

Plan Member Guide

Teachers' Pension Plan



Alberta Teachers'
Retirement Fund Board

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This booklet is a summary of the current Plan provisions and includes all amendments made up to January 2021. We encourage you to take the time to read this booklet and to consider how the Plan fits into your personal financial situation.

Introduction

This booklet is a summary and does not include every detail of the Teachers' Pension Plan (the Plan). If there is any discrepancy between this description and the Plan, the provisions of the Plan and applicable legislation will determine the entitlements and options available.

Overview

The primary objective of the Plan is to provide retirement income to teachers employed by school jurisdictions, chartered schools and other eligible employers. The Plan also provides benefits on termination of employment or death. The Plan is sponsored by its members, who are represented by The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), and the Alberta Government.

Type of Plan

The Plan is a defined benefit pension plan. Your pension at retirement is determined by a formula that uses your Pensionable Service and the average of your Pensionable Salary in the five consecutive years of Pensionable Service when your Pensionable Salary was highest. Your pension does not depend on the amount you contribute.

ATRF Board

The Plan is administered by the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board (ATRF). ATRF is a corporation established under the *Teachers' Pension Plans Act*.

The members of the ATRF Board (the Board), which include four members nominated by the ATA and four nominated by the Alberta Government, are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The Board establishes fiscal, investment and administrative policies, and oversees their implementation by ATRF staff, external consultants and service providers.

The Board is responsible for setting strategies and approving ATRF's business plans. The ATA and the Alberta Government are responsible for benefit or funding changes that must be enacted through legislation.

More Information

The *Glossary* at the back of this book defines some of the terms used in this booklet. These terms, and others defined in the text, start with capital letters when they are used in this booklet.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board

Telephone: 780 451-4166 Toll Free: 800 661-9582 Fax: 780 452-3547
Email: member@atrf.com Website: www.atrf.com

Services Provided by ATRF

Services

ATRF provides a full range of services for Plan members. This includes:

- paying pensions and other benefits
- providing various information materials
- conducting pension seminars
- giving information through personal interviews
- estimating pensions
- estimating termination benefits
- calculating cost to purchase Pensionable Service
- transferring service between pension plans
- maintaining individual Plan member data
- providing investment and financial reports

ATRF provides information to Plan members through direct mailings, field service activities, our website at www.atrf.com, and advertisements in The ATA News. Plan member statements are mailed annually to active and retired Plan members.

Staff are available for personal interviews at ATRF's office. In addition to the information provided at ATRF's office, staff hold pension seminars and will speak at conventions, professional development days and other events throughout Alberta. On request, these out-of-office visits can include time for personal interviews.

MyPension

You can access your own pension information, including printing a Plan member statement, by registering for *MyPension* on the website www.atrf.com.

Confidentiality

Any personal data you provide is protected from unauthorized collection, use, or disclosure, and will not be released – either in writing or verbally – to anyone without your authorization. Information will be provided to third parties only with your written authorization.

Becoming a Member

Who is Eligible

Teachers receiving Salary while employed under a teaching contract with a Plan employer automatically participate in the Plan.

Participation is not permitted for:

- substitute teachers while employed as substitute teachers (substitute service can be purchased at a later date – see *Purchasing Service* on page 21),
- those currently receiving an ATRF pension, and
- teachers after the end of the calendar year in which they turn 71 years of age.

Information Update Form/Designating a Beneficiary Form

You are required to complete an Information Update form and a Designating a Beneficiary form when you begin contributing to the Plan. These forms provide ATRF with basic information such as your address, your employer, and the name of your beneficiary(ies). These forms are available from your employer, our website or ATRF, and should be completed whenever your personal information changes.

Contributions

Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE)

Your monthly contribution to the Plan is integrated with your contribution to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and takes the YMPE into consideration.

The YMPE is the year's maximum pensionable earnings covered by the CPP. The YMPE for 2021 is \$61,600, or \$5,133.33 a month, which is called the monthly maximum pensionable earnings (MMPE). This maximum changes every January 1st and the amount of your ATRF contribution changes accordingly.

Your Contributions

The table below shows the contribution rates effective September 1, 2020:

School Jurisdictions and Charter Schools	September 2020
Employee	
Salary up to YMPE	9.76%
Salary above YMPE	13.94%
Government	10.87%

Contributions are not deducted during strikes or leaves of absence (other than health-related periods of maternity leaves). As well, you do not contribute on any Salary that exceeds maximums permitted under the *Income Tax Act*. In 2021, you will reach this maximum if your annual rate of salary is \$180,758.00 or more.

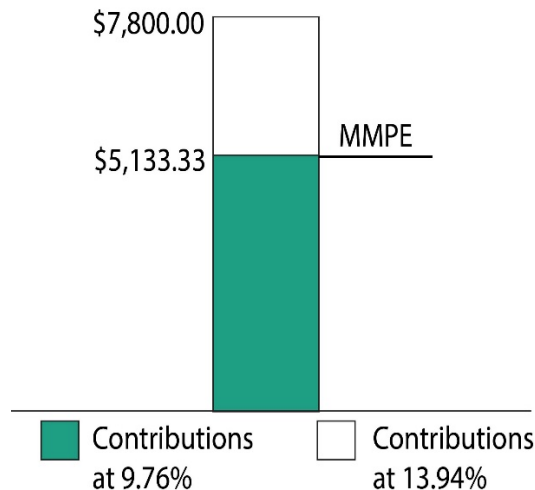
An Example of Contributions in 2021

If you made \$7,800 per month in 2021, you would contribute:

- 9.76% of your monthly salary up to the 2021 MMPE of \$5,133.33 and
- 13.94% of your monthly salary over \$5,133.33.

Total monthly contribution of \$872.75:

- \$501.01 (which is 9.76% of \$5,133.33)
- plus
- \$371.73 (which is 13.94% of \$2,666.67).



Employer Contributions

The Alberta Government pays an employer contribution on behalf of each active contributing Plan member.

As of September 1, 2020, the employer contribution is 10.87% of your Pensionable Salary.

How Contribution Rates are Set

Contribution rates are set at a level sufficient to fund:

- the current pensions being earned, and
- any shortfalls that arise under the Plan in respect of the funding benefits for service after August 1992.

Contribution rates are subject to change, as required, based on a review of the funding progress of the Plan by the Plan's actuary.

