

## CHAPTER 424A

### VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS RETIREMENT

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#### 424A.001 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Terms defined.** Unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, as used in this chapter, the terms defined in this section have the meanings given.

Subd. 1a. **Ancillary benefit.** "Ancillary benefit" means a benefit payable from the special fund of the relief association other than a service pension that is permitted by law and that is provided for in the relief association bylaws.

Subd. 1b. **Defined benefit relief association.** "Defined benefit relief association" means a volunteer firefighters relief association that provides a lump-sum service pension, provides a monthly benefit service pension, or provides a lump-sum service pension as an alternative to the monthly benefit service pension.

Subd. 1c. **Defined contribution relief association.** "Defined contribution relief association" means a volunteer firefighters relief association that provides a service pension based solely on an individual account balance rather than a specified annual lump-sum or monthly benefit service pension amount.

Subd. 2. **Fire department.** "Fire department" includes a municipal fire department, an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, and a fire department established as or operated by a joint powers entity under section 471.59.

Subd. 2a. **Municipal.** "Municipal" means of a city or township.

Subd. 3. **Municipality.** "Municipality" means a city or township which has established a fire department with which the relief association is directly associated, a city or township which has entered into a contract with the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation of which the relief association is directly associated, or a city or township that has entered into a contract with a joint powers entity established under section 471.59 of which the relief association is directly associated.

Subd. 4. **Relief association.** (a) "Relief association" or "volunteer firefighters relief association" means a volunteer firefighters relief association or a volunteer firefighters division or account of a partially salaried and partially volunteer firefighters relief association that is:

(1) organized and incorporated as a nonprofit corporation to provide retirement benefits to volunteer firefighters under chapter 317A and any laws of the state;

(2) governed by this chapter and sections 424A.091 to 424A.095; and

(3) directly associated with:

(i) a fire department established by municipal ordinance;

(ii) an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation that is organized under the provisions of chapter 317A and that operates primarily for firefighting purposes; or

(iii) a fire department operated as or by a joint powers entity that operates primarily for firefighting purposes.

(b) "Relief association" or "volunteer firefighters relief association" does not mean:

(1) the Bloomington Fire Department Relief Association governed by Laws 2013, chapter 111, article 5, sections 31 to 42; Minnesota Statutes 2000, chapter 424; and Laws 1965, chapter 446, as amended; or

(2) the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan governed by chapter 353G.

(c) A relief association or volunteer firefighters relief association is a governmental entity that receives and manages public money to provide retirement benefits for individuals providing the governmental services of firefighting and emergency first response.

Subd. 5. **Special fund.** "Special fund" means the special fund of a volunteer firefighters relief association or the account for volunteer firefighters within the special fund of a partially salaried and partially volunteer firefighters relief association.

Subd. 6. [Repealed, 2010 c 359 art 13 s 13]

Subd. 7. [Repealed, 2009 c 169 art 10 s 58]

Subd. 8. **Firefighting service.** "Firefighting service," if the applicable municipality approves for a fire department that is a municipal department, or if the applicable contracting municipality or municipalities approve for a fire department that is an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, includes fire department service rendered by fire prevention personnel.

Subd. 9. **Separate from active service.** "Separate from active service" means that a firefighter permanently ceases to perform fire suppression duties with a particular volunteer fire department, permanently ceases to perform fire prevention duties, permanently ceases to supervise fire suppression duties, and permanently ceases to supervise fire prevention duties.

Subd. 9a. **Break in service.** "Break in service" means temporarily ceasing all of the following with a particular fire department:

(1) performing fire suppression duties;

(2) performing fire prevention duties;

- (3) supervising fire suppression duties; and
- (4) supervising fire prevention duties.

Subd. 10. **Volunteer firefighter.** "Volunteer firefighter" means a person who is a member of the applicable fire department or the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation and is eligible for membership in the applicable relief association and:

- (i) is engaged in providing emergency response services or delivering fire education or prevention services as a member of a fire department;
- (ii) is trained in or is qualified to provide fire suppression duties or to provide fire prevention duties under subdivision 8; and
- (iii) meets any other minimum firefighter and service standards established by the fire department or specified in the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the relief association.

Subd. 11. **Fiscal year.** The fiscal year for a volunteer firefighter relief association begins on January 1 of each calendar year and ends on December 31 of the same calendar year.

Subd. 12. **Membership start date.** Membership in a volunteer firefighter relief association begins upon the date of hire by a municipality, a joint powers board, or an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation with which the relief association is directly associated, unless otherwise specified in the relief association bylaws.

**History:** 1983 c 219 s 4; 1986 c 359 s 18,19; 1Sp1986 c 3 art 2 s 40; 1989 c 304 s 137; 1989 c 319 art 8 s 26; 1996 c 438 art 8 s 1,2; 2000 c 461 art 15 s 4; 2006 c 271 art 13 s 2,7; 2008 c 349 art 14 s 6,7; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 8-19; 2012 c 286 art 12 s 9; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 77,80; art 6 s 4; 2015 c 68 art 9 s 3; art 13 s 63; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 2-5; 1Sp2019 c 8 art 4 s 2; 2020 c 108 art 7 s 9

#### **424A.002 AUTHORIZATION OF NEW OR CONTINUING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** A fire department, with approval by the applicable municipality or municipalities, may establish a new volunteer firefighter relief association or may retain an existing volunteer firefighter relief association. A fire department may be associated with only one volunteer firefighter relief association at one time.

Subd. 2. **Defined benefit or defined contribution relief association.** The articles of incorporation or the bylaws of the volunteer firefighters relief association must specify that the relief association is either a defined benefit relief association subject to sections 424A.015, 424A.02, and 424A.091 to 424A.094 or is a defined contribution relief association subject to sections 424A.015 and 424A.016.

**History:** 2009 c 169 art 10 s 20; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 80; 2015 c 68 art 9 s 4; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 6

#### **424A.003 CERTIFICATION OF SERVICE CREDIT.**

(a) When a municipal fire department, a joint powers fire department, or an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation is directly associated with the volunteer firefighters relief association, the fire chief shall certify annually by March 31 the service credit for the previous calendar year of each volunteer firefighter rendering active service with the fire department.

(b) The certification shall be made to an officer of the relief association's board of trustees and to the municipal clerk or clerk-treasurer of the largest municipality in population served by the associated fire department.

(c) The fire chief shall notify each volunteer firefighter rendering active service with the fire department of the amount of service credit rendered by the firefighter for the previous calendar year. The service credit notification and a description of the process and deadlines for the firefighter to challenge the fire chief's determination of service credit must be provided to the firefighter at least 21 days prior to its certification to the relief association and municipality. If the service credit amount is challenged, the fire chief shall accept and consider any additional pertinent information and shall make a final determination of service credit.

(d) The service credit certification must be expressed as the number of completed months of the previous year during which an active volunteer firefighter rendered at least the minimum level of duties as specified and required by the fire department under the rules, regulations, and policies applicable to the fire department. No more than one year of service credit may be certified for a calendar year.

(e) If a volunteer firefighter who is a member of the relief association leaves active firefighting service to render active military service that is required to be governed by the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, as amended, the firefighter must be certified as providing service credit for the period of the military service, up to the applicable limit of the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. If the volunteer firefighter does not return from the military service in compliance with the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, the service credits applicable to that military service credit period are forfeited and canceled at the end of the calendar year in which the time limit set by federal law occurs.

**History:** 2018 c 211 art 14 s 7; 2020 c 108 art 16 s 1

#### **424A.01 MEMBERSHIP IN A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS RELIEF ASSOCIATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Minors.** No volunteer firefighters relief association associated with a municipality, a joint powers entity, or an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation may include as a relief association member a minor serving as a volunteer firefighter.

Subd. 2. **Status of substitute volunteer firefighters.** No person who is serving as a substitute volunteer firefighter may be considered to be a firefighter for purposes of chapter 69 or this chapter and no substitute volunteer firefighter is authorized to be a member of any volunteer firefighters relief association governed by chapter 69 or this chapter.

Subd. 3. **Status of nonmember volunteer firefighters.** No person who is serving as a firefighter in a fire department but who is not a member of the applicable firefighters relief association is entitled to any service pension or ancillary benefits from the relief association.

Subd. 3a. [Repealed, 1989 c 319 art 10 s 8]

Subd. 4. **Exclusion of persons constituting an unwarranted health risk.** The board of trustees of every relief association may exclude from membership in the relief association all applicants who, due to some medically determinable physical or mental impairment or condition, is determined to constitute a predictable and unwarranted risk of imposing liability for an ancillary benefit at any age earlier than the minimum age specified for receipt of a service pension. Notwithstanding any provision of section 363A.25, it is a good and valid defense to a complaint or action brought under chapter 363A that the board of trustees of the relief association made a good faith determination that the applicant suffers from an impairment or condition constituting a predictable and unwarranted risk for the relief association if the determination was

made following consideration of: (1) the person's medical history; and (2) the report of the physician completing a physical examination of the applicant undertaken at the expense of the relief association.

Subd. 4a. **Prohibition on receipt of concurrent service credit.** No firefighter may be credited with service credit in a volunteer firefighters relief association for the same hours of service for which coverage is already provided in a fund operated pursuant to chapter 353.

Subd. 5. **Fire prevention personnel.** (a) If the applicable municipality or municipalities approve, the fire department may employ or otherwise utilize the services of persons as volunteer firefighters to perform fire prevention duties and to supervise fire prevention activities.

(b) Personnel serving in fire prevention positions are eligible to be members of the applicable volunteer firefighter relief association and to qualify for service pension or other benefit coverage of the relief association on the same basis as fire department personnel who perform fire suppression duties.

(c) Personnel serving in fire prevention positions also are eligible to receive any other benefits under the applicable law or practice for services on the same basis as personnel who are employed to perform fire suppression duties.

Subd. 5a. **Volunteer emergency medical personnel.** Volunteer emergency medical personnel are eligible to be members of the applicable volunteer firefighters relief association and to qualify for service pension or other benefit coverage of the relief association on the same basis as fire department personnel who perform or supervise fire suppression or fire prevention duties if:

(1) the fire department employs or otherwise uses the services of persons solely as volunteer emergency medical personnel to perform emergency medical response duties or supervise emergency medical response activities;

(2) the bylaws of the relief association authorize the eligibility; and

(3) the eligibility is approved by:

(i) the municipality, if the fire department is a municipal department;

(ii) the joint powers board, if the fire department is a joint powers entity; or

(iii) the contracting municipality or municipalities, if the fire department is an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation.

Subd. 6. **Return to active firefighting after break in service.** (a) This subdivision governs the service pension calculation requirements of a firefighter who returns to active service after a break in service and applies to all breaks in service, except that the resumption service requirements of this subdivision do not apply to leaves of absence made available by federal statute, such as the Family Medical Leave Act, United States Code, title 29, section 2691, and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, United States Code, title 38, section 4301, and do not apply to leaves of absence made available by state statute, such as the Parental Leave Act, section 181.941; the Leave for Organ Donation Act, section 181.9456; the Leave for Civil Air Patrol Service Act, section 181.946; the Leave for Immediate Family Members of Military Personnel Injured or Killed in Active Service Act, section 181.947; or the Protection of Jurors' Employment Act, section 593.50.

(b)(1) If a firefighter who has a break in service of any duration resumes performing active firefighting with the fire department associated with the relief association, and if the bylaws of the relief association so

permit, the firefighter may again become an active member of the relief association, subject to the requirements of this paragraph and the service pension calculation requirements under this section.

(2) A firefighter who has been paid a service pension or disability benefit must wait at least 60 days following receipt of the pension or benefit before resuming active firefighting with the fire department and active membership in the relief association.

(3) A firefighter who has been granted an approved leave of absence not exceeding one year by the fire department or by the relief association is exempt from the minimum period of resumption service requirement of this section.

(4) A person who has a break in service not exceeding one year but has not been granted an approved leave of absence may be made exempt from the minimum period of resumption service requirement of this section by the relief association bylaws.

(5) If the bylaws so provide, a firefighter who returns to active relief association membership after a break in service of any duration may continue to collect a monthly service pension from the relief association, notwithstanding the requirement under section 424A.02, subdivision 1, that the firefighter has separated from active service.

(c) If a former firefighter who has been paid a service pension or disability benefit returns to active relief association membership under paragraph (b), the firefighter may qualify for the receipt of a service pension from the relief association for the resumption service period if the firefighter meets the service requirements of section 424A.016, subdivision 3, or 424A.02, subdivision 2, as applicable, or meets the resumption minimum service requirements specified in the relief association's bylaws. No firefighter may be paid a service pension more than once for the same period of service.

(d) If a former firefighter who has not been paid a service pension or disability benefit returns to active relief association membership under paragraph (b), the firefighter may qualify for the receipt of a service pension from the relief association for the original and resumption service periods if the firefighter meets the service requirements of section 424A.016, subdivision 3, or 424A.02, subdivision 2, based on the original and resumption years of service credit.

(e) A firefighter who returns to active lump-sum relief association membership under paragraph (b) and who qualifies for a service pension under paragraph (c) must have, upon a subsequent cessation of duties, any service pension for the resumption service period calculated as a separate benefit. If a lump-sum service pension had been paid to the firefighter upon the firefighter's previous cessation of duties, a second lump-sum service pension for the resumption service period must be calculated by applying the service pension amount in effect on the date of the firefighter's termination of the resumption service for all years of the resumption service.

(f) A firefighter who had not been paid a lump-sum service pension returns to active relief association membership under paragraph (b), who did not meet the minimum period of resumption service requirement specified in the relief association's bylaws, but who does meet the minimum service requirement of section 424A.02, subdivision 2, based on the firefighter's original and resumption years of active service, must have, upon a subsequent cessation of duties, a service pension for the original and resumption service periods calculated by applying the service pension amount in effect on the date of the firefighter's termination of the resumption service, or, if the bylaws so provide, based on the service pension amount in effect on the date of the firefighter's previous cessation of duties. The service pension for a firefighter who returns to active lump-sum relief association membership under this paragraph, but who had met the minimum period

of resumption service requirement specified in the relief association's bylaws, must be calculated by applying the service pension amount in effect on the date of the firefighter's termination of the resumption service.

(g) If a firefighter receiving a monthly benefit service pension returns to active monthly benefit relief association membership under paragraph (b), and if the relief association bylaws do not allow for the firefighter to continue collecting a monthly service pension, any monthly benefit service pension payable to the firefighter is suspended as of the first day of the month next following the date on which the firefighter returns to active membership. If the firefighter was receiving a monthly benefit service pension, and qualifies for a service pension under paragraph (c), the firefighter is entitled to an additional monthly benefit service pension upon a subsequent cessation of duties calculated based on the resumption service credit and the service pension accrual amount in effect on the date of the termination of the resumption service. A suspended initial service pension resumes as of the first of the month next following the termination of the resumption service. If the firefighter was not receiving a monthly benefit service pension and meets the minimum service requirement of section 424A.02, subdivision 2, a service pension must be calculated by applying the service pension amount in effect on the date of the firefighter's termination of the resumption service for all years of service credit.

