



Volunteer Fire Fighters' Dependents Fund

Established in 1978, the Volunteer Fire Fighters' Dependents Fund ("Fund") provides death benefits to survivors of volunteer firefighters killed in the line of duty and disability benefits to disabled volunteer firefighters as outlined in Chapter 146 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Each political subdivision or fire district having a fire department employing volunteer firefighters is a member of the Fund and must establish a board to administer claims for the benefits from the Fund. A private volunteer fire company which has contracted to afford fire protection to a political subdivision or fire district may also become a member of the Fund, if they should choose to do so.

Pursuant to R.C. 146.03, a Volunteer Fire Fighters' Dependents Fund Board ("Board") consists of five members: two member elected by the legislative authority of the political subdivision or fire district, two members elected by the fire department or the volunteer firefighters, and one member elected by the other four board members. All board members serve a one year term, which begins on January 1st each year, and the members serve without compensation.

When a volunteer firefighter is killed in the line of duty or has become disabled while discharging the duties of a volunteer firefighter, the survivors or the volunteer firefighter may file a claim to request benefits with the Board that is located in the political subdivision or fire district in which the volunteer firefighter was a member. Within five days after receiving a claim, the Board will meet to either approve or deny the claim. If the claim is approved, the certified claim is sent to the Division of State Fire Marshal ("SFM") for payment. When a claim is certified, benefits are paid out as follows: disabled volunteer firefighter will receive \$300 per month; a surviving spouse will receive a lump sum award of \$1,000, in addition to \$300 per month; and each dependent child under 18 years of age, or under 23 years of age if the child is attending a post-secondary institution, will receive \$125 per month.

The Department of Commerce through the SFM is the administrator of the Fund. When a Board is established, the secretary of the board provides the SFM with the names and addresses of the elected board members and a certificate of the current assessed valuation of the political subdivision or fire district (an updated list of elected board members and current assessed valuation is submitted each year to the SFM). The Board will then pay an initial premium based on their assessed property valuation of between \$300 and \$500. The total of all initial premiums collected serve as the basic capital account for the Fund. No further contributions are required of the Fund's members until claims against the Fund have reduced it to 95% or less of its basic capital account. In such event, the SFM will re-assess the Fund members based on their current valuation in an amount of \$90 to \$150.