

411.22 Liability of third parties — subrogation.

1. If a member receives an injury or dies for which benefits are payable under section 411.6, subsection 3, 5, 8, or 9, or section 411.15, and if the injury or death is caused under circumstances creating a legal liability for damages against a third party other than the retirement system, the retirement system is subrogated to the rights of the member or the member's beneficiary entitled to receive a death benefit and may maintain an action for damages against the third party for lost earnings and lost earnings capacity. If the retirement system recovers damages in the action, the court shall enter judgment for distribution of the recovery as follows:

a. A sum sufficient to repay the retirement system for the amount of such benefits actually paid by the retirement system up to the time of the entering of the judgment.

b. A sum sufficient to pay the retirement system the present worth, computed at the interest rate assumption adopted by the system pursuant to section 411.5, subsection 9, of the future payments of such benefits, for which the retirement system is liable, but the sum is not a final adjudication of the future payments which the member is entitled to receive.

c. A sum sufficient to repay the retirement system for the costs and expenses of maintaining the action.

d. Any balance remaining after the repayments provided by paragraphs "a" through "c" shall be paid to the injured member, or the beneficiary under section 411.6, subsection 8 or 9, whichever is applicable.

2. If the system, after receiving written notice of the third-party liability, declines in writing to maintain an action against the third party or fails to maintain an action within one hundred eighty days of receiving written notice of the third-party liability, the member, the member's estate, or the legal representative of the member or the member's estate, may maintain an action for damages against the third party. If such an action is commenced, the plaintiff member, estate, or representative shall serve a copy of the original notice upon the retirement system not less than ten days before the trial of the action, but a failure to serve the notice does not prejudice the rights of the retirement system, and the following rights and duties ensue:

a. The retirement system shall be indemnified out of the recovery of damages to the extent of benefit payments paid or awarded by the retirement system, with legal interest, except that the plaintiff member's or estate's attorney fees may be first allowed by the district court. For purposes of this paragraph, "*benefit payments paid or awarded*" means the sum of the following amounts:

(1) The amount of benefits actually paid by the retirement system up to the time of the entering of the judgment.

(2) The present worth, computed at the interest rate provided in section 535.3 for court judgments and decrees, of the future payments of such benefits, for which the retirement system is liable, but the sum is not a final adjudication of the future payments which the member is entitled to receive.

b. The retirement system has a lien on the damage claim against the third party and on any judgment on the damage claim for benefits for which the retirement system is liable. In order to continue and preserve the lien, the retirement system shall file a notice of the lien within thirty days after receiving a copy of the original notice in the office of the clerk of the district court in which the action is filed.

3. Before a settlement is effective between the retirement system and a third party who is liable for an injury or death, the member or beneficiary must consent in writing to the settlement; and if the settlement is between the member or the member's estate and a third party, the retirement system must consent in writing to the settlement; or on refusal to consent, in either case, the district court in the county in which either the city or the retirement system is located must consent in writing to the settlement.

4. For purposes of subrogation under this section, a payment made to an injured member, a member's estate, or the legal representative of the member or member's estate, by or on behalf of a third party or the third party's principal or agent, who is liable for, connected with, or involved in causing the injury or death of the member, shall be considered paid as damages because the injury or death was caused under circumstances creating a legal liability

against the third party, whether the payment is made under a covenant not to sue, compromise settlement, denial of liability, or is otherwise made.

86 Acts, ch 1203, §5; 88 Acts, ch 1158, §71; 98 Acts, ch 1183, §95, 96; 2000 Acts, ch 1077, §109; 2000 Acts, ch 1232, §69; 2004 Acts, ch 1103, §68