EMPLOYER REPORTING FAQ'S

PERS Optional Membership Election

Q: Which employees are eligible for PERS optional membership?

> **A**: All employees hired in a part-time PERS position of 960 hours a year or less are eligible for PERS optional membership, including seasonal employees.
> **A**: Employees hired in a full-time PERS position exceeding 960 hours a year are automatically PERS members.
> **A**: For schools and universities in particular: Fulltime students employed at and attending the same school or university are not eligible for PERS. Please see the list of job codes on MPERA's website for which code to use report these employees.

Q: How do employees eligible for optional PERS membership elect to enroll in or decline PERS membership?

> **A**: Employers must offer eligible employees the PERS Optional Membership Election Form, per 19-3-412, MCA.
> **A**: An employer must return a copy of this completed form to MPERA, so MPERA can verify the employee's election.

Q: When do optional membership election forms need to be returned to MPERA?

> **A**: A copy of the completed PERS optional membership election form must be returned to MPERA within 90 days of an employee's hire.

Pensionable and Non-Pensionable Compensation

Q: Pensionable compensation is wages/salary from which members receive payroll contributions to their pension. What kind of compensation needs to be reported to MPERA as pensionable?

A: The MPERA website has a reference sheet noting what kind of compensation is pensionable for each retirement system. Visit the Contributions by Pay Types Guide for more information.

> Reminders:
> - Longevity pay is considered pensionable, even if it paid only once a year in a lump-sum (a once-a-year longevity payment is not considered a bonus).
> - Bonuses are temporary, one-time payments and are not considered pensionable Regular Pay.
> - For PERS only, non-receipt-based stipends/allowances are considered pensionable compensation, such as allowances for cell phones, uniforms, etc.
>
> For K-12 schools in particular:
> - Making a payout of sick and vacation time at the end of the school year is only pensionable if the employee is also being terminated from employment.
> - Stipends for PERS employees taking on a student advising role are considered TRS compensation and not PERS. For example, a student council advisor or prom advisor stipend would not be considered PERS compensation.

Payroll Report Deadlines and Waiving past due Invoices

Q: When are payroll reports due?

   A: Payroll reports are due five working days after each regular occurring payday.

Q: What if a payroll report is submitted after the deadline?

   A: Late payroll reports are subject to late fees of 9% a year or $10 a day, whichever is greater.

Q: Can late fees be waived?
   A: A request to have late fees waived due to extenuating circumstances may be made in writing (including via email), but there is never a guarantee late fees will be waived by MPERA.

Loading Files

Q: I loaded my file, but I don't see it under the employer reporting. Can you look and make sure it loaded?

   A: If you are unable to locate your most recent report under the Employer Report Summary, your report contains errors.

   You can view these errors by performing the following steps:
   a. Click on Processed Files under Employer Reporting
   b. In the Processed Files Lookup Screen, click on the Search Button
   c. A list of files will show in the Search Results section. The top file is the newest and usually the one you are working on.
   d. Click on the File Header ID, once in the Processed Files Maintenance screen, read the error message displayed in the File Details (Note the line number given and the error).

   To correct the error, perform the following steps:
   e. Click on the status in blue down in the Status Summary.
   f. In the Criteria section, type the line number from the error message in the Line Number section. Click the Search Button.
   g. Click on the blue line number (this provides a format of the line information that is easier to read. the line information.
   h. Make the correction and re-upload your file

   Helpful Tip: ERIC will only give you one error at a time.

Total Compensation

Q: I keep getting an error in my report for a total compensation record not matching what I'm reporting in their related payroll details, what am I doing wrong?

   A: The Total Compensation is the total of all contributable Pay Types (refer to the Contribution by Pay Types Guide). On the Total Compensation Pay Type detail, scroll down to the related payroll. In this section you will find all the different pay types you recorded. The Total Compensation will equal the amount under related details that we take contributions on. Always double check that you used the correct pay type (example; contributions are not taken on the following Pay Types - Bonus, Other Pay which includes reimbursements since they are not considered compensation).

Splitting By Pay Types

Q: My employee worked his/her regular hours, but also received holiday pay and had a few vacation days. How do I report that?

> **A**: You will report each type of pay as an individual pay type. For example, your employee worked 24 hours under regular pay, 8 hours under holiday pay and 8 hours under vacation pay. Each pay type should be reported individually to reflect hours and earnings under the corresponding pay type.
>
> Helpful Tip: For more information regarding Pay Types visit the Contributions by Pay Type Guide.

Enrollments

Q: My enrollment is still in review for the new employee I'm trying to enroll, how can I get my enrollment valid?

> **A**: When your enrollment is still in review, go down to the other details section and look at the error. The most common errors are (member is supposed to be a mandatory PERS or they are already enrolled under a different job classification). If the member is supposed to be a mandatory PERS, just change the job classification to PERS member. If you are enrolling them under a different job classification, just suppress the warning.
>
> Helpful Tip: After any changes, hit save. Once all changes have been made and saved, then post the enrollment.

Adding Expected Payroll Details

Q: What does the "expected payroll detail" error message mean?

> **A**: If you receive the expected payroll detail error for a member(s), it's due to ERIC anticipating a payroll detail record for an employee. To resolve this error, you need to first verify the employee is still employed with you. If they are no longer employed, please report with zero earnings, and terminate them. If they are still employed, please report them with zero earnings and the pay type "other i.e., reimbursement".

Working Retirees

Q: I have a working retiree on staff now, can you direct me on reporting them?

> **A**: The first step will be to enroll them in the job classification "working retiree". Depending on their age, the working retiree will have an hour limitation, a wage limitation or both. We have literature on those age restrictions on our website under "Retirees" in the "Working after retirement" section.

Job Classifications

Q: Do you have resources to determine job class?

    A: Yes, it can be found on our website mpera.mt.gov under the top header for Employers. There are also two flowcharts for optional employees in the Employer Forms section.
        a. *Job Classification Pay Types*
        b. *Optional Membership Flowchart for School District Employees*
        c. *Optional Membership Flowchart for Non-School District Employees*

Reporting All Employees

Q: The employee isn't a PERS member, why do I have to report them?

    A: According to [ARM 2.43.2114](#), all employees must be reported to us regardless of job classification. This benefits the employee if he/she switches jobs and becomes a PERS member.

Submitting Payments

Q: I created my invoice but had to step away and come back to it. Now I don't know where to go to complete my payment. Can you help?

    A: You can complete your payment by following these steps:
        a. Under Financial Information click on Payment
        b. Select your payment type (ACH or Check) depending on how you pay
        c. Click the New Button under Search Results and enter payment information as normal.

Earnings Error

Q: I'm getting an error stating my employees rate times hours doesn't equal what I'm reporting. How do I fix this?

    A: This error is stating the rate times hours you have entered, do not match the earnings put in. Go into the employees Payroll Detail Record and adjust either the earnings, hourly wage or the hours worked to reflect what it should be for the members pay.