(h) A firefighter who was not receiving a monthly benefit service pension returns to active relief association membership under paragraph (b), who did not meet the minimum period of resumption service requirement specified in the relief association's bylaws, but who does meet the minimum service requirement of section 424A.02, subdivision 2, based on the firefighter's original and resumption years of active service, must have, upon a subsequent cessation of duties, a service pension for the original and resumption service periods calculated by applying the service pension amount in effect on the date of the firefighter's termination of the resumption service, or, if the bylaws so provide, based on the service pension amount in effect on the date of the firefighter's previous cessation of duties. The service pension for a firefighter who returns to active relief association membership under this paragraph, but who had met the minimum period of resumption service requirement specified in the relief association's bylaws, must be calculated by applying the service pension amount in effect on the date of the firefighter's termination of the resumption service.

(i) For defined contribution plans, a firefighter who returns to active relief association membership under paragraph (b) and who qualifies for a service pension under paragraph (c) or (d) must have, upon a subsequent cessation of duties, any service pension for the resumption service period calculated as a separate benefit. If a service pension had been paid to the firefighter upon the firefighter's previous cessation of duties, and if the firefighter meets the minimum service requirement of section 424A.016, subdivision 3, or meets the resumption minimum service requirements specified in the relief association's bylaws, as applicable, based on the resumption years of service, a second service pension for the resumption service period must be calculated to include allocations credited to the firefighter's individual account during the resumption period of service and deductions for administrative expenses, if applicable.

(j) For defined contribution plans, if a firefighter who had not been paid a service pension returns to active relief association membership under paragraph (b), and who meets the minimum service requirement of section 424A.016, subdivision 3, based on the firefighter's original and resumption years of service, must have, upon a subsequent cessation of duties, a service pension for the original and resumption service periods calculated to include allocations credited to the firefighter's individual account during the original and resumption periods of service and deductions for administrative expenses, if applicable, less any amounts previously forfeited under section 424A.016, subdivision 4.

**History:** 1979 c 201 s 11; 1981 c 224 s 274; 1982 c 460 s 7; 1983 c 219 s 5; 1989 c 319 art 10 s 2; 1996 c 438 art 8 s 3; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 21; 2010 c 359 art 13 s 4,5; 2012 c 286 art 12 s 10; 2013 c 111 art 6 s 5; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 8-12; 1Sp2019 c 8 art 4 s 3

**424A.014 FINANCIAL REPORT; BOND; EXAMINATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Financial report and audit.** (a) The board of the Bloomington Fire Department Relief Association and each volunteer firefighters relief association with assets of at least \$500,000 or liabilities of at least \$500,000 in the prior year or in any previous year, according to the applicable actuarial valuation or according to the financial report if no valuation is required, must prepare a financial report covering the special and general funds of the relief association for the preceding fiscal year, file the financial report, and submit financial statements.

(b) The financial report must contain financial statements and disclosures that present the true financial condition of the relief association and the results of relief association operations in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles and in compliance with the regulatory, financing, and funding provisions of this chapter and any other applicable laws. The financial report must be countersigned by:

(1) the municipal clerk or clerk-treasurer of the municipality in which the relief association is located if the relief association is a firefighters' relief association that is directly associated with a municipal fire department;

(2) the municipal clerk or clerk-treasurer of the largest municipality in population that contracts with the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation if the volunteer firefighter relief association is a subsidiary of an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, and by the secretary of the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation; or

(3) the chief financial official of the county in which the volunteer firefighter relief association is located or primarily located if the relief association is associated with a fire department that is not located in or associated with an organized municipality.

(c) The financial report must be retained in the office of the Bloomington Fire Department Relief Association or the volunteer firefighter relief association for public inspection and must be filed with the governing body of the government subdivision in which the associated fire department is located after the close of the fiscal year. One copy of the financial report must be furnished to the state auditor after the close of the fiscal year.

(d) Audited financial statements must be attested to by a certified public accountant or by the state auditor and must be filed with the state auditor on or before June 30 after the close of the fiscal year. Audits must be conducted in compliance with generally accepted auditing standards and section 6.65 governing audit procedures. The state auditor may accept this report in lieu of the report required in paragraph (c).

Subd. 2. **Financial statement.** (a) The board of each volunteer firefighter relief association that is not required to file a financial report and audit under subdivision 1 must prepare a detailed statement of the financial affairs for the preceding fiscal year of the relief association's special and general funds in the style and form prescribed by the state auditor. The detailed statement must show:

- (1) the sources and amounts of all money received;
- (2) all disbursements, accounts payable, and accounts receivable;
- (3) the amount of money remaining in the treasury;
- (4) total assets, including a listing of all investments;
- (5) the accrued liabilities; and



(6) all other items necessary to show accurately the revenues and expenditures and financial position of the relief association.

(b) The detailed financial statement of the special and general funds required under paragraph (a) must be certified by a certified public accountant or by the state auditor in accordance with agreed-upon procedures and forms prescribed by the state auditor. The accountant must have at least five years of public accounting, auditing, or similar experience and must not be an active, inactive, or retired member of the relief association or the fire department.

(c) The detailed financial statement required under paragraph (a) must be countersigned by:

(1) the municipal clerk or clerk-treasurer of the municipality;

(2) where applicable, the municipal clerk or clerk-treasurer of the largest municipality in population that contracts with the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation if the relief association is a subsidiary of an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, and by the secretary of the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation; or

(3) the chief financial official of the county in which the volunteer firefighter relief association is located or primarily located if the relief association is associated with a fire department that is not located in or associated with an organized municipality.

(d) The volunteer firefighters relief association board must submit a copy of the detailed financial statement required under paragraph (a) that has been certified by the governing body of the municipality to the state auditor on or before March 31 after the close of the fiscal year.

(e) A certified public accountant or auditor who performs the agreed-upon procedures under paragraph (b) is subject to the reporting requirement of section 6.67.

**Subd. 3. Qualification.** The state auditor may, upon a demonstration by a relief association of hardship or an inability to conform, extend the deadline for reports under subdivision 1 or 2, but not beyond November 30 following the due date. If the reports are not received by November 30, the municipality or relief association forfeits its current year state aid, and, until the state auditor receives the required information, the relief association or municipality is ineligible to receive any future state aid. A municipality or relief association does not qualify initially to receive, or be entitled subsequently to retain, fire state aid and police and firefighter retirement supplemental state aid payable under chapter 477B and section 423A.022 if the financial reporting requirement or the applicable requirements of this chapter or any other statute or special law have not been complied with or are not fulfilled.

**Subd. 4. Treasurer bond.** (a) The treasurer of the Bloomington Fire Department Relief Association may not enter upon duties without having given the association a bond in a reasonable amount acceptable to the municipality for the faithful discharge of duties according to law.

(b) No treasurer of a relief association governed by sections 424A.091 to 424A.096 may enter upon the duties of the office until the treasurer has given the association a good and sufficient bond in an amount equal to at least ten percent of the assets of the relief association; however, the amount of the bond need not exceed \$500,000.

**Subd. 5. Report by certain municipalities; exceptions.** (a) The chief administrative officer of each municipality that has a fire department but does not have a relief association governed by sections 424A.091 to 424A.095 or Laws 2014, chapter 275, article 2, section 23, and that is not exempted under paragraph (b) or (c) must annually prepare a detailed financial report of the receipts and disbursements by the municipality

for fire protection service during the preceding calendar year on a form prescribed by the state auditor. The financial report must contain any information that the state auditor deems necessary to disclose the sources of receipts and the purpose of disbursements for fire protection service. The financial report must be signed by the municipal clerk or clerk-treasurer with the state auditor on or before July 1 annually. The municipality does not qualify initially to receive, and is not entitled subsequently to retain, any fire state aid and police and firefighter retirement supplemental state aid payable under chapter 477B and section 423A.022 if the financial reporting requirement or the applicable requirements of any other statute or special law have not been complied with or are not fulfilled.

(b) Each municipality that has a fire department and provides retirement coverage to its firefighters through the statewide volunteer firefighter plan under chapter 353G qualifies to have fire state aid transmitted to and retained in the statewide volunteer firefighter retirement fund without filing a detailed financial report if the executive director of the Public Employees Retirement Association certifies compliance by the municipality with the requirements of sections 353G.04 and 353G.08, subdivision 1, paragraph (e), and certifies compliance by the applicable fire chief with the requirements of section 353G.07.

(c) Each municipality qualifies to receive fire state aid under chapter 477B without filing a financial report under paragraph (a) if the municipality:

(1) has a fire department;

(2) does not have a volunteer firefighters relief association directly associated with its fire department;

(3) does not participate in the statewide volunteer firefighter retirement plan under chapter 353G;

(4) provides retirement coverage to its firefighters through the public employees police and fire retirement plan under sections 353.63 to 353.68; and

(5) is certified by the executive director of the Public Employees Retirement Association to the state auditor to have had an employer contribution under section 353.65, subdivision 3, for its firefighters for the immediately prior calendar year equal to or greater than its fire state aid for the immediately prior calendar year.

**Subd. 6. Notification by commissioner of revenue and state auditor.** (a) The state auditor, in performing an audit or examination, must notify the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement if the audit or examination reveals malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office by relief association officials or municipal officials.

(b) The commissioner of revenue must notify the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement if the state auditor has not filed the required financial compliance reports by July 1.

**History:** *1Sp2019 c 6 art 21 s 2; 1Sp2019 c 8 art 4 s 1; art 8 s 3; 2020 c 108 art 7 s 9; art 16 s 2*

#### **424A.015 GENERALLY APPLICABLE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS RELIEF ASSOCIATION PENSION PLAN REGULATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Separation from active service; exception.** (a) No service pension is payable to a person while the person remains an active member of the respective fire department, and a person who is receiving a service pension is not entitled to receive any other benefits from the special fund of the relief association.

(b) No relief association as defined in section 424A.001, subdivision 4, may pay a service pension or disability benefit to a former member of the relief association if that person has not separated from active service with the fire department to which the relief association is directly associated, unless:

(1) the person discontinues volunteer firefighter duties with the fire department and performs duties within the fire department on a full-time basis;

(2) the governing body of the municipality, of the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, or of the joint powers entity has filed its determination with the board of trustees of the relief association that the person's experience with and service to the fire department in that person's full-time capacity would be difficult to replace; and

(3) the bylaws of the relief association were amended to provide for the payment of a service pension or disability benefit for such full-time employees.

**Subd. 2. No assignment or garnishment.** A service pension or ancillary benefits paid or payable from the special fund of a relief association to any person receiving or entitled to receive a service pension or ancillary benefits is not subject to garnishment, judgment, execution, or other legal process, except as provided in section 518.58, 518.581, or 518A.53. No person entitled to a service pension or ancillary benefits from the special fund of a relief association may assign any service pension or ancillary benefit payments, and the association does not have the authority to recognize any assignment or pay over any sum which has been assigned.

**Subd. 3. Purchase of annuity contract.** A relief association that provides a service pension in a single payment, if the governing articles of incorporation or bylaws so provide, may purchase an annuity contract on behalf of a retiring member in an amount equal to the service pension otherwise payable at the request of the person and in place of a direct payment to the person. The annuity contract must be purchased from an insurance carrier licensed to do business in this state.

**Subd. 4. Transfer to individual retirement account.** A relief association that is a qualified pension plan under section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, and that provides a single payment service pension, at the written request of the applicable retiring member or, following the death of the active member, at the written request of the deceased member's surviving spouse, may directly transfer on an institution-to-institution basis the eligible member's lump-sum pension or the survivor benefit attributable to the member, whichever applies, to the requesting person's individual retirement account under section 408(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

**Subd. 5. Minnesota deferred compensation plan transfers.** A relief association may directly transfer on an institution-to-institution basis the eligible member's lump-sum pension amount to the requesting member's account in the Minnesota deferred compensation plan, if:

(1) the governing articles of incorporation or bylaws so provide;

(2) the volunteer firefighter participates in the Minnesota deferred compensation plan at the time of retirement; and

(3) the applicable retiring firefighter requests in writing that the relief association do so.

**Subd. 6. Governing benefit plan provisions.** A service pension or ancillary benefit payable under this chapter is governed by and must be calculated under the general statute, special law, relief association articles of incorporation, or relief association bylaw provisions applicable on the earlier of the following dates:

(1) the date on which the member separates from active service with the fire department and active membership in the relief association; or

(2) the date on which the member begins a break in service with the fire department that continues until the member separates from active service with the fire department and active membership in the relief association.

Subd. 7. **Combined service pensions.** (a) A volunteer firefighter with credit for service as an active firefighter in more than one volunteer firefighters relief association is entitled to a prorated service pension from each relief association if:

- (1) the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the relief associations provide;
- (2) the applicable requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c) are met; and
- (3) the volunteer firefighter otherwise qualifies.

(b) A volunteer firefighter receiving a prorated service pension under this subdivision must have a total combined amount of service credit from the two or more relief associations of ten years or more, unless the bylaws of every affected relief association specify less than a ten-year service vesting requirement, in which case, the total amount of required service credit is the longest service vesting requirement of the relief associations. The member must have one year or more of service credit in each relief association. The prorated service pension must be based on:

(1) for defined benefit relief associations, the service pension amount in effect for the relief association on the date on which active volunteer firefighting services covered by that relief association terminate; and

(2) for defined contribution relief associations, the member's individual account balance on the date on which active volunteer firefighting services covered by that relief association terminate.

(c) To receive a prorated service pension under this subdivision, the firefighter must become a member of the second or succeeding association and must give notice of membership to the prior association within two years of the date of termination of active service with the prior association. The second or subsequent relief association secretary must certify the notice.

**History:** 2009 c 169 art 10 s 22; 2010 c 359 art 13 s 6; 2013 c 111 art 6 s 6,7; 2014 c 296 art 12 s 5; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 13,14; 1Sp2019 c 8 art 4 s 4

#### **424A.016 DEFINED CONTRIBUTION VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS RELIEF ASSOCIATION SPECIFIC REGULATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Defined contribution relief association authorization.** If the articles of incorporation or the bylaws governing the volunteer firefighters relief association so provide exclusively, the relief association may pay a defined contribution lump-sum service pension instead of a defined benefit service pension governed by section 424A.02.

Subd. 2. **Defined contribution service pension eligibility.** (a) A relief association, when its articles of incorporation or bylaws so provide, may pay out of the assets of its special fund a defined contribution service pension to each of its members who:

- (1) separates from active service with the fire department;
- (2) reaches age 50;
- (3) completes at least five years of active service as an active member of the fire department to which the relief association is associated;

(4) completes at least five years of active membership with the relief association before separation from active service; and

(5) complies with any additional conditions as to age, service, and membership that are prescribed by the bylaws of the relief association.

