

840 CMR: PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT ADMINISTRATION

840 CMR 15.00: MISCELLANEOUS

Section

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15.01: Affidavit of Retired Members and Beneficiaries

(1) No less frequently than once every two years, each retirement board shall require each member or beneficiary who receives a pension, retirement allowance, or survivor's allowance to file with the retirement board an affidavit under the penalties of perjury, at such time and in such form as the board shall prescribe, containing the following information:

- (a) the name of the member or beneficiary;
- (b) the current address of the member or beneficiary-;
- (c) a statement certifying that the member or beneficiary is currently living;
- (d) a statement describing the beneficiary's current marital status where marital status is relevant to continued receipt of benefits;
- (e) a statement describing the beneficiary's current dependency status where dependency is relevant to continued receipt of benefits; and
- (f) such additional information as the board may require to determine whether the member or beneficiary is entitled to continued receipt of benefits.

(2) The retirement board shall withhold the retirement benefits of any member or beneficiary who fails to file the affidavit within the time prescribed pending receipt of the affidavit. Upon receipt of the affidavit, any benefits so withheld shall be paid to the retired member or beneficiary.

(3) The retirement board may review and verify the accuracy of any affidavit submitted and shall audit a random sample of at least five per cent of the affidavits received.

15.02: Purchase of Prior Membership Creditable Service; Purchase of Creditable Service for Non-membership Service; Rates of Contribution Upon Return to Active Service

(1) Purchase of Prior Membership Creditable Service. Any member authorized by law to purchase prior creditable service may purchase such service by paying an amount equal to the accumulated regular deductions withdrawn by the member, together with regular interest. Any member may make a lump sum payment or installment payments over a period not exceeding five years and may, with the approval of the board, make installment payments over a period exceeding five years.

(2) Upon submission of documentation satisfactory to the retirement board, a member will be allowed to purchase creditable service for periods of non-membership employment. The amount of creditable service that may be purchased shall be determined by the retirement board in a manner consistent with the retirement board's supplementary regulations that have been approved by the Commission pursuant to 840 CMR 14.00. The member may purchase less than all non-membership service available for purchase; provided, however, that in such event the member must purchase the most recent time first.

(3) Rates of Contribution Upon Return to Active Service. The rates of contribution for members formerly in service who have returned to the service of the same or another governmental unit shall be as follows:

- (a) for any member who contributed to a retirement system and did not receive a refund of accumulated deductions when he or she left service, the contribution rate upon the member's return to service shall be the same rate as the member was contributing at the time he or she left service;

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(b) the contribution rate for any member who contributed to a retirement system, and received a refund of accumulated deductions after termination of service, shall be the contribution rate in effect when the member re-established membership, whether or not the member purchases prior creditable service; and

(c) for any member who contributed 8% of regular compensation as regular deductions during the member's prior service, the contribution rate shall be 8% upon the member's return to service.

15.03: Regular Compensation

(1) During any period of active service prior to July 1, 2009 the term "regular compensation" as defined by M.G.L. c. 32, § 1, shall be determined subject to the following:

(a) To be considered regular compensation, any compensation to an employee must:

1. have been actually paid to or on behalf of a member;
2. be made as remuneration for services actually rendered, for recurring payments for accrued sick leave, or for payments made pursuant to M.G.L. c. 41, § 111F in the year or part of a year to which the compensation is attributed;
3. be ordinary, normal, recurrent, repeated, and of indefinite duration;
4. be made pursuant to an official written policy of the employer or to a collective bargaining agreement;
5. be made on a non-discriminatory basis and be generally available for employees who are similarly situated relative to the purpose of the payment (e.g. a longevity payment made recurrently to all employees in a bargaining unit having attained a specific length of service) provided that the ability of a payment to be denied due to merit shall not exclude it for that reason from regular compensation.

(b) Regular compensation shall include any part of such salary, wages, or other compensation derived from federal grants, except as otherwise provided in M.G.L. c. 32, § 3(2)(a)(xi);

(c) Lump-sum or retroactive payments which would have been regular compensation if paid in the periods in which the services remunerated thereby were actually rendered will be allocated to said periods rather than being entirely attributed to the time of receipt for the purpose of determining a member's regular compensation.

(d) Provided they meet the general criteria in 840 CMR 15.03(1)(a) through (c), payments to be considered regular compensation shall include:

1. a member's annual rate of compensation as provided in an approved salary schedule;
2. any non-cash maintenance allowances in the form of full or partial boarding and housing, as provided in M.G.L. c. 32, § 22(1)(c);
3. any premiums paid by any governmental unit for the purchase of an individual or group annuity contract as authorized by M.G.L. c. 15, § 18A or by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37B;
4. any amounts paid as educational incentives;
5. any amounts paid for length of service;
6. any amounts paid as premiums for shift differentials; and
7. any amounts paid as cost-of-living bonuses or cost-of-living pay adjustments.

