



When Can I Retire?

When thinking about retirement, there are several important dates to consider for different reasons. Below is a brief explanation of each date. As always, if you are thinking about retirement, you should confirm your RSA eligibility date with RSA by calling (334) 517-7000 and confirm your Insurance eligibility date with LGHIB by calling the Personnel Office.

- 1) **RSA eligibility date** - This is according to RSA policies. This date is the earliest day that you become eligible to receive a monthly benefit check from RSA. You are eligible when you meet one of the following criteria:
 - The member has at least 10 years of service credit and has attained the age of 60 or
 - After accumulating 25 years of service credit at any age

A member is eligible to retire the first day of the month following attainment of age 60 with 10 years of creditable service or the first day of the month following attainment of 25 years of service credit. Members may only retire on the first day of any month they are eligible. Eligible members may convert unused sick leave days to service credit to meet the minimum requirement for service retirement

It is not necessarily tied to your hire date. This is the date that you were first enrolled in RSA and began making contributions to RSA. If you were hired prior to July 7, 2003, you were not enrolled in RSA until after your probationary period. Your retirement benefit date will be impacted if you received worker's compensation benefits, took any type of unpaid leave of absence, had a break in service or have service time with another agency. This means **ONLY** RSA can confirm your retirement date. However, you can convert unused sick leave to achieve the 25 years of service requirement but not the 10 year requirement. I will explain sick leave conversion in item #3.

- 2) **Insurance eligibility date** - This is according to LGHIB policies. This is tied to the date your coverage was effective **not** your hire date.

Participants may elect to continue their LGHIP coverage as a retiree if, at the time of retirement, the participant has at least

- 10 years of coverage in the LGHIP (coverage not required to be continuous) and:
- the participant has a combination of 25 years of full time service, or more, of service with a participating unit or other service as approved by the LGHIB, regardless of age or
- the participant is 60 years old, or older

For service retirements, proof of the retiree's years of fulltime service with a unit covered under the LGHIP must be provided. In addition to service with a participating unit, the LGHIB may also consider proof of other approved employers, such as the State of Alabama or a nonparticipating local government employer.

There is a leave conversion privilege provided as well, but these must be preapproved on an individual basis by LGHIB to be eligible.

3) **Sick leave conversion** – This an option offered by RSA that Houston County elected to make available to our retirees.

Our policy:

Employees who separate from service and who do not qualify for retirement under the State Retirement System shall forfeit any accumulated sick leave. Employees who do qualify for retirement under the State Retirement System will be eligible to convert their accumulated sick leave, not to exceed the maximum limit of 960 hours, to service time at the time of retirement. The conversion table will be the one adopted by the State of Alabama. Those employees who were hired into classified or unclassified positions before March 1, 1987 and who qualify for retirement under the State Retirement System and upon retirement have an accumulated balance of at least 480 hours accumulated of sick leave will be eligible to elect to be paid payment for one half (1/2) of that accumulated balance up to a maximum of 240 hours pay at the time of retirement or in the alternative may elect to convert their accumulated sick leave, not to exceed the maximum limit of 960 hours, to service time at the time of retirement. The conversion table will be the one adopted by the State of Alabama. Pursuant to ALA. CODE § 36-26-36.1, no employee shall receive both service credit provided by this section and payment or partial payment for accrued sick leave pursuant to any other provision of law.

For example:

You currently have 927.46 sick leave hours eligible to convert. The formula used to calculate service time conversion is:

Total sick leave hours accrued / 8 hours per day = XX days and converts to XX months based on the RSA conversion chart. $927.46/8 = 115.94$ days Looking at the conversion chart, 111-130 days converts to 6 additional months service. I have attached a copy of the State Conversion chart.

That would allow you to retire six months earlier that the RSA eligibility date. As your projected date gets closer, we will verify all of this. I also encourage you to attend one of the 1 day seminars provided by RSA. Those seminars fill up very quickly. As soon as the schedule is published, you will want to register to secure your place.