medical technician trained with a minimum of one paramedic trained firefighter on each apparatus. The department operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with a minimum of 27 personnel. The number of personnel dedicated to community risk reduction/public fire education and investigations is seven. Two full-time personnel are dedicated to fire training with additional staff added as needed based on subject matter expertise.

The city consists of 34 square miles and is located in the southwestern part of the state of Idaho in the area referred to as the Treasure Valley. This includes Meridian and the cities of Boise, Nampa, Eagle, Star, Kuna, Caldwell and Middleton. The city is transected by the Boise Valley Railroad and by Interstate 84 while U.S. Route 26 and state Highway 55 pass through sections of the city. In addition to the city of Meridian, the response area includes the Meridian Rural Fire District and lands that may become part of the city totaling 60 square miles of response area coverage. The city is the second largest in the state, a regional epicenter, and was identified by *Money Magazine* as the third best place to live in the United States. According to the 2020 census, the city has a population of 117,635.

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) has completed a comprehensive review and appraisal of the MFD based upon the tenth edition of the accreditation model. The commission's goals are to promote organizational self-improvement and to award accreditation status in recognition of good performance. The peer assessment team's objectives were to validate the department's self-

assessment study, identify and make recommendations for improvement, issue a report of findings, and conclude if the department is eligible for an award of accreditation.

The peer assessment team followed CFAI processes and the MFD demonstrated that its self-study accreditation manual, community risk assessment/standards of cover (CRA/SOC), and strategic plan met all core competencies and criteria. The peer assessment team recommends accredited agency status for the MFD from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.

The peer assessment team observed a strong commitment by the department to the CFAI accreditation process and to the idea of continuous improvement. The current accreditation manager reports directly to the fire chief and has been given support from the executive team and resources across the department as required to complete the initial accreditation process. The accreditation manager is a deputy chief overseeing administration. The accreditation manager has completed the peer assessor training and is a peer assessor level 2. The peer assessment team observed clearly that the department is treating the accreditation work as an ongoing process and not a project. The department is assessing the resources and the structure needed to manage the accreditation program effectively going forward including city and third-party resources. These approaches ensure continuity, provide opportunities for quality improvement with other organizations, and the anchoring of a broader accreditation process within the department.

The peer assessment team had meetings with the city chief of staff, fire chief, and the president of the firefighters' association. Individually and collectively, they expressed a high interest in the process and a belief in accreditation programs. There is clearly a commitment to continue to follow and support the implementation of identified opportunities for improvement. It can be anticipated that all representatives will be supporters and network participants as the full benefits of going through the self-assessment process are realized and built on in the future.

The peer assessment team identified opportunities for improvement that are provided below. These recommendations flowed from discussions, interviews, observations, and a review of supplied documentation to support its self-assessment conclusions. The department demonstrated a keen desire to embrace the recommendations provided by the peer assessment team in order to improve the services delivered to the community. It is anticipated that the department will accept all recommendations provided and implement actions to accomplish them.

The following represents a synopsis of the recommendations that were made by the peer assessment team during the on-site visit. Additional details for each of these recommendations can be found in the Observations Section of this report. For each of the recommendations, the performance indicator from the model is provided, including notating if it is a core competency (CC).

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations were developed from the evaluation of criterion, core competencies, and performance indicators.

1. It is recommended that the department formally document and approve the methodology for organizing the response area(s) into geographical planning zones. ([CC 2A.3](#))
2. It is recommended that the department formally document the methodology used for identifying, assessing, categorizing and classifying all risks across the service area. ([CC 2B.1](#))

3. It is recommended that the department include additional details related to the rail risk in the community risk assessment. ([CC 2B.4](#))
4. It is recommended that the department separate the wildland firefighting program from the fire suppression program and complete the appropriate documentation to track it as a specific program. ([CC 2B.4](#))
5. It is recommended that the department ensure that data used for monitoring performance is vetted so the incident type dispatched matches the incident type found. ([CC 2C.2](#))
6. It is recommended that the department formally document the methodology used for monitoring the quality of emergency response performance for all service types across the total response area. ([CC 2C.2](#))
7. It is recommended that the department review its critical tasking analysis for all risks and classes and ensure that it accurately reflects the department's service levels and fire resources required. ([CC 2C.4](#))
8. It is recommended that the department formally document the methodology used to assess performance and opportunities for improvement for the total response area. ([CC 2D.1](#))
9. It is recommended that the department set clear and documented goals for inspections and evaluate that the number of inspectors is adequate to meet those goals. ([CC 5A.3](#))
10. It is recommended that the department update the continuity of operations plan to ensure essential operations are maintained. ([5D.6](#))
11. It is recommended that the department implement a formal calibration program that includes record keeping, ensuring all monitors are calibrated as required and functional. ([5H.2](#))
12. It is recommended that the department identify performance and dispatching expectations and needs that meet the department's requirements and be incorporated into the dispatching agreement. ([9B.7](#))
13. It is recommended that a system be identified to trigger formal review of organizational documents, forms, standard operating guidelines, and manuals on a regular and routine basis. ([CC 9C.3](#))
14. It is recommended that the department formalize the use of near miss reporting to evaluate the level of situational awareness in an effort to teach and share lessons learned from events that could have resulted in a fatality, injury, or property damage. ([11A.6](#))
15. It is recommended that the department advocate for building or renovating five fire stations to ensure bunker gear and workout equipment are separated from the apparatus bays to avoid carcinogens. ([11A.9](#))

The department demonstrated its acute desire to immediately implement plans to address opportunities for improvement. In the exit meeting, the fire chief communicated to all participants his desire for the department to start working on the recommendations immediately. The day following the exit meeting, the peer assessment team was advised by the accreditation manager that the

department was starting work on the recommendations to formally document and approve the methodology for organizing the response areas into geographical planning zones; to implement a formal calibration program that includes record keeping ensuring all monitors are calibrated as required and functional; and to formalize the use of near miss reporting to evaluate the level of situational awareness in an effort to teach and share lessons learned from events.

The department responded to a total of 8,467 emergencies in 2022 including: 905 fire calls (10.7 percent); 6,164 emergency medical service (EMS) calls (72.8 percent); and 1,398 miscellaneous calls (16.5 percent). Servicing these calls in 2022 resulted in a total of 20,314-unit movements.

