

353G.05 PLAN COVERAGE ELECTION.

Subdivision 1. **Coverage.** Any municipality or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation may elect to have its volunteer firefighters covered by the lump-sum retirement division or the monthly benefit retirement division of the retirement plan, whichever applies.

Subd. 2. **Election of coverage; lump sum.** (a) The process for electing coverage of volunteer firefighters by the lump-sum retirement division is initiated by a request to the executive director for a cost analysis of the prospective retirement coverage under the lump-sum retirement division.

(b) If the volunteer firefighters are currently covered by a lump-sum volunteer firefighter relief association or a defined contribution volunteer firefighter relief association governed by chapter 424A, the cost analysis of the prospective retirement coverage must be requested jointly by the secretary of the volunteer firefighter relief association, following approval of the request by the board of the volunteer firefighter relief association, and the chief administrative officer of the entity associated with the relief association, following approval of the request by the governing body of the entity associated with the relief association. If the relief association is associated with more than one entity, the chief administrative officer of each associated entity must execute the request. If the volunteer firefighters are not currently covered by a volunteer firefighter relief association, the cost analysis of the prospective retirement coverage must be requested by the chief administrative officer of the entity operating the fire department. The request must be made in writing and must be made on a form prescribed by the executive director.

(c) The cost analysis of the prospective retirement coverage by the lump-sum retirement division of the statewide retirement plan must be based on the service pension amount under section 353G.11 closest to the service pension amount provided by the volunteer firefighter relief association if the relief association is a lump-sum defined benefit plan, or the amount equal to 95 percent of the most current average account balance per relief association member if the relief association is a defined contribution plan, or to the lowest service pension amount under section 353G.11 if there is no volunteer firefighter relief association, rounded up, and any other service pension amount designated by the requester or requesters. The cost analysis must be prepared using a mathematical procedure certified as accurate by an approved actuary retained by the Public Employees Retirement Association.

(d) If a cost analysis is requested and a volunteer firefighters relief association exists that has filed the information required under section 424A.014 in a timely fashion, upon request by the executive director, the state auditor shall provide the most recent data available on the financial condition of the volunteer firefighter relief association, the most recent firefighter demographic data available, and a copy of the current relief association bylaws. If a cost analysis is requested, but no volunteer firefighter relief association exists, the chief administrative officer of the entity operating the fire department shall provide the demographic information on the volunteer firefighters serving as members of the fire department requested by the executive director.

Subd. 3. **Election of coverage; monthly benefit.** (a) The process for electing coverage of volunteer firefighters by the monthly retirement division is initiated by a request to the executive director for an actuarial cost analysis of the prospective retirement coverage under the monthly benefit retirement division. This request must be made by the secretary of the volunteer firefighter relief association and the chief administrative officer of the entity associated with the relief association, both of which must first obtain approval of the request from their respective municipal governing body or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation. The request must be made in writing and must be made on a form prescribed by the executive director.

(b) Coverage by the monthly benefit retirement division may only be elected if the volunteer firefighters are covered by a monthly benefit volunteer firefighter relief association governed by chapter 424A.

(c) The cost analysis under paragraph (a) must be prepared by the approved actuary retained by the Public Employees Retirement Association. The cost analysis must be based on:

(1) the service pension and other retirement benefit types and amounts in effect for the volunteer firefighter relief association as of the date of the request and any other amount or amounts designated by the requesters, as disclosed in a special actuarial valuation prepared under sections 356.215 and 356.216; and

(2) the standards for actuarial work, and the actuarial assumptions utilized in the most recent prior actuarial valuation, except that the applicable investment return actuarial assumption is six percent.

(d) The secretary of the volunteer firefighter relief association making the request must supply the demographic and financial data necessary for the cost analysis to be prepared.

Subd. 4. Invested assets review. If a cost analysis is requested under subdivision 2 or 3, the executive director of the State Board of Investment shall review the investment portfolio of the relief association, if applicable, for compliance with the applicable provisions of chapter 11A and for appropriateness for retention under the established investment objectives and investment policies of the State Board of Investment. If the prospective retirement coverage change is approved under subdivision 5, the State Board of Investment may require that the relief association liquidate any investment security or other asset which the executive director of the State Board of Investment has determined to be an ineligible or inappropriate investment for retention by the State Board of Investment. The security or asset liquidation must occur before the effective date of the transfer of retirement plan coverage. If requested to do so by the chief administrative officer of the relief association, the executive director of the State Board of Investment shall provide advice about the best means to conduct the liquidation.

Subd. 5. Finalization; coverage transfer. Upon receipt of the cost analysis requested under subdivision 2 or 3, the governing body of the municipality or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation associated with the fire department shall either approve or disapprove the retirement coverage change within 120 days. If the retirement coverage change is not acted upon within 120 days, it is deemed to be disapproved. If the retirement coverage change is approved by the applicable governing body, coverage by the voluntary statewide volunteer firefighter retirement plan is effective on the January 1 next following the approval date.

History: 2009 c 169 art 9 s 14; 2010 c 359 art 6 s 2; 2013 c 111 art 6 s 3; 2015 c 68 art 8 s 14; 1Sp2019 c 6 art 22 s 5; 1Sp2019 c 8 art 8 s 23