Interest on Contributions

Your contributions are credited with interest annually on August 31st. The rate of interest is based on the average of five-year fixed-term deposit rates paid by the chartered banks in the preceding year.

Retirement

Eligibility for Pension

You are eligible for a pension when you are 55 years of age or more and have:

- 5 years of Pensionable Service after August 31, 1992, or
- 5 years of Pensionable Service that includes a period of Pensionable Service in each of the 1991–92 and 1992–93 school years, or
- 10 years of Pensionable Service.

Start of Pension

Pensions are payable from the later of the first of the month following:

- your 55th birthday,
- the termination of your last teaching contract,
- the last accrual of Pensionable Service with the Plan, or
- the last substitute service purchased.

Unreduced Pension

If you have sufficient Pensionable Service to be eligible for a pension, you can receive an unreduced pension when:

- the sum of your age and Pensionable Service is at least 85 (often referred to as the age-plus-service index of 85), or
- you are age 65 (normal retirement).

Reduced Pension

If you have sufficient Pensionable Service to be eligible for a pension and you retire before you are eligible for an unreduced pension (as outlined above), your pension will be reduced by 2% for each year or portion of a year that:

- your age-plus-service index is less than 85, or
- you are under age 65.
(whichever is less – the maximum reduction is 20%)

Examples of Reduced Pensions

- A Plan member who is age 55 with 5 years of Pensionable Service would have an index of 60. There would be a 20% reduction in pension (25 years short of index, and only 10 years short of age 65; therefore, 10 years times 2% = 20% reduction).
- A Plan member who is age 60 with 22.5 years of Pensionable Service would have an index of 82.5. There would be a 5% reduction in pension (2.5 years short of index, and 5 years short of age 65; therefore, 2.5 years times 2% = 5% reduction).

Employment after Retirement

Members who are in receipt of a pension from the Plan can be employed on contract for up to 0.6 of a school year with an ATRF employer without affecting their pensions. If the retired member is employed for more than 0.6 of a year with one or more ATRF employers, the monthly pension is reduced by the amount of salary earned in each month after the 0.6 of a year is reached.

Working as a substitute teacher and other types of employment do not affect your pension from the Plan.

Pension Formula

Based on Three Items

The pension is based on a formula using the following four items:

- Pensionable Service
- Five-year Average Pensionable Salary, to a maximum
- Five-year Average YMPE
- Benefit accrual rate

Pensionable Service

Pensionable Service is:

- Service for which contributions were deducted
- Service accrued during a period of disability which began on or after September 1, 1992
- Service purchased through ATRF and service transferred from another pension plan under a reciprocal transfer agreement

NOTE: If you have received a termination benefit (any form of lump-sum payment from ATRF) or you previously transferred your service to another registered pension plan, the pensionable service associated with that benefit is no longer to your credit.

See the *Glossary, Purchasing Service, Transferring Service between Pension Plans, and If You Become Disabled* for more information on Pensionable Service.

Five-year Average Pensionable Salary

Your Five-year Average Pensionable Salary is the average of your Pensionable Salary in the five consecutive years of Pensionable Service when your Pensionable Salary was the highest. Usually, your highest average Pensionable Salary occurs at the end of your career. Your Five-year Average Pensionable Salary cannot be greater than the five-year average maximum pensionable salary as prescribed under the *Income Tax Act*.

Five-year Average YMPE

Your Five-year Average YMPE is the average of your annual earnings covered by the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) during the same period used to determine your Five-year Average Pensionable Salary.

Benefit Accrual Rate

This is the rate at which you accrue a benefit in the plan. The rate is 1.4% for salary up to your Five-Year Average YMPE and 2% for salary over the Five-Year Average YMPE, up to the maximum pensionable salary allowed under the *Income Tax Act*.

Formula

Five-year Average Pensionable Salary, Pensionable Service and Five-year Average YMPE are used in the following formula to calculate your pension. Your pension at retirement before any applicable reductions will be equal to:

1.4% of Five-year Average YMPE times Pensionable Service
--

Plus

2.0% of Five-year Average Pensionable Salary above the Five-year Average YMPE times Pensionable Service
--

An example using the formula is shown on the following page.

Example

A 10-month teacher, born June 23, 1965, terminates June 30, 2020.

• Five-year Average Pensionable Salary*:	\$94,200
• Five-year Average YMPE:	\$56,100
• Pensionable Service:	27.5
• Age:	55.0
• Index:	
– age + Pensionable Service	
– $55.0 + 27.5 = 82.5$	
– years short of age-plus-service index of 85	2.5
– years short of age 65	10.0
• Reduction factor:	
– lesser of 2.5 and 10.0 is 2.5	
– 2% for each year short	
– $.02 \times 2.5 =$	5.0%
• Pension calculation:	
– $1.4\% \times \$56,100 \times 27.5 =$	\$21,598
plus	
– $2\% \times (\$94,200 - \$56,100) \times 27.5 =$	\$20,955
	\$42,553
Annual Pension	\$42,553
minus 5.0%	\$2,128
Reduced Annual Pension	\$40,425

Use the *Worksheet* on page 32 to estimate your own pension.

*The Five-Year Average Pensionable Salary cannot be higher than the five-year average maximum pensionable salary for the same period in accordance with the *Income Tax Act*.

Please refer to page 32 to estimate your own pension and for the recent maximum pensionable salaries and YMPE.



Pension Options

Overview

At retirement, you must choose a Pension Option. The Pension Option you choose will affect the amount of your monthly pension.

Each Pension Option provides a different benefit if you die after retirement. The greater the benefit provided to your beneficiary, the smaller your monthly pension will be.

The monthly pension calculated by the formula shown on page 8, with its associated survivor benefits (Single Life, 5-Year Guarantee), is often referred to as the “normal form” of pension. The normal form of pension is payable monthly for as long as you live but with the guarantee that should you die before five years from the pension effective date, the remainder of the payments will be paid to your beneficiary or estate.

Pension Options

Factors are applied to the normal form of pension to determine the pension amounts for the other Pension Options. Although the monthly pension amounts for the other Pension Options are different, they have the same value as the pension payable in the normal form.

There are seven Pension Options: four single life pensions and three joint and survivor pensions.

Single Life Pensions

Single Life pensions are payable for your lifetime or to the end of the guarantee period, whichever is longer. The guarantee period starts from the effective date of the pension.

If you die before the end of the guarantee period chosen, the pension will continue in the same amount to your named beneficiary(ies) or estate until the end of the guarantee period. You may change your beneficiaries at any time within the guarantee period.