The Meridian Public Safety Training Center is a jointly used facility shared by the fire and police departments. On the premises is a separate structure constructed as a scenario training center. This two-story structure includes a basement level and features an indoor and outdoor scenario village with multi-functional learning space. This allows the building to be used year-round. Both streetscapes are mirrored and include buildings that resemble residential and commercial-style spaces, such as private residences, multifamily dwellings, convenience stores, banks, and bars. Each occupancy can be modified internally to create different layouts for different training scenarios. The building is designed for use with simulated smoke and has confined space areas for additional training capacity. Training includes advanced extrication, search and rescue, and coordinated responses for fire and police. This is considered an innovative practice for others to emulate.

## OBSERVATIONS

### **Category 1 — Governance and Administration**

The governing body and/or agency manager is legally established to provide general policies to guide the agency, approved programs and services, and appropriated financial resources. The city of Meridian was incorporated August 1, 1903, as a legally established charter city in the state of Idaho to provide its citizens with a full suite of public services, including public safety. The city's charter provides for the mayor's scope of executive authority and legal power. The mayor is the city's chief executive, and the city council is the city's primary legislative body. The city council adopts the official *City Code of Meridian* that creates the city's authority to establish and provide emergency services as a fire department and appoint a fire chief under *Title 5, Chapter 1, Section 5-1-1 and 5-1-2 of the City Code of Meridian, Idaho*. This ordinance designates the fire chief as an appointed position to perform all functions, powers, and duties to provide fire and life protection services and enforce all ordinances related to fire prevention, fire suppression, and the elimination of fire hazards as well as administer the fire department budget.

The fire chief is a director within the corporate structure and reports to the mayor and up to council. The fire chief engages on a regular basis with the chief of staff, mayor and councilor liaison to receive direction and guidance as needed and meets with the mayor and council as required, including budget approval.

During the site visit, meetings were held with the chief of staff and fire chief. Discussions in these meetings demonstrated a general confidence in the fire chief to lead and provide oversight to the department within alignment of council and city priorities. It was made clear by the chief of staff that both he and the mayor expect the fire chief to run the department by leading and guiding the direction and outcomes of the department without their operational involvement.

The organizational structure aligns with or supports the agency's mission, purposes, goals, strategies and objectives. Through the site visit it was observed by the peer assessment team that the department's organizational structure aligns with the major functions provided by the department, which includes operations, prevention, administration, and administrative services. These functions are all focused on the goal of achieving the mission, vision, and values of the organization which relate to delivering on goals and objectives of protecting and enhancing the community.

### **Category 2 — Assessment and Planning**

The agency collects and analyzes data specific to the distinct characteristics of its legally defined service area(s) and applies the findings to organizational services and services development. The Meridian Fire Department (MFD) uses the computer aided dispatch (CAD) and records management system to collect and identify trends in call volumes and response data for the operational units within the defined service areas. The department also works with the city geographical information system (GIS) department to collect demographic, occupancy, and development information to use in the department's community risk assessment/standards of cover (CRA/SOC) and identify needs or additions to the strategic plan.

The data is used to break down the response area into six geographical districts. Analysis from an adopted methodology process is used for pre-planning, program planning and to monitor the



emergency response program effectiveness. The methodology approved and used by MFD was developed through a consultant and the city's GIS manager. The department only has basic information on the methodology used provided by the consultant and all the documentation from the GIS manager is unable to be located following the retirement of the manager. [It is recommended that the department formally document and approve the methodology for organizing the response area\(s\) into geographical planning zones.](#)

The agency identifies and assesses the nature and magnitude of all hazards and risks within its jurisdiction. Risk categorization and deployment impact consider factors such as cultural, economic, historical and environmental values, as well as operational characteristics.

The department utilizes a three-axis risk methodology model to assess and categorize risk. The department identifies the following classifications of risk for its response area based on historical call data and area characteristics: fire, emergency medical services, technical rescue, and hazardous materials. The data is used to monitor risks and performance from the overall service area and broken down to the different geographical zones for use in planning and trend analysis. The department did identify a railroad that transects the city and various hazardous materials components into the risk assessment, but it was not clear to the peer assessment team that the level of detail required to accurately capture the risk from rail was included. [It is recommended that the department include additional details related to the rail risk in the community risk assessment.](#)

The department through its risk assessment process has also identified a wildland risk that has been broken out by categories, had critical tasking identified, and is tracked by incident type. However, although this risk was identified and included in the CRA/SOC, the department does not consider this a separate program and includes it as part of the fire suppression program. [It is recommended that the department separate the wildland firefighting program from the fire suppression program and complete the appropriate documentation to track it as a specific program.](#)

The department has various documents that speak to the methodology used to assess and categorize risk in the CRA/SOC and the methodology is being followed by the department. It was verified on site however, that there is no single detailed documentation of the methodology used for staff to follow or provide consistent replication. [It is recommended that the department formally document the methodology used for identifying, assessing, categorizing and classifying all risks across the service area.](#)

The agency identifies and documents the nature and magnitude of the service and deployment demands within its jurisdiction. Based on risk categorization and service impact considerations, the agency's deployment practices are consistent with jurisdictional expectations and with industry research. Efficiency and effectiveness are documented through quality response measurements that consider overall response, consistency, reliability, resiliency and outcomes throughout all service areas. The agency develops procedures, practices and programs to appropriately guide its resource deployment.

The department relies on fire response lists (FRL) that determine response and service delivery based on incident type and associated risk factors. These FRLs are managed by the *Emergency Services Users Committee* which is made up of all fire departments in the area as they respond in a systems-based approach dispatching the closest available units to an event regardless of their department. The lists are implemented in cooperation with Ada County Sheriff's Office 911 Emergency Dispatch Center and programmed into the CAD for consistent dispatch response.

