

RCW 41.26.120 Retirement for disability incurred in the line of duty. Any member, regardless of age or years of service may be retired by the disability board, subject to approval by the director as hereinafter provided, for any disability incurred in the line of duty which has been continuous since his or her discontinuance of service and which renders the member unable to continue service. No disability retirement allowance shall be paid until the expiration of a period of six months after the discontinuance of service during which period the member, if found to be physically or mentally unfit for duty by the disability board following receipt of his or her application for disability retirement, shall be granted a disability leave by the disability board and shall receive an allowance equal to the full monthly salary and shall continue to receive all other benefits provided to active employees from the employer for such period. However, if, at any time during the initial six-month period, the disability board finds the beneficiary is no longer disabled, the disability leave allowance shall be canceled and the member shall be restored to duty in the same rank or position, if any, held by the beneficiary at the time the member became disabled. Applications for disability retirement shall be processed in accordance with the following procedures:

(1) Any member who believes he or she is or is believed to be physically or mentally disabled shall be examined by such medical authority as the disability board shall employ, upon application of said member, or a person acting in his or her behalf, stating that said member is disabled, either physically or mentally: PROVIDED, That no such application shall be considered unless said member or someone in his or her behalf, in case of the incapacity of a member, shall have filed the application within a period of one year from and after the discontinuance of service of said member.

(2) If the examination shows, to the satisfaction of the disability board, that the member is physically or mentally disabled from the further performance of duty, that such disability was incurred in the line of duty, and that such disability has been continuous from the discontinuance of service, the disability board shall enter its written decision and order, accompanied by appropriate findings of fact and by conclusions evidencing compliance with this chapter as now or hereafter amended, granting the member a disability retirement allowance; otherwise, if the member is not found by the disability board to be so disabled, the application shall be denied pursuant to a similar written decision and order, subject to appeal to the director in accordance with RCW 41.26.200: PROVIDED, That in any order granting a duty disability retirement allowance, the disability board shall make a finding that the disability was incurred in line of duty.

(3) Every order of a disability board granting a duty disability retirement allowance shall forthwith be reviewed by the director except the finding that the disability was incurred in the line of duty. The director may affirm the decision of the disability board or remand the case for further proceedings, or the director may reverse the decision of the disability board if the director finds the disability board's findings, inferences, conclusions, or decisions are:

- (a) In violation of constitutional provisions; or
- (b) In excess of the statutory authority or jurisdiction of the disability board; or
- (c) Made upon unlawful procedure; or

- (d) Affected by other error of law; or
- (e) Clearly erroneous in view of the entire record as submitted and the public policy contained in this chapter; or
- (f) Arbitrary or capricious.

(4) Every member who can establish, to the disability board, that he or she is physically or mentally disabled from the further performance of duty, that such disability was incurred in the line of duty, and that such disability will be in existence for a period of at least six months may waive the six-month period of disability leave and be immediately granted a duty disability retirement allowance, subject to the approval of the director as provided in subsection (3) of this section. [1991 c 35 s 19; 1986 c 176 s 5; 1985 c 102 s 2; 1981 c 294 s 2; 1974 ex.s. c 120 s 10; 1972 ex.s. c 131 s 8; 1970 ex.s. c 6 s 7; 1969 ex.s. c 209 s 12.]

Intent—1991 c 35: See note following RCW 41.26.005.

Purpose—1985 c 102: "As expressed in RCW 41.26.270, the intent of the legislature in enacting the law enforcement officers' and firefighters' retirement system was to provide in RCW 41.26.120 a statute in the nature of a workers' compensation act which provides compensation to employees for personal injuries or sickness incurred in the course of employment. The sole purpose of this 1985 act is to clarify that intent." [1985 c 102 s 1.]

Retrospective application—1985 c 102: "The provisions of this 1985 act apply retrospectively to all disability leave and disability retirement allowances granted under chapter 41.26 RCW on or after March 1, 1970." [1985 c 102 s 7.]

Severability—1981 c 294: See note following RCW 41.26.115.

Severability—1974 ex.s. c 120: See note following RCW 41.26.030.

Severability—1972 ex.s. c 131: See note following RCW 41.26.030.

Disability leave supplement for law enforcement officers and firefighters: RCW 41.04.500 through 41.04.550.