You may choose:

1. Single Life, No Guarantee
(payments cease on your death regardless of the number of payments made)
2. Single Life, 5-Year Guarantee
3. Single Life, 10-Year Guarantee
4. Single Life, 15-Year Guarantee

Joint and Survivor Pensions

Joint and Survivor pensions are calculated on the basis of two lives – yours and a nominee's. The nominee cannot be changed once the pension starts. If the nominee is your Spouse/Pension Partner, a pension is paid for your lifetime and your Spouse/Pension Partner's lifetime. If the nominee is a dependant under the tax rules, a pension is paid for your lifetime and, after your death, only for as long as the nominee remains a dependant.

All joint and survivor pensions have a 5-year guarantee period. If both you and your nominee die before five years from the pension effective date, the remainder of the payments will be paid to your beneficiary or estate.

You may choose:

5. **Joint Equal**
If your nominee dies first, the pension payments stay the same and continue to you for your lifetime. If you die first, the pension payments stay the same and continue to your nominee for their lifetime.
6. **Joint Reducible by One-Third**
If your nominee dies first, the pension payments reduce by one-third so that two-thirds of the pension continues to you for your lifetime. If you die first, two-thirds of the pension continues to your nominee for their lifetime.
7. **Joint 100/60**
If your nominee dies first, the pension payments stay the same and continue to you for your lifetime. If you die first, 60% of the pension continues to your nominee for their lifetime.

If You Have a Spouse/Pension Partner

If you have a Spouse/Pension Partner at retirement, you must choose one of the joint and survivor Pension Options. Your Spouse/Pension Partner can waive their right to the survivor pension by completing a Statutory Declaration. The waiver cannot be signed more than 90 days before your pension commencement date. If your Spouse/Pension Partner waives the right to the pension, you can name a dependant as your nominee or choose a single life Pension Option.

If You Don't Have a Spouse/Pension Partner

If you don't have a Spouse/Pension Partner, you must choose a single life Pension Option or choose a joint and survivor Pension Option and name a dependant as a nominee.

Choosing a Pension Option

Only you can decide which Pension Option is right for you. You should consider:

- your age,
- health,
- dependants,
- family and financial situation,
- lifestyle,
- income needs,
- future plans, and
- any other factors which may apply to your personal situation.

When you apply for your pension, you will be given information on the amounts payable under each available Pension Option. You choose a Pension Option by completing a Pension Election form.

Default Pension Option

If you do not choose a Pension Option within 60 days after the Pension Option information has been sent to you, you will receive the default Pension Option, which is:

- Single Life, 5-Year Guarantee, if you have no Spouse/Pension Partner, or
- Joint 100/60, 5-Year Guarantee, if you have a Spouse/Pension Partner.

If you don't want the default Pension Option, you can withdraw your pension application, in writing, within the 60 days, and reapply for a pension at a later date.

Advance & Reduction Option

The Advance & Reduction Option is a way to level your ATRF pension income with your Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits. This option will pay you more pension from the Plan before age 65 and less pension after age 65.

The Advance & Reduction Option is only available to members who retire prior to age 64.

The Advance is an optional payment that starts when your pension is granted and is paid monthly for your lifetime in addition to your ATRF pension.

A permanent Reduction to your ATRF pension will begin at age 65, and continues for your lifetime regardless of when you start to receive your CPP benefits, or whether the Government of Canada changes CPP eligibility requirements, the benefits available, or the tax rules.

What You Need to Consider

You may only choose the Advance & Reduction Option when you choose your pension option – you cannot choose to add it after your pension has commenced to be paid.

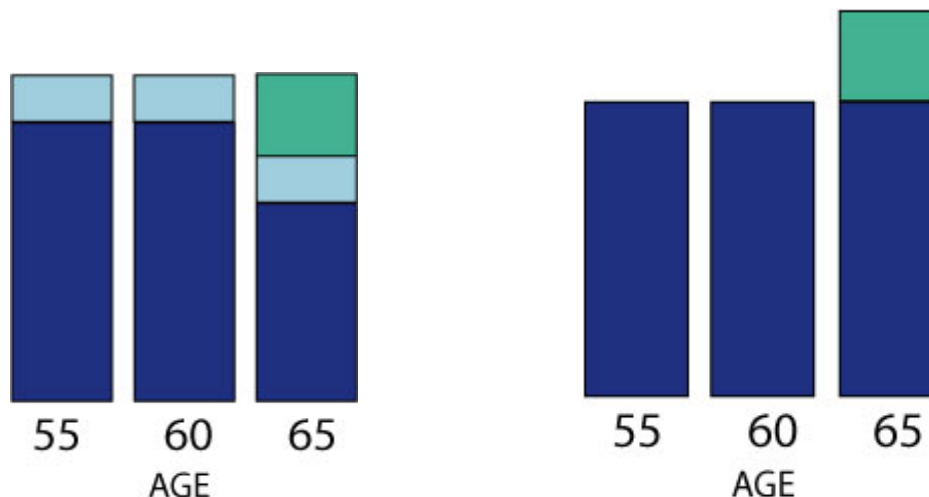
- The Advance & Reduction Option cannot be changed or cancelled once your pension payments begin.
- The Advance & Reduction Option is calculated to be cost-neutral, resulting in no monetary benefit or cost to the Plan.
- The Advance amount is an estimate of your CPP benefit at age 65 based on your Pensionable Service under the Plan.
- The Reduction amount is calculated to have an equivalent actuarial value as the Advance at the time of pension commencement.
- If you live longer than what is expected based on the calculation assumptions, the total dollar amount of the Reductions may exceed the total dollar amount of the Advances paid to you.
- Advances are considered as income and are taxed accordingly. Choosing the Advance will not affect your CPP benefits which are paid directly from the Government of Canada.
- Cost-of-living adjustments are applied annually to the Advance starting at pension commencement and to the Reduction starting at age 65.
- The Advance & Reduction Option stops at your death and does not continue to any surviving nominee, beneficiary, or estate.

Advance & Reduction Option Illustration

■ ATRF ■ ADVANCE ■ CPP

You take the Advance at age 55 and an unreduced CPP benefit at age 65

You do not take the Advance and take an unreduced CPP benefit at age 65.



Cost-of-Living Adjustments

Cost-of-Living Adjustments

Cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) are effective January 1st of each year and are applied to your ATRF pension (including the Advance & Reduction Option, see previous section) before income tax is deducted.