(b) In the case of a member who has completed at least five years of active service as an active member of the fire department to which the relief association is associated on the date that the relief association is established and incorporated, the requirement that the member complete at least five years of active membership with the relief association before separation from active service may be waived by the board of trustees of the relief association if the member completes at least five years of inactive membership with the relief association before the date of the payment of the service pension. During the period of inactive membership, the member is not entitled to receive any disability benefit coverage, is not entitled to receive additional individual account allocation of fire state aid or municipal contribution towards a service pension, and is considered to have the status of a person entitled to a deferred service pension.

(c) The service pension earned by a volunteer under this chapter and the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the relief association may be paid whether or not the municipality or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation to which the relief association is associated qualifies for the receipt of fire state aid under chapter 477B.

Subd. 3. **Vesting schedule.** If the articles of incorporation or bylaws of a defined contribution relief association provide a vesting schedule that satisfies the requirements of this subdivision, the relief association may pay a reduced service pension to a retiring member. For purposes of this section, "vests," "vesting," or "vested" means a nonforfeitable, unconditional, or legally enforceable right. A member vests in the member's account in accordance with the vesting schedule set forth in the relief association's articles of incorporation or bylaws. Provided a member meets the minimum age and service requirements of subdivision 2, the member is entitled to a service pension equal to the member's account, but only to the extent vested as provided in the vesting schedule set forth in the articles of incorporation or bylaws. In no event may the articles of incorporation or bylaws:

(1) require that a member have more than 20 years of active service to become 100 percent vested in the member's account; or

(2) provide for a larger vesting percentage than is provided in the following schedule with respect to the completed number of years of active service indicated in the schedule:

Completed Years of Active Service	Vested Percentage of Pension Amount
5	40 percent
6	52 percent
7	64 percent
8	76 percent
9	88 percent
10 or more	100 percent

Subd. 4. **Individual accounts.** (a) An individual account must be established for each firefighter who is a member of the relief association.

(b) To each individual active member account must be credited an equal share of:

(1) any amounts of fire state aid and police and firefighter retirement supplemental state aid received by the relief association;

(2) any amounts of municipal contributions to the relief association raised from levies on real estate or from other available municipal revenue sources exclusive of fire state aid; and

(3) any amounts equal to the share of the assets of the special fund to the credit of:

(i) any former member who terminated active service with the fire department to which the relief association is associated before meeting the minimum service requirement provided for in subdivision 2, paragraph (b), and has not returned to active service with the fire department for a period no shorter than five years; or

(ii) any retired member who retired before obtaining a full nonforfeitable interest in the amounts credited to the individual member account under subdivision 2, paragraph (b), and any applicable provision of the bylaws of the relief association.

(c) In addition, any investment return on the assets of the special fund must be credited in proportion to the share of the assets of the special fund to the credit of each individual active member account and inactive member account, unless the inactive member is a deferred member as defined in subdivision 6.

(d) Administrative expenses of the relief association payable from the special fund may be deducted from individual accounts in a manner specified in the bylaws of the relief association.

(e) Amounts to be credited to individual accounts must be allocated uniformly for all years of active service and allocations must be made for all years of service, except for caps on service credit if so provided in the bylaws of the relief association. Amounts forfeited under paragraph (b), clause (3), before a resumption of active service and membership under section 424A.01, subdivision 6, remain forfeited and may not be reinstated upon the resumption of active service and membership. The allocation method may utilize monthly proration for fractional years of service, as the bylaws or articles of incorporation of the relief association so provide. The bylaws or articles of incorporation may define a "month," but the definition must require a calendar month to have at least 16 days of active service. If the bylaws or articles of incorporation do not define a "month," a "month" is a completed calendar month of active service measured from the member's date of entry to the same date in the subsequent month.

(f) At the time of retirement under subdivision 2 and any applicable provision of the bylaws of the relief association, a retiring member is entitled to that portion of the assets of the special fund to the credit of the member in the individual member account which is nonforfeitable under subdivision 3 and any applicable provision of the bylaws of the relief association based on the number of years of service to the credit of the retiring member.

(g) Annually, the secretary of the relief association shall certify the individual account allocations to the state auditor at the same time that the annual financial statement or financial report and audit of the relief association, whichever applies, is due under section 424A.014.

**Subd. 5. Service pension installment payments.** (a) A defined contribution relief association, if the governing bylaws so provide, may pay, at the option of the intended recipient and in lieu of a single payment of a service pension or a survivor benefit, the service pension or survivor benefit in installments.

(b) The election of installment payments is irrevocable and must be made by the intended recipient in writing and filed with the secretary of the relief association no later than 30 days before the commencement of payment of the service pension or survivor benefit.

(c) The amount of the installment payments must be the fractional portion of the remaining account balance equal to one divided by the number of remaining annual installment payments.

**Subd. 6. Deferred service pensions.** (a) A "deferred member" means a member of a relief association who has separated from active service and membership and has completed the minimum service and membership requirements in subdivision 2. The requirement that a member separate from active service and membership is waived for persons who have discontinued their volunteer firefighter duties and who are employed on a full-time basis under section 424A.015, subdivision 1.

(b) A deferred member is entitled to receive a deferred service pension when the member reaches at least age 50, or at least the minimum age specified in the bylaws governing the relief association if that age is greater than age 50, and makes a valid written application.

(c) A defined contribution relief association must credit interest or additional investment performance on the deferred lump-sum service pension during the period of deferral for all deferred members on or after January 1, 2021. Interest must be credited using one of the following methods, as provided for in the bylaws:

(1) at the investment performance rate actually earned on that portion of the assets if the deferred benefit amount is invested by the relief association in a separate account established and maintained by the relief association;

(2) at the investment performance rate actually earned on that portion of the assets if the deferred benefit amount is invested in a separate investment vehicle held by the relief association; or

(3) at the investment return on the assets of the special fund of the defined contribution volunteer firefighters relief association in proportion to the share of the assets of the special fund to the credit of each individual deferred member account through the accounting date on which the investment return is recognized by and credited to the special fund.

(d) Unless the bylaws of a relief association that has elected to pay interest or additional investment performance on deferred lump-sum service pensions under paragraph (c) specifies a different interest or additional investment performance method, including the interest or additional investment performance period starting date and ending date, the interest or additional investment performance on a deferred service pension is creditable as follows:

(1) for a relief association that has elected to credit interest or additional investment performance under paragraph (c), clause (1) or (3), beginning on the date that the member separates from active service and membership and ending on the accounting date immediately before the deferred member commences receipt of the deferred service pension; or

(2) for a relief association that has elected to credit interest or additional investment performance under paragraph (c), clause (2), beginning on the date that the member separates from active service and membership and ending on the date that the separate investment vehicle is valued immediately before the date on which the deferred member commences receipt of the deferred service pension.

(e) If the bylaws do not define a method for crediting interest or additional investment performance, the interest or additional investment performance must be credited using the method defined in paragraph (c), clause (3).

(f) Until December 31, 2020, a defined contribution relief association is permitted, if its governing bylaws so provide, to credit interest or additional investment performance on the deferred lump-sum service pension during the period of deferral using the method set forth in the bylaws applicable on the date on which each deferred member separated from active service.

**Subd. 7. Limitation on ancillary benefits.** (a) A defined contribution relief association may only pay an ancillary benefit which would constitute an authorized disbursement as specified in section 424A.05. The ancillary benefit for active members must equal the vested and nonvested amount of the individual account of the member.

(b) For deferred members, the ancillary benefit must equal the vested amount of the individual account of the member. For the recipient of installment payments of a service pension, the ancillary benefit must equal the remaining balance in the individual account of the recipient.

(c) If the bylaws permit and as defined by the bylaws, the relief association may pay an ancillary benefit to, or on behalf of, a member who is not active or deferred.

(d)(1) If a survivor or death benefit is payable under the articles of incorporation or bylaws, the benefit must be paid:

(i) as a survivor benefit to the surviving spouse of the deceased firefighter;

(ii) as a survivor benefit to the surviving children of the deceased firefighter if no surviving spouse;

(iii) as a survivor benefit to a designated beneficiary of the deceased firefighter if no surviving spouse or surviving children; or

(iv) as a death benefit to the estate of the deceased active or deferred firefighter if no surviving spouse, no surviving children, and no beneficiary designated.

(2) If there are no surviving children, the surviving spouse may waive, in writing, wholly or partially, the spouse's entitlement to a survivor benefit.

(e) For purposes of this section, for a defined contribution volunteer fire relief association, a trust created under chapter 501C may be a designated beneficiary. If a trust payable to the surviving children organized under chapter 501C has been established as authorized by this section and there is no surviving spouse, the survivor benefit may be paid to the trust, notwithstanding the requirements of this section.

**Subd. 8. Filing of bylaw amendments.** Each relief association to which this section applies must file a revised copy of its governing bylaws with the state auditor upon the adoption of any amendment to its governing bylaws by the relief association. Failure of the relief association to file a copy of the bylaws or any bylaw amendments with the state auditor disqualifies the municipality from the distribution of any future fire state aid until this filing requirement has been completed.

**History:** 2009 c 169 art 10 s 23; 2010 c 359 art 13 s 7,8; 2012 c 286 art 12 s 11,12; 2013 c 111 art 6 s 8; 2014 c 296 art 12 s 6-8; 2015 c 5 art 16 s 1; 2015 c 68 art 9 s 5; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 15; 1Sp2019 c 6 art 22 s 15,16; 1Sp2019 c 8 art 4 s 5,6; 2020 c 108 art 16 s 3,4



**424A.02 DEFINED BENEFIT RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS; SERVICE PENSIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** (a) A defined benefit relief association, when its articles of incorporation or bylaws so provide, may pay out of the assets of its special fund a defined benefit service pension to each of its members who: (1) separates from active service with the fire department; (2) reaches age 50; (3) completes at least five years of active service as an active member of the fire department to which the relief association is associated; (4) completes at least five years of active membership with the relief association before separation from active service; and (5) complies with any additional conditions as to age, service, and membership that are prescribed by the bylaws of the relief association. A service pension computed under this section may be prorated monthly for fractional years of service as the bylaws or articles of incorporation of the relief association so provide. The bylaws or articles of incorporation may define a "month," but the definition must require a calendar month to have at least 16 days of active service. If the bylaws or articles of incorporation do not define a "month," a "month" is a completed calendar month of active service measured from the member's date of entry to the same date in the subsequent month. The service pension earned by a volunteer firefighter under this chapter and the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the volunteer firefighters relief association may be paid whether or not the municipality or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation to which the relief association is associated qualifies for the receipt of fire state aid under chapter 477B.

(b) In the case of a member who has completed at least five years of active service as an active member of the fire department to which the relief association is associated on the date that the relief association is established and incorporated, the requirement that the member complete at least five years of active membership with the relief association before separation from active service may be waived by the board of trustees of the relief association if the member completes at least five years of inactive membership with the relief association before the date of the payment of the service pension. During the period of inactive membership, the member is not entitled to receive disability benefit coverage, is not entitled to receive additional service credit towards computation of a service pension, and is considered to have the status of a person entitled to a deferred service pension under subdivision 7.

(c) No municipality, independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, or joint powers entity may delegate the power to take final action in setting a service pension or ancillary benefit amount or level to the board of trustees of the relief association or to approve in advance a service pension or ancillary benefit amount or level equal to the maximum amount or level that this chapter would allow rather than a specific dollar amount or level.

Subd. 2. **Vesting schedule.** If the articles of incorporation or bylaws of a defined benefit relief association provide a vesting schedule that satisfies the requirements of this subdivision, the relief association may pay a reduced service pension to a retiring member. For purposes of this section, "vests," "vesting," or "vested" means a nonforfeitable, unconditional, or legally enforceable right. A member vests in the member's accrued service pension in accordance with the vesting schedule set forth in the relief association's articles of incorporation or bylaws. Provided a member meets the minimum age and service requirements of subdivision 1, the member is entitled to the member's accrued service pension, but only to the extent vested as provided in the vesting schedule set forth in the articles of incorporation or bylaws. In no event may the articles of incorporation or bylaws:

(1) require that a member have more than 20 years of active service to become 100 percent vested in the member's accrued service pension; or

(2) provide for a larger vesting percentage than is provided in the following schedule with respect to the completed number of years of active service indicated in the schedule:

Completed Years of Active Service	Vested Percentage of Pension Amount
5	40 percent
6	52 percent
7	64 percent
8	76 percent
9	88 percent
10 or more	100 percent

Subd. 3. **Flexible service pension maximums.** (a) Annually on or before August 1 as part of the certification of the financial requirements and minimum municipal obligation determined under section 424A.092, subdivision 4, or 424A.093, subdivision 5, as applicable, the secretary or some other official of the relief association designated in the bylaws of each defined benefit relief association shall calculate and certify to the governing body of the applicable municipality the average amount of available financing per active covered firefighter for the most recent three-year period. The amount of available financing includes any amounts of fire state aid and police and firefighter retirement supplemental state aid received or receivable by the relief association, any amounts of municipal contributions to the relief association raised from levies on real estate or from other available revenue sources exclusive of fire state aid, and one-tenth of the amount of assets in excess of the accrued liabilities of the relief association calculated under section 424A.092, subdivision 2; 424A.093, subdivisions 2 and 4; or 424A.094, subdivision 2, if any.

(b) The maximum service pension which the defined benefit relief association has authority to provide for in its bylaws for payment to a member retiring after the calculation date when the minimum age and service requirements specified in subdivision 1 are met must be determined using the table in paragraph (c) or (d), whichever applies.

