



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS | PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT ADMINISTRATION COMMISSION

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: All Retirement Boards

FROM: Bill Keefe, Executive Director

RE: *Violent Act Injury Disability – Recent Legislative Changes*

DATE: December 2, 2025

Governor Healey recently signed Chapter 73 of the Acts of 2025, which in Section 21 changed the definition of “Violent Act Injury” in Section 1 of G.L. c. 32 and, in Sections 22 and 23, made State Police Officers eligible for this benefit by amending Section 26 of G.L. c. 32.

The effective date of Chapter 73 of the Acts of 2025 is November 25, 2025, and the new provisions of the Violent Act Injury disability are applicable to any member who qualifies and has not been approved by PERAC for disability as of that date.

As you know, on July 31, 2024, Governor Healey signed Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2024, “An Act Relative to Disability Pensions and Critical Incident Stress Management for Violent Crimes” (“Violent Assault Disability”). This Act created an enhanced new type of G.L. c. 32, Section 7 accidental disability retirement benefit for certain firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians, and other licensed health care professionals, who become permanently physically incapacitated by reason of a violent attack. Pertinently, the Act added a definition for “Violent Act Injury” into Section 1 of G.L. c. 32. Following passage of this Act, PERAC issued Memo #28 of 2024, which provided a comprehensive overview of the Violent Assault Disability legislation.

Section 21 of Chapter 73 amends G.L. c. 32, § 1 to now read:

“Violent Act Injury” is defined in G.L. c. 32, § 1 as:

A catastrophic or life-threatening and permanent bodily injury sustained as a direct and proximate result of a violent attack upon a person by means of a dangerous weapon, which is used in a manner intended to cause serious injury or death, including, but not limited to, a firearm, knife, automobile or explosive device.



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Thus, this amendment changes the prior definition in the following way:

A catastrophic, **or** life-threatening ~~or life-altering~~ and permanent bodily injury sustained as a direct and proximate result of a violent attack upon a person by means of a dangerous weapon, which is **used in a manner intended to cause** ~~designed for the purpose of causing~~ serious injury or death, including, but not limited to, a firearm, knife, automobile or explosive device. (Emphases added).

Given these changes, PERAC is in the process of amending several of its forms to comply with the new language in the definition. These forms are the Member's Disability Application Form, the Treating Physician's Statement, the Employer's Statement, and the Medical Panel Certificates. Once complete, PERAC will issue a new Memorandum, which will supersede Memo #15 of 2025, which notified the retirement boards of the original changes to the forms.

Please note that the underlying instruction and guidance in PERAC Memo #28 of 2024 regarding how a retirement board should process a Violent Act Injury disability application has not changed.

In addition, Chapter 73 further expands the eligibility criteria for Violent Act Injury applicants to include Officers of the State Police. Section 22 of the Act provides:

- Paragraph (a) of subdivision (2) of section 26 of said chapter 32, as so appearing, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- This subdivision shall not apply to a member in service who is physically not able to perform the essential duties of the member's job by reason of violent act injury.

While Section 23 of the Act states:

- Said section 26 of said chapter 32, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by inserting after subdivision (2) the following subdivision:-
- (2½) Section 7 shall apply to any member in service classified in Group 3 who is an officer of the department of state police if the rating board, after an examination of such officer by a registered physician appointed by it, reports in writing to the state board of retirement that such officer is physically incapacitated for the performance of duty by reason of violent act injury occurring during the performance and within the scope of the officer's duty and without contributory negligence on the officer's part, and that such incapacity is likely to be permanent.

We trust the foregoing will be of assistance. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Deputy Executive Director Ken Hill at 617-591-8945 or at Kenneth.j.hill@mass.gov. Thank you.