



Audit of DNS Residential Complaints

City of Milwaukee

Internal Audit Division

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Agenda

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Audit Scope

The scope of this audit includes Residential complaints, with a focus on high-risk tenant impacted cases (e.g. no heat, no water, etc.) from the period January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2021.

Audit Objectives

- Verify that caseload information is complete, relevant, and reliable to adequately evaluate, prioritize, monitor, and address residential complaints.
- Determine if complaints involving high-risk issues related to tenant-occupied residential property are being addressed in a timely manner (in accordance with policy and procedures and/or based on other measurable criteria).
- Determine if complaints involving high-risk issues related to tenant-occupied residential property are being addressed in an equitable manner (in accordance with policy and procedures, and/or based on other measurable criteria, such as zip code, district, etc).

Audit Procedures

Audit activities consisted of:

- Process walkthroughs
- Observations
- Review of policies and procedures
- Testing of controls



Audit Conclusion

The DNS residential response process is well designed and operating effectively. DNS prioritizes and addresses emergent residential complaints and allocates resources in an equitable manner across geographic areas.

However, an opportunity exists for case closeouts to be consistently entered in a complete and timely manner.

Audit Finding: Delayed Closeouts and Inconsistent Documentation on Case Records

- Finding: Case closeouts have an opportunity to be executed and documented more consistently. However, execution issues appear to be rare because the lack of repeat complaints indicates complaints are being addressed. Three out of the 30 sampled cases were not closed out in a timely manner. One of those cases showed a delay in completing a timely re-inspection and providing adequate documentation to support the case status.
- Risk: Untimely resolution for residents in emergency situations. *Risk Rating: Low*
- Recommendation: DNS should establish specific guidelines for required documentation that includes the detail of the actions taken to support inspection results and other activities performed to address the case. Additionally, DNS management should use documentation and entered comments to monitor the status of emergency cases.

Other Conclusions

- Accela

- Accela is the platform DNS utilizes to create, monitor, and store the residential case information. The program allows DNS staff to add comments to cases to provide context and document relevant actions to the case. Internal Audit confirmed features within Accela are not working as designed.

- Placards

- When a property is deemed too unsafe for the resident to remain at the property, an inspector will issue a placard. Due to the severity of a placard, DNS's policy and procedures specify placards need to be signed off by a supervisor upon issuance and a copy of the placard needs to be sent via Certified Mail to all occupants, property owners on record, and any property managers/registered agents for the property within 24 hours of issuance. Additionally, a copy of the order is posted directly on the property. Internal Audit is comfortable inspectors are obtaining supervisor signatures upon issuing a placard for unsafe conditions and DNS is sending a copy of the placard within 24 hours of issuance via Certified Mail to the resident.

- Equitable Allocation of Resources

- While district maps have remained static over the years, DNS continues to allocate resources to areas where they are needed most. Internal Audit tested all emergency residential cases from 2020 and 2021 to see if any districts had longer case completion times. Internal Audit believes resident complaints are being addressed timely and fairly.

Other Conclusions

- Lack of Repeat Complaints
 - To gain comfort that DNS is addressing high-risk emergency cases despite the lack of consistent documentation, Internal Audit tested all possible emergency cases as indicated by the language in MCO 200-21 from 2020 and 2021 to identify if there are repeat complaints at the same address for the same issue. Addresses identified as having multiple cases attached to them had a few different explanations:
 - a. Same address, but a different unit in the building
 - b. The resident entered the same complaint multiple times on the same day, which resulted in duplicated complaints in the system
 - i. DNS has 24 hours to respond to an emergency case
 - c. The resident entered a new complaint for different issues
 - i. Example: One case for no heat and another case for no hot water
 - d. The resident had an issue, but the issue reemerged later
 - i. Example: Resident submitted a case for no heat in December. DNS addressed the issue. The boiler broke 6 weeks later, and the resident submitted a new case.
 - e. The resident ignores DNS contact attempts, which results in DNS closing the case. The resident opens a new case a few days later because the issue(s) were not addressed.
 - Internal Audit was unable to identify instances where a resident had to submit a new case due to DNS not following up once the complaint was initially received.

Next Steps

Phase 1

- Auditee will execute audit finding remediation action plans



Phase 2

- Internal Audit will solicit audit finding remediation progress updates at least annually



Phase 3

- Internal Audit will report remediation status to the F&P committee annually until fully executed



Thank You.

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