(c) For a defined benefit relief association where the governing bylaws provide for a monthly service pension to a retiring member, the maximum monthly service pension amount per month for each year of service credited that may be provided for in the bylaws is the greater of the service pension amount provided for in the bylaws on the date of the calculation of the average amount of the available financing per active covered firefighter or the maximum service pension figure corresponding to the average amount of available financing per active covered firefighter:

Minimum Average Amount of Available Financing per Firefighter	Maximum Service Pension Amount Payable per Month for Each Year of Service
\$ ...	\$ .25
41	.50
81	1.00
122	1.50
162	2.00
203	2.50

243	3.00
284	3.50
324	4.00
365	4.50
405	5.00
486	6.00
567	7.00
648	8.00
729	9.00
810	10.00
891	11.00
972	12.00
1053	13.00
1134	14.00
1215	15.00
1296	16.00
1377	17.00
1458	18.00
1539	19.00
1620	20.00
1701	21.00
1782	22.00
1823	22.50
1863	23.00
1944	24.00
2025	25.00
2106	26.00
2187	27.00
2268	28.00

2349	29.00
2430	30.00
2511	31.00
2592	32.00
2673	33.00
2754	34.00
2834	35.00
2916	36.00
2997	37.00
3078	38.00
3159	39.00
3240	40.00
3321	41.00
3402	42.00
3483	43.00
3564	44.00
3645	45.00
3726	46.00
3807	47.00
3888	48.00
3969	49.00
4050	50.00
4131	51.00
4212	52.00
4293	53.00
4374	54.00
4455	55.00
4536	56.00
4617	57.00

4698	58.00
4779	59.00
4860	60.00
4941	61.00
5022	62.00
5103	63.00
5184	64.00
5265	65.00
5346	66.00
5427	67.00
5508	68.00
5589	69.00
5670	70.00
5751	71.00
5832	72.00
5913	73.00
5994	74.00
6075	75.00
6156	76.00
6237	77.00
6318	78.00
6399	79.00
6480	80.00
6561	81.00
6642	82.00
6723	83.00
6804	84.00
6885	85.00
6966	86.00

7047	87.00
7128	88.00
7209	89.00
7290	90.00
7371	91.00
7452	92.00
7533	93.00
7614	94.00
7695	95.00
7776	96.00
7857	97.00
7938	98.00
8019	99.00
8100	100.00
any amount in excess of	
8100	100.00

(d) For a defined benefit relief association in which the governing bylaws provide for a lump-sum service pension to a retiring member, the maximum lump-sum service pension amount for each year of service credited that may be provided for in the bylaws is the greater of the service pension amount provided for in the bylaws on the date of the calculation of the average amount of the available financing per active covered firefighter or the maximum service pension figure corresponding to the average amount of available financing per active covered firefighter for the applicable specified period:

Minimum Average Amount of Available Financing per Firefighter	Maximum Lump-Sum Service Pension Amount Payable for Each Year of Service
\$ ...	\$ 10
11	20
16	30
23	40
27	50
32	60
43	80

54	100
65	120
77	140
86	160
97	180
108	200
131	240
151	280
173	320
194	360
216	400
239	440
259	480
281	520
302	560
324	600
347	640
367	680
389	720
410	760
432	800
486	900
540	1000
594	1100
648	1200
702	1300
756	1400
810	1500
864	1600

918	1700
972	1800
1026	1900
1080	2000
1134	2100
1188	2200
1242	2300
1296	2400
1350	2500
1404	2600
1458	2700
1512	2800
1566	2900
1620	3000
1672	3100
1726	3200
1753	3250
1780	3300
1820	3375
1834	3400
1888	3500
1942	3600
1996	3700
2023	3750
2050	3800
2104	3900
2158	4000
2212	4100
2265	4200



2319	4300
2373	4400
2427	4500
2481	4600
2535	4700
2589	4800
2643	4900
2697	5000
2751	5100
2805	5200
2859	5300
2913	5400
2967	5500
3021	5600
3075	5700
3129	5800
3183	5900
3237	6000
3291	6100
3345	6200
3399	6300
3453	6400
3507	6500
3561	6600
3615	6700
3669	6800
3723	6900
3777	7000
3831	7100

3885	7200
3939	7300
3993	7400
4047	7500
4101	7600
4155	7700
4209	7800
4263	7900
4317	8000
4371	8100
4425	8200
4479	8300
4533	8400
4587	8500
4641	8600
4695	8700
4749	8800
4803	8900
4857	9000
4911	9100
4965	9200
5019	9300
5073	9400
5127	9500
5181	9600
5235	9700
5289	9800
5343	9900
5397	10,000

5451	10,100
5505	10,200
5559	10,300
5613	10,400
5667	10,500
5721	10,600
5775	10,700
5829	10,800
5883	10,900
5937	11,000
5991	11,100
6045	11,200
6099	11,300
6153	11,400
6207	11,500
6261	11,600
6315	11,700
6369	11,800
6423	11,900
6477	12,000
6531	12,100
6585	12,200
6639	12,300
6693	12,400
6747	12,500
6801	12,600
6855	12,700
6909	12,800
6963	12,900

7017	13,000
7071	13,100
7125	13,200
7179	13,300
7233	13,400
7287	13,500
7341	13,600
7395	13,700
7449	13,800
7503	13,900
7557	14,000
7611	14,100
7665	14,200
7719	14,300
7773	14,400
7827	14,500
7881	14,600
7935	14,700
7989	14,800
8043	14,900
8097	15,000
any amount in excess of	
8097	15,000

(e) For a defined benefit relief association in which the governing bylaws provide for a monthly benefit service pension as an alternative form of service pension payment to a lump-sum service pension, the maximum service pension amount for each pension payment type must be determined using the applicable table contained in this subdivision.

(f) If a defined benefit relief association establishes a service pension in compliance with the applicable maximum contained in paragraph (c) or (d) and the minimum average amount of available financing per active covered firefighter is subsequently reduced because of a reduction in fire state aid or because of an increase in the number of active firefighters, the relief association may continue to provide the prior service pension amount specified in its bylaws, but may not increase the service pension amount until the minimum

average amount of available financing per firefighter under the table in paragraph (c) or (d), whichever applies, permits.

(g) No defined benefit relief association is authorized to provide a service pension in an amount greater than the largest applicable flexible service pension maximum amount even if the amount of available financing per firefighter is greater than the financing amount associated with the largest applicable flexible service pension maximum.

(h) The method of calculating service pensions must be applied uniformly for all years of active service. Credit must be given for all years of active service except for caps on service credit if so provided in the bylaws of the relief association.

**Subd. 3a. Penalty for paying pension greater than applicable maximum.** (a) If a defined benefit relief association pays a service pension greater than the maximum service pension associated with the applicable average amount of available financing per active covered firefighter under the table in subdivision 3, paragraph (c) or (d), whichever applies, the maximum service pension under subdivision 3, paragraph (f), or the applicable maximum service pension amount specified in subdivision 3, paragraph (g), whichever is less, the state auditor shall:

(1) disqualify the municipality or the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation associated with the relief association from receiving fire state aid by making the appropriate notification to the municipality and the commissioner of revenue, with the disqualification applicable for the next apportionment and payment of fire state aid; and

(2) order the treasurer of the applicable relief association to recover the amount of the overpaid service pension or pensions from any retired firefighter who received an overpayment.

(b) Fire state aid amounts from disqualified municipalities for the period of disqualifications under paragraph (a), clause (1), must be credited to the amount of fire insurance premium tax proceeds available for the next subsequent fire state aid apportionment.

(c) The amount of any overpaid service pension recovered under paragraph (a), clause (2), must be credited to the amount of fire insurance premium tax proceeds available for the next subsequent fire state aid apportionment.

(d) The determination of the state auditor that a relief association has paid a service pension greater than the applicable maximum must be made on the basis of the information filed by the relief association and the municipality with the state auditor under this chapter and any other relevant information that comes to the attention of the state auditor. The determination of the state auditor is final. An aggrieved municipality, relief association, or person may appeal the determination under section 480A.06.

(e) The state auditor may certify, upon learning that a relief association overpaid a service pension based on an error in the maximum service pension calculation, the municipality or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation associated with the relief association for fire state aid if (1) there is evidence that the error occurred in good faith, and (2) the relief association has initiated recovery of any overpayment amount. Notwithstanding paragraph (c), all overpayments recovered under this paragraph must be credited to the relief association's special fund.

Subd. 4. [Repealed, 2009 c 169 art 10 s 58]

Subd. 5. [Repealed, 1999 c 222 art 11 s 1]

Subd. 6. [Repealed, 2009 c 169 art 10 s 58]

Subd. 7. **Deferred service pensions.** (a) A member of a defined benefit relief association is entitled to a deferred service pension if the member separates from active service and membership and has completed the minimum service and membership requirements in subdivision 1. The requirement that a member separate from active service and membership is waived for persons who have discontinued their volunteer firefighter duties and who are employed on a full-time basis under section 424A.015, subdivision 1.

(b) The deferred service pension is payable when the former member reaches at least age 50, or at least the minimum age specified in the bylaws governing the relief association if that age is greater than age 50, and when the former member makes a valid written application.

(c) A defined benefit relief association that provides a lump-sum service pension governed by subdivision 3 may, when its governing bylaws so provide, credit interest on the deferred lump-sum service pension during the period of deferral. If provided for in the bylaws, interest must be credited in one of the following manners:

(1) at the investment performance rate actually earned on that portion of the assets if the deferred benefit amount is invested by the relief association in a separate account established and maintained by the relief association;

(2) at the investment performance rate actually earned on that portion of the assets if the deferred benefit amount is invested in a separate investment vehicle held by the relief association; or

(3) at an interest rate of up to five percent, compounded annually, as set by the board of trustees.

(d) Any change in the interest rate set by the board of trustees under paragraph (c), clause (3), must be ratified by the governing body of the municipality or joint powers entity served by the fire department to which the relief association is directly associated, or by the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, as applicable.

(e) Interest under paragraph (c), clause (3), is credited beginning on the January 1 next following the date on which the deferred service pension interest rate as set by the board of trustees was ratified by the governing body of the municipality or joint powers entity served by the fire department to which the relief association is directly associated, or by the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, as applicable.

(f) Unless the bylaws of a relief association that has elected to credit interest or additional investment performance on deferred lump-sum service pensions under paragraph (c) specifies a different interest or additional investment performance method, including the interest or additional investment performance period starting date and ending date, the interest or additional investment performance on a deferred service pension is creditable as follows:

(1) for a relief association that has elected to credit interest or additional investment performance under paragraph (c), clause (1) or (3), beginning on the first day of the month next following the date on which the member separates from active service and membership and ending on the last day of the month immediately before the month in which the deferred member commences receipt of the deferred service pension; or

(2) for a relief association that has elected to credit interest or additional investment performance under paragraph (c), clause (2), beginning on the date that the member separates from active service and membership and ending on the date that the separate investment vehicle is valued immediately before the date on which the deferred member commences receipt of the deferred service pension.

(g) For a deferred service pension that is transferred to a separate account established and maintained by the relief association or separate investment vehicle held by the relief association, the deferred member bears the full investment risk subsequent to transfer and in calculating the accrued liability of the volunteer firefighters relief association that pays a lump-sum service pension, the accrued liability for deferred service pensions is equal to the separate relief association account balance or the fair market value of the separate investment vehicle held by the relief association.

**Subd. 8. Lump-sum service pensions; installment payments.** (a) A defined benefit relief association, if the governing bylaws so provide, may pay, at the option of the intended recipient and in lieu of a single payment of a lump-sum service pension or survivor benefit, a lump-sum service pension or survivor benefit in installments.

(b) The election of installment payments is irrevocable and must be made by the intended recipient in writing and filed with the secretary of the relief association no later than 30 days before the commencement of payment of the service pension or survivor benefit. The amount of the installment payments must be determined in any reasonable manner provided for in the governing bylaws, but the total amount of installment payments may not exceed the single payment service pension amount plus interest at an annual rate of five percent on the amount of delayed payments for the period during which payment was delayed.

Subd. 8a. [Repealed, 2009 c 169 art 10 s 58]

Subd. 8b. [Repealed, 2009 c 169 art 10 s 58]

**Subd. 9. Limitation on ancillary benefits.** A defined benefit relief association, including any volunteer firefighters relief association governed by Laws 2013, chapter 111, article 5, sections 31 to 42, or any volunteer firefighters division of a relief association governed by chapter 424, may only pay ancillary benefits which would constitute an authorized disbursement as specified in section 424A.05 subject to the following requirements or limitations:

(1) with respect to a defined benefit relief association in which governing bylaws provide solely for a lump-sum service pension to a retiring member, or provide a retiring member the choice of either a lump-sum service pension or a monthly service pension and the lump-sum service pension was chosen, no ancillary benefit may be paid to any former member or paid to any person on behalf of any former member after the former member (i) terminates active service with the fire department and active membership in the relief association; and (ii) commences receipt of a service pension as authorized under this section; and

(2) with respect to any defined benefit relief association, no ancillary benefit paid or payable to any member, to any former member, or to any person on behalf of any member or former member, may exceed in amount the total earned service pension of the member or former member. The total earned service pension must be calculated by multiplying the service pension amount specified in the bylaws of the relief association at the time of death or disability, whichever applies, by the years of service credited to the member or former member. The years of service must be determined as of (i) the date the member or former member became entitled to the ancillary benefit; or (ii) the date the member or former member died entitling a survivor or the estate of the member or former member to an ancillary benefit. The ancillary benefit must be calculated without regard to whether the member had attained the minimum amount of service and membership credit specified in the governing bylaws. For active members, the amount of a permanent disability benefit or a survivor benefit must be equal to the member's total earned service pension except that the bylaws of a defined benefit relief association may provide for the payment of a survivor benefit in an amount not to exceed five times the yearly service pension amount specified in the bylaws on behalf of any member who dies before having performed five years of active service in the fire department with which the relief

association is affiliated. For deferred members, the amount of a permanent disability benefit or a survivor benefit must be calculated using the service pension amount in effect on the date specified in section 424A.015, subdivision 6, unless the bylaws of the relief association specify a different service pension amount to be used for the calculation.

(3)(i) If a lump sum survivor or death benefit is payable under the articles of incorporation or bylaws, the benefit must be paid:

(A) as a survivor benefit to the surviving spouse of the deceased firefighter;

(B) as a survivor benefit to the surviving children of the deceased firefighter if no surviving spouse;

(C) as a survivor benefit to a designated beneficiary of the deceased firefighter if no surviving spouse or surviving children; or

(D) as a death benefit to the estate of the deceased active or deferred firefighter if no surviving children and no beneficiary designated.

(ii) If there are no surviving children, the surviving spouse may waive, in writing, wholly or partially, the spouse's entitlement to a survivor benefit.

(4)(i) If a monthly benefit survivor or death benefit is payable under the articles of incorporation or bylaws, the benefit must be paid:

(A) as a survivor benefit to the surviving spouse of the deceased firefighter;

(B) as a survivor benefit to the surviving children of the deceased firefighter if no surviving spouse;

(C) as a survivor benefit to a designated beneficiary of the deceased firefighter if no surviving spouse or surviving children; or

(D) as a death benefit to the estate of the deceased active or deferred firefighter if no surviving spouse, no surviving children, and no beneficiary designated.

(ii) If there are no surviving children, the surviving spouse may waive, in writing, wholly or partially, the spouse's entitlement to a survivor benefit.

(iii) For purposes of this clause, if the relief association bylaws authorize a monthly survivor benefit payable to a designated beneficiary, the relief association bylaws may limit the total survivor benefit amount payable.

(5) For purposes of this section, for a monthly benefit volunteer fire relief association or for a combination lump-sum and monthly benefit volunteer fire relief association where a monthly benefit service pension has been elected by or a monthly benefit is payable with respect to a firefighter, a designated beneficiary must be a natural person. For purposes of this section, for a lump-sum volunteer fire relief association or for a combination lump-sum and monthly benefit volunteer fire relief association where a lump-sum service pension has been elected by or a lump-sum benefit is payable with respect to a firefighter, a trust created under chapter 501C may be a designated beneficiary. If a trust is payable to the surviving children organized under chapter 501C as authorized by this section and there is no surviving spouse, the survivor benefit may be paid to the trust, notwithstanding a requirement of this section to the contrary.

Subd. 9a. **Postretirement increases.** Notwithstanding any provision of general or special law to the contrary, a defined benefit relief association paying a monthly service pension may provide a postretirement



increase to retired members and ancillary benefit recipients of the relief association if (1) the relief association adopts an appropriate bylaw amendment; and (2) the bylaw amendment is approved by the municipality pursuant to subdivision 10 and section 424A.093, subdivision 6. The postretirement increase is applicable only to retired members and ancillary benefit recipients receiving a monthly service pension or monthly ancillary benefit as of the effective date of the bylaw amendment. The authority to provide a postretirement increase to retired members and ancillary benefit recipients of a relief association contained in this subdivision supersedes any prior special law authorization relating to the provision of postretirement increases.

