

# PERS Eligibility for Part-Time Fire Fighters

## Issue

Under what circumstances should part-time fire fighters be members of a system other than the Volunteer Fire Fighters' and Reserve Officers' Plan (VFFRP)?<sup>1</sup>

## Background

Unpaid volunteer fire fighters and some part-time employee fire fighters are generally represented by VFFRP, but under certain circumstances may be mandated into the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). [A letter from a stakeholder](#) stated that the possibility of being moved from VFFRP to PERS is something fire departments actively avoid due to the difference in benefits, and doing so is impacting the ability to provide emergency fire services.

Plan membership for fire fighters is determined by a series of four criteria. A fire fighter will only be a member of PERS if the answers to each question are as denoted in italics:

1. Is this person a full-time, fully-compensated career fire fighter? *No.*
2. Is this person a volunteer? *No.*
3. Has this person worked more than the hourly threshold for PERS eligibility? *Yes.*
4. Has the fire department or district opted into PERS? *Yes.*

## Committee Activity

The SCPP studied this issue at the October meeting.

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<sup>1</sup>RCW 41.24 *et seq.*