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Enhanced Benefits for Political Subdivision Employees in Hazardous Duty Positions

Participating political subdivisions may elect to provide enhanced benefits to hazardous duty employees. These employees include full-time, salaried sworn law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and jail officers of regional jails or authorities.

Resources
Military Leave Benefits
Law Enforcement Officers' Handbook (768kb)

Sheriffs who are members of VRS are automatically covered under enhanced hazardous duty benefits. Deputy sheriffs not already covered under enhanced benefits will become covered effective July 1, 2008.

Eligibility

Political subdivision employees in hazardous duty positions receiving enhanced benefits are eligible for full, unreduced retirement at age 50 with at least 25 years of creditable service or age 60 with at least five years of creditable service. Those age 50 with at least five years of creditable service are eligible for an early, reduced retirement.

Benefit Calculation

The amount of the service retirement benefit for VRS-covered sheriffs is 1.85 percent of average final compensation multiplied by total service credit. For all other employees in local hazardous duty positions, the amount is 1.7 percent of average final compensation multiplied by total service credit, unless a political subdivision has elected the 1.85 percent retirement multiplier for these members. In both cases, a reduction factor is applied for early retirement. Employees in hazardous duty positions retiring on disability use the 1.7 percent multiplier.

Those in hazardous duty positions whose employers have elected enhanced benefits may be eligible to receive a special annual supplement until they reach full Social Security retirement age. To qualify, they must have at least 20 years of hazardous duty service with a VRS-covered employer at retirement. Members who joined VRS before July 1, 1974 are not required to meet the 20-year hazardous duty requirement to qualify for the supplement.

Except for the eligibility requirements, benefit calculation and hazardous-duty supplement, benefit plan provisions for employees in hazardous duty positions are the same as for members of VRS.