The department utilizes incident data from *ESO* to assess both the nature and magnitude of the service demands for the department. Other forms of data analysis include the use of *ArcGIS* tools to track response time performance and gaps. Due to identified issues with data collection from *ESO*, the department is currently using CAD data for its performance analysis which has limitations related to accuracy of final call determinants. It was observed by the peer assessment team that although upgrades in response types were amended in the CAD data, downgraded or a different incident type found upon arrival were not amended. [It is recommended that the department ensure that data used for monitoring performance is vetted so the incident type dispatched matches the incident type found.](#)

As part of the monitoring and measurement adopted processes, the department measures performance of response programs and non-response programs through baseline and benchmark analysis and annual performance appraisals. The department utilizes a data analyst from the city of Boise that developed the methodology and performed the original and ongoing analysis. The result of this monitoring is reported in the department's annual report published to the authority having jurisdiction and public. The results and any identified issues are also discussed in monthly meetings with the senior executive leadership team, executive leadership team, and the battalion chiefs. It was observed that the department uses a complex and detailed method to monitor its performance of emergency response programs but that the documentation of the methodology was basic and not well known within Meridian Fire Department (MFD). [It is recommended that the department formally document the methodology used for monitoring the quality of emergency response performance for all service types across the total response area.](#)

The department completed a critical task analysis for each risk category and class for all service types identified from the risk assessment. These were aligned with the FRLs to ensure that the resources dispatched in the system were able to achieve the tasks required for the service being delivered. It was identified by the peer assessment team that some of the critical tasks documented included resources or addressed service levels above what MFD provides or requires. [It is recommended that the department review its critical tasking analysis for all risks and classes and ensure that it accurately reflects the department's service levels and fire resources required.](#)

The agency has assessed and provided evidence that its current deployment methods for emergency services appropriately address the risk in its service area. Its response strategy has evolved to ensure that its deployment practices have maintained and/or made continuous improvements in the effectiveness, efficiency and safety of its operations, notwithstanding any external influences beyond its control. The agency has identified the impacts of these external influences and communicates them to the authority having jurisdiction.

The department has reviewed performance data using an approved methodology and assessed outcomes from non-emergency programs to identify trends and performance gaps and taken steps to improve effectiveness of the service delivery. The department has recently opened two new stations to address demands for service related to response time performance and a growing city. Time clocks have been installed into the new fire stations for crews to be able to monitor their turnout time performance and are being considered for retrofitting in older stations. Additionally, the department is working with the dispatch center and other area fire departments in implementing a pre-alerting process for dispatching. The department has also recently been approved for a data analytics contractor to be hired to work with the department on processes and systems to provide better holistic data and performance analytics for decision making.

Annually the CRA/SOC and strategic plan are updated and reviewed with the previous year's incident data as well as response times, based on the identified hazard categories. To identify any program deficiencies or unfavorable trends, the department relies on data collected from quarterly and annual response time performance metrics, evaluations from the community risk reduction program, assessments of the fire investigations program, and feedback from public education programs. When shortcomings or negative trends are detected or anticipated, the department examines these issues and develops performance improvement plans as necessary and department plans are amended. The peer assessment team observed that although there are several components documented on methodology used for assessing performance and opportunities for improvement, there is not a detailed methodology documented for staff to follow for a holistic and consistent process. [It is recommended that the department formally document the methodology used to assess performance and opportunities for improvement for the total response area.](#)

The department demonstrated through several initiatives its commitment to engagement with stakeholders both internally and externally. As part of the strategic plan, CRA/SOC and through regular program work, the department engages staff, stakeholders, and partners to inform, engage, assess, and plan in order to improve services delivered to the community. Executive leadership staff of the department participate on several working groups and committees across the region related to public safety and emergency response. Every two years the city engages the public in the services and performance of various city departments including the Meridian Fire Department.

### **Category 3 — Goals and Objectives**

The mission, vision and values of the agency are incorporated into a strategic plan. Once a strategic plan is in place and resources are available, the strategic plan provides direction, determines initiatives, and guides the goals and objectives of the agency.

The Meridian Fire Department (MFD) has a three-year strategic plan that was accepted by city council in 2021 and published in January 2022. The strategic plan provides a clear and concise delivery of the mission, vision, and values of MFD. The strategic planning process with input from community partners established seven strategic goals. The guiding principles were developed that includes five core values with input and agreement of all department members.

The strategic plan defines the agency's general goals and S.M.A.R.T. objectives, directs its activities in a manner consistent with its mission and is appropriate for the community it serves. With the assistance of *Ironwood Strategic Solutions, LLC* and commitment of both internal and external customers, the department has developed a list of goals and objectives that support the mission, core values, and vision of the department. The goals are clearly stated and supported by objectives to be accomplished that will enhance services to the community.

The agency uses a management process to implement its goals and objectives. The department tasks department managers to track and implement the goals and objectives, with the fire chief overseeing the program. All goals are reviewed annually with the executive team, which consists of multiple ranks. A goals and objectives progress tracker is maintained and updated annually, along with a portal that is provided to city council and accessible to department personnel.

Processes are in place to measure and evaluate progress toward completion of goals and objectives and overall plan performance. The goals and objectives are re-examined and modified periodically. The department evaluates its progress toward completion of goals and objectives by an excel

workplan. Additional progress reviews occur during annual meetings with the executive team and quarterly updates are done on the online portal with the city council. The online portal is also forward facing and in line with the city strategic plan allowing the community to see updates.

### **Category 4 — Financial Resources**

Agency planning involves broad staff and community participation in financial planning and resource allocation. The agency’s financial planning and budget process reflects sound strategic planning and a commitment to its stated goals and objectives. The agency prepares a balanced budget, which adequately maintains level of service and personnel resources.

Meridian Fire Department seeks input on budgetary items with all staff members, who receive input from program managers. The department submits the proposed annual budget to the city manager. The department participates with the city of Meridian Finance Department during city council-led open public meetings. The city finance department manages the budget process from the initial budgetary cycle through the final approval process and then provides guidance throughout the year on all appropriations.

Agency financial management demonstrates sound budgeting and control, proper recording, reporting and auditing. The city of Meridian Finance Department is responsible for the financial management of the city and its departments. The finance department has developed policies that adhere to Idaho State Statute and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and adopted those policies into the Meridian City Code of Ordinances. The city completes an annual audit using an independent auditor with a full report published online and presented to the city council.

Appropriately allocated financial resources support the organizational mission, stated long-term plan, goals and objectives and also maintain the quality of programs and services. The Meridian Fire Department maintains adopted levels of service within the funds they are budgeted each year. The department’s operating budget remains consistent from year to year and additional budget dollars are provided when capital needs are requested and approved.

The city of Meridian budget process supports the long-term plan, goals, and objectives of the department as evident by their recent support in approving the expansion of the department by nearly 30 percent in 2022 with the addition of 2 new fire stations and 30 new firefighters. Processes are in place to ensure contingency funds are in place to support unanticipated shortfalls or emergencies.

