

Pension Division Newsletter

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Important Notice about Completing Forms using Excel 2007

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) made enhancements to its State Auditor’s Form Entry System (SAFES), the secure web application that relief associations use to access, submit, and electronically sign reporting forms. It has come to our attention that the enhancements have caused problems for form submissions if the forms are completed using Excel 2007.

If you complete the forms using Excel 2010 or newer, or using LibreOffice, you should not run into any problems submitting them through SAFES.

On March 13, 2017, we corrected the submission problem. If you are using Excel 2007 and downloaded your reporting forms from SAFES before March 13, you will need to either: 1) download and complete new versions of the forms and then submit them as normal through SAFES; or 2) submit the reporting forms using an alternative secure transmission portal that is a feature within SAFES.

If you choose to submit the forms using the alternative transmission portal, please go to:

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

Next, log in using your regular SAFES username and password. After you log in, choose “Pension” from the Division drop-down menu. Browse to find the form on your computer that you would like to submit, and then click the “Send File” button. After we receive the form submission we will send you an e-mail within a few days with the submission confirmation ID.



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What's Ahead:**March 31:**

Reporting forms for relief associations with assets and liabilities of less than \$500,000 are due to the Office of the State Auditor.

March 31:

Investment Business Recipient Disclosure Form is due to the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement.

June 30:

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

August 1:

The 2017 Schedule Form must be certified to the municipality or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation.

Reporting Form Helpful Hints

Below are some helpful hints to keep in mind when completing the new 2016 FIRE (FIRE-16) Form and the 2017 Schedule Form.

- Submit the FIRE-16 and the SC-17, if applicable, by uploading them through SAFES.
- Signatures are required on both forms. The signature pages are provided in the PDF versions of the forms that are created after the forms are uploaded.
- The PDF versions of the forms should be available in SAFES immediately after each form's submission.
- The forms can be signed electronically in SAFES or paper signature pages can be submitted. The forms submissions are not complete until all signatures are provided.
- Defined contribution plans may complete the defined contribution allocation table that is included within the FIRE-16 or may submit the allocation table using an alternative format. If your relief association submits its own version of the defined contribution allocation table, please submit it as a PDF document through SAFES.
- The FIRE-16 and SC-17 contain multiple worksheets, so you will see multiple tabs on the bottom menu bar. Click the right arrow icon in the lower left corner of the Excel file to navigate through the list of tabs in the menu bar. Make sure you complete each required worksheet.
- Review the "Home" tab within the FIRE-16 and SC-17 before submitting the forms to make sure there are no remaining red error messages. Red error messages indicate that information needs to be provided or is incorrect, and must be completed before the forms can be submitted.
- The Excel versions of the FIRE-16 and SC-17 that you access through SAFES are intended to be data-entry tools. The PDF versions of both forms that you subsequently access through SAFES are formatted for printing and retaining.
- The audit or agreed-upon procedures report should also be submitted through SAFES as a PDF document.
- Relief associations with assets and liabilities below the \$500,000 statutory threshold must have their FIRE-16 signed by a **certified public accountant**.

Sample Bylaw Guides:

LUMP-SUM

City Fire Department

Town Fire Department

Joint-Powers Fire Department

Independent Corporation

DEFINED-CONTRIBUTION

City Fire Department

Town Fire Department

Joint-Powers Fire Department

Independent Corporation

How to Sign Forms in SAFES

Forms submitted through SAFES are usually available for viewing and signing immediately after they have been successfully uploaded. You will receive a confirmation ID for each form that uploads successfully.

Following the successful form upload, log into SAFES at: <https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/safes>.

If this is your first time logging into SAFES this year, you will be asked to verify your contact information. Review your contact information on the “Contact Information” tab. Make any necessary updates and then click the “Verify” button.

Next, select the “Forms” tab and choose the appropriate reporting year. You will see a list of your relief association’s required and submitted reporting forms for each reporting year, along with the status of each form.

Forms that are available for signing electronically will have a blue “View Form” link next to the form name. Click on the blue link to view the form. If the information on the form is accurate, sign the form by clicking the “Sign Form” button. After you click the button, a 32-character unique identifier is displayed on the form, which represents your electronic signature.

If you have questions regarding any of the information on the form, contact the individual who submitted it for clarification.

Investment Performance Information

Minnesota law requires the OSA to annually provide information to volunteer fire relief associations on the investment performance of the Minnesota State Board of Investment and on the voluntary Statewide Plan administered by the Public Employees Retirement Association.

Investment performance for the 2016 calendar year is provided in the 2017 Investment Performance Information document that can be found on the OSA website at: <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=pensionDocs>.

Supplemental Benefit Reimbursements

Statements of Position:

A listing of the 2017 supplemental benefit reimbursement amounts is now available on the OSA website at:

<http://www.osa.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20170324.000>.

Retention of Records

The supplemental benefit reimbursements were disbursed on or about March 15, 2017, for relief associations that submitted reimbursement application forms to the Department of Revenue (DOR) by February 15, 2017.

Records Management

If your relief association paid supplemental benefits during the preceding year but did not submit a reimbursement application form to the DOR by the February 15 deadline, your association may still be eligible to receive reimbursement in March 2018 if a reimbursement application is submitted to the DOR.

Firefighter Service Credit Determinations

The form to file for reimbursement in March 2018 will be available on the DOR website in mid-November, and will be due to the DOR by February 15, 2018.

Considerations When Making Benefit Changes

Pension Division Staff

If you have questions, please contact us:

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