

**R e t i r i n g   R i g h t !**



Montana Public Employee  
Retirement Administration  
MPERA

**S**teps to Retirement

**2008**

**T**he Montana Public Employee Retirement Administration (MPERA) has prepared a checklist to help you make the retirement process as easy as possible. Here is a list of things you should do before you retire.

- ◆ Attend a pre-retirement seminar as early as 5 years before you retire. Yes, 5 years.
- ◆ Six months prior to your retirement contact MPERA and request a retirement benefit estimate. Allow 4 to 6 weeks to receive your estimate.
- ◆ Review the estimate and check all the numbers. Contact MPERA if you find any discrepancies.
- ◆ At this point you may want to contact a financial advisor to assist in your decision making process.
- ◆ Along with your estimate, you will receive:
  1. an Important Form, which contains further information and instructions regarding the retirement process;
  2. a Retirement Application;
  3. a Tax Withholding Certificate;
  4. a Direct Deposit Form.
- ◆ Complete and return the white copy of your Important Form to MPERA
- ◆ Complete your Application, including your retirement option. Obtain the necessary signatures. Attach certified birth certificates for you and you contingent annuitant. (See page 6 for other acceptable documents.)
- ◆ You should also submit:
  - The completed Tax Withholding Certificate.
  - The completed Direct Deposit Form.

MPERA will send you a letter confirming receipt of your completed application.

- ◆ Contact your payroll clerk if you wish to continue your health insurance.

**Your retirement process is underway!**

**Y**ou are embarking on a new chapter in your life. To smooth your transition into retirement, MPERA has provided answers to the most commonly asked questions.

*The following information does **not** apply to the PERS Defined Contribution Retirement Plan or the State of Montana 457 deferred compensation plan.*

### **How do I start the process?**

- Six months prior to your expected retirement date, contact MPERA for a retirement estimate.
- Your application should be filed with MPERA 30 to 90 days before your retirement date.

### **What additional documents does MPERA need?**

You must provide proof-of-age documents for both yourself and your contingent annuitant. (See Acceptable Documents on page 6.)

### **What kind of retirement benefit payments are available?**

- Monthly benefit payable to you only, for life.
- Optional survivor payments may be available. See your member handbook for details.
- Lump sum payment in lieu of a monthly benefit.

### **How much will I receive under each of the available options?**

You can request estimates for all available retirement options. We can not provide exact amounts until you terminate from employment. Remember that an estimate is not binding and is subject to verification of service and salary.



## **How do I choose a retirement benefit option?**

An explanation of the options is provided with your retirement estimate. Read the description of the options carefully. Select an option only after carefully considering your personal needs and circumstances.

## **When will my retirement be effective?**

You must terminate employment before you can retire. Your retirement will be effective on the 1st day of the month following your termination date, unless otherwise specified. For example, if you terminate June 30th, your retirement will be effective July 1st.

## **When will I receive my first check?**

Your monthly retirement benefit is paid on the last working day of each month. For example, your July benefit will be mailed on the last working day of July. For the quickest receipt of your benefit, direct deposit is recommended.

## **What if I have questions regarding my retirement benefit estimate?**

You may call MPERA at (406) 444-3154 or toll free (877) 275-7372 to speak to a member services analyst or set up an appointment. Appointments are scheduled between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm and should be arranged in advance.

## **Are there other things to consider?**

Check with your **employer** regarding:

- Supplemental plans
- Deferral of final payout of your sick and annual leave
- Volunteer Employee Benefit Association (VEBA)
- Health, life and supplemental insurance
- Automatic payments

*This list is **not** inclusive of all things to consider.*

## Required Forms and Documents

### 1. Retirement Application Front and Back Side

- A. Front — Personal Information  
Complete all blanks.
- B. Front — Retirement Option  
Select a retirement option.
- C. Back — Beneficiary Designation
  - Option 1 - Designate beneficiary(ies).
  - Options 2 or 3 - Designate contingent annuitant.
  - Option 4, 10-year or 20-year period certain - Designate contingent annuitant(s).
- D. Back — Signature  
Sign your completed application and have your signature witnessed.

### 2. Tax Withholding Certificate

Federal and Montana state income taxes can be withheld from your retirement benefit. **Taxes will not be withheld unless you complete the necessary forms.** You may change your withholding status at anytime. If you're a nonresident, check your state's tax laws regarding your Montana monthly retirement benefit.

Every January you will receive a 1099R showing the gross and taxable benefits paid to you and the taxes withheld for the previous year. Consult a tax professional regarding your own situation.

### 3. Direct Deposit Form

You must complete this form to authorize MPERA to send your monthly payment to the identified financial institution for deposit in your account.

## Acceptable Documents

The following documents are acceptable for verifying birth dates. You may send an original document or you may send a legible copy.

### **Any one of the following documents is acceptable:**

- A certified copy of a birth certificate
- Notification of birth registration

### **A driver's license and one of the following documents would be considered acceptable:**

- Passport
- A church certificate (birth, baptismal, blessing, etc.)
- A military service record
- An original naturalization record or immigration certificate
- Your child's birth certificate on which your date of birth is shown
- A certified school record showing age or date of birth
- A marriage record or certified copy, if it shows date of birth
- A copy of a U.S. Bureau of the Census record
- Tribal membership certificate

### **Return All Forms To:**

Montana Public Employee  
Retirement Administration  
(MPERA)  
P.O. Box 200131  
Helena, MT 59620-0131

## Document Checklist



- √ **Birth certificates or other proof-of-age documents for yourself and your contingent annuitant.**
- √ **Your contingent annuitant's social security number.**
- √ **The front and back of the retirement application completed and signed.**
- √ **A tax withholding certificate, completed and signed.**
- √ **A completed and signed Direct Deposit form.**

## After You Retire



**Address Changes** are important when it comes to protecting your check. Even though your retirement check may be sent directly to a financial institution, we need a current home address to ensure that publications, year-end tax and other important documents are sent directly to you. Requests for address changes must have your signature.

**Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)** deposits your monthly check directly to your financial institution account for its safety and your convenience.

**Personal Changes** such as divorce or death of your beneficiary or contingent annuitant may impact your retirement benefit. Notify MPERA immediately.

**MONTANA PUBLIC EMPLOYEE  
RETIREMENT ADMINISTRATION**

**100 North Park Suite 200**

**P.O. Box 200131**

**Helena, MT 59620-0131**

**(406) 444-3154**

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3,000 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of      cents per copy, for a total cost of \$      for printing and \$00 for distribution.