For the pension payable on pensionable service to December 31, 1992, COLA is calculated at 60% of the change from year to year in the Alberta Consumer Price Index (ACPI).

For the pension payable on pensionable service from January 1, 1993, COLA is calculated at 70% of the change from year to year in the ACPI.

Plan members who received a pension for less than 12 months in the previous year receive a pro-rated adjustment.

Deferred Pension

If you withdraw from employment and are entitled to receive a pension at some future date and you decide to leave your pension benefit in the Plan, your deferred pension will accumulate any cost-of-living increases that are granted during the deferral period to your earliest pension effective date.


Applying for Pension

How to Apply (for those under contract)

You should apply for your pension no earlier than four months before the pension start date.

Provide a resignation letter to your employer, indicating your proposed date of contract termination. Before submitting a resignation to an employer, you should contact ATRF to confirm your total Pensionable Service, and to ensure that purchases or transfers of Pensionable Service have been completed.

You should consider whether to resign at the end of a month or during the month because pension payments begin only from the first of a month. For example, consider a Plan member who is 55 years of age and resigns February 2, 2020. The pension would be effective March 1, 2020 (the first of the month following termination of the last teaching contract and the last Pensionable Service with ATRF), and payment would be made at the end of March 2020. If the Plan member resigned January 31 (two days earlier than February 2), the pension would begin February 1, 2020, and payment would be made at the end of February 2020. This would result in one more month of pension for two days less of Pensionable Service.



Your resignation date may be affected by other factors such as early retirement incentive programs.

Obtain an ATRF Employee Termination Notice from ATRF, our website, or your employer. Indicate you want an immediate pension from the earliest eligible date and return it to ATRF. If you are registered for *MyPension* you can submit an electronic application.

How to Apply (for those not under contract)

Contact ATRF not more than four months before your 55th birthday, and request the *Steps to Retirement* publication. Complete the forms included in the publication and return them to ATRF. If you are registered for *MyPension* you can submit an electronic application.

What You Must Supply

ATRF must have confirmation of your birth date and the birth date of your pension partner, if applicable. ATRF will accept a legible copy of one of the following to verify your date of birth:

- Birth certificate
- Adoption papers
- Canadian registration of birth
- Canadian passport (valid or expired)
- Canadian citizenship papers
- Certificate of Indian Status (status card)
- Driver's license issued by a Canadian province or territory
- Alberta identification card

To verify any changes in names shown on birth certificates to current names, Plan members should submit marriage certificate(s) and other pertinent documents (originals or copies) or, if unavailable, complete a statutory declaration available from ATRF.

You must complete a Spousal/Pension Partner Status Declaration.

What Happens Next

Once all documents have been received, ATRF will send you:

- a statement outlining the amount of pension payable under each of the available Pension Options,
- a Pension Election form,
- TD1 Personal Tax Credits Returns,
- if you have a Spouse/Pension Partner, a Pension Partner's Waiver of Pension at Pension Commencement Statutory Declaration, and
- a detailed Contribution and Service Record.

If all of the required documents are properly completed and returned by the 10th of the month, the first pension payment is deposited electronically into your bank account at the end of the month. If delays occur, the first payment will be retroactive to the effective date.

If You Terminate Employment

Resignation or Termination

If you resign from your contract or your contract is terminated, your contributions cease and you must then decide what to do with your benefit. Obtain the information kit entitled *Benefits at Termination* from your employer or ATRF. Complete the Employee Termination Notice and return it to ATRF.

Entitled to an Immediate Pension

If you are entitled to receive an immediate pension (age 55 or older with sufficient Pensionable Service), you may not withdraw your funds. You may elect to:

- receive your pension, or
- transfer your benefit to another pension plan with which ATRF has a reciprocal transfer agreement, or
- leave your funds "on deposit" and apply for your pension at a later date retroactive to the first eligible date. Please see the information at the bottom of page five to determine your valid pension eligibility date.

Entitled to a Deferred Pension

If you have enough Pensionable Service to be eligible for a pension, but you are not yet age 55, you may elect to:

- transfer your entitlement to another pension plan with which ATRF has a reciprocal transfer agreement, or
- leave your funds "on deposit" to either accrue more Pensionable Service in the plan or to receive a pension at a later date, or
- withdraw your funds.

Deferred pensions will receive cost-of-living adjustments from the later of the:

- termination of the last teaching contract,
- last accrual of Pensionable Service, or
- last substitute Pensionable Service purchase.

You are responsible for advising your designated beneficiary to contact ATRF in the event of your death.

To begin receiving your pension, you should contact ATRF about four months before your 55th birthday.

Leaving Contributions “On Deposit”

If you leave your contributions “on deposit”:

- you may make a different choice at a later date, and
- your contributions accumulate interest annually based on the average of the five-year fixed-term deposit rates paid by the chartered banks in the preceding year.

You are responsible for advising your designated beneficiary to contact ATRF in the event of your death.

To begin receiving your pension, you should contact ATRF about four months before your 55th birthday.

Withdrawing Funds

If you are not eligible for an immediate pension when you resign or leave teaching, application can be made to withdraw your benefit from the Plan. The benefit is different for Pensionable Service before and after September 1, 1992.

The benefit payable for Pensionable Service before September 1, 1992 is equal to your contributions with interest and:

- may be paid to you in cash with income tax deducted, or
- may be transferred directly to a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), with no income tax deducted. This direct transfer will not affect your RRSP contribution room.

The benefit payable for Pensionable Service from September 1, 1992 depends on whether you have sufficient Pensionable Service to be eligible for a pension:

- If you are not eligible to receive a pension, the benefit is equal to your contributions with interest. This benefit may be paid to you directly with income tax deducted or transferred to an RRSP with no income tax deducted.
- If you are eligible to receive a pension, the benefit is the greater of:
 - your contributions with interest, or
 - the Commuted Value of your pension.

This benefit must be transferred directly to a Locked-In Retirement Account (LIRA), subject to the limit under the tax rules.

LIRAs are restricted RRSPs that require that funds be used to provide a lifetime pension on or after age 50 but must be removed or converted to an income stream before the end of the calendar year in which you turn age 71. A list of financial institutions that offer LIRAs is available on the Alberta Government Finance website (www.finance.alberta.ca/publications/pensions/lists_reports.html) or from ATRF.

