



Frequently Asked Questions **2% Fire Dues Explanations and FAQs**

1. Where can I find a copy of the Fire Dues Distribution Roll?

The 2% Fire Dues Distribution Roll can be found on the DSPS Fire Prevention/Safety and Health website in 2 places. The list is first sorted alphabetically by County, and then sorted by Towns, Villages and Cities. The “Current Year Distribution” list replaces the mailings that were done in the past to announce the amounts of the payments. If there are questions concerning the list, contact DSPSSBFireDues@Wisconsin.gov.

- Click on the 2% Dues drop down tab and in the first paragraph click on the link “Current Year Distribution”
- Under the heading Additional Resources on the right side of the main page click on the link “Current Year Distribution”

2. Who arranges the 2% Fire Dues payments to Municipalities in Wisconsin?

- The Industry Services Division (IS) of the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) does the arranging of payments to municipalities
- Payments are sent to the Municipality Treasurer via ACH (direct deposit) or paper check (mailed via USPS)

3. Who is entitled to the 2% Fire Dues payments?

- 101.575 Entitlement to Dues the full statute can be read at <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/101.575>

Municipalities maintaining a fire department must account for all 2% dues funds received, expended, and held in a reserve/capital account.

Municipalities may contract with a fire dept to provide fire protection and prevention services to their municipality. **101.575(1)(c)** Those municipalities are entitled to a fire dues payment if they meet all the specified requirements. In this case if a municipality is contracting with a fire department, they must give their 2% dues funds received to the fire department providing fire protection/prevention services. Municipalities that contract for fire protection/prevention services should define in the contracts how the dues payments will be allocated to pay for eligible items to help ensure that the payments are utilized in accordance with s. **101.575**. Two percent fire dues are not intended to cover the full cost of fire protection/prevention services or the costs to operate a fire department which extend far beyond the eligible items that two-percent fire dues may be used for. Since the list of eligible items is narrow when compared to a fire department’s operating costs, simply paying for contracted fire protection/prevention services utilizing only fire dues payments is not allowed.

4. What happens if a Municipality contracts with multiple Fire Depts for Fire Services and one of the Fire Depts is found non-compliant?

- **314.01(14)(b) 2. Compliance determination**

Fire department non-compliance results in a municipal non-compliance. Meaning “One fails they all fail”. Any municipality served by a non-compliant fire department will receive a 2% fire dues payment during the first year of non-compliance. If during the second year following a year of non-compliance, the municipality fails self-certification, any fire departments (providing services to the municipality) fails the self-certification, and/or the fire department serving the municipality fails an audit conducted by the Fire Prevention Coordinator, the municipality will not receive a 2% dues payment.

5. What can be purchased with 2% Fire Dues money?

- [101.575\(6\)\(a\)](#) No city, village or town maintaining a fire department under this section may use any dues received under s. [101.573](#) and this section for any purpose except the direct provision of the following:
 1. The purchase of fire protection equipment.
 2. Fire inspection and public education.
 3. Training of fire fighters and fire inspectors performing duties under s. 101.14.
 4. To fund wholly or partially fire fighters' pension funds or other special funds for the benefit of disabled or superannuated fire fighters.

[\(b\)](#) Any city, village, or town that contracts for fire protection service shall give dues received under s. [101.573](#) and this section to the fire department providing the fire protection service. That fire department shall use those dues for any of the purposes specified in par. [\(a\)](#).