### **Category 5 — Community Risk Reduction Program**

#### **Criterion 5A – Prevention Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective and efficient program as identified in the community risk assessment and standards of cover. The approach is comprehensive and includes both prevention and mitigation strategies such as life safety, hazard risk reduction, plan review, code compliance, and the detection, reporting and control of fire and non-fire risks.

The Meridian Fire Department inspection’s division is comprised of the deputy chief of prevention who acts as the department’s fire marshal, three additional full time fire inspectors, and one additional fire inspector being trained for succession planning. The deputy chief of prevention works in conjunction with the city’s building officials to adopt fire prevention and building codes. The

process to adopt and update codes includes the department's third-party plan reviewers, the Meridian Police Department, and key stakeholders within the construction community. City council approves all building code adoptions and changes. The department has successfully ensured compliance with the *International Fire Code* as adopted by the city council.

The prevention division utilizes technologies including *Compliance Engine* and *MobileEyes* to streamline and assist with workload. *MobileEyes* assists with scheduling all inspections according to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): *1730 Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations*. While the department was able to inspect 100 percent of all high-risk occupancies on schedule in 2022, they do have a backlog of low and moderate-risk occupancies. Approximately 50 percent of all low and moderate-risk occupancies have met their 2- and 3-year inspections. [It is recommended that the department set clear and documented goals for inspections and evaluate that the number of inspectors is adequate to meet those goals.](#)

The deputy chief of prevention reviews all pre-applications for projects in the city of Meridian for access, water supply, and other applicable codes. The prevention division plans on utilizing geographic information systems and analytical abilities to help better track fire incidents and casualties in the near future. The prevention division provides a formal annual appraisal for the department and will continue to do so.

#### **Criterion 5B – Public Education Program**

A public education program is in place and directed toward reducing community risks in a manner consistent with the agency's mission and as identified within the community risk assessment and standards of cover. The Meridian Fire Department's public education program is part of the department's community risk reduction division. The program provides a variety of services including smoke detector checks, home inspections, fall prevention education, K-12 educational programs, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid programs, car seat installations and inspections, and juvenile fire setter intervention. The program partners with several other agencies and organizations including the Meridian Police Department, school system, Red Cross, Lowe's, and the Idaho Transportation Department in order to deliver these services.

The public education program includes a community risk reduction manager, a public education specialist, and a community risk reduction specialist. The program monitors incident locations to target specific demographics when investigating how and when to perform targeted education and services. They also partner with outside agencies or through communication with the prevention division to identify high-risk audiences. The program uses on duty field personnel to assist in delivering services. All departmental personnel are trained in car seat installation in the fire academy and must maintain this certification until they are promoted to engineer, though it may be kept voluntarily even after. The public education program provides a formal annual appraisal for the department and will continue to do so.

#### **Criterion 5C – Fire Investigation, Origin and Cause Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, and efficient program directed toward origin and cause investigation and subsequent classification of fires, explosions, and other emergency situations that endanger life or property to drive community risk reduction activities. The fire investigation, origin, and cause program is overseen by the deputy chief of prevention, who acts as the department's fire

marshal and is assisted by two dual role fire investigators/inspectors. All three personnel are certified through the *International Association of Arson Investigators*, attend the *National Fire Academy Fire Investigation* track, and meet NFPA 1033: *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator* requirements. The city operates using the *2018 International Fire Code* which states that the fire department is legally responsible to investigate the origin, cause, and circumstances of all fires. The program uses NFPA 921: *Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations* as the guide for investigating all fire and explosion incidents, which has proven to be an effective and systematic approach. The program has adequate staff with expertise to handle the call volume and workload of the city, even providing aid to surrounding jurisdictions when possible. The program provides a formal annual appraisal for the department and will continue to do so.

### **Criterion 5D – Domestic Preparedness Program**

The agency operates an all-hazards preparedness program that includes a coordinated multiagency response plan designed to provide the community preparedness and resiliency in response to terrorist threats or attacks, major disasters, and other large-scale emergencies occurring at or in the immediate area. The Meridian Fire Department is part of the Ada County/City Emergency Management (ACCEM) group. The deputy chief of administration chairs the ACCEM Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG and Local Emergency Planning Committee report to ACCEM. Together the group is responsible for the creation and management of the county emergency operations plans. Ada County has an emergency operations plan, flood response plan, hazmat response plan, joint information systems plan, wildfire response plan, and hazard mitigation plan.

The department operates an emergency operations program that includes a coordinated multi-department response plan designed to protect the community. The department plans to continue to require national incident management system and incident command system courses and to work directly with the local, state, and regional associations to ensure they are compliant with all training recommendations.

The department has a documented continuity of operations plan that was created in 2012. This plan has not been reviewed or updated. [It is recommended that the department update the continuity of operations plan to ensure essential operations are maintained.](#)

The department conducts a program appraisal for domestic preparedness, with the deputy chief of administration being responsible for the appraisal. The appraisal evaluates the program's budget, goals and objectives, and inputs and outputs.

### **Criterion 5E – Fire Suppression Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, efficient and safe fire suppression program directed toward controlling and/or extinguishing fires to protect the community from injury or death and reduce property loss. The Meridian Fire Department (MFD) provides suppression services using three 24-hour shifts. The front-line response fleet consists of 7 engine companies, one quint with a 100-foot platform ladder, supervision is provided by a battalion chief, a cross-staffed ladder with a 100-foot platform, 2 cross-staffed brush units, and one cross-staffed tender. The department operates these resources out of eight fire stations.

The department maintains 4 reserve engines with 1,500 GPM pumps, one training engine, and one 100-foot platform ladder. MFD will also be adding a mobile air unit to the fleet in 2023. The

department relies on many agencies and associations to enhance and contribute to its mission and overall success. The department has automatic aid agreements that a closest unit response model. The department identified issues with call processing times being extended. While working with the dispatch center the department is now being dispatched by *Fire Priority Dispatch System* protocols.

The fire suppression program is formerly reviewed and documented at least annually. The department discusses programs during quarterly meetings and documents a few measures in the budget development, program performance indicators, and in the annual report.