To initiate a transfer to an RRSP and/or LIRA, you must complete a Canada Revenue Agency form T2151 Direct Transfer of a Single Amount. This form is available from ATRF, Canada Revenue Agency, or your financial institution.

Payment will be made as soon as possible after you terminate employment with your ATRF employer and after the required documentation has been received from you and your last employer.

If benefits are paid to you directly, they are taxable in the year in which you receive them. ATRF will issue a T4A Supplementary Form with your cheque detailing the payment and the tax withheld.

Contributions Transferred to Another Pension Plan

If you become a member of another pension plan, you may be eligible to transfer Pensionable Service to that pension plan provided it has a reciprocal transfer agreement with ATRF. See *Transferring Service Between Pension Plans* on page 23 for more information.

If You Become Disabled

Disabled on or after September 1, 1992

If you become disabled, you may continue to accrue Pensionable Service without having to make any contributions if:

- you were a contributing active ATRF member, on a leave of absence, or on strike immediately before the disability began, and
- you received, or are receiving, a long-term or extended disability benefit through your employer during the period of disability.

If you were disabled, but did not receive a long-term or extended disability benefit through your employer, contact ATRF.

If ATRF is notified that you are in receipt of disability benefits, you will be credited with pensionable service without having to make a formal application. However, we encourage you to submit an application in case ATRF was not notified.

If you accrue Pensionable Service for any period of disability on or after September 1, 1992, tax rules require ATRF to issue a T4A with a Pension Adjustment (PA). This PA will reduce your RRSP contribution room in the following year. If your application to accrue Pensionable Service is delayed, income tax returns for previous years may be affected.

Disabled Before September 1, 1992

Periods of disability before September 1, 1992 may be purchased as Pensionable Service. See *Purchasing Service* on page 21.

More Information

Applications are in the Disability – Accruing Pensionable Service information sheet, which can be found on our website. Members who are registered for My*Pension* can apply online.

Benefit Sharing on Relationship Breakdown

Special Rules for Relationship Breakdown

Your benefits may not be given to another person, used as security, or forfeited. However, pensions are considered family property and may be shared as the result of a court order when relationship breakdown occurs. The regulations regarding division of pensions on relationship breakdown apply to Plan members who were legally married or were in a common-law relationship that broke down on or after January 1, 2020.

If the pension has not yet commenced, a Plan member's former spouse will generally be entitled to an immediate one-time lump-sum payment of a portion of the Plan member's benefits under the Plan. This portion must not exceed 50% of the Plan member's pension benefit earned during the period of joint accrual. If the pension has commenced, the pension payments will be split between the Plan member and the former spouse.

Because ATRF must comply with all legislative provisions, you should give ATRF the opportunity of reviewing any court order before it is made. In order to divide a benefit entitlement, ATRF will require a court-filed and court-certified copy of the order.

Three Ways of Sharing

The sharing may take one of three forms depending on whether the member is entitled to a termination benefit or a pension. The sharing may be accomplished by:

- the Plan member giving up ownership to other family property to offset the sharing of the pension benefit,
- an immediate one-time lump-sum payment of a portion of the pension benefit, or
- dividing a pension that is already being paid.

More Information

A detailed information sheet and draft orders are available on our website or through our office.

In the Event of Your Death Before Your Pension Begins

Priority of Beneficiaries

The Plan provides a benefit if you die before your pension begins. A death benefit is paid to your:

- Spouse/Pension Partner,
- dependent minor children, if you have no Spouse/Pension Partner,
- named beneficiary(ies), if you have no Spouse/Pension Partner or dependent minor children, otherwise
- estate.

Before Entitled to Pension

If you die before you have enough Pensionable Service to be eligible for a pension, your beneficiary (as determined by the priority list above) will receive your contributions with interest, plus the value of any actuarial purchase of Pensionable Service.

After Entitled to Pension

If you die after you have enough Pensionable Service to be eligible for a pension, your surviving Spouse/Pension Partner will receive a pension equal to the amount he or she would have received if you had elected a Joint Equal Pension Option with 100% continuing to your Spouse/Pension Partner for life (reduced if necessary to comply with tax rule maximums). (See *Pension Options* on page 10 for more information.)

This pension is paid from the first of the month following:

- death, if you die while under contract or within two months of terminating your contract, or
- what would have been your 55th birthday, if you die while not under contract and more than two months from the end of your most recent contract, or
- what would have been the first eligible date of your pension, if you die after age 55 while not under contract.

If you have no Spouse/Pension Partner but you have dependent minor children (under 18 years of age at the date of your death and dependent on you for support), your dependent minor children will receive:

- double your contributions with interest, plus
- the value of any actuarial purchase of Pensionable Service.

If you have no Spouse/Pension Partner or dependent minor children, your designated beneficiary or estate will receive:

- your contributions with interest, plus
- the value of any actuarial purchase of Pensionable Service.



In the Event of Your Death After Your Pension Begins

Benefit Determined by Pension Option

If you die after your pension begins, the benefit will be determined by the Pension Option you elected at retirement. See *Pension Options* on page 10 for more information.

Purchasing Service

Why Purchase Service?

Purchasing service increases your Pensionable Service which increases your pension.

Cost of Purchasing Service

The cost of purchasing Pensionable Service, which is an actuarial purchase of service, equals the value of the increase in pension benefit as calculated on the date of application. The calculation uses the higher of your projected annual Pensionable Salary or the Five-year Average Pensionable Salary at the date of application, and assumes that the pension will be paid at the earliest possible date. The purchase is cost-neutral, resulting in no subsidized cost to you or the Plan.

Get Estimate First

ATRF can estimate (or you can estimate on the website) the cost of purchasing Pensionable Service, and you are encouraged to obtain an estimate before making formal application. ATRF will provide an approximate cost, and, if you have sufficient Pensionable Service to be entitled to a pension, estimated pension amounts with and without the purchase.

Limitations and Conditions

Pensionable Service can be purchased in total, or in half-year increments. If you are applying for a pension, any portion of service can be purchased. Each type of Pensionable Service purchase has specific eligibility requirements. Under the tax rules, a maximum of one year of Pensionable Service may be accumulated for any calendar year, including purchased Pensionable Service.

Generally, purchases of post-1989 Pensionable Service must first be approved by Canada Revenue Agency. Once approved, the purchase is fully tax deductible but reduces your RRSP contribution room. Since each Plan member's financial situation is different, you should contact Canada Revenue Agency or your financial advisor for more detailed information.

