



## Frequently Asked Questions - Post-1956 Military Service

Last updated: 08/2014

### General Inquiries

**Q: *I just received a letter stating that my benefit is going to be reduced unless I purchase my post-1956 military service. Can you explain what this means?***

A: When you retired from MPD or FEMS, the military service you performed after 12/31/1956 was included in the determination of your benefit. According to DC Code §504(h), your benefit is recalculated when you reach your Social Security Full Retirement Age unless you previously completed a purchase of your post-1956 military service or you are not eligible for Social Security benefits. Our records indicate that you have not purchased your post-1956 military service and you have already reached your Social Security Full Retirement Age, which is why you received the letter. Please note that if you retired before 11/22/2003, you still have the option to purchase your post-1956 military service.

**Q: *What will happen if I don't purchase my post-1956 military service?***

A: If you do not purchase your post-1956 military service and you are eligible for Social Security benefits (or do not provide documentation that you are not eligible), your benefit will be recalculated to exclude your post-1956 military service. You may also be obligated to repay the amount of your benefit attributable to your post-1956 military service that you have received since reaching your Social Security Full Retirement Age.

**Q: *How much will my benefit be if I don't purchase my post-1956 military service?***

A: We have not yet performed the calculation to exclude your post-1956 military service. If you wish to see what your benefit will be to help you with your decision making process, please send us a letter with your request. Upon receipt, we will provide you with a response within ten (10) business days.

**Q: *If I don't purchase my post-1956 military service, will I have to repay the additional benefit I've received since attaining my Social Security Full Retirement Age?***

A: You may be obligated to repay the amount of your benefit attributable to your post-1956 military service that you have received since reaching your Social Security Full Retirement Age.

**Q: *I already purchase my post-1956 military service. Why am I receiving this letter?***

A: If you previously purchased your post-1956 military service, you will need to provide us with documentation supporting your claim. If you are unable to find the documentation, please let us know and we will go through our files again to see if we locate your information.



**Purchasing Post-1956 Military Service** (Available only to members who retired before 11/22/2003)

**Q: What do I have to do to purchase my post-1956 military service?**

A: You need to first submit a completed Form RI 20-97 Estimated Earnings During Military Service, along with your Form DD-214 Report of Separation (or equivalent certification) to the appropriate Military Finance Center. When you receive the estimated earnings, send a copy along with the completed DCRB Form P56-101 Post-56 Military Service Options Form to DCRB. We will determine the purchase cost and send the information to you along with your payment options.

**Q: What if I don't have a copy of my DD-214?**

A: You can request a copy through the website of the National Archives ([www.archives.gov/veterans](http://www.archives.gov/veterans)).

**Q: How long will it take for me to receive a response to my Form RI 20-97 Estimated Earnings During Military Service request?**

A: While the processing time may vary between Military Finance Centers, our experience is that the information is typically provided within eight (8) weeks.

**Q: How long will it take you to process my purchase calculation?**

A: Due to the volume of requests, the estimated time to respond to your purchase request is four (4) to six (6) weeks.

**Q: How much will it cost to purchase my post-1956 military service?**

A: While the actual amount depends on many factors, we can give you an example to help you with your decision-making process. If you were hired before 11/10/1996 (the rate of your employee contributions was at 7%) and your estimated earnings during military service were \$10,000, the purchase amount will be approximately \$850.

**Q: Can I purchase my post-1956 military service in installments?**

A: No. Only lump sum payments are allowed.



**Q: Will my benefit be reduced before I can complete the purchase of my post-1956 military service?**

A: Once you receive the cost to purchase your post-1956 military service, you will have thirty (30) days to complete the purchase. If you do not complete the purchase within that timeframe, your benefit will be reduced.

### **Social Security Eligibility**

**Q: How do I find out if I'm eligible for Social Security?**

A: You will need to contact the Social Security Administration to find out if you are eligible for Social Security benefits. You can do this by going to the Social Security website ([www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)) and accessing your statement online. Alternatively, you can call 1-800-772-1213 to speak to a Social Security representative.

**Q: What if I'm not eligible for Social Security?**

A: You will need to provide documentation supporting your claim that you are not eligible for Social Security benefits to our office. If you are not eligible for Social Security benefits, your benefit will not be reduced.

**Q: Why can't I receive Social Security benefits and also have post-1956 military service counted as creditable service under the District of Columbia Police Officers and Firefighters' Retirement Plan?**

A: DCRB must comply with the laws governing the Plan, including the DC Code section that prohibits including post-1956 military service for retired members who are eligible for Social Security and who have not purchased this service.