Performance Gap Analysis

The following table represents the agency’s actual performance (baseline) versus the goal (benchmark). The gaps are provided in red (representing improvement opportunities), and green (when actual performance exceeds the goal).

2020-2022 Moderate Risk Fire Suppression Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	9:08	8:00	01:08
		n= 330		
ERF	Urban	15:36	11:00	04:36
		n=84		

2020-2022 High Risk Fire Suppression Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	8:16	8:00	00:16
		n= 43		
ERF	Urban	27:24	25:00	02:24
		n=11		

It was verified and validated by the peer assessment team that the Meridian Fire Department had a statistically insignificant number of maximum risk fire suppression incidents for 2020-2022, to provide a sufficient data set to study. Therefore, no performance gap analysis is provided in this report.

**Criterion 5F – Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Program**

The agency operates an EMS program with a designated level of out-of-hospital emergency medical care that protects the community from injury or death. Meridian Fire Department operates an EMS program that provides advanced life support (ALS) first response. The department currently staffs six front-line engines and two front-line trucks with ALS capabilities. The department staffs these units with paramedic and emergency medical technician (EMT) certified personnel. The department does not provide transport services. Patient transport is provided by Ada County Paramedics for the department. Ada County Paramedics’ ambulances operate with a minimum of one EMT and one paramedic on every unit.

The department operates using the Ada County/City Emergency Services System (ACCESS) Standing Written Orders that meet the standards of the Idaho Bureau of EMS and Preparedness.

Medical control and MFD have maintained a close working relationship. Training is provided by fire department EMS staff when standing orders or protocols are updated or changed.

Performance Gap Analysis

The following table represents the agency’s actual performance (baseline) versus the goal (benchmark). The gaps are provided in red (representing improvement opportunities), and green (when actual performance exceeds the goal).

2020-2022 Moderate Risk EMS Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	11:27	7:50	03:37
		15,499		
ERF	Urban	15:28	13:20	02:08
		n=12,984		

2020-2022 High Risk EMS Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	9:03	7:50	01:13
		n=605		
ERF	Urban	21:19	15:00	06:19
		n=269		

It was verified and validated by the peer assessment team that the Meridian Fire Department had a statistically insignificant number of maximum risk EMS incidents for 2020 - 2022, to provide a sufficient data set to study. Therefore, no performance gap analysis is provided in this report.

**Criterion 5G – Technical Rescue Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, efficient and safe technical rescue program directed toward rescuing the community from any life-endangering causes (e.g., structural collapse, vehicle accidents, swift water or submersion, confined space, cave-in, trench collapse). The Meridian Fire Department operates a technical rescue program directed toward rescuing the community from life-endangering vehicle accidents and swift/surface water incidents. All department firefighters are trained to the technician level for vehicle extrication, at the operations level for swift and surface water search and rescue, and awareness level for other technical rescues. An automatic aid agreement is in place with Boise Fire Department for rescues involving low and high angle rope rescue, structural collapse, confined space, advanced water rescue, and trench collapse. Equipment for extrication and stabilization for vehicle rescue and equipment for water rescue are carried on all frontline apparatus.



## Performance Gap Analysis

The following table represents the agency's actual performance (baseline) versus the goal (benchmark). The gaps are provided in red (representing improvement opportunities), and green (when actual performance exceeds the goal).

2020-2022 Moderate Risk Tech Rescue Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	8:16	8:00	00:16
		n=189		
ERF	Urban	21:00	15:00	06:00
		n=39		

It was verified and validated by the peer assessment team that the Meridian Fire Department had a statistically insignificant number of high-risk or maximum risk tech rescue incidents for 2020 - 2022, to provide a sufficient data set to study. Therefore, no performance gap analysis is provided in this report.

### **Criterion 5H – Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Program**

The agency operates an adequate, effective, efficient and safe hazardous materials program directed toward protecting the community from the hazards associated with the uncontrolled releases of hazardous and toxic materials. All Meridian Fire Department (MFD) firefighters are trained to the operations level defined by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 472: *Standard of Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents* and are able to mitigate Level I hazmat incidents. These include basic hazardous materials emergencies such as small flammable liquid spills, carbon monoxide alarms, small to moderate diameter natural gas line breaks and small pressurized vessel leaks. For hazmat emergencies that extend beyond the capabilities of MFD, assistance from an outside agency is required. The neighboring cities of Boise and Caldwell have technician level hazmat teams and are requested if needed. Suppression personnel also complete biennial physicals as required per the *Collective Labor Agreement between City of Meridian and Meridian Firefighters IAFF Local 4627*.

The department participates in the Ada County Hazmat Response Plan (ACHRP) and the Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) *Idaho HazMat/WMD Incident Command and Response Support Plan* which outlines training and regulation requirements. All suppression personnel are required to complete a minimum of six hours of hazardous materials refresher training annually.

All engines and ladder trucks carry basic equipment including absorbent material for the controlling of spills and capabilities for damming, diking, diversion, and containment of products. They also carry a four-gas monitor for the identification of hazards and the protection of staff. The monitors are calibrated monthly instead of bump testing prior to use due to a reduced usage based upon recommendation from the manufacturer. The battalion chief that oversees the program is responsible for the calibrations and replacement of monitors. In discussions with the battalion chief, it was noted that some of the monitors assigned to units outside of suppression do not always come in as required for calibration and that no tracking for compliance is done. [It is recommended that the department implement a formal calibration program that includes record keeping, ensuring all monitors are calibrated as required and functional.](#)

## Performance Gap Analysis

The following table represents the agency’s actual performance (baseline) versus the goal (benchmark). The gaps are provided in red (representing improvement opportunities), and green (when actual performance exceeds the goal).

2020-2022 Moderate Risk Hazmat Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	10:36	8:00	<b>02:36</b>
		n=143		
ERF	Urban	12:56	10:00	<b>02:56</b>
		n=61		

2020-2022 High Risk Hazmat Response Times				
1st/ERF	Urban/Rural	Baseline	Benchmark	Gap
1st Due	Urban	15:24	8:00	<b>07:24</b>
		n=16		

It was verified and validated by the peer assessment team that the Meridian Fire Department had a statistically insignificant number of maximum risk hazardous materials incidents for 2020 - 2022, to provide a sufficient data set to study. Therefore, no performance gap analysis is provided in this report.

