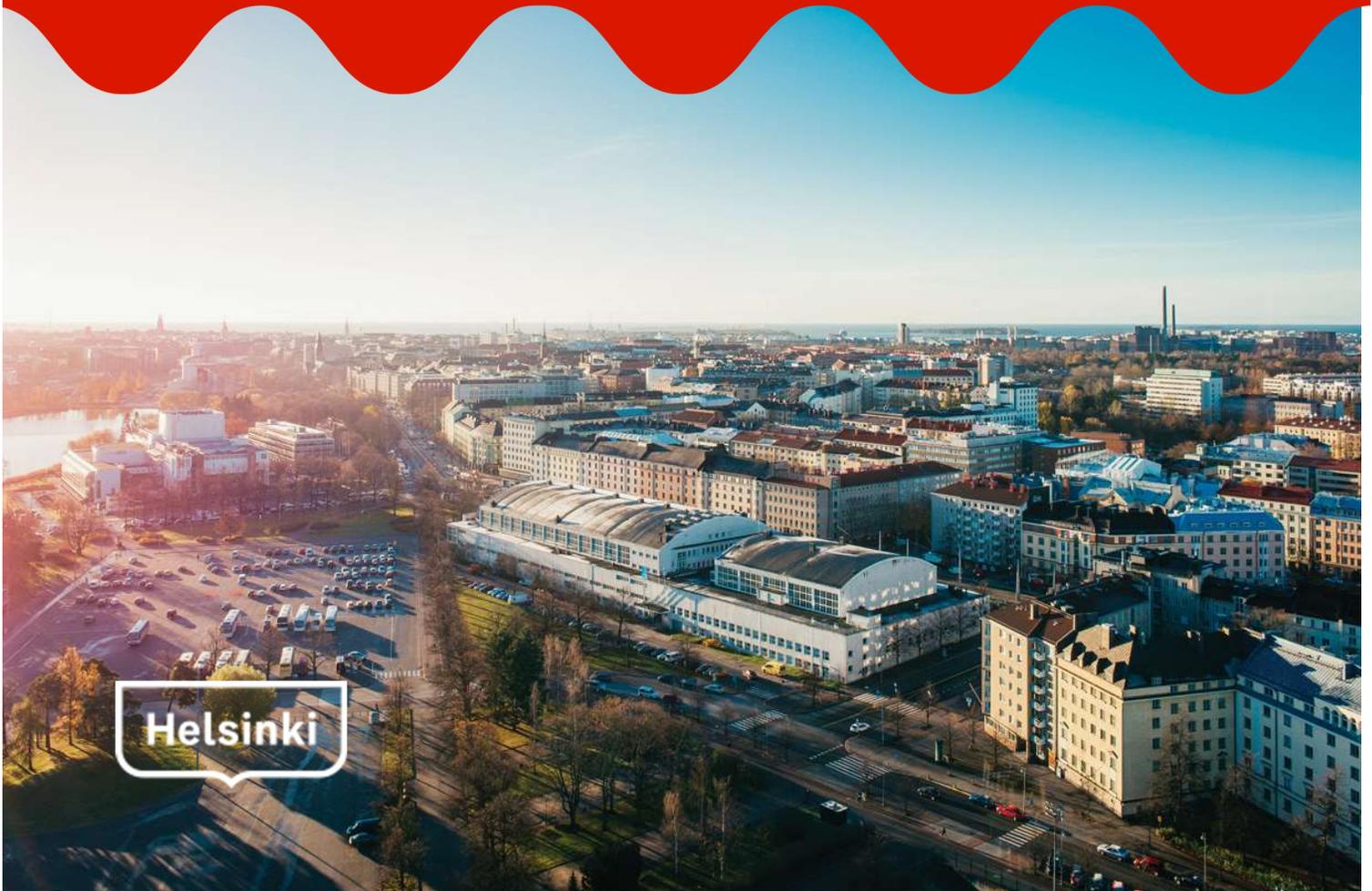




# Helsinki City Rescue Department's self- supervision programme

Helsinki City Rescue Department





# **Rescue Department's self-supervision programme**

Helsinki City Rescue Department

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	4
Rescue services reform and self-supervision.....	4
Rescue services' self-supervision vs. health and social services' self-supervision .....	5
Self-supervision as part of a wellbeing services county's internal control .....	5
Helsinki City Rescue Department's self-supervision programme.....	6
Objectives and policies .....	6
Subjects of self-supervision – What do we supervise?.....	7
Implementation of self-supervision – How do we supervise? .....	7
How do we develop self-supervision? .....	9
Appendix 1: Self-supervision information form.....	11

# Introduction

## Rescue services reform and self-supervision

Provisions on the organisation of rescue services are laid down in the *Act on Organising Rescue Services* (613/2021). The Act includes a description of the national guidance of rescue services. Self-supervision means the organiser's own supervision of its tasks and services. Self-supervision must ensure the quality, availability and effectiveness of the services in particular.