(2) During any period of active service prior to July 1, 2009, any extraordinary or ad hoc payment amount shall be excluded from regular compensation. Exclusions shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) any amounts paid for hours worked beyond the member's normal work schedule;
- (b) any amounts paid as premiums for working holidays, except as authorized by law;
- (c) any amounts paid as bonuses other than cost-of-living bonuses, provided that any payment to an employee or group of employees which will not recur or which will recur for only a limited or definite term will be considered a bonus, and further provided that any payments to an employee or group of employees as part of a salary augmentation plan or salary enhancement program which is provided for in an individual contract in effect on or before January 25, 2006 or in a collective bargaining agreement in effect on or before January 25, 2006, including payments under such a plan or program which will not recur or which will recur for only a limited or definite term, shall be treated as regular compensation; and further provided, that any employee who is covered by such an agreement or contract on January 25, 2006 and who begins, at any time during the life of a collective bargaining

agreement or individual employment contract in effect on or before January 25, 2006, to receive benefits and make retirement contributions pursuant to a salary augmentation plan or salary enhancement program under such a collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract, may complete the plan or program under that agreement or contract or under a successor collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract, provided that the successor collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract contains a salary augmentation plan or salary enhancement program; and further provided that the amount of the salary augmentation plan or salary enhancement program under a successor collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract which shall be treated as regular compensation shall not exceed the amount of the salary augmentation plan or salary enhancement program provided under the collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract in effect on or before January 25, 2006, and further provided that any member who has previously retired and is receiving benefits as of April 7, 2006 under the provisions of a salary augmentation plan or salary enhancement program shall have that plan deemed in compliance with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 32.

(d) any amounts paid in lieu of or for unused vacation, sick leave, or other leave;

(e) severance pay;

(f) any amounts paid as early retirement incentives; and

(g) any other payments made as a result of the member giving notice of retirement.

(3) During any period of active service subsequent to July 1, 2009 the term "regular compensation", as defined by M.G.L. c. 32, § 1, shall be determined subject to the following:

(a) to be considered regular compensation, any compensation to an employee must be compensation received exclusively as wages by an employee for services performed in the course of employment for his employer;

(b) "wages" shall mean the base salary or other base compensation of an employee paid to that employee for employment by an employer including pre-determined, non-discretionary, guaranteed payments paid by the employer to similarly situated employees, provided, that "wages" shall include payments made by the employer to the employee because of the character of the work, because of the employee's length of service, because of the time at which the work takes place as a condition of employment in a particular position, because of educational incentives, and payments for holding the training, certification, licensing or other educational incentives approved by the employer for the performance of services related to the position the employee holds and payments made by the employer to the employee calculated as a percentage of base pay;

(c) Any amount, benefit or payment included in the definition of "regular compensation" by law or by regulation prior to July 1, 2009 and included in any applicable collective bargaining agreement or individual contract for employment in effect on May 1, 2009, shall continue to be included in the definition of "regular compensation" during the term of that collective bargaining agreement or contract; provided, however, that any such amount, benefit or payment received after the term of said collective bargaining agreement or contract ends or after June 30, 2012, as the case may be, shall continue to be considered regular compensation unless such payment does not meet the criteria set forth in 840 CMR 15.03(3)(b) or is excluded by the provision of 840 CMR 15.03(3)(f);

(d) Regular compensation shall include any part of the wages derived from federal grants except as provided in M.G.L. c. 2 and (2)(a)(xi);

(e) Lump-sum retroactive payments which would have been wages if paid in the periods in which the services remunerated thereby were actually rendered will be allocated to said periods rather than being entirely attributed to the time of receipt for the purpose of determining a member's regular compensation;

(f) "Wages" shall not include, without limitation, overtime, commissions, bonuses other than cost-of-living bonuses, amounts derived from salary enhancements or salary augmentation plans which will recur for a limited or definite term, indirect, in-kind or other payments for such items as housing, lodging, travel, clothing allowances, annuities, welfare benefits, lump sum buyouts for workers' compensation, job-related expense payments, automobile usage, insurance premiums, dependent care assistance, one-time lump sum payments in lieu of or for unused vacation or sick leave or the payment for termination, severance, dismissal or ally amounts paid as premiums for working holidays, except in the

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case of police officers, firefighters and employees of a municipal department who are employed as fire alarm signal operators or signal maintenance repairmen money paid for holidays shall be regarded as regular compensation, amounts paid as early retirement incentives or any other payment made as a result of the employer having knowledge of the member's retirement, tuition, payments in kind and all payments other than payment received by an individual from his employing unit for services rendered to such employing unit, regardless of federal taxability; provided further, that notwithstanding the foregoing, in the case of a teacher employed in a public day school who is a member of the teachers' retirement system, salary payable under the terms of an annual contract for additional services in such school and compensation for services rendered by a teacher in connection with a school lunch program or for services in connection with a program of instruction of physical education and athletic contests as authorized by M.G.L. c. 71, § 47 shall be regarded as "regular compensation" rather than as bonus or overtime and shall be included in the salary on which deductions are to be paid to the annuity savings fund of the teachers' retirement system.

### 15.04: Benefit Calculation Factors

All retirement allowances effective on or after January 12, 1988 shall be computed on the basis of the Combined Annuity Table of Mortality set back one year and interest at the rate of 3% per annum and Option C factors, when applicable, pursuant to St. 1987, c. 697.

### REGULATORY AUTHORITY

840 CMR 15.00: M.G.L. c. 7, § 50; c. 32, and 21.