



Retiree FOCUS

WINTER | DECEMBER 2019

SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF OHIO | SERVING THE PEOPLE WHO SERVE OUR SCHOOLS®



Payment Schedule

Your payment is directly deposited into your bank account on the dates listed in the payment schedule. Payments usually are deposited on the first day of the month.

If the first day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, your payment will be deposited on the previous business day, with the exception of January.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE	
January	January 2, 2020
February	January 31, 2020
March	February 28, 2020
April	April 1, 2020

Due to tax laws, your January payment will not be deposited early. Instead, it will be deposited on January 2, 2020, the first business day of the new year.

Quarterly Payment Stubs

You receive a payment stub every quarter with your *Retiree Focus* newsletter. Your payment stub details your gross monthly allowance and deductions, and these amounts for year-to-date. You also receive a payment stub whenever there is a change in your benefit.

Your next payment stub will arrive with your *Retiree Focus* in March. It also will be available through the Member Self Service Portal using your Account Login. ■



SERS Election Reminder

If you have been gathering signatures to qualify for the election of the retiree-member seat with the term of July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024, all original signatures and certification forms must be delivered to SERS by December 6, 2019.

To qualify for the election, candidates must gather 150 valid retiree signatures, which includes age and service or disability

retirees, with not less than 10 signatures from each of at least five counties where the retirees reside, and submit a notarized Certification Form. If more than one retiree member meets these qualifications, an election will be held in January 2020.

More information about the election process can be found on our website at www.ohsers.org/about-sers/board-of-trustees/board-election/. ■



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A Happy Holiday is a Safe Holiday: Prevent Falls this Season



Are you hosting any holiday festivities this year? Is your house ready for guests and party-proofed for accidents?

Anyone can take a tumble, and nothing can ruin a celebration faster than a trip to the emergency room.

A single fall can significantly change someone's life, making that person more reliant on others for help.

Safeguard everyone's happiness this holiday season by making sure your house is prepared for any missteps.

No Free Falling

According to the Ohio Department of Aging, there are precautions you can take to ensure that your holiday is safe and free from falls.

Outdoors:

- Keep walkways and steps clear of leaves and debris
- Ensure outdoor walkways and steps are well lit
- Fix broken or uneven steps, and loose handrails

Indoors:

- Remove rugs or make sure they are secured to the floor
- Use extra lamps and nightlights to help your guests find their way around your home any time of day
- Arrange furniture to create clear, straight paths

How to Fall Safely

According to the American Association of Retired Persons, there are ways of falling to help you avoid injury:

- Protect your head
- Turn sideways
- Keep arms and legs bent
- Stay loose, not rigid

Fear of Falling

Many falls, especially those in older adults, can be prevented. A person's risk for falls decreases when he or she stops being afraid of falling.

The Ohio Department of Aging suggests that older adults may not want to talk about falling because they see it as a threat to their independence.

Some may even refuse to leave their homes or do other activities they used to enjoy because they are afraid of falling.

Couch Cabin Fever

Don't let fear of falling paralyze you into becoming a couch potato this winter. Help yourself stay safe as well as active by:

- Dressing appropriately for weather conditions
- Avoiding walkways that are muddy, wet, or covered with leaves
- Using lamps, nightlights, and brighter bulbs to increase light in and around your house
- Using a walking stick or cane to boost your confidence and steady yourself

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Watch the Mail for Your 1099-R Tax Form



We are required by federal law to mail your 1099-R tax form by the end of January.

Along with the form, you will receive a handout explaining how federal and Ohio

income tax laws apply to your SERS pension payments.

Additionally, both the form and handout also will be available through the Member Self Service Portal using your Account Login. ■

‘Know Your Rx’ is a New Partner for SERS



If you are enrolled in one of the SERS Aetna health care plans with Express Scripts prescription coverage, you may receive a call from a Know Your Rx (KYRx) pharmacist starting in early 2020. As a new vendor for SERS, KYRx is reviewing pharmacy claims and contacting retirees who may have a prescription alternative available.

