

**495—11.3(97B) First month of entitlement (FME).**

**11.3(1) General.** A member shall submit a written application to IPERS setting forth the retirement date, provided the member has attained at least age 55 by the retirement date and the retirement date is after the member's last day of service. A member's first month of entitlement shall be no earlier than the first day of the first month after the member's date of termination from employment or, if later, the month provided for under subrule 11.3(2). No payment shall be made for any month prior to the month the completed application for benefits is received by IPERS.

If a member files a retirement application but fails to select a valid first month of entitlement, IPERS will select by default the earliest month possible. A member may appeal this default selection by sending written notice of the appeal postmarked on or before 30 days after a notice of the default selection was mailed to the member. Notice of the default selection is deemed sufficient if sent to the member at the member's address.

**11.3(2) Additional FME provisions.** Effective January 1, 2001, employees of a school corporation who are permitted by the terms of their employment contracts to receive their annual salaries in monthly installments over periods ranging from 9 to 12 months may retire at the end of a school year and receive trailing wages through the end of the contract year if they have completely fulfilled their contract obligations at the time of retirement. For purposes of this paragraph, "school corporation" means body politic described in Iowa Code sections 260C.16 (community colleges), 273.2 (area education agencies) and 273.1 (K-12 public schools). For purposes of this paragraph, "trailing wages" means previously earned wage payments made to such employees of a school corporation after the first month of entitlement. This exception does not apply to hourly employees, including those who make arrangements with their employers to hold back hourly wages for payment at a later date, to employees who are placed on sick or disability leave or leave of absence, or to employees who receive lump sum leave, vacation leave, early retirement incentive pay or any other lump sum payments in installments.

For all employees of all IPERS-covered employers who terminate employment in January 2003, or later, if the final paycheck is paid within the same quarter or within one quarter after termination and wages are reported under the normal pay schedule, the first month of entitlement shall be the month following termination. However, if the last paycheck is paid more than one quarter after the termination, the first month of entitlement shall be the first month after the employee is paid the last paycheck. Under no circumstances shall such trailing wages result in more than one quarter of service credit being added to retiring members' earning records.

**11.3(3) Survival into designated FME.** To be eligible for a monthly retirement benefit, the member must survive into the designated first month of entitlement. If the member dies prior to the first month of entitlement, the member's application for monthly benefits is canceled and the distribution of the member's account is made pursuant to Iowa Code section 97B.52. Cancellation of the application shall not invalidate a beneficiary designation. If the application is dated later in time than any other designations, IPERS will accept the designation in a canceled application as binding until a subsequent designation is filed.

**11.3(4) Members retiring under the rule of 88.** The first month of entitlement of a member qualifying under the rule of 88 shall be the first of the month when the member's age as of the last birthday and years of service equal 88. The fact that a member's birthday allowing a member to qualify for the rule of 88 is the same month as the first month of entitlement does not affect the retirement date.

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