### **Category 6 — Physical Resources**

Development and use of physical resources are consistent with the agency’s established plans. A systematic and planned approach to the future development of facilities is in place. The Meridian Fire Department has a systematic and planned approach to the future development and renovation of facilities and works closely with the city of Meridian Public Works Department to plan physical resources through their capital projects and facilities plan. The department maintains and operates out of eight fixed facility fire stations. The department continuously monitors the condition of these facilities to determine the need for repairs and update of the stations. The department also has a four-story fire training structure and shares a public safety training center and scenario village with the Meridian Police Department.

The agency designs, maintains and manages fixed facility resources that meet the agency’s goals and objectives. The department staff works with city of Meridian staff in the design and construction of fire stations. The department establishes station committees to draft specifications and designs. The committees are comprised of members of the department, across all ranks, city representatives, manufacturers, architects, and building contractors to ensure all aspects of the projects were acceptable, fully vetted, met the needs of the department and were within the approved budget. Three of the eight fire stations are adequately designed to accommodate the personnel, apparatus, and equipment assigned. Five fire stations have limited storage space for personal protective equipment, workout equipment, and spare equipment. There is a plan in place for renovating these stations to meet the department’s needs.

Apparatus resources are designed, purchased and maintained to adequately meet the agency’s goals and objectives. The department purchases equipment with input from operations personnel and in

alignment with goals and objectives, and to meet the stated levels of coverage for the risks identified in the standards of cover. The department operates seven front line engines, one ladder truck, one quint, one water tender, two brush trucks, and one battalion chief. In addition, the department has four reserve engines and one reserve ladder truck. There are 22 support vehicles for administration, operations, and inspections personnel. The department uses an apparatus and equipment committee to input in vehicle replacement.

The inspection, testing, preventive maintenance, replacement schedule and emergency repair of all apparatus are well established and meet the emergency apparatus service and reliability needs. The department operating guidelines require daily vehicle inspections through the *Vector Check It* program. Any deficiencies are forwarded to the division chief of logistics. The department has contracted with two local vendors for apparatus maintenance. The department also contracts with vendors to conduct pump and ladder testing. The department has an adequate fleet of reserve apparatus, which includes four reserve engines, one reserve ladder truck, and one battalion chief vehicle. The department has a goal of maintaining one reserve engine for every three front line engines.

Equipment and supplies are adequate and designed to meet the agency's goals and objectives. The department is well stocked and has adequate equipment and supplies to meet normal operational and peak demand. The department maintains a cache of back-up equipment including tools, nozzles, fittings, and emergency medical services equipment, which is accessible to personnel as needed. An annual review of tools and equipment allows the department to prioritize and replace tools and equipment as needed.

The department maintains contracts for the maintenance, testing and inspection of ground and aerial ladders, extrication tools, and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Line personnel provide maintenance for common small equipment such as saws, fans, and generators.

Safety equipment is adequate and designed to meet agency goals and objectives. The department has in-service and back-up safety equipment that meets department goals and objectives. The division chief of logistics works with the division chief of health and safety, the equipment committee, and the health and safety committee to monitor the needs of the department and to ensure safety equipment is current with industry safety standards. All personnel are issued or have access to safety equipment to effectively respond to all identified response programs and levels. Departmental personnel have two sets of properly measured-to-fit turnout gear. All stations are equipped with personal protective equipment extractors and Fire Station 6 is equipped with specialized SCBA pack washers for decontamination. Any repairs needed to turnout gear are performed by a qualified third-party vendor.

### **Category 7 — Human Resources**

General human resources administration practices are in place and are consistent with local, state/provincial and federal statutory and regulatory requirements. The city of Meridian has a dedicated, full-time human resources director. The human resources director is responsible for directing human resource operations for the city and the Meridian Fire Department. The city of Meridian's Human Resources (HR) Department is adequately staffed with six personnel serving the human resources needs of the employees. The city's policies and procedures have been reviewed by the city's legal counsel for compliance with all local, state, and federal requirements. Policies are reviewed and updated annually or as needed.

Systems are established to attract, select, retain and promote qualified personnel in accordance with applicable local, state/provincial and federal statutory requirements. The Meridian Fire Department identifies positions on an as-needed basis due to retirements, departures, or attrition. The department follows *Standard Operating Policy and Procedure 2.7, Staffing, Selection, Promotion, and Transfer*, for job posting announcements. Promotional announcements are posted in accordance with *Article 15 Promotional Testing of the Collective Labor Agreement (CLA) between City of Meridian and Meridian Firefighters IAFF Local 4627*. Recruitment for positions in the department occurs throughout all levels. The department has created a recruitment committee to address the department's recruitment needs. The recruitment committee includes representatives from administration, operations, training, and line personnel.

The city of Meridian is an equal opportunity employer as outlined in the city's *Standard Operating Policy and Procedure Manual, policy, and procedure 2.1 – Equal Employment Opportunity*. The administrative division screens all applications to ensure that minimum qualifications are met for posted positions. The city's human resources (HR) department assists with screenings to ensure that veterans preferences points are applied correctly, and that screening adheres to local, state, and federal laws. The HR department receives all internal applications for promotions and screens all applicants for minimum qualifications. An eligibility list is then sent from HR to the deputy chief of operations.

The department actively engages in a variety of recruitment efforts to increase diversity. The department supports and participates in the local *Ignite Fire Bootcamp* for young women and teenage girls and boys, is a member of *Women in Fire*, and promotes women in the fire service on its recruitment website. The city is also a designated affirmative action employer and maintains a written affirmative action plan according to the *Standard Operating Policy and Procedure Manual*.

The department works closely with the Meridian Professional Firefighters Local 4627 to offer competitive wages, benefits, and working conditions to help attract and retain employees. The recruitment committee is tasked with assisting in improving hiring efforts and examining barriers to entering the department. The HR department regularly conducts exit interviews in accordance with *Standard Operating Policy 8.2 - Termination of Employment*. All employees are automatically scheduled for exit interviews, but participation is voluntary. Information gathered from exit interviews are summarized and presented to the city's leadership team, including the fire chief. The fire department also has regular meetings with Meridian Professional Firefighters Local 4627 in labor management meetings and policy committee meetings to improve policies and procedures.

The deputy chief of administration is responsible for reviewing upcoming retirements and attrition to determine the personnel resource needs of the department. The department has successfully identified position needs and created hiring lists using retirement projections.

