

495—11.5 (97B) Bona fide retirement and bona fide refund.

11.5(1) *Bona fide retirement—general.* To receive retirement benefits, a member under the age of 70 must officially leave employment with all IPERS covered employers, give up all rights as an employee, and complete a period of bona fide retirement. A period of bona fide retirement means four or more consecutive calendar months for which the member qualifies for monthly retirement benefit payments. The qualification period begins with the member's first month of entitlement for retirement benefits as approved by IPERS. A member may not return to covered employment before filing a completed application for benefits. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the continuation of group insurance coverage at employee rates for the remainder of the school year for a school employee who retires following completion of services by that individual shall not cause that person to be in violation of IPERS' bona fide retirement requirements.

A member will not be considered to have a bona fide retirement if the member is a school or university employee and returns to work with the employer after the normal summer vacation. In other positions, temporary or seasonal interruption of service which does not terminate the period of employment does not constitute a bona fide retirement. A member also will not be considered to have a bona fide retirement if the member has, prior to or during the member's first month of entitlement, entered into contractual arrangements with the employer to return to employment after the expiration of the four-month bona fide retirement period.

Effective July 1, 1990, a school employee will not be considered terminated if, while performing the normal duties, the employee performs for the same employer additional duties which take the employee beyond the expected termination date for the normal duties. Only when all the employee's compensated duties cease for that employer will that employee be considered terminated.

The bona fide retirement period will be waived, however, if the member is elected to public office which term begins during the normal four-month bona fide retirement period. This waiver does not apply if the member was an elected official who was reelected to the same position for another term. The bona fide retirement period will also be waived for state legislators who terminate their nonlegislative employment and the IPERS coverage for their legislative employment and begin retirement but wish to continue with their legislative duties.

A member will have a bona fide retirement if the member returns to work as an independent contractor with a public employer during the four-month qualifying period. Independent contractors are not covered under IPERS.

Effective July 1, 1998, through June 30, 2000, a member does not have a bona fide retirement until all employment with covered employers, including employment which is not covered by 495—Chapter 4, is terminated and the member receives at least four monthly benefit payments. In order to receive retirement benefits, the member must file a completed application for benefits with IPERS before returning to any employment with the same employer.

Effective July 1, 2000, a member does not have a bona fide retirement until all employment with covered employers, including employment which is not covered under this chapter, is terminated for at least one month, and the member does not return to covered employment for an additional three months. In order to receive retirement benefits, the member must file a completed application for benefits before returning to any employment with a covered employer.

11.5(2) *Bona fide retirement—licensed health care professionals.* For retirees whose first month of entitlement is no earlier than July 2004 and no later than June 2012, a retiree who is reemployed as a "licensed health care professional" by a "public hospital" does not have a bona fide retirement until all employment with covered employers is terminated for at least one calendar month. In order to receive retirement benefits, the member must file a completed application for benefits form before returning to any employment with a covered employer.

"Licensed health care professional" means a public employee who is a physician, surgeon, podiatrist, osteopath, psychologist, physical therapist, physical therapist assistant, nurse, speech pathologist, audiologist, occupational therapist, respiratory therapist, pharmacist, social worker, dietitian, mental health counselor, or physician assistant who is required to be licensed under Iowa Code chapter 147.

“Public hospital” means a governmental entity of a political subdivision of the state of Iowa that is authorized by legislative authority. For purposes of this subrule, a “public hospital” must also meet the requirements of Iowa Code section 249J.3. Under Iowa Code section 249J.3, a “public hospital” must be licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 135B and governed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 145A(merged hospitals), Iowa Code chapter 347 (county hospitals), Iowa Code chapter 347A (county hospitals payable from revenue), or Iowa Code chapter 392 (creation by city of a hospital or health care facility). For the purposes of this definition, “public hospital” does not include a hospital or medical care facility that is funded, operated, or administered by the Iowa department of human services, Iowa department of corrections, or board of regents, or the Iowa Veterans Home.