Subd. 9b. [Repealed, 2009 c 169 art 10 s 58]

**Subd. 10. Local approval of bylaw amendments; filing requirements.** (a) Each defined benefit relief association to which this section applies must file a revised copy of its governing bylaws with the state auditor upon the adoption of any amendment to its governing bylaws by the relief association or upon the approval of any amendment to its governing bylaws granted by the governing body of the municipality served by the fire department to which the relief association is directly associated or by the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, as applicable. Failure of the relief association to file a copy of the bylaws or any bylaw amendments with the state auditor disqualifies the municipality from the distribution of any future fire state aid until this filing requirement has been completed.

(b) If the special fund of the relief association does not have a surplus over full funding under section 424A.092, subdivision 3, paragraph (c), clause (5), or 424A.093, subdivision 4, and if the municipality is required to provide financial support to the special fund of the relief association under section 424A.092 or 424A.093, no bylaw amendment which would affect the amount of, the manner of payment of, or the conditions for qualification for service pensions or ancillary benefits or disbursements other than administrative expenses authorized under section 424A.05, subdivision 3b, payable from the special fund of the relief association is effective until it has been ratified as required under section 424A.092, subdivision 6, or 424A.093, subdivision 6. If the special fund of the relief association has a surplus over full funding under section 424A.092, subdivision 3, or 424A.093, subdivision 4, and if the municipality is not required to provide financial support to the special fund under this section, the relief association may adopt or amend without municipal ratification its articles of incorporation or bylaws which increase or otherwise affect the service pensions or ancillary benefits payable from the special fund if authorized under section 424A.092, subdivision 6, or 424A.093, subdivision 6.

(c) If the relief association pays only a lump-sum pension, the financial requirements are to be determined by the board of trustees following the preparation of an estimate of the expected increase in the accrued liability and annual accruing liability of the relief association attributable to the change. If the relief association pays a monthly benefit service pension, the financial requirements are to be determined by the board of trustees following either an updated actuarial valuation including the proposed change or an estimate of the expected actuarial impact of the proposed change prepared by the actuary of the relief association. If a relief association adopts or amends its articles of incorporation or bylaws without municipal ratification under this subdivision, and, subsequent to the amendment or adoption, the financial requirements of the special fund under this section are such so as to require financial support from the municipality, the provision which was implemented without municipal ratification is no longer effective without municipal ratification, and any service pensions or ancillary benefits payable after that date must be paid only in accordance with the articles of incorporation or bylaws as amended or adopted with municipal ratification.

Subd. 11. [Repealed, 2000 c 461 art 16 s 13]

**Subd. 12. Transfer of service credit to new district.** Notwithstanding the requirements of subdivision 1 or any other law, a member of a fire department which is disbanded upon formation of a fire district to

serve substantially the same geographic area, who serves as an active firefighter with the new district fire department, and is a member of the district firefighters defined benefit relief association is entitled to a nonforfeitable service pension from the new relief association upon completion of a combined total of 20 years active service in the disbanded and the new departments. The amount of the service pension is based upon years of service in the new department only and must be in an amount equal to the accrued liability for the appropriate years of service calculated in accordance with section 424A.092, subdivision 2.

Subd. 13. MS 2016 [Repealed, 2018 c 211 art 14 s 33]

**History:** 1979 c 201 s 12; 1980 c 607 art 15 s 11; 1981 c 224 s 208,209,274; 1982 c 421 s 3; 1982 c 460 s 8; 1982 c 465 s 7,8; 1983 c 219 s 6; 1983 c 286 s 21; 1983 c 289 s 114 subd 1; 1984 c 547 s 15; 1984 c 655 art 1 s 92; 1985 c 261 s 8-10; 1Sp1985 c 7 s 35; 1987 c 372 art 1 s 22; 1988 c 668 s 9; 1988 c 709 art 7 s 2,3; 1989 c 319 art 10 s 3-6; 1990 c 570 art 14 s 1; 1993 c 244 art 1 s 1-3; art 3 s 1; 1996 c 438 art 8 s 4; 1997 c 203 art 6 s 92; 1997 c 241 art 6 s 1; art 10 s 5; 2000 c 461 art 15 s 5-9; 2002 c 392 art 13 s 1; 1Sp2003 c 12 art 12 s 1; 2004 c 267 art 14 s 1,2,5; 2005 c 164 s 29; 1Sp2005 c 7 s 28; 1Sp2005 c 8 art 9 s 10-12; 2006 c 271 art 13 s 3; 2008 c 277 art 1 s 83; 2008 c 349 art 14 s 8-10; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 24-35; 2010 c 359 art 13 s 9,10; 2010 c 382 s 73,87; 2012 c 286 art 12 s 13-15; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 78,80; art 6 s 9; 2014 c 275 art 2 s 18; 2014 c 296 art 12 s 9,10; 2015 c 5 art 16 s 1; 2015 c 68 art 9 s 6-8; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 16-18; 1Sp2019 c 6 art 22 s 17-19; 1Sp2019 c 8 art 4 s 7-10; 2020 c 108 art 10 s 1

#### **424A.021 CREDIT FOR BREAK IN SERVICE TO PROVIDE UNIFORMED SERVICE.**

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** Subject to restrictions stated in this section, a volunteer firefighter who is absent from firefighting service due to service in the uniformed services, as defined in United States Code, title 38, section 4303(13), may obtain service credit if the relief association is a defined benefit plan or an allocation by the relief association as though the person was an active member if the relief association is a defined contribution plan for the period of the uniformed service, not to exceed five years, unless a longer period is required under United States Code, title 38, section 4312.

Subd. 2. **Limitations.** (a) To be eligible for service credit or an allocation as though an active member under this section, the volunteer firefighter must return to firefighting service with coverage by the same relief association or by the successor to that relief association upon discharge from service in the uniformed service within the time frame required in United States Code, title 38, section 4312(e).

(b) Service credit or an allocation as though an active member is not authorized if the firefighter separates from uniformed service with a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge or under other than honorable conditions.

(c) Service credit or an allocation as though an active member is not authorized if the firefighter fails to provide notice to the fire department that the individual is leaving to provide service in the uniformed service, unless it is not feasible to provide that notice due to the emergency nature of the situation.

**History:** 1Sp2005 c 8 art 9 s 13; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 36

#### **424A.03 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER SERVICE PENSION AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS BASED ON SERVICE.**

Subdivision 1. **Service pensions based on years of service.** A relief association must provide service pensions or retirement benefits to its members based on the years of service of the members, not on the compensation paid to the members for their service.

Subd. 2. **Penalty for violation.** If a relief association violates subdivision 1, the affiliated municipality or municipalities must not be included in the apportionment of fire state aid and police and firefighter

retirement supplemental state aid payable under chapter 477B and section 423A.022 and in the apportionment of fire state aid to the various municipalities under section 477B.03.

Subd. 3. [Repealed, 2015 c 68 art 13 s 65]

**History:** 1979 c 201 s 13; 1983 c 219 s 7; 1983 c 289 s 114 subd 1; 1984 c 655 art 1 s 92; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 37; 1Sp2019 c 6 art 22 s 20; 2020 c 108 art 16 s 5

#### **424A.04 VOLUNTEER RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS; BOARD OF TRUSTEES.**

Subdivision 1. **Membership.** (a) A relief association that is directly associated with a municipal fire department must be managed by a board of trustees consisting of nine members. Six trustees must be elected from the membership of the relief association and three trustees must be drawn from the officials of the municipalities served by the fire department to which the relief association is directly associated. The bylaws of a relief association which provides a monthly benefit service pension may provide that one of the six trustees elected from the relief association membership may be a retired member receiving a monthly pension who is elected by the membership of the relief association. The three municipal trustees must be one elected municipal official and one elected or appointed municipal official who are designated as municipal representatives by the municipal governing board annually and the chief of the municipal fire department.

(b) A relief association that is a subsidiary of an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation must be managed by a board of trustees consisting of nine members. Six trustees must be elected from the membership of the relief association, two trustees must be drawn from the officials of the municipalities served by the fire department to which the relief association is directly associated, and one trustee must be the fire chief serving with the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation. The bylaws of a relief association may provide that one of the six trustees elected from the relief association membership may be a retired member receiving a monthly pension who is elected by the membership of the relief association. The two municipal trustees must be elected or appointed municipal officials, selected as follows:

(1) if only one municipality contracts with the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, the municipal trustees must be two officials of the contracting municipality who are designated annually by the governing body of the municipality; or

(2) if two or more municipalities contract with the independent nonprofit corporation, the municipal trustees must be one official from each of the two largest municipalities in population who are designated annually by the governing bodies of the applicable municipalities.

(c) The municipal trustees for a relief association that is directly associated with a fire department operated as or by a joint powers entity must be the fire chief of the fire department and two trustees designated annually by the joint powers board. The municipal trustees for a relief association that is directly associated with a fire department service area township must be the fire chief of the fire department and two trustees designated by the township board.

(d) If a relief association lacks the municipal board members provided for in paragraph (a), (b), or (c) because the fire department is not located in or associated with a municipality or joint powers entity, the municipal board members must be the fire chief of the fire department and two board members appointed from the fire department service area by the board of commissioners of the applicable county.

(e) The term of the appointed municipal board members is one year or until the person's successor is qualified, whichever is later.

(f) A municipal trustee under paragraph (a), (b), (c), or (d) has all the rights and duties accorded to any other trustee, except the right to be an officer of the relief association board of trustees.

(g) A board must have at least three officers, who are a president, a secretary and a treasurer. These officers must be elected from among the elected trustees by either the full board of trustees or by the relief association membership, as specified in the bylaws. In no event may any trustee hold more than one officer position at any one time. The terms of the elected trustees and of the officers of the board must be specified in the bylaws of the relief association, but may not exceed three years. If the term of the elected trustees exceeds one year, the election of the various trustees elected from the membership must be staggered on an equal basis as is practicable.

Subd. 2. **Fiduciary duty.** The board of trustees of a relief association shall undertake their activities consistent with chapter 356A.

Subd. 2a. **Fiduciary responsibility.** In the discharge of their respective duties, the officers and trustees shall be held to the standard of care specified in section 11A.09. In addition, the trustees shall act in accordance with chapter 356A. Each member of the board is a fiduciary and shall undertake all fiduciary activities in accordance with the standard of care of section 11A.09, and in a manner consistent with chapter 356A. No fiduciary of a relief association shall cause a relief association to engage in a transaction if the fiduciary knows or should know that the transaction constitutes one of the following direct or indirect transactions:

- (1) sale or exchange or leasing of any real property between the relief association and a board member;
- (2) lending of money or other extension of credit between the relief association and a board member or member of the relief association;
- (3) furnishing of goods, services, or facilities between the relief association and a board member; or
- (4) transfer to a board member, or use by or for the benefit of a board member, of any assets of the relief association. A transfer of assets does not mean the payment of relief association benefits or administrative expenses permitted by law.

Subd. 3. **Conditions on relief association consultants.** (a) If a volunteer firefighter relief association employs or contracts with a consultant to provide legal or financial advice, the secretary of the relief association shall obtain and the consultant shall provide to the secretary of the relief association a copy of the consultant's certificate of insurance.

(b) A consultant is any person who is employed under contract to provide legal or financial advice and who is or who represents to the volunteer firefighters relief association that the person is:

- (1) an actuary;
- (2) a certified public accountant;
- (3) an attorney;
- (4) an investment advisor or manager, or an investment counselor;
- (5) an investment advisor or manager selection consultant;
- (6) a pension benefit design advisor or consultant; or

(7) any other financial consultant.

**History:** 1979 c 201 s 14; 1980 c 607 art 15 s 12; 1981 c 224 s 210; 1983 c 219 s 8; 1989 c 319 art 8 s 27; 2000 c 461 art 15 s 10; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 16 s 1; 1Sp2005 c 8 art 9 s 14; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 38; 2012 c 286 art 12 s 16; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 19

#### **424A.05 RELIEF ASSOCIATION SPECIAL FUND.**

Subdivision 1. **Establishment of special fund.** Every volunteer firefighters relief association shall establish and maintain a special fund within the relief association.

Subd. 2. **Special fund assets and revenues.** The special fund must be credited with all fire state aid and police and firefighter retirement supplemental state aid received under chapter 477B and section 423A.022, all taxes levied by or other revenues received from the municipality under sections 424A.091 to 424A.096 or any applicable special law requiring municipal support for the relief association, any funds or property donated, given, granted or devised by any person which is specified for use for the support of the special fund and any interest or investment return earned upon the assets of the special fund. The treasurer of the relief association is the custodian of the assets of the special fund and must be the recipient on behalf of the special fund of all revenues payable to the special fund. The treasurer shall maintain adequate records documenting any transaction involving the assets or the revenues of the special fund. These records and the bylaws of the relief association are public and must be open for inspection by any member of the relief association, any officer or employee of the state or of the municipality, or any member of the public, at reasonable times and places.

Subd. 3. **Authorized disbursements from special fund.** (a) Disbursements from the special fund may not be made for any purpose other than one of the following:

(1) for the payment of service pensions to retired members of the relief association if authorized and paid under law and the bylaws governing the relief association;

(2) for the purchase of an annuity for the applicable person under section 424A.015, subdivision 3, for the transfer of service pension or benefit amounts to the applicable person's individual retirement account under section 424A.015, subdivision 4, or to the applicable person's account in the Minnesota deferred compensation plan under section 424A.015, subdivision 5;

(3) for the payment of temporary or permanent disability benefits to disabled members of the relief association if authorized and paid under law and specified in amount in the bylaws governing the relief association;

(4) for the payment of survivor benefits or for the payment of a death benefit to the estate of the deceased active or deferred firefighter, if authorized and paid under law and specified in amount in the bylaws governing the relief association;

(5) for the payment of the fees, dues and assessments to the Minnesota State Fire Department Association and to the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association in order to entitle relief association members to membership in and the benefits of these associations or organizations;

(6) for the payment of insurance premiums to the state Volunteer Firefighters Benefit Association, or an insurance company licensed by the state of Minnesota offering casualty insurance, in order to entitle relief association members to membership in and the benefits of the association or organization; and

(7) for the payment of administrative expenses of the relief association as authorized under subdivision 3b.

(b) Checks or authorizations for electronic fund transfers for disbursements authorized by this section must be signed by the relief association treasurer and at least one other elected trustee who has been designated by the board of trustees to sign the checks or authorizations. A relief association may make disbursements authorized by this subdivision by electronic fund transfers only if the specific method of payment and internal control policies and procedures regarding the method are approved by the board of trustees.

**Subd. 3a. Corrections of erroneous special fund deposits.** Upon notification of funds deposited in error in the special fund and after presentation of evidence that the error occurred in good faith, the state auditor may require the relief association to provide a written legal opinion concluding that the transfer of funds from the special fund is consistent with federal and state law. Taking into consideration the evidence of good faith presented and the legal opinion, if any, provided, the state auditor may order the transfer from the special fund to the appropriate fund or account an amount equal to the funds deposited in error.