A rescue department's most important planning document is the decision on the level and standard of rescue services. The decision is the most important objective document for self-supervision, as it includes descriptions of the objectives concerning the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of rescue services. As the funding mechanism is reformed, the importance of the decision on the level and standard of rescue services will increase even further, as it is binding and funding must be secured for the services and their target levels described therein.

Self-supervision as a common practice of rescue services provides an opportunity for joint development. Of particular note is the statutory obligation to publish the observations made in the context of self-supervision and the corrective measures related thereto. A self-supervision programme thus increases the transparency of rescue services and at the same time provides the Ministry of the Interior, which guides operations, and the Regional State Administrative Agencies, which are responsible for self-supervision, with a better basis for guiding and supervising operations. A self-supervision programme and its implementation also provide valuable information for the management of rescue services at local level.

## Self-supervision at Helsinki City Rescue Department

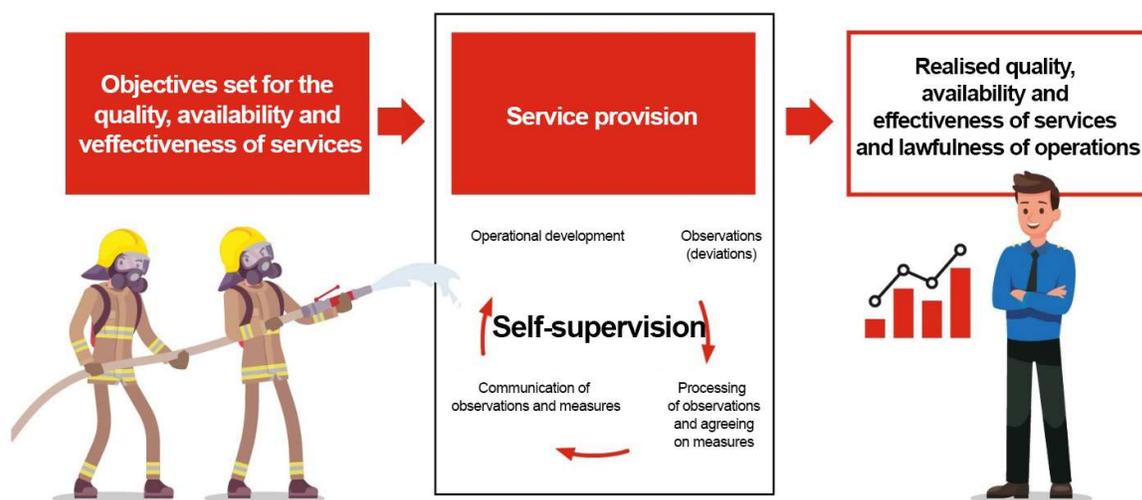


Figure 1. What is self-supervision all about?

## **Rescue services' self-supervision vs. health and social services' self-supervision**

Self-supervision within the meaning used in legislation concerning the organisation of services has different bases and histories in the context of rescue services and health and social services. In the health and social services sector, provider-specific self-supervision plans have a long history based on statutory requirements concerning their preparation. The self-supervision plans drawn up in the health and social services sector have typically taken the form of quality or operating manuals, which have enabled service providers to systematically supervise both their own and external service provision. In this regard, the health and social services sector differs significantly from the rescue services sector, where external service providers play only a minor role. The new legislation obliges rescue services providers to draw up self-supervision programmes. However, it does not oblige rescue services to draw up self-supervision plans.

## **Self-supervision as part of a wellbeing services county's internal control**

The party responsible for the internal control of an organisation is the top management of the organisation. Internal control has traditionally been divided into oversight of legality, oversight of the use of funds and oversight of operational performance.

Self-supervision produces data for the internal control needs of the service provider. Self-supervision is part of internal control, but it does not fully cover the information needs of internal control by itself. The Act on Organising Rescue Services does not equate self-supervision to internal control, nor is self-supervision presented as meaning the same thing. The focus of the Act on Organising Rescue Services and its rationale is on the customer and citizen perspective, i.e. the provision of services and, in particular, the quality characteristics of the provided services. The other established areas of internal control are less emphasised in the Act and its rationale. Self-supervision as a new practice does not, of course, remove an organisation's statutory obligation to carry out internal control. As such, top management will remain responsible for internal control as a whole in future as well. Self-supervision provides valuable data for internal control use, especially in the context of monitoring the performance of the tasks assigned to the organisation and the achievement of set objectives. The self-supervision process does not end with the observations made, as deciding on corrective measures and implementing them are also essential parts of the process.

