

Rule 513-7-1-.04 Qualification for Membership and Creditable Service

- (1) To qualify for initial membership in the Pension Fund, an individual shall meet one of the following,
 - (a) Be a firefighter who,
 - (1) Is a permanent compensated employee of a compliant fire department;
 - (2) Works at least 20 hours per week on average (1040 hours annually); and,
 - (3) Is state certified or is a candidate for state certification by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council,
 - (b) Be a Volunteer firefighter who,
 - (1) Is enrolled as a firefighter with a compliant volunteer fire department; and,
 - (2) Has the principal responsibility of preventing or suppressing fires,
 - (c) Be a full-time employee of the Pension Fund working an average of 30.5 hours per week.
- (2) Employees who are not state certified through the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council and whose only function is the performance of emergency medical services are not eligible for membership.
- (3) No person under a sentence of confinement shall be eligible for active membership in the Fund, nor shall any member of the Fund earn creditable service during a time period in which the member is incarcerated under a sentence of confinement.
- (4) Any individual who does not qualify for membership under (1) above, or who does not have and principally perform the duties of a firefighter shall not be eligible for initial or continued membership in the Georgia Firefighters' Pension Fund, even though the individual is employed by a fire department in some other capacity, unless prior to July 1, 2006 as an employee of a full-time fire department, the individual principally performed within that fire department a support function set forth in subpart (5) (a, b and c).
- (5) Current members of the Pension Fund who do not meet the initial membership requirements specified in paragraph (1) above, and who were admitted to the Fund prior to July 1, 2006 may remain in the Fund and continue to earn creditable service so long as there is no break in eligibility based on qualifying employment listed below,
 - (a) Clerical services for administration of the department performed by personnel within the fire department;
 - (b) Communication services for fire suppression and fire prevention activities performed by personnel within the fire department; and,
 - (c) The maintenance and repair of fire fighting equipment and apparatus performed by

personnel within the fire department.

In the event of a transfer from one department to another, no more than 30 calendar days may lapse where the member is not eligibly employed by a department.

- (6) The Board may require evidence of qualification for initial or continued membership in the Georgia Firefighters' Pension Fund and of the performance of creditable service certification by the applicant or member and by the Chief of the department as to the roster of the department, showing the position held and the duties of the position held.
 - (a) For membership which requires state certification the Board shall verify through the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, department records, and other means, that qualifications are met.
 - (b) For volunteer firefighters, the Board shall require annual affidavits from department chiefs that training and attendance requirements set forth in 513-7-1-.08 are met.
 - (c) For part-time firefighters, the Board shall require annual affidavits from the department chiefs that requirements in 513-7-1-.08 are met.
 - (d) For all others, the Board shall require an initial job description and periodically, on request, reaffirmation of fire support duties through inquiries of the employing fire department.
- (7) Creditable service may be earned by qualifying firefighters serving in a public fire department that serves a designated district provided all of the following are met;
 - (a) The fire department is financed by public appropriation or subscription and is not privately owned; and,
 - (b) The fire department has a current certificate of compliance issued by the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training council; and,
 - (c) The fire department has been issued an ISO rating as a Class 9 or better under the current approved ISO rating schedule
 - (d) A volunteer fire department shall hold no less than 8 (eight) hours training/fire department activity in at least 10 (ten) months of a calendar year for any member of the department to earn creditable service for that year.
- (8) Credit for prior eligible service may be granted if the member satisfied the requirements for membership and creditable service in 513-7-1-.04 at the time such service was rendered. For the member to be eligible for the purchase of prior eligible service the department with which credit is being claimed shall have met the requirements set forth above in 513-7-1-.04 (7).

A member shall be entitled to credit for up to ten years of prior eligible service, provided that such person satisfies the following requirements;

- (a) The member shall file with the Board an application for such credit on forms

prescribed by the Board,

- (b) Submit required documentation verifying that creditable service was earned; and,
- (c) Pay to the fund an amount sufficient to grant requested creditable service without creating any actuarially determined accrued liability against The Fund. This amount will be determined and provided by Fund Staff, based on the most recent tables provided by the actuary retained by the Board.

Cite as Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 513-7-1-.04 Authority:

O.C.G.A. Sec. 47-7-23.

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RULE 513-7-1-.08 Volunteer and Part-Time Firefighter Requirements and Affidavits.

- (1) A volunteer fire department shall have an active volunteer program as outlined in (a), (b) and (c) below in order for its members to be eligible to earn pension credit. Volunteer firefighters shall meet a minimum standard of 50% of the aggregate of creditable department drills or meetings and creditable calls for the calendar year using a point based system. One point shall be earned for each eligible call, and one point for each completed hour of designated department drills or meetings held as a group.
 - (a) A volunteer fire department shall hold at least 8 hours of drills or meetings per month for 10 months or more in a calendar year. If the department fails to hold the required hours of drills and meetings, no member of the department shall be able to earn creditable service for that year.
 - (b) Creditable department drills or meetings shall take place as a group, at the department level. If a department has multiple stations, drills and meetings as a group at the station level may count as department drills and meetings. There shall be no sub-groups within a station for the purpose of calculating annual department drills and meetings for Pension Fund credit. Of regular department drills, and meetings offered annually, each member of the department shall attend a minimum of 25% . In addition, creditable service shall not be earned if the member attended less than 24 hours of department drills and meetings for the year. Drills and meetings shall be documented on forms that contain the following;
 - (i) Date of training/event
 - (ii) Actual beginning and actual end times
 - (iii) Location
 - (iv) Brief description of training/activity
 - (c) Creditable calls are calls specific to the department being called. If a department has multiple stations, the calls may be specific to the station. Fire calls shall be counted towards pension credit. A fire call is defined as fires on property subject to insurance coverage under O.C.G.A. 47-7-6, including, but not limited to structures, vehicles, boats, planes and motorcycles. Structures include commercial, and residential properties, whether occupied or not. In addition to fire calls, it shall be pre-determined annually by the chief, if, and what other types of calls are also counted as creditable. This may include but is not limited to motor vehicle accidents, and vegetation, crop, and open land fires. Awarding of, or denying of credit for a particular type call shall be consistent throughout the year. Members shall meet a minimum of 25% of creditable calls annually. In the event the 25% calculation does not result in a whole number, the calculation may be rounded down to the nearest whole number. Firefighters from departments with one or more creditable calls, cannot earn creditable service if no calls were attended.
- (2) Additional pension eligible points may be earned for Additional Training and Station Duty
 - (a) One point may be earned for each hour of organized training attended which shall take place outside the department's regularly scheduled station activity. Additional training points are not required to be earned within the member's department, but shall require the approval of the member's chief. Additional training credit shall not account for more than 25% of the members total annual pension eligible points.
 - (b) Additional points may also be earned by performing pre-scheduled, pre-approved Station Duty. Station Duty, performed in two hour blocks, shall earn one point of additional credit per completed two hour block. Work shall take place during the time in which credit is being earned. Station Duty Credit shall not account for more than 25% of the members total annual pension eligible points.
 - (c) Station duty credit and additional member training credit shall not be earned concurrently. The department shall maintain documentation of station duty, and additional training where credit is being applied towards annual pension credit. Documentation shall be on forms provided, and prescribed by, the Board of Trustees.