Documented personnel policies and procedures are in place to guide both administrative and personnel behavior. The city of Meridian publishes its employee handbook, the *Standard Operating Policy and Procedure Manual*, and provides a copy to all new employees and posts it on the intranet for all personnel to access. Personnel policies and procedures are part of this manual and are reviewed annually and updated as needed. The City of Meridian's *Unlawful Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Policy and Procedure* is published in the city's *Standard Operating Policy and Procedure Manual*. The fire department also has internal personnel policies and procedures that are published on the intranet for its members and distributed to new hires. *The Collective Labor Agreement (CLA) between City of Meridian and Meridian Firefighters*

*IAFF Local 4627* also dictates many personnel policies and practices for line personnel and is also published on the intranet.

The department's disciplinary policies, procedures, and processes are outlined in department policy *AP 210 – Discipline* and *Article 28 Discipline and Discharge of the Collective Labor Agreement (CLA) between City of Meridian and Meridian Firefighters IAFF Local 4627*. The discipline process outlined in department policy defines both informal and formal discipline and defines how progressive discipline should proceed. The CLA adds due process and just cause to disciplinary procedures and outlines timelines for how long disciplinary records may be maintained for personnel. *Article 16 Grievance Procedure of the CLA between City of Meridian and Meridian Firefighters IAFF Local 4627* outlines the established grievance procedure.

Human resources development and utilization is consistent with the agency's established mission, goals and objectives. The city of Meridian has an employment classification system as defined in the *Standard Operating Policy and Procedure Manual, Policy 3.1 – Employee Classification*. The HR department is responsible for administering the policy and conducts periodic reviews of positions to ensure appropriate classification. The fire department maintains a current file of all job descriptions for all department positions, including negotiated positions. All job descriptions are available on the city's intranet. Job descriptions for open positions are available on the department's public facing website employment opportunities page.

The department's training division provides annual engineer and officer development programs for all members, as well as a chief officer development program. Development programs are a requirement to test for promotion according to the *Collective Labor Agreement (CLA) between City of Meridian and Meridian Firefighters IAFF Local 4627*. Members are also actively encouraged to attend the *National Fire Academy (NFA)* and participate in credentialing programs through the NFA or the *Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)*.

A system and practices for providing employee/member compensation are in place. Pay rates and compensation for union members are published in *Appendix A Compensation Schedule of the Collective Labor Agreement (CLA) between City of Meridian and Meridian Firefighters IAFF Local 4627* and are available on the intranet. Rates of pay and compensation for non-union fire employees, including administrative and executive personnel, are published on the department's intranet on the human resources page.

### **Category 8 — Training and Competency**

A training program is established to support the agency's needs. The agency provides access to and guidance on educational programs that increase advancement potential and support the agency's needs. Meridian Fire Department has a training division consisting of a division chief of training, two full-time training captains, and shift field training officers (FTO). The department's fire training program requirements are based on guidelines from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Idaho Surveying and Ratings Bureau. The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) division is responsible for all EMS training.

A block training calendar identifies annual, biennial, and triennial fire training requirements, and utilizes shift field training officers to evaluate the training process. Quarterly training blocks are developed to ensure requirements are met.

Training and education programs are provided to support the agency's needs. The department's training and educational programs are developed to ensure it meets its levels of service, and national and state level requirements. The department uses *Target Solutions* for its training records management for both fire and EMS training. The division chief of training meets with the training committee monthly to plan quarterly training. The department utilizes documented tracking and performance-based measures to evaluate individual and crew performance through training evolutions and real-world emergencies. The division chief of training conducts an annual appraisal of the program to identify areas for improvement.

Printed and nonprinted training and education resources, library materials, media equipment, facilities and staff are available in adequate quantity, relevancy and diversity, and are current. The department maintains a reference library at each station in addition to using the *Meridian Fire Operations* website to provide access to all current crew performance standards, individual performance standards, job performance requirements, and other supplementary training videos. Each station has multiple computers for accessing the department's website.

Firefighters participate in field training at the department's four-story training tower. In addition, the city has a Public Safety Training Center, a jointly owned facility with Meridian Police Department, which offers multiple classrooms with computer testing capabilities, a lecture hall, and a newly constructed *scenario village* which includes indoor prop houses and business that can be reconfigured for training purposes.

## **Category 9 — Essential Resources**

### **Criterion 9A – Water Supply**

The water supply resources are reliable and capable of distributing adequate volumes of water and pressures to all areas of agency responsibility. All areas meet fire flow requirements in accordance with applicable fire flow criteria. The Meridian Fire Department has approximately 6,725 hydrants in the district. The department has no documented incidents where hydrants or water distribution system posed an issue. The city of Meridian's water supply system is divided into five zones with a total of 25 wells, two storage tanks with 2 million-gallon capacities, and multiple booster pumps in each zone. All zones are able to deliver the largest single fire flow requirement during peak demand with a pump out of service with high confidence ratings. The city has a 20-year master plan to ensure an adequate water supply for the community's needs through the year 2037.

The peer assessment team confirmed that Meridian Fire Department's most recent *Idaho Surveying and Rating Bureau* was November 13, 2019, with a grading of 38.05 out of 40 points for water supply. It was confirmed that the department has a hydrant inspection and testing program in place. Street maps with hydrant locations are available to the crews in the field and in the stations.

### **Criterion 9B – Communication Systems**

The public and the agency have an adequate, effective and efficient emergency communications system. The system is reliable and able to meet the demands of major operations, including command and control within fire/rescue services during emergency operations, and meets the needs of other public safety agencies.

Ada County Sherriff's Office 911 Emergency Dispatch Center handles all communications for the Meridian Fire Department. Communications hardware consists of 9 fixed stations, 39 mobile radios, and 66 portables assigned to apparatus and personnel. The 700 MHz system provides interoperability with public safety personnel. The system is covered by a maintenance contract with the city of Boise. The communication center is adequately staffed and is equipped with a continuous, uninterrupted power supply along with a backup generator. The dispatch center is adequately staffed with 59 telecommunicators and 4 supervisors with a minimum of 12 dispatchers working during peak times for both fire and emergency medical dispatch capabilities. The center is equipped with a continuous, uninterrupted power supply along with a backup generator, and has internal facilities and data maintenance personnel on site. Quality assurance processes occur daily. The division chief of administration works with dispatch center leaders to ensure the department's objectives are met in the 2022 fiscal year, 90 percent of all calls were answered in 10 seconds or less by the dispatch center. It was noted that over the past three years the alarm handling time exceeded three minutes. [It is recommended that the department identify performance and dispatching expectations and needs that meet the department's requirements and be incorporated into the dispatching agreement.](#)

### **Criterion 9C – Administrative Support Services and Office Systems**

Administrative support services and general office systems are in place with adequate staff to efficiently and effectively conduct and manage the agency's administrative functions such as organizational planning and assessment, resource coordination, record keeping, reporting, business communications, public interaction and purchasing.