6. What is an explanation of what can be purchased from question 5?

1. Fire Protection Equipment: fire apparatus (engine, ladder, brush, tender, etc.), hose, personal protective equipment (turnout gear, SCBAs, helmets, boots, gloves, etc.), thermal imaging cameras (TIC), radios, pagers, foam, axes, nozzles, fans, and any equipment used to supplement fire suppression. The money can also be held in a reserve/capital account to accumulate enough money to purchase fire protection equipment (fire apparatus, PPE, TIC, etc.) or used to pay the balance on a loan for fire protection equipment.
2. The 2% dues can be expended on fire inspection services (e.g. wages and benefits, contracting for fire inspection services, etc.) or for public education services and equipment. Equipment may include brochures, pamphlets, technical aids such as laptops, tablets and software used for inspection activities, uniforms, and business cards
3. Training of fire fighters and fire inspectors performing fire inspection or fire education activities duties under s. [101.14](#). Training may include fees, memberships, lodging, books, wages, and travel.
4. Municipalities can also use the 2% dues to supplement retirement programs such as the Wisconsin Service Awards Program or other approved retirement program sponsored by the local municipality. Approved means state approved.

7. When Can Municipalities Expect to Receive their Fire Dues Payment?

- [101.573\(3\)](#) The Wisconsin statute mandates the payment to be made on or before August 1 of each year.

8. How Is the Amount Determined?

- There are three key factors to consider in understanding the computation of fire dues payments and why the amounts may change for a municipality from year to year:
 1. The Fire Dues fund amount is subject to change based upon the amount of fire insurance underwritten in Wisconsin in the year.
 2. The percentage each municipality receives changes due to the relationship between the growth of the local community and the overall growth within the state.
 3. The amount of disbursement is subject to change due to the hold-harmless provisions.

9. What is the Hold-Harmless Amount?

- An important factor in the equation is called the “hold-harmless” amount. This amount, based on the payment received in the calendar year 1979, ensures that each municipality never receives less than the amount they received in 1979. For some municipalities the “hold harmless” amount is higher than the current calculation and for some it is lower. It’s also the reason why some municipalities’ fire dues payment remains the same from year to year.

10. How are the Calculations done?

- The Fire Dues payment is computed using the calculations described below:
 1. Divide the municipal equalized valuation of real property improvements by the total state equalized valuation of real property improvements (this gives the municipal percentage);
 2. Multiply the municipal percentage times the amount of funding available for distribution. The resulting number is the current fire dues amount.
 3. Determine the 1979 base Fire Dues payment (“hold harmless” amount) for the municipality.
 4. Compare the 1979 base Fire Dues payment with the current fire dues amount. The larger of the two numbers is the current Fire Dues payment for the municipality.
 5. Re-compute the current Fire Dues payment for all municipalities after adjusting the amount available by the difference between the current Fire Dues amount and the hold harmless amount for those municipalities who are held harmless.

11. What are the questions asked on the Fire Dues Self Certification and what do they mean, provide examples if needed?

1. In the space provided below list the dollar amount of the last 25 fire dues payment that was allocated to the fire department. Please enter your number in this format only 12345.67. Do not add \$ or comma (,)

- This question is only asked of the Municipality Clerk. We want to know how much of the 2% Fire Dues payment you received the previous year was allocated/given to this Fire Department. We only want to know about the fire dues payment. Do not enter what you

pay the FD in total. If you have questions about this question, please contact the fire dues tech box. DSPSSBFireDues@wisconsin.gov

Example 1: Municipality A received \$10,000.00 in 2023 as a 2% Fire Dues Payment from DSPS. Municipality A only has Fire Dept B provide Fire Services to their municipality, and they gave the full \$10,000.00 to them, they would answer the question with 10,000.00.

Example 2: Municipality A received \$10,000 in 2023 as a 2% payment from DSPS. Municipality A has 2 Fire Departments (B and C) that provided Fire Services to their municipality, and they split the payment in ½ between the 2 Fire Departments. When Municipality A is completing the certification for Fire Dept B they would answer this question with 5000.00. When Municipality A is completing the certification for Fire Dept C they would answer this question with 5000.00.

2. Did your Fire Department provide Fire Protection for this Municipality? Yes or No

- “Your” doesn’t mean ownership it means this is the Fire Dept your Municipality calls when they have an emergency.
- If this Fire Dept was responsible for providing your municipality with Fire Protection you would answer Yes, if not then you would answer No.

