



Wyoming Retirement System

Partnering to Build Financial Security for Members and their Families

MATT MEAD
Governor

THOMAS WILLIAMS
Executive Director

HARRY L. WALES
Deputy Director

May 27, 2011

«Department_Name»

«Contact»

«Addr1»

«City», «State» «zip»

Re: Volunteer Firemen's Pension Plan

Dear «Contact»:

The Wyoming Retirement System (WRS) has undertaken an effort to confirm that volunteer fire departments participating in the Volunteer Firemen's Pension Fund (the Plan) are in compliance with Wyoming law and WRS regulatory requirements. The purpose of this letter is to clarify WRS interpretation of the statutory requirements articulated in Wyo. Stat. § 35-9-601 *et seq* as it pertains to member and department eligibility issues and to offer a few other friendly reminders. In the event these clarifications impact the current practice or procedure of a particular volunteer fire department in determining whether its firefighters are eligible to participate in the Plan, these interpretations shall be applied beginning January 1, 2012.

Monthly Meeting Attendance

Wyo. Stat. § 35-9-601(h) defines "volunteer fire department" as "any duly constituted and organized fire fighting unit: ... (iv) Holding monthly meetings to conduct business and training;" Wyo. Stat. § 35-9-601(a) defines "volunteer fireman" as "any individual who may or may not receive compensation for services rendered as a volunteer fireman and who: (i) Is carried on the regular rolls of, but devotes less than his entire time of employment to activities of a volunteer fire department, all or a portion of the members of which are volunteer; and (ii) During the course of any one (1) year, attends not less than fifty percent (50%) of the monthly volunteer fire department meetings."

WRS understands that each volunteer fire department determines the make-up and schedule of its monthly meetings, as well as attendance requirements for its firefighters. To avoid confusion, WRS interprets the statutory requirements for participation in the Plan to be that a volunteer fire department must hold at least one meeting per calendar month to conduct business and/or training, and volunteer firefighters electing to participate in the Plan must attend at least 50 percent of those monthly meetings. Therefore, if a department holds one meeting per month, its firefighters must

attend no less than six meetings in a calendar year. If a department schedules more than one meeting per month, a firefighter still needs to only attend one meeting per month for no less than six months in a calendar year to remain eligible for the Plan. Only one meeting per month shall count toward the attendance requirement. Effective January 1, 2012, any firefighter that does not meet the attendance requirement as herein interpreted will be suspended from participating in the Plan for one year.

Continuance of Monthly Pension Payments after Retiring from Active Service

WRS regulations allow a firefighter participating in the Plan to continue making payments to the Plan after terminating service as a volunteer firefighter if he or she has recorded at least ten (10) years of contributions to the Plan as an active volunteer firefighter in Wyoming. If a volunteer firefighter terminates membership prior to the ten (10) year minimum, he will not be allowed to continue making payments to the Plan. WRS classifies an active volunteer firefighter as both a “volunteer fireman” and a “participating member” as those terms are defined in statute. Upon receipt of a completed Volunteer Fire Notice of Termination form (WRS-7VF) on behalf of a member who meets the ten year minimum and elects to continue making payments to the Plan, WRS will classify the individual only as a “participating member” for pension plan purposes; no longer an active member of a volunteer fire department. **Any active volunteer firefighter must continue to meet the monthly meeting requirement regardless of years of service and/or contributions in order to remain eligible to participate in the Plan.**

Probationary Periods

An individual department may have a policy that requires a probationary period, but it would benefit the volunteer at the time of retirement to have contributions to the Plan begin as early as possible. If a department chooses not to pay contributions for a probationary member, WRS would accept contributions from an individual member paid on their own through the department during the probationary period.

Registration and Termination Forms

Please remember to submit all Volunteer Fire Registration forms (WRS-1VF) and Volunteer Fire Notice of Termination forms (WRS-7VF) in a timely manner.

Contribution Submission

Please remember to properly classify contributions sent to WRS under the correct tax status. Any contributions paid by a member must be classified as “taxed” contributions, and any contributions paid by a Department (Fire District, County, etc.) must be classified as “untaxed” contributions. For more information regarding contributions, member eligibility, and member buybacks, please refer to the Volunteer Fireman Pension Plan letter dated February 10, 2011, which can be accessed on our Web site at <http://retirement.state.wy.us/employers/complianceFAQ.html>.

WRS Staff Contact

As part of our continuous cross-training efforts, Debbie Grimm has assumed the day-to-day duties of the Volunteer Fire and Volunteer EMT Plans effective May 4, 2011. Debbie can be reached at (307) 777-5835 or debbie.grimm@wyo.gov.

Department Contact

In an effort to streamline operations and improve efficiency, it is important that WRS have valid Department contact information on file so we can relay information in a timely manner. Our computer system has the ability to readily store contact information for multiple individuals if you have more than one. **Please review the information on the next page and revise as needed.** The contact information on the left side of the page is what is currently in our system. If this is incorrect or incomplete, please line through the incorrect information and enter the correct information on the right side of the page.

Member Email Addresses

If your volunteer firefighters would like to provide us with their email addresses for communication purposes, please compile a list with the member's name and email address and forward a copy to Debbie. Email addresses will not be disclosed to outside sources.

Thank you so much for your continued partnership with the Wyoming Retirement System.

Sincerely,



Erin Gorney
Employer Compliance Auditor

CC: Harry Wales, Deputy Director
Ben Brandes, Legal Counsel
Rose Todd, Operations Manager

WRS # «Agency_Num»	«Department_Name»	If incorrect, please enter below
Mailing Address	«Addr1»	
City	«City»	
State, Zip	«State», «zip»	
	Main Contact:	
Name	«Contact»	
Phone	«Phone» «Phone_Ext»	
Email	«EMail»	
	Alternate Contact:	
Name	«Contact2»	
Phone	«Phone2» «Phone_Ext2»	
Email	«Email2»	