**Subd. 3b. Authorized administrative expenses from special fund.** (a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the payment of the following necessary, reasonable, and direct expenses of maintaining, protecting, and administering the special fund, when provided for in the bylaws of the association and approved by the board of trustees, constitutes authorized administrative expenses of a volunteer firefighters relief association organized under any law of the state or the Bloomington Fire Department Relief Association:

(1) office expenses, including but not limited to rent, utilities, equipment, supplies, postage, periodical subscriptions, furniture, fixtures, and salaries of administrative personnel;

(2) salaries of the officers of the association or their designees, and salaries of the members of the board of trustees of the association if the salary amounts are approved by the governing body of the entity that is responsible for meeting any minimum obligation under section 424A.092 or 424A.093 or Laws 2013, chapter 111, article 5, sections 31 to 42, and the itemized expenses of relief association officers and board members that are incurred as a result of fulfilling their responsibilities as administrators of the special fund;

(3) tuition, registration fees, organizational dues, and other authorized expenses of the officers or members of the board of trustees incurred in attending educational conferences, seminars, or classes relating to the administration of the relief association;

(4) audit and audit-related services, accounting and accounting-related services, and actuarial, medical, legal, and investment and performance evaluation expenses;

(5) filing and application fees payable by the relief association to federal or other government entities;

(6) reimbursement to the officers and members of the board of trustees or their designees, for reasonable and necessary expenses actually paid and incurred in the performance of their duties as officers or members of the board; and

(7) premiums on fiduciary liability insurance and official bonds for the officers, members of the board of trustees, and employees of the relief association.

(b) All other expenses of the relief association must be paid from the general fund of the association if one exists. If a relief association has only one fund, that fund is the special fund for purposes of this subdivision. If a relief association has a special fund and a general fund, the payment of any expense of the relief association that is directly related to the purposes for which both funds were established must be apportioned between the two funds on the basis of the benefits derived by each fund.

Subd. 4. **Investments of assets of the special fund.** The assets of the special fund must be invested only in securities authorized by section 424A.095.

**History:** 1979 c 201 s 15; 1981 c 224 s 211,274; 1983 c 219 s 9; 2000 c 461 art 15 s 11; 2006 c 271 art 13 s 4; 2008 c 349 art 14 s 11; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 39-42; 2010 c 359 art 13 s 11,12; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 80; 2014 c 296 art 12 s 11; 2015 c 68 art 9 s 9,10; 1Sp2019 c 6 art 21 s 3; art 22 s 21,22

#### **424A.06 RELIEF ASSOCIATION GENERAL FUND.**

Subdivision 1. **Establishment of general fund.** A volunteer firefighters relief association may establish and maintain a general fund within the relief association.

Subd. 2. **General fund assets and revenues.** (a) The general fund, if established, must be credited with the following:

(1) all money received from dues other than dues payable as contributions under the bylaws of the relief association to the special fund;

(2) all money received from fines;

(3) all money received from initiation fees;

(4) all money received as entertainment revenues; and

(5) any money or property donated, given, granted or devised by any person, either for the support of the general fund of the relief association or for unspecified purposes.

(b) The treasurer of the relief association is the custodian of the assets of the general fund and must be the recipient on behalf of the general fund of all revenues payable to the general fund. The treasurer shall maintain adequate records documenting any transaction involving the assets or the revenues of the general fund. These records must be open for inspection by any member of the relief association at reasonable times and places.

Subd. 3. **Authorized disbursements from the general fund.** Disbursements from the general fund may be made for any purpose that is authorized by either the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the relief association.

Subd. 4. **Investment of assets of the general fund.** The assets of the general fund may be invested in any securities that are authorized by the bylaws of the relief association and may be certified for investment by the State Board of Investment in fixed income pools or in a separately managed account at the discretion of the State Board of Investment as provided in section 11A.14.

**History:** 1979 c 201 s 16; 1980 c 509 s 163; 1993 c 300 s 13; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 43; 2012 c 286 art 12 s 17

#### **424A.07 NONPROFIT FIREFIGHTING CORPORATIONS; ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.**

Before paying any service pensions or retirement benefits under section 424A.02 or before becoming entitled to receive any amounts of fire state aid upon transmittal from a contracting municipality under

section 477B.04, subdivision 3, an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation shall establish a volunteer firefighters relief association governed by this chapter.

**History:** 1979 c 201 s 17; 1981 c 224 s 274; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 44; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 20; 1Sp2019 c 6 art 22 s 23

#### **424A.08 MUNICIPALITY WITHOUT RELIEF ASSOCIATION; AUTHORIZED DISBURSEMENTS.**

(a) Any municipality which is entitled to receive fire state aid but which has no volunteer firefighters relief association directly associated with its fire department and which has no full-time firefighters with retirement coverage by the public employees police and fire retirement plan shall deposit the fire state aid in a special account established for that purpose in the municipal treasury. Disbursement from the special account may not be made for any purpose except:

(1) payment of the fees, dues and assessments to the Minnesota State Fire Department Association and to the state Volunteer Firefighters Benefit Association in order to entitle its firefighters to membership in and the benefits of these state associations;

(2) payment of the cost of purchasing and maintaining needed equipment for the fire department; and

(3) payment of the cost of construction, acquisition, repair, or maintenance of buildings or other premises to house the equipment of the fire department.

(b) A municipality which is entitled to receive fire state aid, which has no volunteer firefighters relief association directly associated with its fire department, which does not participate in the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan under chapter 353G, and which has full-time firefighters with retirement coverage by the public employees police and fire retirement plan may disburse the fire state aid as provided in paragraph (a), for the payment of the employer contribution requirement with respect to firefighters covered by the public employees police and fire retirement plan under section 353.65, subdivision 3, or for a combination of the two types of disbursements.

(c) A municipality that has no volunteer firefighters relief association directly associated with it and that participates in the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan under chapter 353G shall transmit any fire state aid that it receives to the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter fund.

**History:** 1979 c 201 s 18; 1983 c 219 s 10; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 45; 2010 c 359 art 6 s 9; 2014 c 296 art 12 s 12; 2020 c 108 art 7 s 9

**424A.09** [Repealed, 2009 c 169 art 10 s 58]

#### **424A.091 VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS RELIEF ASSOCIATION FINANCING GUIDELINES ACT; APPLICATION.**

Subdivision 1. **Covered relief associations.** The applicable provisions of sections 424A.091 to 424A.096 govern any firefighters relief association defined in section 424A.001, subdivision 4, and do not apply to the Bloomington Fire Department Relief Association.

Subd. 2. **Authorized employer support for a relief association.** Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a municipality may lawfully contribute public funds, including the transfer of any applicable fire state aid, or may levy property taxes for the support of a firefighters relief association specified in subdivision 1, however organized, which provides retirement coverage or pays a service pension to retired firefighter or a retirement benefit to a disabled firefighter or a surviving dependent of either an active or retired firefighter



for the operation and maintenance of the relief association only if the municipality and the relief association both comply with the applicable provisions of sections 424A.091 to 424A.096.

**Subd. 3. Remedy for noncompliance; determination.** (a) A municipality in which there exists a firefighters relief association as specified in subdivision 1 which does not comply with the applicable provisions of sections 424A.091 to 424A.096 or the provisions of any applicable special law relating to the funding or financing of the association does not qualify initially to receive, and is not entitled subsequently to retain, fire state aid under chapter 477B until the reason for the disqualification specified by the state auditor is remedied, whereupon the municipality or relief association, if otherwise qualified, is entitled to again receive fire state aid for the year occurring immediately subsequent to the year in which the disqualification is remedied.

(b) The state auditor shall determine if a municipality to which a firefighters' relief association is directly associated or a firefighters relief association fails to comply with the provisions of sections 424A.091 to 424A.096 or the funding or financing provisions of any applicable special law based upon the information contained in the annual financial report of the firefighters relief association required under section 424A.014, the actuarial valuation of the relief association, if applicable, the relief association officers' financial requirements of the relief association and minimum municipal obligation determination documentation under section 424A.092, subdivisions 3 and 4; 424A.093, subdivisions 4 and 5; or 424A.094, subdivision 2, if requested to be filed by the state auditor, the applicable municipal or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation budget, if requested to be filed by the state auditor, and any other relevant documents or reports obtained by the state auditor.

(c) The municipality or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation and the associated relief association are not eligible to receive or to retain fire state aid if:

(1) the relief association fails to prepare or to file the financial report or financial statement under section 424A.014;

(2) the relief association treasurer is not bonded in the manner and in the amount required by section 424A.014, subdivision 4;

(3) the relief association officers fail to determine or improperly determine the accrued liability and the annual accruing liability of the relief association under section 424A.092, subdivisions 2, 2a, and 3, paragraph (c), clause (2), if applicable;

(4) if applicable, the relief association officers fail to obtain and file a required actuarial valuation or the officers file an actuarial valuation that does not contain the special fund actuarial liability calculated under the entry age normal actuarial cost method, the special fund current assets, the special fund unfunded actuarial accrued liability, the special fund normal cost under the entry age normal actuarial cost method, the amortization requirement for the special fund unfunded actuarial accrued liability by the applicable target date, a summary of the applicable benefit plan, a summary of the membership of the relief association, a summary of the actuarial assumptions used in preparing the valuation, and a signed statement by the actuary attesting to its results and certifying to the qualifications of the actuary as an approved actuary under section 356.215, subdivision 1, paragraph (c);

(5) the municipality failed to provide a municipal contribution, or the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation failed to provide a corporate contribution, in the amount equal to the minimum municipal obligation if the relief association is governed under section 424A.092, or the amount necessary, when added to the fire state aid actually received in the plan year in question, to at least equal in total the calculated annual financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association if the relief association is governed

under section 424A.093, and, if the municipal or corporate contribution is deficient, the municipality failed to include the minimum municipal obligation certified under section 424A.092, subdivision 3, or 424A.093, subdivision 5, in its budget and tax levy or the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation failed to include the minimum corporate obligation certified under section 424A.094, subdivision 2, in the corporate budget;

(6) the defined benefit relief association did not receive municipal ratification for the most recent plan amendment when municipal ratification was required under section 424A.02, subdivision 10; 424A.092, subdivision 6; or 424A.093, subdivision 6;

(7) the relief association invested special fund assets in an investment security that is not authorized under section 424A.095;

(8) the relief association had an administrative expense that is not authorized under section 424A.05, subdivision 3 or 3b, or the municipality had an expenditure that is not authorized under section 424A.08;

(9) the relief association officers fail to provide a complete and accurate public pension plan investment portfolio and performance disclosure under section 356.219;

(10) the relief association fails to obtain the acknowledgment from a broker of the statement of investment restrictions under section 356A.06, subdivision 8b;

(11) the relief association officers permitted to occur a prohibited transaction under section 356A.06, subdivision 9, or 424A.04, subdivision 2a, or failed to undertake correction of a prohibited transaction that did occur; or

(12) the relief association pays a defined benefit service pension in an amount that is in excess of the applicable service pension maximum under section 424A.02, subdivision 3.

**History:** 1971 c 261 s 1; 1977 c 429 s 63; 1979 c 201 s 1; 1980 c 509 s 19; 1982 c 460 s 6; 1983 c 289 s 114 subd 1; 1984 c 655 art 1 s 92; 1990 c 480 art 6 s 4; 1Sp2005 c 8 art 9 s 3; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 2; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 80; art 6 s 1; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 21; 1Sp2019 c 6 art 22 s 24

#### **424A.092 RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS PAYING LUMP-SUM SERVICE PENSIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Application.** This section shall apply to any firefighters relief association specified in section 424A.091, subdivision 1, which pays a lump-sum service pension, but which does not pay a monthly service pension, to a retiring firefighter when at least the minimum requirements for entitlement to a service pension specified in section 424A.02 or any applicable special legislation and the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the relief association have been met. Each firefighters relief association to which this section applies shall determine the accrued liability of the special fund of the relief association in accordance with subdivisions 2 and 2a, if applicable, and the financial requirements of the relief association and the minimum obligation of the municipality in accordance with the procedure set forth in subdivision 3.

Subd. 2. **Determination of accrued liability.** (a) Beginning with the calculation performed in 2021 for the 2022 calendar year, each firefighters relief association which pays a lump-sum service pension shall determine the accrued liability of the special fund of the firefighters relief association relative to each active member of the relief association, calculated using the applicable appendix to the standards for actuarial work established by the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement under section 3.85, subdivision 10.

(b) For calendar years before 2022, each firefighters relief association shall determine the accrued liability of the special fund of the firefighters relief association relative to each active member of the relief association, calculated individually using the following table:

Cumulative Year	Accrued Liability
.....	.....
1	\$ 60
2	124
3	190
4	260
5	334
6	410
7	492
8	576
9	666
10	760
11	858
12	962
13	1070
14	1184
15	1304
16	1428
17	1560
18	1698
19	1844
20	2000
21 and thereafter	100 additional per year

As set forth in the table the accrued liability for each member of the relief association corresponds to the cumulative years of active service to the credit of the member. The accrued liability of the special fund for each active member is determined by multiplying the accrued liability from the chart by the ratio of the lump-sum service pension amount currently provided for in the bylaws of the relief association to a service pension of \$100 per year of service.

(c) If a member has fractional service as of December 31, the figure for service credit to be used for the determination of accrued liability pursuant to this section shall be rounded to the nearest full year of service

credit. The total accrued liability of the special fund as of December 31 shall be the sum of the accrued liability attributable to each active member of the relief association.

(d) To the extent that the state auditor considers it to be necessary or practical, the state auditor may specify and issue procedures, forms, or mathematical tables for use in performing the calculations of the accrued liability for deferred members pursuant to this subdivision.

**Subd. 2a. Determination of accrued liability for recipients of installment payments.** (a) Each firefighters relief association which pays a lump-sum service pension in installment payments to a retired firefighter pursuant to section 424A.02, subdivision 8, shall determine the accrued liability of the special fund of the firefighters relief association relative to each retired member receiving a lump-sum service pension in installment payments calculated individually as the sum of each future installment payment discounted at an interest rate of five percent, compounded annually, from the date the installment payment is scheduled to be paid to December 31. If the bylaws of the relief association provide for the payment of interest on unpaid installments, the amount of interest, projected to December 31, shall be added to the accrued liability attributable to each retired member. The sum of the accrued liability attributable to each retired member of the relief association receiving a lump-sum service pension in installment payments shall be the total additional accrued liability of the special fund of the relief association as of December 31, and shall be added to the accrued liability of the special fund of the relief association calculated pursuant to subdivision 2 for purposes of calculating the financial requirements of the relief association and the minimum obligation of the municipality pursuant to subdivision 3.

(b) To the extent that the state auditor deems it to be necessary or practical, the state auditor may specify and issue procedures, forms, or mathematical tables for use in performing the calculations required pursuant to this subdivision.

