

RESOLUTION NO. 87-17

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DECLARING
THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE INCLUSION OF EMS
PERSONNEL IN THE SPECIAL RISK CATEGORY
OF THE FLORIDA RETIREMENT SYSTEM

WHEREAS, Paramedics and EMTs provide a unique kind of service to the citizens and visitors of Nassau County; and

WHEREAS, the very nature of their job exposes them to extraordinary physical demands, emotional stress, and significant exposure to disease; and

WHEREAS, the intent of Florida Statute 121.0515 was to provide Special Risk Retirement membership for such occupations in the Florida Retirement System; and

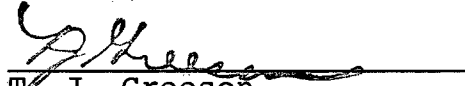
WHEREAS, the inclusion of Paramedics and EMTs can be accomplished by legislative amendment.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Nassau County, Florida that legislators be encouraged to initiate and support the appropriate amendment to present Florida Statutes pertaining to the inclusion of EMTs and Paramedics in the Special Risk category of the Florida Retirement System.

ADOPTED this 13th day of January, 1987.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:


T. J. Greeson
Its: Ex-Officio Clerk


Gene Blackwelder
Its: Chairman



**NASSAU COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

NASSAU COUNTY OFFICE ANNEX
11 North 14th Street, Box 12
Fernandina Beach, Florida 32034-0494



TERRY P. GRIFFIN
Director

January 12, 1987

DIVISIONS

- Civil Defense
- Communications
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire
- Fuel Allocation
- Water Safety

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Suncom 620-5227
Emergency Dial 911
(904) 261-5962

Nassau County Board of Commissioners
P.O. Box 1010
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Dear Gentlemen and Madam:

The Florida Association of County Emergency Medical Services (FACEMS) of which Nassau is a member, will be conducting a presentation for the State Association of County Commissioners at its next meeting in Tampa on the merits of including Florida's Rescue personnel under the Special Risk retirement class of the Florida Retirement System.

When the Legislature first created the Special Risk classification Rescue services were a new service in Florida so they were omitted from being included with Fire and Police. Since that time Rescue personnel in Florida have worked side by side with police and Fire agencies and been exposed to the same dangers. Many have died side by side but their families received different benefits.

In Nassau County, Rescue personnel are constantly subjected to danger from auto accidents, hazardous materials, being shot or stabbed, or having heart attacks or mental breakdowns from stress. The State of Florida has recently released a list of 21 infections and deadly diseases Rescue personnel are being subjected to daily with the most deadly being the Aids virus.

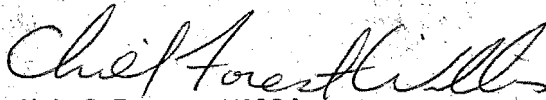
The National career longevity average of street Rescue personnel lifting stretchers is 15 years without suffering irreparable back damage. However, he or she must continue working until they are 62 in order to retire while police and fire can retire at 55. If a police officer or firefighter is killed in the line of duty in Florida his children can go to college free. Rescue personnel get no such benefit.

The difference in retirement contribution for Special Risk versus regular risk is 1.97%. In Nassau County, the retirement contribution for 27 affected employees would increase by only \$1,072 total. Special risk retirement for Rescue Employees would greatly reduce the attrition being suffered statewide and locally by disillusioned Rescue personnel.

FACEMS is not asking the Board to allocate funds or make any other commitment. It only requests that a resolution be completed in support of the concept to entered with others at the SACC meeting in February.

On behalf of the Rescue Division I would respectfully request the Board to take favorable action on this request. An information sheet is attached.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chief Forest Willis".

Chief Forest Willis
Rescue Supervisor

The Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services has recently released a list of the 21 most contagious diseases Rescue personnel are being subjected to on a daily basis. This list does not include all diseases that Rescue personnel may encounter.

- Aids
- Anthrax
- Syphilis
- Diphtheria
- Dissemination Vaccinia
- Hansen's Disease
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis, Non-A, Non-B
- Legionaires Disease
- Malaria
- Rubeola
- Meningococcal Meningitis
- Plague
- Poliomyelitis
- Psittacosis
- Tuberculosis
- Q Fever
- Rabies
- Rubella
- Typhoid

SPECIAL RISK RETIREMENT SHOULD INCLUDE
PARAMEDICS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS

- * PARAMEDICS, EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS, FIREFIGHTERS AND LAWEN SHARE THE SAME WORK ENVIRONMENT.
- * EACH AGENT IS HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO INJURY ON THE JOB.
- * EACH AGENT IS HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO CONTACT INFECTIOUS DISEASES.
- * EACH AGENT WORKS UNDER HIGHLY STRESSFUL CONDITIONS, WHERE ACCURATE JOB PERFORMANCE MUST BE MAINTAINED.
- * EACH OF THESE AGENTS MAY REQUIRE RETIREMENT EARLIER THAN GENERAL EMPLOYEES DUE TO DETERIORATION RELATED TO THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEMANDS OF THEIR JOB.
- * LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FIRE PERSONNEL RECEIVE SPECIAL RISK RETIREMENT BENEFITS, ALLOWING THEM TO RETIRE AT AGE 55.
- * PARAMEDICS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS RECEIVE NO SPECIAL RISK BENEFITS IN THE CURRENT FLORIDA RETIREMENT SYSTEM.

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RESOLUTION

Approved by unanimous vote of the Florida Association of County
Emergency Medical Services - January 27, 1986

SUBJECT:

EMS employees' eligibility for special risk retirement.

BACKGROUND:

Florida Statute 121.0515, Special Risk Membership category of the Florida Retirement System provides for increased retirement credit for law enforcement, firefighter and criminal detention employees due to the high risk nature of their work. They receive retirement credits at a higher rate per year than other employees covered by the system.

It was the intent of the legislature to establish a class of retirement membership that awards more retirement per year of service to those whose work is physically demanding or arduous, that requires extraordinary agility and mental acuity and who may find that because of diminishing physical and mental faculties they are not able, without risk to themselves, the public or co-workers, to continue performing such duties and thus enjoy the full career and retirement benefits as provided others.

DISCUSSION:

Presently EMT and Paramedic personnel are excluded from Special Risk Membership essentially due to the fact that when the legislation was originally formulated the EMS services were not effectively organized nor very well represented and, consequently, were not seriously considered. There is little if any disagreement among professionals of the emergency services field in general that the EMTs and Paramedics are routinely subjected to a significant amount of physical exertion, mental and

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Page 2
RESOLUTION (Continued)

DISCUSSION (Continued)

emotional stress and debilitating experiences which should entitle them to the increased retirement benefits in accordance with the legislature's intent of the classes of workers this act was designed to protect.

EMS personnel, while being exposed to similar dangers as faced by law enforcement and firefighter personnel, are faced with the additional specter of infectious diseases such as hepatitis and AIDS adding to their mental and psychological stress.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the State Association of County Commissioners of Florida endorse the inclusion of EMS personnel in the Special Risk Category of the Florida Retirement System and encourage legislators to initiate and support the appropriate amendment to the present Florida Statutes pertaining to Special Risk Category.