Purchase of Employer-approved Leaves

Any employer-approved leave can be purchased, if you:

- were a contributing active member of ATRF or on strike *immediately* before the leave, and
- are currently accruing Pensionable Service as a contributing active member of ATRF or as a disabled member.

You are not required to return to employment with the same employer after the leave ends, nor are you required to take any minimum number of courses during an educational or professional improvement leave.

Purchase of Previously Refunded Service

If you have withdrawn contributions and interest from ATRF for a prior period of Pensionable Service, you can purchase this service if you are currently accruing Pensionable Service as a contributing active member or as a disabled member.

Purchase of Substitute Service

Only substitute service provided with an ATRF employer since May 1, 1971 may be purchased.

If you are currently applying for an ATRF pension:

- you may purchase any amount of substitute service, and
- the cost is subsidized by the Alberta Government.

If you are currently accruing Pensionable Service as a contributing active member or as a disabled member:

- you may purchase any amount of substitute service, and
- if you purchase less than 186 days, you are required to pay the full cost, or
- if you purchase service in 186-day blocks, the cost is subsidized by the Alberta Government.

If you are not currently accruing Pensionable Service as a contributing active member or as a disabled member:

- you may purchase only 186-day blocks of substitute service, and
- the cost is subsidized by the Alberta Government.

If the substitute service was rendered with an ATRF private school, there is no subsidy.

Purchase of Disability Service before September 1, 1992

Periods of disability before September 1, 1992 can be purchased if:

- you are currently accruing Pensionable Service as a contributing active member or as a disabled member,
- you were a contributing active member, on strike, or on leave of absence immediately before your period of disability,

- you withdrew from teaching because of a disability even though you may have been capable of other gainful employment, and
- you received a long-term or extended disability benefit or you can provide satisfactory medical evidence to support your disability.

Purchase of Past Private School Service

Service with ATRF private schools can be purchased if:

- you are currently accruing Pensionable Service as a contributing active member or as a disabled member,
- the private school is currently an ATRF employer, or was an ATRF employer in the past, and
- you are or were a member of the Private School Teachers' Pension Plan.

For past service with a private school after December 31, 1991, the tax rules require that the private school must have had a pension plan in place, you must no longer be a member of that plan, and no benefits remain to your credit for the service.

More Information

Applications can be found in the *Purchasing Service* information kit which is available in the Publications & Forms section of our website, or through our office. Members who are registered for *MyPension* can apply to purchase service online.

Transferring Service Between Pension Plans

Reciprocal Transfer Agreements

There are four reciprocal transfer agreements which allow you to transfer Pensionable Service between participating pension plans:

- Teachers' Pension Plans Authorities
- Alberta Public Sector Pension Plans
- Government of Canada – Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP)
- 1974 BC Reciprocal Transfer Agreement

Transfer Amount

For the Teachers' Pension Plans, the Alberta Public Sector Pension Plans and the Government of Canada – Public Service Pension Plan agreements the amount available for transfer from the exporting pension plan is equal to the value of that plan's benefit. The amount requested by the importing pension plan is equal to the value of the benefit for the Pensionable Service to be credited.

If there is a shortfall between the amount available for transfer and the amount required by the importing pension plan, you may pay the difference and be credited

for all of the Pensionable Service being transferred. If you decide not to pay the difference, your Pensionable Service transferred will be pro-rated.

If the amount requested by the importing pension plan is less than the value of the benefit as if you were withdrawing funds as a termination benefit (see page 17), the difference will be paid directly to you in cash, with income tax deducted. Tax rules do not permit this amount to be transferred to an RRSP.

Teachers' Pension Plans Authorities

Transfers of Pensionable Service under this reciprocal transfer agreement are permitted on application, if you:

- are a contributing active member of the importing pension plan at the time of application,
- have 20 or more days of Pensionable Service with the importing pension plan following the transfer of employment,
- have ceased to occupy a position with the exporting pension plan and are not an active member of the exporting pension plan,
- have Pensionable Service with the exporting pension plan, and
- are not receiving a pension from either the importing or exporting pension plan.

The authorities participating under this reciprocal transfer agreement with ATRF are:

Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board

(780) 451-4166 1-800-661-9582 www.atrf.com

B.C. Pension Corporation

(250) 953-3022 1-800-665-6770 www.pensionsbc.ca (*click on Teachers' Pension Plan*)

Manitoba Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund

(204) 949-0048 1-800-782-0714 www.traf.mb.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Pension Plan

(709) 729-3931 www.fin.gov.nl.ca

Nova Scotia Pension Services Corporation

(902) 424-5070 www.novascotiapension.ca

Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan

(416) 226-2700 1-800-668-0105 www.otpp.com

Prince Edward Island Teachers' Superannuation Commission

(902) 368-4200 www.peitsf.ca

Province of New Brunswick Pension Division

(506) 453-2296 www2.gnb.ca

Quebec Pension Commission

(418) 643-4881 1-800-463-5533 www.carra.gouv.qc.ca

Saskatchewan Teachers' Superannuation Commission

(306) 787-6440 1-877-364-8202 www.stsc.gov.sk.ca

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

(306) 373-1660 1-800-667-7762 www.stf.sk.ca

Alberta Public Sector Pension Plans

If transferring to ATRF you must:

- be an active member of ATRF on the date of application,
- have ceased to be a member of the exporting plan,
- have pensionable service credited with the exporting plan,
- not be in receipt of a pension from either ATRF or the exporting plan, and
- not be entitled to an unreduced pension under the exporting plan.

If transferring to Management Employees Pension Plan (MEPP), the Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP), or the Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) you must:

- have ceased to occupy a position with ATRF on or after January 1, 1995, and have ceased to be an active member of ATRF,
- be an active member of the importing plan on the date of application,
- have pensionable service credited with the importing plan, and
- not be in receipt of a pension from either ATRF or the importing plan.

Time Limits

- If you joined the ATRF plan after December 31, 2007, you have one year from the date you joined to transfer service from MEPP, PSPP, or LAPP.
- If you were an active ATRF plan member on December 31, 2007, you had until January 1, 2009 to apply to transfer and are no longer eligible.

