

Pension Division Newsletter

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New Sample Bylaw Guides

Four new Sample Bylaw Guides are available on the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) website. The new guides are for use by defined-contribution relief associations affiliated with a city fire department, an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, a town fire department, or a joint-powers fire department. The new guides include benefit provisions that are unique to defined-contribution plans and incorporate changes enacted during the 2012 legislative session.

The bylaw guides for defined-benefit lump-sum plans that are available on our website have also been updated to incorporate the recent legislative changes.

The new defined-contribution guides and the revised defined-benefit lump-sum guides are available in both MS Word and Adobe PDF versions, and can be found at:

<http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20120208.000>.



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2012 Legislative Update

The 2012 Pension Legislative Update has been released. The Update provides detailed information about several changes of law that may require a volunteer fire relief association to amend its bylaws. The Update also summarizes investment changes that may not require bylaw changes, but are likely to impact a relief association's investment policy and investment authorities and restrictions.

The Legislative Update has been sent by e-mail to each relief association. Relief association trustees are encouraged to read the legislative update and visit the website links that are included within the update to obtain additional information.

The legislative update is available on the OSA website at:

http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/other/PensionDocs/2012_Legislative_Update.pdf.

What's Ahead:

September 15: First certification deadline for 2012 state fire aid.

October 1: State fire aid is disbursed for relief associations certified as eligible to receive their aid in the first round of payments.

November 15: Second certification deadline for 2012 state fire aid.

November 30: Final deadline for submitting 2011 reporting-year forms to avoid forfeiture of state fire aid.

Working Group Nominations

This fall, the Office of the State Auditor will convene the Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group for the sixth consecutive year. The Working Group brings together the major volunteer fire relief association stakeholders to work on legislative changes to make the pension process easier and more effective.

Membership of the Working Group changes each year so that new communities can be represented. The Group typically holds about five weekday meetings at our office in Saint Paul. The meetings are spread across the fall and early winter months. If you are interested in serving on the Working Group, please contact Rose Hennessy Allen at (651) 296-5985 or at Rose.Hennessy-Allen@osa.state.mn.us.

If you or members in your community would like to suggest topics for the Working Group to consider, please forward them to Rose Hennessy Allen at the phone number or e-mail address provided above.

Revised Online Training Session

A new version of the "SAFES Electronic Signature Process" online training session has been released. The online training session walks through the process of signing relief association reporting forms electronically using our State Auditor Form Entry System (SAFES) website. The new online training session can be viewed at:

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/496046002>.

Additional online training sessions for relief association trustees are available on the "Training Opportunities" page of the OSA website under the "Pension Division" heading. You can access the page directly at:

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

Additional topics include how to use SAFES, relief association reporting requirements, and how to complete the various relief association reporting forms.

Online Trainings:

[Completing the Schedule Form](#)

[Completing the Maximum Benefit Worksheet](#)

[Completing the Reporting Form](#)

[Completing the Investment Disclosure Report Form](#)

[Relief Association Reporting Requirements](#)

[SAFES Electronic Signature Process](#)

Reporting Reminder and State Aid Deadline

The 2011 reporting-year forms for volunteer fire relief associations were due by March 31 for relief associations with less than \$200,000 in assets and liabilities and by June 30 for relief associations that exceeded this statutory threshold. Notices were sent by e-mail and U.S. mail to relief associations that have not submitted all required reporting information. Your assistance is appreciated in ensuring the late reporting forms are submitted as soon as possible. Late reporting forms may result in a delay in your relief association's receipt of 2012 state fire aid.

If your relief association has submitted its reporting forms but has been notified by our Pension Division staff that additional information is needed, please provide the requested information as soon as possible. The first certification deadline for 2012 state fire aid is September 15. To be certified as eligible for receipt of your state fire aid in the first round of payments, all required 2011 reporting information must have been submitted, the OSA review must have been completed, and any issues identified by the OSA must be resolved by that date.

If you have questions regarding relief association reporting requirements, please contact the Pension Division at (651) 282-6110 or at pension@osa.state.mn.us.

A document providing reporting information and helpful hints for completing the reporting forms can be viewed on our website at:

http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/forms/pen/ReportingForms/pensionrf_infoandhelpfulhints.pdf.

Forgot Your SAFES Password?

If you've forgotten your username or password for logging into the State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFES), the online web application for accessing and submitting your reporting forms, click on the link below. After entering your username or e-mail address, a new password will be generated and sent to you by e-mail.

<https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/safes/PasswordRecovery.aspx>

**Statements of
Position:**

**Considerations When
Making Benefit
Changes**

Return to Service

Investment Authority

**Governance for Fire
Relief Associations**

**Fundraisers and
Donations**

IRS Filing Notice

During the past year the tax-exempt status of some volunteer fire relief associations in Minnesota has been automatically revoked by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The automatic revocations were due to a failure to file annual information returns or notices with the IRS. Exempt organizations that do not file for three consecutive years automatically lose their tax-exempt status.

The IRS is providing transition relief for small exempt organizations that apply for reinstatement of their revoked tax-exempt status. The transition relief includes a reduced user fee to apply for reinstatement and less burdensome criteria that need to be met for the organization's reinstatement to be effective retroactively.

Additional information about transition relief, automatic revocation of tax-exempt status, the effect of losing tax-exempt status, and reinstating tax-exempt status is available on the IRS website at:

<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4991.pdf>.

Pension Division Staff

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