If you answer Yes, questions A1 and A2 will open and go on to ask the following:

A1:

-Did your city, village, or town organize and/or maintain its fire protection services to provide continuous fire protection in the entire city, village, or town?

- Your city, town, or village must have a fire department respond to alarms for fires either through an organized fire department from your city, town, or village or through some contractual agreement with another fire department. If you contracted for your fire protection, the contract could be with another public or private fire department. The key is that the fire protection was continuous throughout the entire year. You should be prepared to demonstrate, through a written agreement, department response records, that this relationship exists, satisfying the above requirement if the fire protection was provided by another department.

-Did your fire department have a designated fire chief?

- The fire department, as mentioned in the explanation of item one, must have a designated fire chief. You should be prepared to show the auditor that the fire department serving the community has a designated fire chief through a department roster, table of organization, or other means to satisfy this requirement.

-Did your fire department by itself; or in combination with another fire department (under a contract or mutual aid agreement) respond with at least four fire fighters, none of whom was the chief, to each first alarm for buildings?

- To satisfy this requirement you must provide evidence of the number of people who responded to calls for fires. Department fire response records, payroll records, NFIRS reports, or other department reports that indicate the number of people who responded must be provided.

-Did your fire department provide a training program that addresses training topics pertaining to safety and health?

- In order to qualify for your 2% dues, you must provide training to your fire fighters on subjects that relate to safety and health. This training can include, but is not limited to incident command, rapid intervention teams, fire fighter I or II, driver/operator training, fire officer training, physical fitness, self-contained breathing apparatus, hazardous materials, confined space, terrorism, etc. Department training records, either written or electronic, would be the best way to demonstrate that this training has been provided; however, there must be documentation that indicates that the training was provided.

-Did your department provide facilities capable, without delay, of receiving fire alarms and dispatching fire fighters and apparatus?

- Your fire department must demonstrate that it can receive alarms for fires. There are several ways in which this can be accomplished. Department members can receive fire alarms via radio pagers, telephone ring down systems, or through sirens that can be heard throughout a community. This does not mean that the fire department must provide a building or radio system to qualify to receive 2% dues. Communication centers owned and operated by local police departments or county sheriff departments must meet the requirements of this section.

-Did your fire department either hold a meeting at least once each month if your department is volunteer or if a combination or if a paid department, maintain sufficient personnel ready for services at all times?

- If you are a **volunteer department** you must demonstrate that you held monthly meetings. This can be accomplished through department minutes, training reports, meeting rosters, etc. It is important that you must provide written or electronic documentation that such meetings are being held.
- If you are a paid or combination department you must provide evidence that you have personnel available to respond. This can be accomplished through a variety of methods such as department rosters, daily staffing assignments, or any other means of electronic or written documents.

If you can answer YES to all the points in A1 then you will answer YES to question A1, if you can't answer NO.

A2.

-Did your Fire Dept, City, Village, or Town use all your 2% dues funds in one or more of the following areas?

- State statute specifically outlines what the 2% dues funds can be used for.
 1. *The funds can be used to purchase fire apparatus (engine, ladder, brush, tender, etc.) or as specified above in 2% Fire Dues Uses. The money can be held in a reserve account for several years to accumulate enough money to purchase a vehicle. The money can also be spent to purchase any fire protection equipment used to supplement fire suppression or rescue activities*
 2. *The 2% dues can be expended on fire inspection services (e.g. wages and benefits, contracting for fire inspection services, uniforms etc.) or for other fire education*

services or equipment. Money is typically spent on fire prevention brochures, props, and other public education items used to promote fire safety in a community.

3. Fire Inspection/Prevention Training is another area where the 2% dues can be expended. Sponsoring Fire Inspection/Prevention training seminars, attendance at seminars, tuition, books, travel, uniforms and overtime costs are all permitted expenses of the training related items under this section.
4. Municipalities can also use the 2% dues to supplement retirement programs such as the Length of Service Awards Program or other approved retirement program sponsored by the local municipality. Approved means State Approved.