There are no detailed provisions concerning the organisation of self-supervision as part of the internal control of a rescue services organiser and provider. As such, service providers are free to decide how to organise their internal control and self-supervision and implement connections between them. The key is to ensure that the planning and implementation of self-supervision, the observations made and associated corrective measures together with the internal control of the organisation form a logical and functional entity. One particularly noteworthy aspect of self-supervision is that, according to the Act on Organising Rescue Services, it must be carried out as part of the organisation and provision of services. In other words, self-supervision must not be organised as a separate activity independent of service provision. It is important to understand that the self-supervision of rescue services is about quality control and development carried out by the organisation responsible for organising and providing the service itself.

The Act on Organising Rescue Services demands oversight of legality. Seeing as how, apart from this single sentence concerning oversight of legality, the Act emphasises supervision of the various quality characteristics of services when it comes to self-supervision, it can be interpreted that as regards oversight of legality, self-supervision is about overseeing compliance with the statutory requirements concerning the organisation of services, which in practice means overseeing compliance with the Act. This interpretation does not remove the obligation to oversee legality, but this broader definition of it allows oversight of legality to be carried out as part of internal control without being included in a self-supervision programme.

# Helsinki City Rescue Department's self-supervision programme

## Objectives and policies

The objectives of Helsinki City Rescue Department's self-supervision programme are as follows:

- The self-supervision programme must meet the requirements set for it in the Act on Organising Rescue Services.
- The implementation of the self-supervision programme must provide clear benefits in terms of the organisation and provision of rescue services and the development of service quality.
- The implementation of the self-supervision programme must integrate seamlessly into the normal daily operations and line management of the Rescue Department.
- The programme must be compact and clear. It must be demonstrably linked to the planning documents and indicators that define the subjects of self-supervision, i.e. the services and the related service level descriptions and target levels. A compact and clear self-supervision programme can be adapted to comply with national requirements and practices in a more agile manner later, once understanding of the organisation of self-supervision becomes clearer and more concrete at national level.

The preparation and development of the self-supervision programme is subject to the following policies:

- The Rescue Department's self-supervision programme is drawn up as a separate document. This is the clearest solution in terms of the guidance and supervision of rescue services.
- Self-supervision will be developed in the coming years. The self-supervision programme is valid until further notice. The need to update it will be reviewed regularly, at least when the requirements concerning it are supplemented.
- The objects of measurement and indicators of self-supervision are defined in greater detail by service, reviewed periodically and updated as necessary.
- The observations made in the context of the implementation of the self-supervision programme and associated development measures follow a three-month cycle of collection, preparation and publication. The self-supervision programme, the observations based on the monitoring of the implementation of the self-supervision programme and the measures to be carried out based on these observations are published every three months in a public information network or in other ways that promote their publicity.
- The observations made in the context of the Rescue Department's self-supervision process may also be related to the prehospital emergency medical services and civil defence services provided by the Department, the operations of the Rescue School and security of supply services. These observations are used in the operational development of the Department. The Act on Organising Rescue Services only requires the publication of observations and measures relating to the performance of statutory rescue services tasks.

## Subjects of self-supervision – What do we supervise?

The requirements concerning self-supervision detailed in the Act on Organising Rescue Services and its rationale focus primarily on the organisation and provision of services and the quality characteristics of the provided services. In particular, self-supervision must ensure the quality, availability and effectiveness of the services. In addition to the quality characteristics listed above, the rationale of the Act emphasises the connection of self-supervision to risk management and the hearing of the personnel, residents, companies and other communities of the wellbeing services county. The rationale also highlights the need to monitor the availability, quality and effectiveness of rescue services as well as their costs and productivity, and to compare these data with corresponding data from other wellbeing services counties.

The subjects of Helsinki City Rescue Department's self-supervision, i.e. the quality requirements set for rescue services, have been documented in many different planning documents and indicators. The planning documents containing the quality requirements and expectations of rescue services can be roughly grouped as follows:

- regulatory basis (laws and regulations)
- strategic guidance of rescue services at national level
- strategic and operational guidance of the City of Helsinki
- the service strategy of the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division
- the planning documents of the Rescue Department's service provision
  - o the decision on the level and standard of rescue services
  - o action plans drawn up by the Rescue Department and individual services, units and sub-units.