**Subd. 3. Financial requirements of relief association; minimum obligation of municipality.** (a) During the month of July, the officers of the relief association shall determine the overall funding balance of the special fund for the current calendar year, the financial requirements of the special fund for the following calendar year and the minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund for the following calendar year in accordance with the requirements of this subdivision.

(b) The overall funding balance of the special fund for the current calendar year must be determined in the following manner:

(1) The total accrued liability of the special fund for all active and deferred members of the relief association as of December 31 of the current year must be calculated under subdivisions 2 and 2a, if applicable.

(2) The total present assets of the special fund projected to December 31 of the current year, including receipts by and disbursements from the special fund anticipated to occur on or before December 31, must be calculated. To the extent possible, for those assets for which a market value is readily ascertainable, the current market value as of the date of the calculation for those assets must be utilized in making this calculation. For any asset for which no market value is readily ascertainable, the cost value or the book value, whichever is applicable, must be utilized in making this calculation.

(3) The amount of the total present assets of the special fund calculated under clause (2) must be subtracted from the amount of the total accrued liability of the special fund calculated under clause (1). If the amount of total present assets exceeds the amount of the total accrued liability, then the special fund is considered to have a surplus over full funding. If the amount of the total present assets is less than the amount of the total accrued liability, then the special fund is considered to have a deficit from full funding. If the amount

of total present assets is equal to the amount of the total accrued liability, then the special fund is considered to be fully funded.

(c) The financial requirements of the special fund for the following calendar year must be determined in the following manner:

(1) The total accrued liability of the special fund for all active and deferred members of the relief association as of December 31 of the calendar year next following the current calendar year must be calculated under subdivisions 2 and 2a, if applicable.

(2) The increase in the total accrued liability of the special fund for the following calendar year over the total accrued liability of the special fund for the current year must be calculated.

(3) The amount of anticipated future administrative expenses of the special fund must be calculated by multiplying the dollar amount of the administrative expenses of the special fund for the most recent prior calendar year by the factor of 1.035.

(4) If the special fund is fully funded, the financial requirements of the special fund for the following calendar year are the total of the amounts calculated under clauses (2) and (3).

(5) If the special fund has a deficit from full funding, the financial requirements of the special fund for the following calendar year are the financial requirements of the special fund calculated as though the special fund were fully funded under clause (4) plus an amount equal to one-tenth of the original amount of the deficit from full funding of the special fund as determined under clause (2) resulting either from an increase in the amount of the service pension occurring in the last ten years or from a net annual investment loss occurring during the last ten years until each increase in the deficit from full funding is fully retired. The annual amortization contribution under this clause may not exceed the amount of the deficit from full funding.

(6) If the special fund has a surplus over full funding, the financial requirements of the special fund for the following calendar year are the financial requirements of the special fund calculated as though the special fund were fully funded under clause (4) reduced by an amount equal to one-tenth of the amount of the surplus over full funding of the special fund.

(d) The minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund is the financial requirements of the special fund reduced by the amount of any fire state aid and police and firefighter retirement supplemental state aid payable under chapter 477B and section 423A.022 reasonably anticipated to be received by the municipality for transmittal to the special fund during the following calendar year, an amount of interest on the assets of the special fund projected to the beginning of the following calendar year calculated at the rate of five percent per annum, and the amount of any contributions to the special fund required by the relief association bylaws from the active members of the relief association reasonably anticipated to be received during the following calendar year. A reasonable amount of anticipated fire state aid is an amount that does not exceed the fire state aid actually received in the prior year multiplied by the factor 1.035.

**Subd. 4. Certification of financial requirements and minimum municipal obligation; levy.** (a) The officers of the relief association shall certify the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association and the minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund of the relief association as determined under subdivision 3 on or before August 1 of each year. The certification must be made to the entity that is responsible for satisfying the minimum obligation with respect to the special fund of the relief association. If the responsible entity is a joint powers entity, the certification must be made

in the manner specified in the joint powers agreement, or if the joint powers agreement is silent on this point, the certification must be made to the chair of the joint powers board.

(b) The financial requirements of the relief association and the minimum municipal obligation must be included in the financial report or financial statement under section 424A.014. The schedule forms related to the determination of the financial requirements must be filed with the state auditor by March 31, annually, if the relief association is required to file a financial statement under section 424A.014, subdivision 2, or by June 30, annually, if the relief association is required to file a financial report and audit under section 424A.014, subdivision 1.

(c) The municipality shall provide for at least the minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund of the relief association by tax levy or from any other source of public revenue.

(d) The municipality may levy taxes for the payment of the minimum municipal obligation without any limitation as to rate or amount and irrespective of any limitations imposed by other provisions of law upon the rate or amount of taxation until the balance of the special fund or any fund of the relief association has attained a specified level. In addition, any taxes levied under this section must not cause the amount or rate of any other taxes levied in that year or to be levied in a subsequent year by the municipality which are subject to a limitation as to rate or amount to be reduced.

(e) If the municipality does not include the full amount of the minimum municipal obligations in its levy for any year, the officers of the relief association shall certify that amount to the county auditor, who shall spread a levy in the amount of the certified minimum municipal obligation on the taxable property of the municipality.

(f) If the state auditor determines that a municipal contribution actually made in a plan year was insufficient under section 424A.091, subdivision 3, paragraph (c), clause (5), the state auditor may request a copy of the certifications under this subdivision from the relief association or from the city. The relief association or the city, whichever applies, must provide the certifications within 14 days of the date of the request from the state auditor.

**Subd. 5. Crediting of investment income; effect of excess interest.** All investment income earned on the assets of the special fund of the relief association shall be credited to the special fund. Investment income earned or anticipated to be earned in a calendar year in excess of the assumed rate specified in subdivision 3, clause (3) shall not be included in the calculations of the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association or the minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund of the relief association for that calendar year.

**Subd. 6. Municipal ratification for plan amendments.** If the special fund of the relief association does not have a surplus over full funding under subdivision 3, paragraph (c), clause (5), and if the municipality is required to provide financial support to the special fund of the relief association under this section, the adoption of or any amendment to the articles of incorporation or bylaws of a relief association which increases or otherwise affects the retirement coverage provided by or the service pensions or retirement benefits payable from the special fund of any relief association to which this section applies is not effective until it is ratified by the governing body of the municipality served by the fire department to which the relief association is directly associated or by the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, as applicable, and the officers of a relief association shall not seek municipal ratification prior to preparing and certifying an estimate of the expected increase in the accrued liability and annual accruing liability of the relief association attributable to the amendment. If the special fund of the relief association has a surplus over full funding under subdivision 3, paragraph (c), clause (5), and if the municipality is not required to provide financial

support to the special fund of the relief association under this section, the relief association may adopt or amend its articles of incorporation or bylaws which increase or otherwise affect the retirement coverage provided by or the service pensions or retirement benefits payable from the special fund of the relief association which are effective without municipal ratification so long as this does not cause the amount of the resulting increase in the accrued liability of the special fund of the relief association to exceed 90 percent of the amount of the surplus over full funding reported in the prior year and this does not result in the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association exceeding the expected amount of the future fire state aid and police and firefighter retirement supplemental state aid to be received by the relief association as determined by the board of trustees following the preparation of an estimate of the expected increase in the accrued liability and annual accruing liability of the relief association attributable to the change. If a relief association adopts or amends its articles of incorporation or bylaws without municipal ratification under this subdivision, and, subsequent to the amendment or adoption, the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association under this section are such so as to require financial support from the municipality, the provision which was implemented without municipal ratification is no longer effective without municipal ratification and any service pensions or retirement benefits payable after that date may be paid only in accordance with the articles of incorporation or bylaws as amended or adopted with municipal ratification.

**History:** 1971 c 261 s 2; 1973 c 772 s 3; 1977 c 171 s 2; 1977 c 429 s 63; 1978 c 562 s 1; 1979 c 201 s 2-8; 1981 c 224 s 27,28; 1982 c 421 s 1; 1982 c 465 s 1; 1983 c 219 s 1-3; 1983 c 289 s 114 subd 1; 1984 c 655 art 1 s 92; 1987 c 259 s 8; 1990 c 480 art 6 s 5; 1Sp2003 c 1 art 2 s 62; 1Sp2005 c 8 art 9 s 4,5; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 3,4; 2010 c 359 art 13 s 1; 2010 c 382 s 14; 2012 c 286 art 12 s 5; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 80; 2014 c 296 art 12 s 13; 2015 c 68 art 9 s 11,12; 1Sp2019 c 6 art 22 s 25,26; 2020 c 108 art 16 s 6,7

#### **424A.093 RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS PAYING MONTHLY SERVICE PENSIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Application.** (a) This section applies to any firefighters relief association specified in section 424A.091, subdivision 1, which pays or allows for an option of a monthly service pension to a retiring firefighter when at least the minimum requirements for entitlement to a service pension specified in section 424A.02, any applicable special legislation and the articles of incorporation or bylaws of the relief association have been met. Each firefighters relief association to which this section applies shall determine the actuarial condition and funding costs of the special fund of the relief association in accordance with subdivisions 2 and 3, the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association in accordance with subdivision 4 and the minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund of the relief association in accordance with subdivision 5.

(b) If a firefighters relief association that previously provided a monthly benefit service pension discontinues that practice and either replaces the monthly benefit amount with a lump sum benefit amount consistent with section 424A.02, subdivision 3, or purchases an annuity in the same amount as the monthly benefit from an insurance company licensed to do business in this state, the actuarial condition and funding costs, financial, and minimum municipal obligation requirements of section 424A.092 apply rather than this section.

Subd. 2. **Determination of actuarial condition and funding costs.** A relief association to which this section applies shall obtain an actuarial valuation showing the condition of the special fund of the relief association as of December 31, 1978, and at least as of December 31 every four years thereafter. The valuation shall be prepared in accordance with the provisions of sections 356.215, subdivision 8, and 356.216 and any applicable standards for actuarial work established by the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement, except that the figure for normal cost shall be expressed as a level dollar amount, and the amortization contribution shall be the level dollar amount calculated to amortize any current unfunded accrued liability

by at least the date of full funding specified in subdivision 4, clause (b). Each valuation shall be filed with the governing body of the municipality served by the fire department to which the relief association is directly associated or by the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, as applicable, and with the state auditor, not later than July 1 of the year next following the date as of which the actuarial valuation is prepared. Any relief association which is operating under a special law which requires that actuarial valuations be obtained at least every four years and be prepared in accordance with applicable actuarial standards set forth in statute may continue to have actuarial valuations made according to the time schedule set forth in the special legislation subject to the provisions of subdivision 3.

**Subd. 3. Valuation requirement upon benefit change.** The officers of the relief association shall not seek municipal ratification of any amendments to the articles of incorporation or bylaws which increase or otherwise affect the retirement coverage provided by or the service pensions or retirement benefits payable from any relief association pursuant to subdivision 6 prior to obtaining either an updated actuarial valuation including the proposed amendment or an estimate of the expected actuarial impact of the proposed amendment prepared by the actuary of the relief association.

**Subd. 4. Financial requirements of special fund.** (a) On or before August 1 of each year, the officers of the relief association shall determine the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association in accordance with the requirements of this subdivision.

(b) The financial requirements of the relief association must be based on the most recent actuarial valuation of the special fund prepared in accordance with subdivision 2. If the relief association has an unfunded actuarial accrued liability as reported in the most recent actuarial valuation, the financial requirements must be determined by adding the figures calculated under paragraph (d), clauses (1), (2), and (3). If the relief association does not have an unfunded actuarial accrued liability as reported in the most recent actuarial valuation, the financial requirements must be an amount equal to the figure calculated under paragraph (d), clauses (1) and (2), reduced by an amount equal to one-tenth of the amount of any assets in excess of the actuarial accrued liability of the relief association.

(c) The determination of whether or not the relief association has an unfunded actuarial accrued liability must be based on the current market value of assets for which a market value is readily ascertainable and the cost or book value, whichever is applicable, for assets for which no market value is readily ascertainable.

(d) The components of the financial requirements of the relief association are the following:

(1) The normal level cost requirement for the following year, expressed as a dollar amount, is the figure for the normal level cost of the relief association as reported in the actuarial valuation.

(2) The amount of anticipated future administrative expenses of the special fund must be calculated by multiplying the dollar amount of the administrative expenses of the special fund for the most recent prior calendar year by the factor of 1.035.

(3) The amortization contribution requirement to retire the current unfunded actuarial accrued liability by the established date for full funding is the figure for the amortization contribution as reported in the actuarial valuation. If there has not been a change in the actuarial assumptions used for calculating the actuarial accrued liability of the special fund, a change in the bylaws of the relief association governing the service pensions, retirement benefits, or both, payable from the special fund, or a change in the actuarial cost method used to value all or a portion of the special fund which change or changes, which by themselves, without inclusion of any other items of increase or decrease, produce a net increase in the unfunded actuarial accrued liability of the special fund, the established date for full funding is the December 31 occurring ten years later. If there has been a change in the actuarial assumptions used for calculating the actuarial accrued



liability of the special fund, a change in the bylaws of the relief association governing the service pensions, retirement benefits, or both payable from the special fund or a change in the actuarial cost method used to value all or a portion of the special fund and the change or changes, by themselves and without inclusion of any other items of increase or decrease, produce a net increase in the unfunded actuarial accrued liability of the special fund within the past 20 years, the established date for full funding must be determined using the following procedure:

(i) the unfunded actuarial accrued liability of the special fund attributable to experience losses that have occurred since the most recent prior actuarial valuation must be determined and the level annual dollar contribution needed to amortize the experience loss over a period of ten years ending on the December 31 occurring ten years later must be calculated;

(ii) the unfunded actuarial accrued liability of the special fund must be determined in accordance with the provisions governing service pensions, retirement benefits, and actuarial assumptions in effect before an applicable change;

(iii) the level annual dollar contribution needed to amortize this unfunded actuarial accrued liability amount by the date for full funding in effect before the change must be calculated using the interest assumption specified in section 356.215, subdivision 8, in effect before any applicable change;

(iv) the unfunded actuarial accrued liability of the special fund must be determined in accordance with any new provisions governing service pensions, retirement benefits, and actuarial assumptions and the remaining provisions governing service pensions, retirement benefits, and actuarial assumptions in effect before an applicable change;

(v) the level annual dollar contribution needed to amortize the difference between the unfunded actuarial accrued liability amount calculated under item (ii) and the unfunded actuarial accrued liability amount calculated under item (iv) over a period of 20 years starting December 31 of the year in which the change is effective must be calculated using the interest assumption specified in section 356.215, subdivision 8, in effect after any applicable change;

(vi) the annual amortization contribution calculated under item (v) must be added to the annual amortization contribution calculated under items (i) and (iii);

(vii) the period in which the unfunded actuarial accrued liability amount determined in item (iv) will be amortized by the total annual amortization contribution computed under item (vi) must be calculated using the interest assumption specified in section 356.215, subdivision 8, in effect after any applicable change, rounded to the nearest integral number of years, but which must not exceed a period of 20 years from the end of the year in which the determination of the date for full funding using this procedure is made and which must not be less than the period of years beginning in the year in which the determination of the date for full funding using this procedure is made and ending by the date for full funding in effect before the change;

(viii) the period determined under item (vii) must be added to the date as of which the actuarial valuation was prepared and the resulting date is the new date for full funding.