A “public hospital” possesses the powers conferred upon it by statute, the Iowa Constitution, and regulatory provisions that are unique to governmental entities and hospitals. For example, a “public hospital” may finance its activities by tax levies or the issuance of bonds, condemn property, hold elections, and join forces with other governmental entities in cooperative ventures that are authorized under Iowa Code chapter 28D and Iowa Code chapter 28E. “Public hospitals” are subject to scrutiny by the public by complying with Iowa Code chapter 21 (open meetings Act) and Iowa Code chapter 22(open records Act). Public employees of a “public hospital” are covered by Iowa Code chapter 20 (public employment relations Act). A “public hospital” can be distinguished from a profit or not-for-profit hospital by examining whether the focus of the hospital is community service with profits being applied not to rates of return to investors, but to enhance community services, facility upgrading, or subsidized care for persons unable to pay the full cost of service.

This subrule only applies to reemployments that meet all the foregoing requirements and in addition occur following a “complete termination of employment.” A “complete termination of employment” means: (1) the employer must post the opening and conduct a job search; (2) the retired member must receive all termination payouts that are mandatory for other terminated employees of that employer; (3) the retired member must give up all perquisites of seniority, to the extent applicable to all other terminated employees of that employer; and (4) the retired member must not enter into a reemployment agreement with the prior employer or another public hospital as defined in this subrule prior to or during the first month of entitlement.

11.5(3) *Bona fide refund.* The 30-day bona fide refund period shall be waived for an elected official covered under Iowa Code section 97B.1A(8) “a”(1), and for a member of the general assembly covered under Iowa Code section 97B.1A(8) “a”(2), when the elected official or legislator notifies IPERS of the intent to terminate IPERS coverage for the elective office and, at the same time, terminates all other IPERS covered employment prior to the issuance of the refund. Such an official may remain in the elective office and receive an IPERS refund without violating IPERS’ bona fide refund rules. If such elected official terminates coverage for the elective office and also terminates all other IPERS covered employment but is then reemployed in covered employment, and has not received a refund as of the date of hire, the refund shall not be made. Furthermore, if such elected official is reemployed in covered employment, the election to revoke IPERS coverage for the elective position shall remain in effect, and the public official shall not be eligible for new IPERS coverage for such elected position.

The prior election to revoke IPERS coverage for the elected position shall also remain in effect if such elected official is reelected to the same position without an intervening term out of office. The waiver granted in this subrule shall be applicable to such elected officials who were in violation of the prior bona fide refund rules on and after November 1, 2002, when such individuals have not repaid the previously invalid refund.

If a member takes a refund in violation of the bona fide refund requirements of Iowa Code section 97B.53(4), the member shall have 30 days from the date of written notice by IPERS to repay the refund in full without interest. Thereafter, in order to receive service credit for the period covered by the refund, the member shall be required to buy back the period of service at its full actuarial cost.

11.5(4) *Part-time appointed members of boards or commissions receiving minimal noncovered wages.* Solely for purposes of determining whether a member has severed all employment with all covered employers and has remained out of employment as required under Iowa Code section 97B.52A, persons who have been appointed as part-time members of boards or commissions prior to or during

their first month of entitlement and who receive only per diem and reimbursements for reasonable business expenses for such positions will be deemed not to be in employment prohibited under Iowa Code section 97B.52A.

For purposes of this subrule, per diem shall not exceed the amount authorized under Iowa Code section 7E.6(1)“a” for members of boards, committees, commissions, and councils within the executive branch of state government. This limit shall apply regardless of whether or not the position in question is within the executive branch of state government.

Members of boards and commissions not exempted under this subrule include: (a) those who are entitled to the payment of per diem regardless of attendance at board or commission meetings, and (b) those who would have received per diem in excess of the amount authorized under Iowa Code section 7E.6(1)“a” were it not for an agreement by the member to waive such compensation.

Persons appointed as part-time board or commission members who receive only per diem as set forth above and reimbursements of reasonable business expenses may continue in or accept appointments to such positions without violating the bona fide retirement rules under Iowa Code section 97B.52A.

11.5(5) *Members of the national guard who are called into state active duty.* Effective May 25, 2008, members of the national guard who are called into state active duty as defined in Iowa Code section 29A.1 in noncovered positions during the required period of complete severance will not be in violation of the bona fide retirement requirements of Iowa Code section 97B.52A as amended by 2010 Iowa Acts, House File 2518, section 33.

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