



Retiree Reminder

for retired members of the Maine Public Employees Retirement System

Winter 2020-2021



Lobby Operations

Everyone at MainePERS sends our wishes for a happy, healthy and safe winter.

We are doing our part to help you stay safe and healthy while conducting your MainePERS business. This means our lobby hours may change throughout the winter based on the general health risk indexes reported by the Maine CDC.

During those periods where our lobby is closed, our foyer will remain open between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. as an easy, secure and safe way to hand deliver information to us. Masks are required to enter the foyer. Hand sanitizer is available on a table along with pens.

We do encourage the use of mail or secure email for most of your MainePERS business. We are providing postage paid return envelopes to make it easier for you to use the mail and secure email if you prefer electronic communication.

Thank you for staying safe and helping us to stay healthy so we can be here for your retirement needs. Please give us a call any time at 207-512-3100 for help in how best to deliver your or receive our information quickly and safely.

A Few Questions Safeguards Your Data

Responding quickly to your requests for retirement information and safeguarding your MainePERS data are two of our top priorities.

One way we safeguard your information is to send the information you request about your account to the confirmed mailing address we have on file. While this protects the safety of your information, it may take longer than you want.

We recently added a new security feature that allows us to provide much of the confidential information you request over the phone. If you choose, we ask you a few questions to confirm that it's you, and then answer your questions or send the information you need using secure email or the United States Postal Service (USPS).

We are able to bring you this convenience by working with a nationally recognized organization that provides financial institutions like us with random questions that only you are expected to answer successfully. Your answers are used for that telephone call only and are not stored or recorded at MainePERS.

Stay Cybersafe

The pandemic has not slowed cybercriminals. The good news is cybersecurity experts keep finding better ways for all of us to protect our identity.

Better Passwords. Experts now suggest two ways to increase the security of the passwords you use.

The first way is to use complex passwords. This is what many of us already do. For example, adding a capital letter, number and special character to "rover1234" becomes "Rov5r1@#four", creating a complex, and harder to crack, password.

"Passphrases" are gaining popularity as a stronger way to keep your passwords safe and easier for you to remember.

A passphrase is a string of words that you can remember but isn't easy to guess. One that makes us smile is "successinretirementisgoodplanning". Adding capitals and special characters, "Succ5ss1nRetirementisGoodplann!ng" makes it stronger.



Annual Notice of Right to Elect or Revoke Federal Tax Withholding

You have the right to decide whether or not you want federal income tax withheld from your monthly MainePERS benefit payment.

When making your decision, remember to take into account that you are still responsible for payment of federal income tax on the taxable portion of your MainePERS benefit when you file your return. Not having enough tax withheld or paid in during the year could leave you subject to tax penalties under the federal estimated tax payment rules.

You may change your current withholding election by sending us a completed W-4P found on the Internal Revenue Service website at www.irs.gov. No action is necessary if you do not wish to change your current income tax withholding.

State of Maine Income Tax and the Pension Income Deduction

The holidays are soon followed each year by preparations for filing your Federal and State of Maine Income Tax Returns. We help you prepare by mailing a Form 1099-R every January with the amount of the taxable portion of your MainePERS retirement benefit.

The good news is you may qualify for a pension income deduction when filing your State of Maine Income Tax Return because you are a recipient of a MainePERS retirement benefit.

The State of Maine provides a deduction from gross income of up to \$10,000 if you file as a single taxpayer. Married taxpayers may qualify for a deduction of up to \$20,000.

More information about this deduction can be found on our new website at www.mainebers.org. Click on the "Retirement" tab at the top of our homepage, then on "Benefit and Tax Information", and go to Question 11.

Gross Federal Income Tax Exclusion for Eligible Retired Public Safety Workers

Retired public safety workers receiving a MainePERS retirement benefit may be eligible to deduct up to \$3,000 from gross income on their federal tax return. Two conditions must be met in order to qualify for this deduction. The first is you must have retired at or after your normal retirement age or due to disability. The second is you must be having your health insurance premiums deducted directly from your MainePERS benefit.

More information about this deduction can be found at www.mainebers.org. Click on the "Retirement" tab at the top of our homepage, then on "Benefit and Tax Information", and go to Question 12.

Annual Check-up for Your Group Life Insurance Beneficiaries

We want the beneficiaries you intend to receive your life insurance benefits to receive them as soon as possible when the time comes. Every once in a while, however, members forget to change their beneficiary information with us after a life event like a divorce. Checking your beneficiaries once a year when you are organizing other year-end financial information such as your taxes will help us get your life insurance benefits to your intended beneficiaries as quickly as possible.

Keeping In Touch

We know you move, but we don't always know where! Each year we receive a large amount of returned mail for members and retirees who moved but forgot to let us know. We understand this. It is nearly impossible to remember everyone you need to notify when you move.

So we have another suggestion to add to your list when you are organizing your year-end financial information. Check your contact information with us to make sure we can find you.

There are two ways to let us know. Call us at (800) 451-9800 and we can make the changes over the phone using our new security feature. Or you may download, complete and mail an address change form (MM-0002) found at www.mainebers.org by selecting Forms and Resources at the top of the page and then clicking on "Forms".