The objective documents described above and their detailed content form the basis for self-supervision. Self-supervision involves making observations on how the services provided meet the set objectives and quality requirements. At the same time, it involves assessing the lawfulness of the organisation and provision of the services.

Self-supervision also involves collecting and responding to customer feedback and comparing data on the Rescue Department's operations to corresponding data from other wellbeing services counties. Wellbeing services counties are required to organise the collection of customer feedback themselves. National reference data is obtained via different cooperation networks and through national joint data collections carried annually by the Ministry of the Interior and Regional State Administrative Agencies.

## Implementation of self-supervision – How do we supervise?

Helsinki City Rescue Department has decided that the implementation of the self-supervision programme must provide clear benefits in terms of the organisation and provision of rescue services and the development of service quality. The purpose of self-supervision is to support service provision and the assessment of its performance and effectiveness. Self-supervision must not become an additional administrative burden that is separate from service provision. In order to achieve this, it is appropriate to organise self-supervision as part of normal service provision and its line management.

Helsinki City Rescue Department has decided to organise self-supervision in the following way:

- Observations and associated corrective measures are processed and decided upon every three months by the Rescue Department's management group. The processing times are: February (observations from October–December and annual report from the previous year), May (observations from January–March), August (observations from April–June) and November (observations from July–September). The management group confirms the observations and measures, after which the related decisions (self-supervision report) are published on the Department's website.
- Self-supervision is carried out by individual services, the management groups of which process observations regularly. The agenda of every service management group meeting includes as standard the item 'self-supervision' for highlighting any observations. The observations made and their significance are assessed. When an observation is assessed as being significant, development measures are defined to address it. The observations of the service management groups and the corrective measures defined to address them are compiled and submitted to the Rescue Department's management group for processing every three months.
- The assessment of the significance of observations focuses on how the observed deficiency, error or other defect affects service provision. Observations concerning individual incidents of minor significance that are unlikely to be repeated are not processed by the Rescue Department's management group. Instead, these types of observations must be processed by the line management of the service in question. If, on the other hand, a deficiency, error or other defect in the quality, availability or effectiveness of a service provided is assessed as being significant and likely to be repeated, the observation is reported to the Rescue Department's management group. The management of the service must also plan the measures to remedy the deficiencies related to self-supervision observations.
- An observation can also be positive, i.e. an observation that the agreed or desired service level is significantly exceeded. In this case, it is appropriate to analyse the causes of the deviation and to assess, among other things, whether the overall allocation of rescue services' resources corresponds to the service level.
- If an observation and its impacts on service provision are significant, the corrective measures must be initiated immediately.
- Every Rescue Department employee is obliged to report to their supervisor any observations relating to a risk to the quality, availability or effectiveness of services. The administrative specialists working directly for the Rescue Department in the administration of the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division are also obliged to report such observations.
- Observations and associated corrective measures are reported to the Rescue Department's management group on a quarterly basis using a shared form template ([Appendix 2](#)).
- The coordination and development of self-supervision are the responsibility of a specialist separately assigned for this task. This specialist is tasked with supporting the self-supervision carried out by individual services and compiling the observations made by individual services and the proposed corrective measures so that they can be reported to the Rescue Department's management group for processing. The assigned specialist is also responsible for ensuring that confirmed observations and measures are communicated both internally and externally immediately after the decisions concerning them are made, as required by the Act on Organising Rescue Services. In addition to the tasks related to the self-supervision process, the specialist is also tasked with developing the self-supervision of Helsinki City Rescue Department.

