



# Pension Division Newsletter

April 2022

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## Website Resources

We'd like to remind you of helpful resources available on the [Office of the State Auditor \(OSA\) website](#).

### Reporting Forms

A link to SAFES, the State Auditor's Form Entry System, is posted at the top of the OSA homepage for quick and easy access. Relief associations use SAFES to download, submit, and electronically sign their annual financial and investment reporting forms.

Under the "Forms + Deadlines" menu option, select "Pension Forms" to access other annual reporting forms, such as the Broker Certification Form. Form instructions and resources to help with proper completion of the forms can also be found on this page.

### Newsletters and Topics

The monthly Pension Division Newsletter can be found under the "News" menu option. Articles from the monthly Newsletter, published over the years, can be accessed by topic on the "Pension Topics" page under the "Training + Guidance" menu option. Topics include: benefit levels, board of trustees and membership, internal controls, and pension and benefit payments.

### Training Videos

Recorded training videos are available under the "Training + Guidance" menu option. Filter by the "Pension" category to find videos on completing reporting forms, a legislative update, and a new trustee training video.

### Statements of Position

Statements of Position, found under the "Training + Guidance" menu option, are educational resources providing information and guidance on select topics. Filter by the "Pensions" category to find statements on topics that include: service credit determinations, municipal contributions, and investment authority.

### Reports

The annual Financial and Investment Report of Volunteer Fire Relief Associations can be accessed by going to the "Reports + Data Analysis" menu option and then choosing "Pension Reports." The reports summarize data from the annual reporting forms filed with the OSA, including benefit levels, rates of return, state aid, and municipal contribution amounts.

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**What’s Ahead:**

**May 12:**

Supplemental State Aid  
Work Group Meeting  
2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
via Zoom.

**June 30:**

Reporting forms for  
relief associations with  
assets or liabilities of at  
least \$500,000 are due to  
the OSA.

**August 1:**

The 2022 Schedule Form  
must be certified to the  
municipality or  
independent nonprofit  
firefighting corporation.

## Selected Relevant Statutes Booklet

An updated version of the [Selected Relevant Statutes booklet](#) for volunteer fire relief associations is now available. The Selected Relevant Statutes booklet contains many of the State statutes relevant to relief associations.

Relief association trustees and consultants are encouraged to download the booklet for reference when updating bylaws, making investment decisions, and calculating benefit payments.

## Resources for Auditors

Resources are available on the OSA website for auditors working with volunteer fire relief associations. The [2021 Minnesota Legal Compliance Audit Guide for Relief Associations](#) prescribes the minimum procedures and audit scope for legal compliance audits.

The OSA has developed minimum procedures and a reporting format for [agreed-upon procedures engagements](#) for relief associations. A sample client representation letter is also provided.

[Audit reports](#) prepared by the OSA of local public pension plans are posted on our website and can be used as a reference.

## Submitting Agreed-Upon Procedures and Audit Reports

Agreed-upon procedures and audit reports for relief associations should be submitted to the OSA electronically through SAFES. Both types of reports must be saved as PDF documents and be uploaded by the relief association’s accountant or auditor.

A relief association must authorize its accountant or auditor to have SAFES access to the association’s reporting information by completing and submitting a [2022 User Authorization Form](#).

To submit a report, choose the “Submit Documents” tab within SAFES. Browse and select the document for submission. When submitting the agreed-upon procedures report, choose “Agreed-Upon Procedures Report” when specifying the document type. To submit an audit report through SAFES, choose “Pension Audit Report” when specifying the document type.

When submitting audit reports, please be sure that the management letter is included in the submission. When submitting PDF documents through SAFES, the financial statements, required supplementary information, and management letter should be saved and submitted as one PDF document.

## Shorter Vesting Allowed for Firefighters Who Return to Service

**Statements of Position:**

[Return to Service for Relief Association Members](#)

[Paying a Defined-Benefit Lump-Sum Service Pension](#)

[Management of Records](#)

[Considerations When Making Benefit Changes](#)

Relief associations have authority to define a separate vesting requirement for members who return to active service after being paid a service pension or disability benefit. The vesting requirement for these specific “return to service” members can be lower than the vesting requirement for other members, and applies only to members who return to the same fire department after being paid a service pension or disability benefit from the affiliated relief association.

A member who is paid a service pension must have a break in service of at least 60 days before the individual may return to active fire department service and relief association membership. Upon a resumption of active service, the member starts over in accruing service credit and must become vested again based solely on the resumption period of service to become eligible for a second service pension distribution.

A relief association that wants to define shorter vesting requirements for members who are paid a service pension and then return to active service and membership must do so by amending the bylaws.

For example, a relief association may specify in its bylaws that members who return after being paid a service pension or benefit have a vesting requirement of three years, and become fully vested immediately after three years of resumption service.

As another example, a relief association may specify in its bylaws that members who return after being paid a service pension or benefit have graduated vesting, with a member being 50 percent vested after one year of resumption service and vesting increasing in 10 percent increments for each additional resumption year.

Relief associations that pay monthly service pensions specify in the bylaws whether the monthly payments continue or cease (to resume once service ends again) during the member’s resumption period of service.

### Pension Division Staff

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