**Subd. 5. Minimum municipal obligation.** (a) The officers of the relief association shall determine the minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund of the relief association for the following calendar year on or before August 1 of each year in accordance with the requirements of this subdivision.

(b) The minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund is an amount equal to the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association determined under subdivision 4, reduced by the estimated amount of any fire state aid and police and firefighter retirement supplemental state aid payable under chapter 477B and section 423A.022 reasonably anticipated to be received by the municipality for transmittal to the special fund of the relief association during the following year and the amount of any anticipated contributions to the special fund required by the relief association bylaws from the active members of the relief association reasonably anticipated to be received during the following calendar year. A reasonable amount of anticipated fire state aid is an amount that does not exceed the fire state aid actually received in the prior year multiplied by the factor 1.035.

(c) The officers of the relief association shall certify the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association and the minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund of the relief association as determined under subdivision 4 and this subdivision by August 1 of each year. The certification must be made to the entity that is responsible for satisfying the minimum obligation with respect to the special fund of the relief association. If the responsible entity is a joint powers entity, the certification must be made in the manner specified in the joint powers agreement, or if the joint powers agreement is silent on this point, the certification must be made to the chair of the joint powers board.

(d) The financial requirements of the relief association and the minimum municipal obligation must be included in the financial report or financial statement under section 424A.014.

(e) The municipality shall provide for at least the minimum obligation of the municipality with respect to the special fund of the relief association by tax levy or from any other source of public revenue. The municipality may levy taxes for the payment of the minimum municipal obligation without any limitation as to rate or amount and irrespective of any limitations imposed by other provisions of law or charter upon the rate or amount of taxation until the balance of the special fund or any fund of the relief association has attained a specified level. In addition, any taxes levied under this section must not cause the amount or rate of any other taxes levied in that year or to be levied in a subsequent year by the municipality which are subject to a limitation as to rate or amount to be reduced.

(f) If the municipality does not include the full amount of the minimum municipal obligation in its levy for any year, the officers of the relief association shall certify that amount to the county auditor, who shall spread a levy in the amount of the minimum municipal obligation on the taxable property of the municipality.

(g) If the state auditor determines that a municipal contribution actually made in a plan year was insufficient under section 424A.091, subdivision 3, paragraph (c), clause (5), the state auditor may request from the relief association or from the city a copy of the certifications under this subdivision. The relief association or the city, whichever applies, must provide the certifications within 14 days of the date of the request from the state auditor.

**Subd. 6. Municipal ratification for plan amendments.** If the special fund of the relief association does not have a surplus over full funding under subdivision 4, and if the municipality is required to provide financial support to the special fund of the relief association under this section, the adoption of or any amendment to the articles of incorporation or bylaws of a relief association which increases or otherwise affects the retirement coverage provided by or the service pensions or retirement benefits payable from the special fund of any relief association to which this section applies is not effective until it is ratified by the governing body of the municipality served by the fire department to which the relief association is directly associated or by the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, as applicable. If the special fund of the relief association has a surplus over full funding under subdivision 4, and if the municipality is not required to provide financial support to the special fund of the relief association under this section, the relief association

may adopt or amend its articles of incorporation or bylaws which increase or otherwise affect the retirement coverage provided by or the service pensions or retirement benefits payable from the special fund of the relief association which are effective without municipal ratification so long as this does not cause the amount of the resulting increase in the accrued liability of the special fund of the relief association to exceed 90 percent of the amount of the surplus over full funding reported in the prior year and this does not result in the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association exceeding the expected amount of the future fire state aid and police and firefighter retirement supplemental state aid to be received by the relief association as determined by the board of trustees following the preparation of an updated actuarial valuation including the proposed change or an estimate of the expected actuarial impact of the proposed change prepared by the actuary of the relief association. If a relief association adopts or amends its articles of incorporation or bylaws without municipal ratification pursuant to this subdivision, and, subsequent to the amendment or adoption, the financial requirements of the special fund of the relief association under this section are such so as to require financial support from the municipality, the provision which was implemented without municipal ratification is no longer effective without municipal ratification and any service pensions or retirement benefits payable after that date may be paid only in accordance with the articles of incorporation or bylaws as amended or adopted with municipal ratification.

**History:** 1971 c 261 s 3; 1977 c 429 s 63; 1978 c 563 s 4; 1979 c 201 s 9; 1981 c 224 s 29; 1982 c 421 s 2; 1983 c 289 s 114 subd 1; 1984 c 655 art 1 s 92; 1Sp1985 c 7 s 35; 1986 c 359 s 11; 1987 c 259 s 9,10; 1994 c 541 s 1; 2000 c 461 art 15 s 3; 2002 c 392 art 11 s 52; 1Sp2005 c 8 art 9 s 6,7; art 10 s 6; 2007 c 13 art 2 s 18; 2009 c 169 art 10 s 5; 2010 c 359 art 13 s 2; 2012 c 286 art 12 s 6; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 80; 2014 c 296 art 12 s 14,15; 2015 c 68 art 9 s 13,14; 1Sp2019 c 6 art 22 s 27

#### **424A.094 NONPROFIT FIREFIGHTING CORPORATIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Authorized inclusion in fire state aid program; covered nonprofit corporations.** (a) This section applies to any independent nonprofit firefighting corporation incorporated or organized under chapter 317A which: (1) operates exclusively for firefighting purposes; (2) which is composed of volunteer firefighters; and (3) which has a duly established separate subsidiary incorporated firefighters relief association which provides retirement coverage for or pays a service pension to a retired firefighter or a retirement benefit to a surviving dependent of either an active or a retired firefighter, and which is subject to the applicable provisions of chapter 424A.

(b) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a municipality contracting with an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation must be included in the distribution of fire state aid to the appropriate county auditor by the state auditor only if the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation complies with the provisions of this section.

Subd. 2. **Determination of actuarial condition and funding costs.** Each independent nonprofit firefighting corporation to which this section applies shall determine the actuarial condition and the funding costs of the subsidiary relief association using the following procedure:

(1) An independent nonprofit firefighting corporation which has a subsidiary relief association which pays a monthly benefit service pension shall procure an actuarial valuation of the special fund of the subsidiary relief association at the same times and in the same manner as specified in section 424A.093, subdivisions 2 and 3, and an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation which has a subsidiary relief association which pays a lump-sum service pension shall determine the accrued liability of the special fund of the relief association in accordance with section 424A.092, subdivision 2.

(2) The financial requirements of the special fund of the subsidiary relief association which pays a monthly benefit service pension shall be determined in the same manner as specified in section 424A.093, subdivision 4, and the financial requirements of the special fund of the subsidiary relief association shall be determined in the same manner as specified in section 424A.092, subdivision 3.

(3) The minimum obligation of the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation on behalf of the special fund of the subsidiary relief association shall be determined in the same manner as specified in section 424A.092, subdivision 4, or 424A.093, subdivision 5, as applicable.

(4) The independent nonprofit firefighting corporation shall appropriate annually from the income of the corporation an amount at least equal to the minimum obligation of the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation on behalf of the special fund of the subsidiary relief association.

Subd. 3. **Authorized pension disbursements.** Authorized disbursements of assets of the special fund of the subsidiary relief association of the independent nonprofit firefighting corporation shall be governed by the provisions of section 424A.05.

**History:** 1971 c 261 s 4; 1977 c 429 s 63; 1979 c 201 s 10; 1983 c 289 s 114 subd 1; 1984 c 655 art 1 s 92; 1989 c 304 s 137; 1990 c 480 art 6 s 6; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 80; art 6 s 2; 2014 c 296 art 12 s 16; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 22

#### **424A.095 INVESTMENTS.**

(a) The special fund assets of a relief association governed by sections 424A.091 to 424A.096 must be invested in securities that are authorized investments under section 356A.06, subdivision 6 or 7, whichever applies.

(b) The governing board of the association may select and appoint a qualified private firm to measure management performance and return on investment, and the firm must use the formula or formulas developed by the state board under section 11A.04, clause (11).

**History:** 1971 c 261 s 5; 1973 c 129 s 7; 1974 c 152 s 11; 1980 c 607 art 14 s 28,45 subd 1; 1981 c 208 s 8; 1984 c 574 s 3; 1986 c 356 s 7; 1986 c 359 s 12; 1989 c 319 art 8 s 8; 1993 c 300 s 9; 1994 c 604 art 2 s 2; 1Sp2005 c 8 art 9 s 8; 2012 c 286 art 10 s 5; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 80

#### **424A.096 CITATION; APPLICATION OF OTHER LAWS.**

Subdivision 1. **Citation.** Sections 424A.091 to 424A.096 may be cited as the "Volunteer Firefighters Relief Association Guidelines Act of 1971."

Subd. 2. **Applicability.** Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, no relief association described in sections 424A.091 to 424A.096, authorized under any present or future legislative act, shall be exempt from sections 424A.091 to 424A.096 unless such relief association is exempted by specific legislative reference to the Volunteer Firefighters Relief Association Guidelines Act of 1971.

**History:** 1971 c 261 s 6; 1977 c 429 s 63; 2013 c 111 art 5 s 80

#### **424A.10 STATE SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFIT; VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS.**

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** For purposes of this section:

(1) "qualified recipient" means a volunteer firefighter who receives a lump-sum distribution of pension or retirement benefits from a volunteer firefighters relief association or from the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan;

(2) "survivor of a deceased active or deferred volunteer firefighter" means the surviving spouse of a deceased active or deferred volunteer firefighter or, if none, the surviving child or children of a deceased active or deferred volunteer firefighter, or, if none, the designated beneficiary of the deceased active or deferred volunteer firefighter, or, if no beneficiary has been designated, the estate of the deceased active or deferred volunteer firefighter;

(3) "active volunteer firefighter" means a person who:

(i) regularly renders fire suppression service, the performance or supervision of authorized fire prevention duties, or the performance or supervision of authorized emergency medical response activities for a fire department;

(ii) has met the statutory and other requirements for relief association membership; and

(iii) is deemed by the relief association under law and its bylaws to be a fully qualified member of the relief association or from the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan for at least one month;

(4) "deferred volunteer firefighter" means a former active volunteer firefighter who:

(i) terminated active firefighting service, the performance or supervision of authorized fire prevention duties, or the performance or supervision of authorized emergency medical response activities; and

(ii) has sufficient service credit from the applicable relief association or from the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan to be entitled to a service pension under the bylaws of the relief association, but has not applied for or has not received the service pension; and

(5) "volunteer firefighter" includes an individual whose services were utilized to perform or supervise fire prevention duties if authorized under section 424A.01, subdivision 5, and individuals whose services were used to perform emergency medical response duties or supervise emergency medical response activities if authorized under section 424A.01, subdivision 5a.

**Subd. 2. Payment of supplemental benefit.** (a) Upon the payment by a volunteer firefighters relief association or by the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan of a lump-sum distribution to a qualified recipient, the association must pay a supplemental benefit to the qualified recipient. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the relief association must pay the supplemental benefit out of its special fund and the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan must pay the supplemental benefit out of the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan. This benefit is an amount equal to ten percent of the regular lump-sum distribution that is paid on the basis of the recipient's service as a volunteer firefighter. In no case may the amount of the supplemental benefit exceed \$1,000. A supplemental benefit under this paragraph may not be paid to a survivor of a deceased active or deferred volunteer firefighter in that capacity.

(b) Upon the payment by a relief association or the retirement plan of a lump-sum survivor benefit to a survivor of a deceased active volunteer firefighter or of a deceased deferred volunteer firefighter, the association must pay a supplemental survivor benefit to the survivor of the deceased active or deferred volunteer firefighter from the special fund of the relief association and the retirement plan must pay a supplemental survivor benefit to the survivor of the deceased active or deferred volunteer firefighter from the retirement fund if chapter 353G so provides. The amount of the supplemental survivor benefit is 20 percent of the survivor benefit, but not to exceed \$2,000.

(c) For purposes of this section, the term "regular lump-sum distribution" means the pretax lump-sum distribution excluding any interest that may have been credited during a volunteer firefighter's period of deferral.

(d) An individual may receive a supplemental benefit under paragraph (a) or under paragraph (b), but not under both paragraphs with respect to one lump-sum volunteer firefighter benefit.

**Subd. 3. State reimbursement.** (a) Each year, to be eligible for state reimbursement of the amount of supplemental benefits paid under subdivision 2 during the preceding calendar year, the volunteer firefighters relief association or the statewide lump-sum volunteer firefighter plan shall apply to the commissioner of revenue by February 15. By March 15, the commissioner shall reimburse the relief association for the amount of the supplemental benefits paid by the relief association to qualified recipients and to survivors of deceased active or deferred volunteer firefighters.

(b) The commissioner of revenue shall prescribe the form of and supporting information that must be supplied as part of the application for state reimbursement. The commissioner of revenue shall reimburse the relief association by paying the reimbursement amount to the treasurer of the municipality where the association is located and shall reimburse the retirement plan by paying the reimbursement amount to the executive director of the Public Employees Retirement Association. Within 30 days after receipt, the municipal treasurer shall transmit the state reimbursement to the treasurer of the association if the association has filed a financial report with the municipality. If the relief association has not filed a financial report with the municipality, the municipal treasurer shall delay transmission of the reimbursement payment to the association until the complete financial report is filed. If the association has dissolved or has been removed as a trustee of state aid, the treasurer shall deposit the money in a special account in the municipal treasury, and the money may be disbursed only for the purposes and in the manner provided in section 424A.08. When paid to the association, the reimbursement payment must be deposited in the special fund of the relief association and when paid to the retirement plan, the reimbursement payment must be deposited in the retirement fund of the plan.

(c) A sum sufficient to make the payments is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner of revenue.

**Subd. 4. In lieu of income tax exclusion.** (a) The supplemental benefit provided by this section is in lieu of the state income tax exclusion for lump-sum distributions of retirement benefits paid to volunteer firefighters.

(b) If the law is modified to exclude or exempt volunteer firefighters' lump-sum distributions from state income taxation, the supplemental benefits under this section are no longer payable, beginning with the first calendar year in which the exclusion or exemption is effective. This subdivision does not apply to exemption of all or part of a lump-sum distribution under section 290.032 or 290.0802.

Subd. 5. [Repealed, 2013 c 111 art 6 s 13]

**History:** 1988 c 719 art 19 s 22; 1989 c 319 art 10 s 7; 1993 c 307 art 9 s 1; 2006 c 271 art 13 s 5; 2007 c 134 art 10 s 1-3; 2008 c 154 art 15 s 9; 2009 c 169 art 9 s 29-31; art 10 s 46-50; 2013 c 111 art 6 s 10,11; 2014 c 296 art 12 s 17; 2018 c 211 art 14 s 23; 1Sp2019 c 8 art 4 s 11; 2020 c 108 art 7 s 9