The authorities participating under this reciprocal transfer agreement with ATRF are:

Management Employees Pension Plan (MEPP) 1-877-889-6377 www.mepp.ca	Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP) 1-877-453-1777 www.pspp.ca	Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) 1-877-649-5277 www.lapp.ab.ca
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Government of Canada – Public Service Pension Plan

To transfer **to the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund**, from the Government of Canada – Public Service Pension Plan, please contact:

Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board
600 Barnett House
11010 142 Street NW
EDMONTON AB T5N 2R1
(780) 451-4166 or 1-800-661-9582

To transfer **to the Government of Canada – Public Service Pension Plan**, from the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund, please contact:

Public Works & Government Services Canada
Public Service Pension Centre Mail Facility
150 Dion Boulevard
PO BOX 8000
MATANE QC G4W 4T6
1-800-561-7930

If transferring to ATRF you must:

- have ceased to occupy a position with the PSPP, and have ceased to be an active member of the PSPP,
- be an active member of ATRF on the date of application,
- have pensionable service credited with the PSPP,
- not be in receipt of a pension from either ATRF or the PSPP, and
- ensure both ATRF and the PSPP receive your Transfer Application within the time limits specified.

If transferring to PSPP you must:

- have ceased to occupy a position with ATRF on or after July 1, 1995, and have ceased to be an active member of ATRF,
- be an active member of the PSPP on the date of application,
- have pensionable service credited with the PSPP,
- not be in receipt of a pension from either ATRF or the PSPP, and
- ensure both ATRF and the PSPP receive your Transfer Application within the time limits specified.

Important Deadlines

There are deadlines that must be met in order to be eligible to transfer under this new agreement.

- If you were an active ATRF plan member on January 12, 2012, you had until January 13, 2013 to apply to transfer service from PSPP and are no longer eligible.
- If you joined the ATRF plan after January 12, 2012, you have one year from the date you joined to apply to transfer service from PSPP.
- If you were an active member of PSPP on January 12, 2012, you had until January 13, 2013 to apply to transfer service from ATRF and are no longer eligible.
- If you joined PSPP after January 12, 2012, you have one year from the date you joined to apply to transfer service from ATRF.

Reciprocal Transfer Agreement with British Columbia Teachers' Pension Plan

Transfers of Pensionable Service under this reciprocal transfer agreement are permitted only at retirement, and only if you are being granted a pension by the importing pension plan.

If, on January 31, 1995, you had Pensionable Service with ATRF and the British Columbia Teachers' Pension Plan (BCTPP), you may be able to participate under the 1974 Reciprocal Transfer Agreement if:

- you are eligible to apply for a pension at some time in the future from the importing pension plan, and
- you are not in receipt of a pension from either ATRF or BCTPP.

When ATRF is the importing pension plan:

- you must have at least five years of Pensionable Service with ATRF,
- your combined Pensionable Service with ATRF and BCTPP must meet ATRF's minimum service requirements for pension eligibility, and
- you must have at least one year of Pensionable Service with ATRF after the last year of Pensionable Service being transferred from BCTPP.

The years of Pensionable Service with BCTPP are used to determine your eligibility for pension and to calculate your ATRF pension.

More Information

Applications and more information about these reciprocal transfer agreements can be obtained by contacting ATRF or by visiting our website.

Review of Administrative Decisions

Contact ATRF

When you have questions or concerns about an administrative decision made by ATRF staff, you should first contact ATRF directly for further information and review.

Review Committee

The ATRF Board has also established a Review Committee to address requests by Plan members to review certain ATRF administrative decisions. The Review Committee, comprised of all ATRF Board members, is responsible for reviewing administrative decisions relating to eligibility for, and commencement of benefits.

If you are a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), advice and assistance with the review are available from the ATA.



Other Resources

Federal Government Programs

Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

Old Age Security (OAS)

Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)

Employment Insurance (EI)

For detailed information please contact:

Service Canada
Toll Free (Canada and the United States)
1-800-277-9914 (CPP and OAS); 1-800-206-7218 (EI)
www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Alberta Government Programs

Alberta Seniors Benefit

Special Needs Assistance for Seniors

For detailed information please contact:

Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
Seniors Information Services Offices
1-877-644-9992 (toll free outside Edmonton); (780) 664-9992 (in Edmonton)
www.seniors.gov.ab.ca

Health Benefits

Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan (ASEBP)

For detailed information, please contact:

Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan
Edmonton: (780) 431-4786
1-877-431-4786 (toll free throughout Alberta)
Email: benefits@asebp.ab.ca
www.asebp.ab.ca

Alberta Blue Cross

For detailed information please contact:

Alberta Blue Cross Edmonton 780-498-8000	Alberta Blue Cross Calgary 403-234-9666	Alberta Blue Cross Toll free in Alberta 1-800-661-6995
Or visit their website at www.ab.bluecross.ca		

Other Associations

The Alberta Teachers' Association

The ATA can provide information and assistance to its members in the areas of professional development, member services and teacher welfare.

For detailed information please contact:

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Edmonton Barnett House 780-447-9400 1-800-232-7208 (in Alberta)	Calgary Southern Regional Office 403-265-2672 1-800-332-1280 (in Alberta)
Or visit their website at www.teachers.ab.ca	

Alberta Retired Teachers' Association

ARTA members may be eligible to apply for group insurance benefits.

For detailed information please contact:

Alberta Retired Teachers' Association
Edmonton – Barnett House
780-822-2400
1-855-212-2400 (toll free anywhere in Canada)
www.arta.net
Email: info@arta.net

ATRF Website and *MyPension*

Visit our Website

Go to **www.atrf.com** and check out:

- Life Events
- Meet With Us – register for a personal interview
- Publications & Forms

MyPension

When registered for *MyPension* you will have secure access to the following:

- pension estimates
- your plan member statement
- contribution and service record
- termination benefit estimates
- service purchase estimates

Apply Online

You can also submit an electronic application:

- for your pension
- for a termination benefit
- to purchase service
- to accrue disability service

Update Your Information

You can view and/or update:

- your personal information
- your spouse/pension partner's information
- beneficiary information
- your security profile

Join our Email List

When you join our email list you can receive documents electronically:

- the Pension Points newsletter
- Annual Report Highlights
- your Plan Member Statement

Pension Calculations

To estimate your pension on paper, we have included a Worksheet on page 32 of this guide; however, you can also do a pension estimate using the calculator in *MyPension* which uses your own pensionable service and salary.

NOTE: *The salary and service information you find on our website is only as current as the most recent data your employer has submitted.*

How to Register for MyPension

Registering for *MyPension* takes only a few minutes and access is immediate...

