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Article for *Minnesota Fire Chief*

Fire Relief Training Sessions Now Available Online

By Rebecca Otto, State Auditor

The Pension Division of the Office of the State Auditor is pleased to announce a series of online training sessions for relief association officers, municipal trustees, and accountants or auditors.

Online trainings are live or recorded audio-visual tutorials conducted by Pension Division staff which can be viewed on your computer. Live online trainings, presented at a scheduled time, allow attendees to watch the training and interact with presenters during the training session. Recorded online trainings can be accessed at any time from the Office of the State Auditor website, and Pension Division staff will respond to any follow-up questions attendees send in.

Convenience

Online trainings are often more brief and topic-specific than on-site trainings. The trainings can be viewed from your office, fire hall, or at home. Online trainings eliminate travel time and costs while still providing targeted, interactive training for relief association trustees.

Office of the State Auditor staff will tailor these trainings based on the attendees' level of knowledge and experience with the topic. If you are not able to join a live online training, it will be recorded and available for viewing on our website, which you can access at any time of the day or night.

Online trainings require a high-speed Internet connection. If high-speed Internet isn't available at your home or fire hall, your public library should offer it (only five libraries in Minnesota don't currently offer high-speed Internet). Most librarians have experience in working with online trainings, and can assist you in getting started with yours.

Training Topics

Each online training session focuses on a specific topic such as reporting forms, legislative updates, or investment issues. The Pension Division has recorded a series of online trainings to assist with the completion of the Pension Reporting Form. The training sessions are geared toward new relief association trustees but provide information that will be useful for experienced trustees as well.

The following recorded online trainings are currently available for viewing on the Office of the State Auditor website:

- Completing the Reporting Form (25 minutes)
- Completing the Maximum Benefit Worksheet (6 minutes)
- Completing the Schedule Form (20 minutes)
- Deferred Interest: Options and Calculations (18 minutes)
- How To Use The State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFES) (5 minutes)
- SAFES Electronic Signature Process (8 minutes)

Future Training Topics

Online trainings create greater flexibility in the topics our staff can address with fire relief officials. The topics for trainings currently available were chosen with input from fire relief officials from around the state, and we're interested in learning what future topics you'd like us to cover. Send your suggestions to pension@auditor.state.mn.us.

More information and instructions on accessing an online training can be found on the Training Opportunities page of the Office of the State Auditor website at:

<http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=trainingopportunities>.