Refer to Wisconsin State Statute [101.575](#) for the authorized use of 2% entitlement funds. What the auditor will look for are fire department expenditures in one or all the approved categories that are at least equal to the amount of 2% dues funds that the fire department/municipality received.

If you can answer YES to all points in A2 then you will answer YES to question A2, if you can't answer NO.

3. Did your Fire Department provide Fire Prevention Services for this Municipality?

- “Your” doesn’t mean ownership it means this is the Fire Dept your Municipality calls when they have an emergency.
- If this Fire Dept was responsible for providing your municipality for Fire Prevention (Public Education/Fire Inspections) you would answer Yes, if not then you would answer No.

If you answer Yes, question B1 will open and go on to ask the following:

-Did the chief of your fire department provide for the inspection of every public building and place of employment at least once in each non-overlapping 6-month period, or in accordance with the exceptions [s. SPS314.01\(13\)\(b\) 5.a-r](#). Wis. Admin. Code, or in accordance with a special order issued by the Department of Safety and Professional Services, in all territory served by the fire department.

- [101.14\(2\)\(c\)1](#) The Fire Chief must demonstrate that you substantially complied with the provisions mentioned above. For the buildings the fire department is aware of, the fire department must provide at least two inspections per year or at least one per year if the exceptions have been taken as noted above. It is possible that there may be public buildings or places of employment that the fire department is not aware of, and, within reason, these buildings will not be counted against the fire department. The fire chief is responsible for determining the number of inspectable buildings in his/her community. This list should be updated at least yearly, if not every six months when new buildings are found.
- *If your department has applied for and received one of the exceptions above, you must provide a special order to the auditor to justify the number of inspections being less than the twice per year requirement. Auditors will base their review on the special-order requirements.*

-Are written reports of fire inspections made and kept on file by your fire department or its designee?

- [101.14\(2\)\(e\)](#) Written or electronic reports of fire inspections must be kept on file. The minimum information that a fire inspection report must contain is the date of

inspection, location of the inspection, violations found, and corrective actions taken. A written or electronic report must be maintained for each inspection conducted by the fire department.

-Did the fire department provide public education services?

- [s. 101.14\(2\)\(cm\)](#) Fire departments should keep records of public fire education programs and tours given. Records for fire station tours can indicate the date and time of tour as well as the number of children and adults. Other activities such as open houses, fundraising breakfasts and dinners can also satisfy this requirement if some type of fire education program accompanied the breakfast or dinner. Completing a training record can also serve as documentation for presentation of a public education program to the public.

12. When did NFIRS reporting become a 2% Fire Dues requirement?

- The 2013-15 state budget law, otherwise known as 2013 Wisconsin Act 20, modified the requirements for qualifying for Two-Percent Dues payments. Specifically, in order to be eligible for fire dues payments from the state, a local fire department must now be in substantial compliance with the [s. 101.141](#) Wis. Stats., [s. SPS 314.01\(11\)](#) Wis. Adm. Code, and NFPA 1 section 1.11.3.1 requirements to keep records of fires and submit the reports of fires to the U.S. Fire Administration. Currently, the system used by NFA is eNFIRS. The Fire Department must also be in substantial compliance with other eligibility requirements as well. The changes to the law further require that local fire departments and municipal clerks must self-certify compliance with the fire incident reporting requirements, in addition to self-certifying compliance with current eligibility requirements.

13. Who should a Fire Department contact for assistance with eNFIRS?

- Fire departments needing training assistance with submitting fire reports, creating an eNFIRS account, resetting passwords, reactivating their eNFIRS account, or with other questions regarding eNFIRS, are encouraged to email those requests directly to the following email address for the quickest response: dspsisnfirs@wisconsin.gov.