For example, since some doses of a tablet medication may be less expensive than the capsule version but have the same effect for the patient, a switch to the tablet could save

money for the retiree and the SERS plan without changing the outcome of treatment.

With the retiree’s consent, the KYRx pharmacist will contact the prescribing doctor’s office to discuss a possible change.

If a KYRx pharmacist calls, please answer the phone.

The pharmacist will not ask for any financial information and only discusses prescription issues. The discussion will be confidential.

More information on the KYRx will appear in a future *Retiree Focus* newsletter. ■

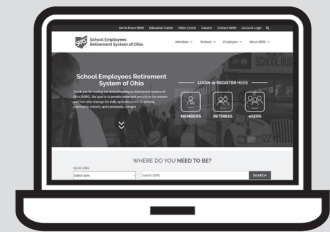


If you create an Account Login through the Member Self Service Portal, you will be able to access and manage your account with SERS.

Features available include the ability to:

- Review your account
- Update personal information, such as address, direct deposit, and tax withholding

Contact our Member Services Team toll-free at 800-878-5853 to begin the registration process. ■



Flying South This Winter? Update Your Address



Make sure you advise SERS of any change in address. If not, you may be missing out on valuable membership information, or even benefits.

Even if SERS deposits your check directly into your bank account, we still need your current address.

You can update your address by using the My Profile section of the Account Login on our website at www.ohsers.org, or by calling us at 800-878-5853.

If you move and do not notify SERS, your benefits can be suspended. ■



Q: My husband just passed away, and he was my beneficiary. Can I choose someone else as my beneficiary?

A: If your beneficiary has passed away, please call SERS toll-free at 800-878-5853 to let us know.

If you chose Plan A, C, or D (joint life plans) and your beneficiary passed away, your plan will be changed to a Plan B, single life plan, with an adjustment in your pension.

You can choose a new beneficiary for your Plan B single life plan, or Plan E guaranteed plan limited to the beneficiary for a specified time.

Your ability to change your Plan B to a joint life plan for a new beneficiary is limited to electing a joint life plan that names a new spouse within one year of your remarriage.

If you chose Plan F, a joint life plan with multiple beneficiaries, and a beneficiary passed away, your pension will be adjusted on the basis of the remaining beneficiary or beneficiaries.

If you have questions, please contact SERS toll-free at 800-878-5853.

Q: I just got divorced. Can I remove my ex-spouse as the beneficiary?

A: Your ability to remove your ex-spouse as your beneficiary depends on your plan of payment.

If you chose Plan B, the single life plan, or Plan E, a guaranteed plan limited to the beneficiary for a specified term, you can change your beneficiary at any time.

If you chose Plan A, C, D, or F (joint life plans), to be able to remove your ex-spouse as a beneficiary you must obtain authorization by an order from the court that granted your divorce, dissolution, or annulment; or, by the written and signed consent of your ex-spouse.

If you chose Plan A, C, or D, and you obtain authorization to remove your ex-spouse as a beneficiary, your elected plan will be changed to Plan B.

If you chose Plan F, a joint life plan with multiple beneficiaries, and a beneficiary is removed, your pension will be adjusted on the basis of the remaining beneficiary or beneficiaries. ■

Stay Ahead of the Scams



According to the Security Summit, which is a partnership between the IRS, state tax agencies, and the tax community, taxpayers should be

aware of an IRS impersonation scam spreading via email.

The email subject line may use the phrase “Automatic Income Tax Reminder” or “Electronic Tax Return Reminder.”

The emails have links that show an IRS.gov-like website with details pretending to be about the taxpayer’s refund, electronic return, or tax account, and contain a temporary password or password to access the files to submit the refund.

“This latest scheme is yet another reminder that tax scams are a year-round business for thieves,” said IRS Commissioner Charles Rettig, “we urge you to be on-guard at all times.”

The IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email; it does not send emails about your tax refund, or to request personal or financial information.

If you receive a fraudulent email, contact the Ohio Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Section to report the scam by calling 800-282-0515 or by visiting the website at www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov. ■