The Meridian Fire Department provides support for administration and office systems through its administrative services division. This division is comprised of four people: an administrative services division manager, an administrative assistant II, and administrative assistant I, and a records clerk. While the department has grown in personnel by 40 percent alone since 2021, the administrative services division has been able to analyze their own processes and eliminate many time-wasting practices. The division maintains its own internal process flows and reviews them regularly.

The administrative services division manages several community outreach initiatives designed for communications between the department and the citizens, including an extensive frequently asked questions section and an ask the chief section of the department's website. Public records are maintained, available, and disposed of in accordance with all related mandates and procedures.

Organizational documents, forms, standard operating guidelines (SOG), and manuals are up to date and within the three-year window and are managed by the deputy chief of administration, however SOGs have historically been updated on an as-needed basis. [It is recommended that a system be identified to trigger formal review of organizational documents, forms, standard operating guidelines, and manuals on a regular and routine basis.](#)

### **Criterion 9D – Information Technology**

Information technology resources are in place with adequate staff to efficiently and effectively conduct and manage the agency's information technology functions, such as hardware and software implementation and maintenance and data analysis. The Meridian Fire Department collaborates with the city of Meridian's Information Technology (IT) Department. The IT department offers technical support, replacement schedules, and ensures security for the entire city. The fire department has

adequate hardware, software, and IT support from the IT department to suit the operational needs of the fire department.

The department utilizes a variety of programs to perform duties and services, including *Vector Solutions*, *MobileEyes*, *Compliance Engine*, and *ESO*. The fire department is addressing questions of data accuracy and analysis and utilizes outside resources for assistance. Fire department personnel are beginning to use platforms such as *ESRI/GIS*, *SSRS reports*, and *PowerBI* to pull, analyze, and visualize information from their variety of data sources.

### **Category 10 — External Systems Relationships**

The agency's operations and planning efforts include relationships with external agencies and operational systems that affect or may influence its mission, operations and/or cost effectiveness. The importance of these relationships is discussed and reflected in the strategic plan. Many of these relationships are examples of strong and supportive interagency interoperability that not only enhances fire services and public safety within the city of Meridian; but extends to the adjacent municipalities, businesses and citizens.

These relationships have helped to improve the department's operational effectiveness, sharing of resources, and managing costs. A good example of this are the relationships with the Ada County/City Emergency Services System (ACCESS) Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and Emergency Systems (ES) Users group. The purpose of these groups is to ensure appropriate and effective services are delivered to citizens across the region not just in the member cities. This led to a systems approach to emergency response with the closest unit dispatched regardless of boundaries.

The agency maintains current agreements with those external agencies which support the identified programs. The department maintains multiple external agency agreements which are reviewed by the executive leadership team on varying schedules dependent on the type of agreement and external agency requirements.

All agreements are reviewed by the city solicitor and if required the finance division of the city at the time of development to ensure the best interests of the city. The administrative services division manager maintains copies of the agreements in *Municode*, a tool for managing contract reviews, updates, revisions, and signatures. Most contracts are reviewed, updated, and renewed annually while performance issues are reviewed as they come up or prior to any renewals.

### **Category 11 — Health and Safety**

The agency's occupational health, safety and risk management programs protect the organization and personnel from unnecessary injuries, loss, and liability. The newly hired division chief of health and safety, under the supervision of the deputy of administration, is responsible for implementing and overseeing health, safety and risk management programs at the Meridian Fire Department (MFD). The division chief of health and safety will bring all of the programs under one division umbrella to provide for greater and more efficient management, as well as improvement, of the department's many safety initiatives. The division chief of health and safety supervises the incident safety officer program for emergency scene safety, the peer fitness trainers who assist firefighter physical fitness initiatives, and the peer support team for behavioral and mental health related matters.



The MFD has policies and guidelines in place to address cross-contamination. Along with decontaminating bunker gear by using the extractors at each station, helmet wash stations, and self-contained breathing apparatus wash stations to reduce carcinogens.

The agency uses near miss-reporting, *Green Sheets* to elevate the level of situational awareness in an effort to teach and share lessons learned from events that could have resulted in a fatality, injury, or property damage. However, this process is not formally used in the department. It depends on what battalion chief is on duty if a *Green Sheet* is completed. [It is recommended that the department formalize the use of near miss reporting to evaluate the level of situational awareness in an effort to teach and share lessons learned from events that could have resulted in a fatality, injury, or property damage.](#)

Currently only three of the eight stations have a dedicated bunker gear room. There are five fire stations that have bunker gear and fitness equipment in the engine bays. [It is recommended that the department advocate for building or renovating five fire stations to ensure bunker gear and workout equipment are separated from the apparatus bays to avoid carcinogens.](#)

The agency has a wellness/fitness program for personnel. The agency specifies and communicates the provisions if employees/members do not comply with the wellness/fitness program. The MFD has a health and wellness program that is provided to all employees. The department has a comprehensive and mandatory physical examination performed by *Emergency Responders Health Center LLC* biannually. The exam includes cardiac stress tests as well as cancer, audiology, and spirometry screenings. Starting in 2025 the command staff will also undergo yearly exams.

The MFD provides employees with an employee assistance program, along with a *Fire Strong* program that is available to employees and families 24/7. The department has also established a peer support team. There are currently 19 members, and this is growing as training is offered.

The MFD provides personnel access to physical fitness equipment. The department also has approximately 12 peer fitness trainers and offers a daily workout that is available online for on duty and off duty staff. The health and wellness program is formerly reviewed and documented at least annually. The appraisal is conducted by the division chief of health and safety with input from the peer fitness and peer support teams to evaluate the effectiveness of the associated programs and provide recommendations based on the department's goals and objectives.