## Self-supervision of the Rescue Department's services

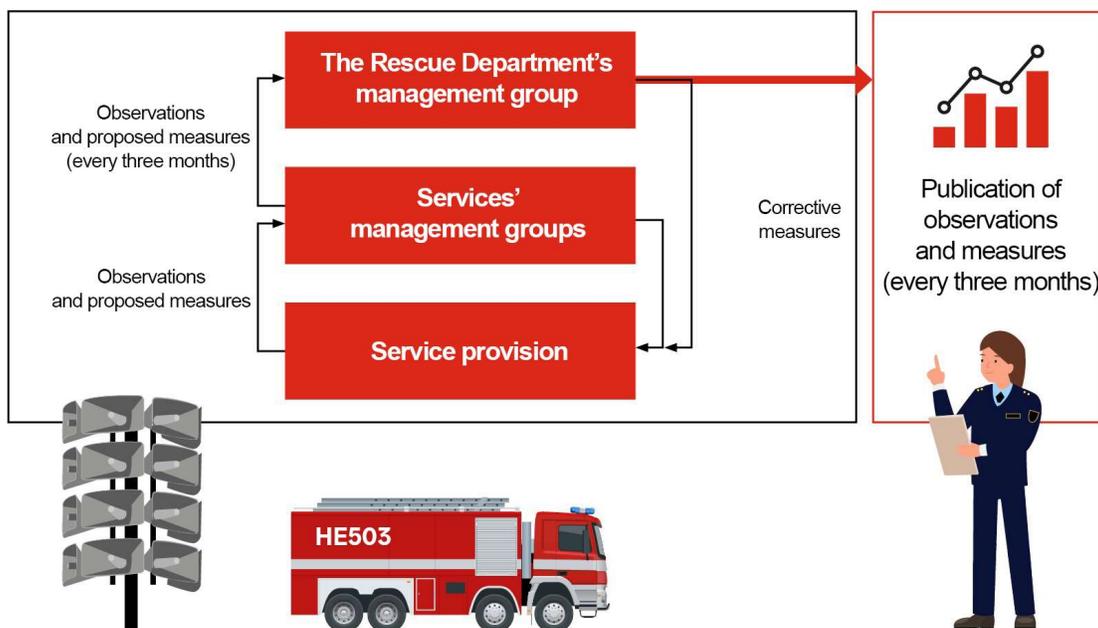


Figure 2. The self-supervision process of rescue services in Helsinki.

The self-supervision programme and information on observations made in the context of self-supervision are published on the City of Helsinki Rescue Department's pages on the joint web platform of rescue services ([www.pelastustoimi.fi](http://www.pelastustoimi.fi)).

### How do we develop self-supervision?

Implementing the self-supervision operating model into the organisation and provision of rescue services requires special planning. The implementation must be carried out in a way that takes into account the significance of observations and the monitoring of the realisation of corrective measures. If necessary, the operating model can be developed and corrected in an agile manner if the practical experience gained from self-supervision so requires.

The implementation of self-supervision includes identifying and responding to development needs. The shape that self-supervision ultimately takes will be affected by both practical experience and development needs identified.

Helsinki City Rescue Department has identified the following development needs that are directly linked to the implementation of self-supervision:

- *Development of the indicators used in services.*
- *Development of the collection and analysis of customer feedback.* The objective is that customer feedback is collected regularly and comprehensively about all provided services. The collection of feedback must be carried out in such a way as to provide customers' views on the most important services, particularly with regard to the quality, availability and effectiveness of the services. The practical implementation of the collection of customer feedback will be planned in cooperation with other rescue services at national level and with health and social services in Helsinki.
- *Development of effectiveness measurement.* The aim is to improve the measurement of the effectiveness of service provision. Measuring the effectiveness of rescue services is a challenge shared by rescue services at national level. As such, discussions on the development of effectiveness measurement should be launched in national cooperation networks and with the Ministry of the Interior.
- *Development of internal communications and training on self-supervision.* The implementation of self-supervision requires both communication and training within the organisation. Every employee must know the basics of self-supervision and procedures in situations where deviations are observed in the quality, availability or effectiveness of services. The functioning of internal communications and the organisation of training events are basic prerequisites for the successful implementation of self-supervision.

# Appendix 1: Self-supervision information form

The management groups of services use a standardised information form. This form is used to report observed deviations and associated corrective measures to the Rescue Department's management group four times a year in accordance with a schedule separately confirmed by the rescue commander.

	HELSINGIN KAUPUNKI Pelastuslaitos	1 / 2
SELF-SUPERVISION INFORMATION FORM		
Observations confirmed by the management group of [name of service] and proposed measures		
<p>At its meetings on [dd.mm.yyyy], [dd.mm.yyyy] and [dd.mm.yyyy], the management group of [name of service] has discussed observations of deviations related to the quality, availability and/or effectiveness of the Rescue Department's services or the lawfulness of its operations reported in accordance with the self-supervision process.</p> <p>The management group hereby confirms the observations and associated corrective measures listed in the table below and submits them to the Rescue Department's management group for quarterly processing.</p> <p>As regards observations assessed as being critical, the implementation of urgent corrective measures has been started immediately. These observations and measures have been discussed separately with the rescue commander.</p>		
<b>Observation</b> <i>Title and description of the observation (incl. an assessment of the critical nature of the observed deviation and the urgency of the corrective measures, urgent/non-urgent)</i>	<b>Corrective measure</b> <i>Title and a more detailed description of the measure with grounds.</i>	



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