- Go to www.atrf.com
- Click on *Access MyPension* on the left side
- This takes you to the secured section called *MyPension*
- Click on *Register*
- Read and accept the *MyPension* agreement
- Register with your ATRF ID Number
- Create your *MyPension* ID and Password
- Registration is complete

User ID & Password Help

Forgot MyPension User ID or Password?

On the *MyPension* main page, click on '**Forgot MyPension User ID?**', provide information specific to you and we will send your User ID and password in two separate emails.

Security Tip

For additional security, we recommend you change your User ID and password occasionally. To do this, Sign In to *MyPension*, select the '**View/Update Your Security Profile**' menu item on the *MyPension* menu page and follow the instructions provided.

How to Estimate Your ATRF Pension Worksheet begins on page 32.

Worksheet:

How to Estimate Your ATRF Pension

You can also visit the website to register for My*Pension* to access your own personal information.

To estimate your pension, you must project your Pensionable Service, Five-year Average Pensionable Salary and Five-year Average YMPE. This calculation does not include any cost-of-living adjustments for Deferred Pensions.

1. Determine your **index** (use four decimal places)

- Your age at retirement (A) _____
(complete years plus days ÷ 365)
- Your Pensionable Service at retirement (B) _____
- Your index is (A) + (B) = (C) _____

2. Determine your **reduction factor**

If (C) is 85 or more, reduction factor is 0. Put 0 in box (G) and go to step 3.

If (C) is less than 85

- Calculate the number of years short of age 65 (D) _____
Subtract (A) _____ from 65 = (D)
- Calculate the number of years short of 85 index (E) _____
Subtract (C) _____ from 85 = (E)
- (F) = the lesser of (D) or (E) (F) _____
- **Reduction factor = .02 × (F) _____ = (G) _____**
(Maximum 20%)

3. Estimate your **Five-year Average Pensionable Salary** * (H) _____

Estimate the five consecutive years during which your salaries were the highest and calculate the average annual salary. A part-time employee should annualize each year's earnings. For example, a plan member receiving \$45,000 for half-time employment for the entire year would have an annualized salary of \$90,000.

*Your Five-Year Average Pensionable Salary cannot exceed the maximum pensionable salary determined each year in accordance with the *Income Tax Act*.

Following are the last 5 years maximum pensionable salary under the Teachers' Pension Plan:

2021 – \$180,758
2020 – \$172,221
2019 – \$168,498
2018 – \$163,992
2017 – \$162,312

4. Estimate your **Five-year Average YMPE** (I) _____

For example, the **Five-year Average YMPE** as of August 31, 2021, is \$57,733 and as of December 31, 2021, is \$57,780.

Following are the YMPE's in recent years:

- \$61,600 in 2021
- \$58,700 in 2020
- \$57,400 in 2019
- \$55,900 in 2018
- \$55,300 in 2017
- \$54,900 in 2016
- \$53,600 in 2015

Use the current year YMPE of \$61,600 to project for future years.

5. Estimate your **pension**

• $1.4\% \times (I) \$ \frac{\text{Five-year Average YMPE}}{\text{YMPE}} \times (B) \frac{\text{Pensionable Service}}{\text{Pensionable Service}} = (J) \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

• $2.0\% \times (H - I) \$ \frac{\text{Five-year Average Pensionable Salary above the Five-year Average YMPE}}{\text{Five-year Average Pensionable Salary above the Five-year Average YMPE}} \times (B) \frac{\text{Pensionable Service}}{\text{Pensionable Service}} = (K) \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

NOTE: *If you have pensionable service prior to January 1, 1966 you will receive a 2.0% benefit for that service.*

- Annual pension: (J) + (K) = (L) _____
- If reduction applies: (L) × (G) = (M) _____
- (L) – (M) = (N) _____

NOTE: *If you work the 10-month school year and retire at the end of June, you include the service, YMPE and salary to the end of August in your calculation as of June 30th. If you work the 12-month school year, you would retire at the end of August to receive the full school year's credit of service and salary.*

Glossary

Commuted Value

A lump sum amount in today's dollars which equals the value of your future pension payments.

Deferred Pension

A pension which starts at some future date.

Pension Option

The form of monthly pension that you select. Your Pension Option may include survivor benefits or a guarantee period.

Pensionable Salary

Pensionable Salary is salary used to determine your Five-year Average Pensionable Salary. It is limited to ensure that your benefit does not exceed the maximum benefit allowed by the tax rules. In 2021, the limit on Pensionable Salary is \$180,758.00.

Pensionable Service

Pensionable Service is:

- service for which ATRF contributions were deducted,
- service purchased through ATRF,
- service transferred from another pension plan under a reciprocal transfer agreement, and
- service accrued while disabled.

Pensionable Service includes contractual teaching service, for which contributions have been made to ATRF, with:


- school jurisdictions,
- chartered schools,
- specific colleges, or
- specific private schools.

Service is no longer pensionable once you take a termination benefit.

The health-related portion of a maternity leave is considered to be Pensionable Service if ATRF contributions are deducted. Contact your employer to ensure contributions are deducted.

As of September 1, 1992, if you become disabled, you can continue to accrue Pensionable Service. See *If You Become Disabled* on page 18 for more information.

Pensionable Service is credited according to service and salary information provided by employers and is rounded to four decimal places. For those Plan members who are employed part-time, Pensionable Service is credited on a part-time basis. For



example, a Plan member employed for a full year on a half-time basis will be credited with 0.5 of a year of Pensionable Service.

Under the tax rules, a maximum of one year of Pensionable Service may be accumulated in any calendar year.

Pensionable Service determines your eligibility to receive an ATRF pension, and is used to calculate your pension. Pensionable Service can be accumulated:

- with no maximum number of years,
- to the end of the calendar year in which you reach age 71.

Salary

Salary is compensation for regular service, and includes administrative allowances, isolation pay, retroactive salary, and administrative vacation pay. It does not include car allowances, salary earned teaching night or summer school classes, early retirement incentives, or vacation payouts for administrative positions.

Spouse/Pension Partner

A person who, at the relevant time, was married to the member and had not been living separate and apart from that member for three or more consecutive years, or a person who, as at and up to the relevant time, had lived with that member in a conjugal relationship for a continuous period of at least three years and was, during that period, held out by that member in the community in which they lived as being in that conjugal relationship.

YMPE

The yearly maximum pensionable earnings (YMPE) covered by the Canada Pension Plan for 2021 is \$61,600.

Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board

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