

Pension Division Newsletter

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2017 Reporting-Year Forms

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) is pleased to announce that the 2017 Financial and Investment Reporting Entry (FIRE-17) Form and 2018 Schedule (SC-18) Form for volunteer fire relief associations are now available for completion. Reporting forms are accessed through the State Auditor’s Form Entry System (SAFES) at: <https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/safes/>.

Relief associations with assets and liabilities of less than \$500,000 must submit 2017 reporting forms and an agreed-upon procedures report by March 31. The Agreed-Upon Procedures Guide and a Sample Independent Accountant’s Report are available on the OSA website at:

<http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20151209.000>.

Relief associations with assets or liabilities of at least \$500,000, or that have exceeded this threshold in a prior year, must submit 2017 reporting forms and an audit report by June 30.

To submit the FIRE-17 and SC-18 forms, please upload the Excel files through SAFES. The audit report and agreed-upon procedures report should be submitted as PDF documents through SAFES.

Signatures are required on the FIRE-17 and the SC-18 forms. After the Excel forms are uploaded, PDF versions of the submitted forms are created and posted into SAFES. These PDF versions of the submitted forms contain the signature pages. The signature pages can be printed out and signed, or the forms can be signed electronically in SAFES.

To sign the form electronically, a form signer clicks on the “Sign” button in SAFES. A 32-character unique ID is then displayed on the signature line of the form, which serves as the signer’s electronic signature. Paper copies of the signature pages can be submitted to us by e-mail, fax, or mail.

An informational document is available on the Pension Forms page of the OSA website that provides detailed instructions for accessing, submitting, and electronically signing the forms. [Click here](#) to view the document.



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What's Ahead:

January 31:
Working Group Meeting
from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00
p.m. at the OSA.

February 15:
Final deadline for
submitting 2017
Supplemental Benefit
Reimbursement Forms
to the Department of
Revenue.

March 15:
Fire Equipment
Certification Form
(FA-1) is due to the
Department of Revenue

March 31:
Reporting forms for
relief associations with
assets and liabilities of
less than \$500,000 are
due to the OSA.

March 31:
Investment Business
Recipient Disclosure
Form is due to the
LCPR.

Working Group Update

The Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group met on January 17. The Working Group members and other stakeholders discussed the proposal to increase the maximum allowable lump-sum benefit level to \$15,000 per year of active service that will be before the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR) during the 2018 Legislative Session. This was not a Working Group proposal, but the Group has been asked to consider weighing in on it.

The Working Group also discussed the current statutory authority that permits relief associations, if certain conditions are met, to increase their benefit levels without municipal ratification. The Working Group will continue its discussion on these topics at its next meeting.

The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 31 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at our 525 Park Street office in Saint Paul.

Meetings are open to the public. Agendas and materials will be available on the OSA website at:

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

FYI - Fire State Aid Work Group Update

The Fire State Aid Work Group convened by the LCPR and other stakeholder groups is scheduled to hold its next meeting on Thursday, February 1, at 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) offices at 60 Empire Drive in Saint Paul.

The Work Group will continue its discussions on whether a change to current law should be sought to allow municipalities that have “combination” fire departments to retain a portion of the fire state aid to pay employer contributions to PERA on behalf of their full-time firefighters. Currently, all fire state aid received by the municipality must be transferred to the volunteer fire relief association or to the statewide volunteer retirement plan administered by PERA.

The Work Group is also considering whether a change to current law should be sought to clarify how fire state aid should be handled when there are no longer any active members in a volunteer fire relief association.

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](#)

Broker Certification Form

Volunteer fire relief associations using the services of a broker must complete a uniform Broker Certification Form that is provided by the OSA. The Broker Certification Form must be completed before a relief association may enter into a business arrangement with a broker, and must be completed annually thereafter. A copy of each completed form should be submitted to the OSA with the relief association’s annual reporting forms.

If any portion of the relief association’s assets are held by a security broker or its agent, the security broker or its agent must acknowledge in writing annually that sufficient insurance has been obtained from the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (SIPC), supplemented by additional insurance, if necessary, to cover the full amount of the relief association’s assets held by the security broker or its agent.

Note that the State Board of Investment (SBI) is not considered a broker for purposes of this reporting requirement. A relief association that invests with the SBI is therefore not required to have the SBI complete a Broker Certification Form.

The Broker Certification Form for volunteer fire relief associations is available on the Pension Forms page of the OSA website, under “Current Forms.” The Pension Forms page can be found at: <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20070105.001>.

Reminder to Submit Supplemental Benefit Reimbursement Forms

Supplemental Benefit Reimbursement (SBR) forms are due to the Minnesota Department of Revenue (DOR) by February 15, 2018, for volunteer fire relief associations seeking reimbursement of supplemental benefits paid. The DOR issues the reimbursements in March.

Relief associations must use the online SBR form that is available on the DOR website. The online form requires relief associations to provide their Minnesota ID number. If a relief association does not know its ID number, it can be obtained by calling the DOR at (651) 282-5225 during business hours.

The SBR form and instructions are available on the DOR website at: http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/local_gov/prop_tax_admin/Pages/sbr.aspx.

Statements of Position:

[Retention of Records for Relief Associations](#)

[Records Management](#)

[Interest Earnings for Deferred Members](#)

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

Fire Equipment Certification Form

The 2017 Fire Equipment Certification (FA-1) Form is due to the Minnesota Department of Revenue (DOR) by March 15. Submission of the form is required for communities to be eligible for 2018 fire state aid. Five percent of a community’s fire state aid is forfeited for each week or fraction of a week that the form is submitted past the March 15 due date.

A copy of the FA-1 Form and a list of fire departments for which the form has been received are provided on the DOR website at:

http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/local_gov/prop_tax_admin/Pages/fsa.aspx.

Investment Business Recipient Disclosure Form

Relief associations are required to annually submit by March 31 a completed Investment Business Recipient Disclosure Form to the Executive Director of the LCPR. The form requires the chief administrative officer of the relief association to list all the recipients of investment business with respect to investments made by the association.

For your convenience, a copy of the form is available on the OSA website at:

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

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