

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT AET AND BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO BARGAINING UNIT F EMPLOYEES

When is the last day of manual toll collection?

Manual toll collection is scheduled to end on October 16, 2016.

What happens if manual toll collection doesn't end on October 16, 2016.

Implementation plans are on track for the October 16, 2016 AET conversion. If for any reason there is a delay you will be expected to continue working.

What benefits will be available if I continue working to the last day of manual toll collection?

If you were hired before January 31, 2014 you may be eligible for several benefits. First, the top 200 most senior employees who work through the last day of manual toll collection and retire within 90 days of the end of manual toll collection are eligible for either the Enhanced Retirement Benefit or a Cash Retention Stipend.

Can I get both of these benefits?

No. You can choose one or the other but not both.

When will I know if I'm in the top 200 most senior employees?

Starting with the week of July 1, 2016, MassDOT and Local 127 will publish a seniority roster on the first Friday of each month up through the end of manual toll collection. Although unlikely, there is a chance that if you're not in the top 200 on the first list, you could move into a top 200 spot on a later list.

What is the Enhanced Retirement Benefit (ERB)?

The ERB allows for a combination of up to 5 years to be added to an eligible employee's age and/or creditable service for purposes of calculating their state retirement allowance.

Will the 5 years be allocated between my age and creditable service to maximize my retirement allowance?

Yes. A total of five years can be added to either your age or creditable service or a combination of both. The State Retirement Board will determine which combination will maximize your retirement allowance.

What if I'm among the top 200 most senior employees but I'm not old enough or don't have enough years of service to retire? Can I use the additional five years to qualify for retirement?

Yes. Normally, you must be at least 55 years old with 10 years of creditable service or have 20 years of creditable service to qualify for superannuation retirement. Under the ERB if you are among the top 200 most senior employees, and if needed, you can apply the five years to your age and/or creditable service to qualify for a superannuation retirement. For example, if you are 52 years old with 8 years of creditable service on the last day of manual toll collection, 3 years could be added to your age and 2 years to your creditable service to qualify for retirement as if you were 55 years old with 10 years of service.

What if I elect the ERB but decide not to retire? Can I retire later and still use the extra 5 years towards my retirement?

No. You can only add the five years if you retire within 90 days after the last day of manual toll collection.

If I elect the ERB when will my retirement become effective?

Employees must choose one of two retirement dates; either (1) the day immediately following the last day of manual toll collection on the turnpike as certified by the secretary of transportation; or (2) the ninetieth (90th) day following the certified last day of manual toll collection. A retirement

application may not be revoked or withdrawn once the effective date of retirement has occurred.

Why do I have only two options for retirement dates?

It's required by Section 40(3) (B) of Chapter 79 of the Acts of 2014. Chapter 79 is the session law that authorizes the creation of the ERB.

May I work in the public sector as a retiree?

There are limitations that apply to retirees who work in positions in state or local public sector positions in Massachusetts. Such service may not exceed 960 hours per calendar year. Additionally, total earnings per calendar year cannot exceed the difference between the retirement allowance and the current salary of the position from which you retired.

As a retiree, you must cease employment whenever either one of the above two conditions are met. If you wish to continue working, then you must waive your retirement allowance.

After you have been retired one full calendar year, you may earn an additional \$15,000 per year beyond the limitations listed above; however you are still limited to the maximum 960 hours per year.

If I elect the ERB can I suspend / waive my retirement and get another job at MassDOT or some other state agency?

A retired employee may waive the receipt of their retirement allowance by providing written notification to the State Retirement Board at least thirty days in advance of the start of the waiver period.

What is the Cash Retention Stipend ("CRS")?

The CRS is a lump sum payment equal to fifty percent (50%) of your base salary over the last 12 months of your active employment.

If I elect the Cash Retirement Incentive can I retire and get another job at MassDOT or other Commonwealth agency?

If you accept the Cash Retention Stipend you must retire within 90 days after the end of manual toll collection and may not work for MassDOT or any other state, county or municipal agency in the State in a capacity that would enhance your retirement allowance. You could work as a “960” employee.

When will I be paid the CRS?

The CRS will be paid within 120 days after the last day of manual toll collection.

What does “active employment” mean?

It means a month in which you were on the payroll for each scheduled workday in the month and did not have any unpaid or NOP status.

If I’m not one of the top 200 most senior employees are there any cash benefits available for me?

If you were hired before January 31, 2014 and are not eligible for ordinary retirement, you may qualify for the Alternative Retention Stipend.

What is the Alternative Retention Stipend?

This is a one-time lump sum payment in the amount of \$1,000 for each year of completed service as of the date you are laid off. The maximum payment is \$20,000.

Will the Cash Retention Stipend or Alternative Retention Stipend go towards the calculation of my pension?

No. This is a one-time lump sum payment and therefor is not considered pensionable income.

Do part-time employees qualify for the Alternative Retention Stipend?

Yes. Eligible part-time employees get a prorated amount based on their regularly scheduled hours.

What if I was part-time employee and converted to full-time status?

The amount for each year of part-time service will be pro-rated.

When will I be paid the ARS?

You will be paid within thirty (30) days of the date of your layoff.

If I accept the ARS can I collect unemployment compensation benefits?

The Division of Unemployment Assistance makes the final determination on eligibility for UA benefits. MassDOT will not oppose your application for UA benefits.

What other jobs can I apply for at MassDOT?

You can apply for any job at MassDOT for which you meet the minimum entrance requirements.

Will I get preferences over other candidates for available jobs?

Qualified Unit F employees hired before January 31, 2014 will be offered any vacant positions in Bargaining Unit B for which they apply that have first been posted but not filled by employees within Unit B. If more than one Unit F employee is qualified for the same position, the senior Unit F employee gets preference for appointment. If the positions are in Units A, C, D or E qualified Unit F employees will be given preference over external candidates to the extent permitted by Civil Service law.

Are there 86 Positions “Guaranteed” for Toll Collectors?

MassDOT is required to post and fill 86 positions that Unit F members could be reasonably expected to meet the minimum entrance requirements.

Depending on what bargaining unit the position is assigned to, qualified Unit F employees may get preference over other candidates but are not guaranteed jobs.

How do I know if a position is one of the “86” Positions MassDOT agreed to post and fill?

When a position is designated as one of the “86” positions a letter is sent to the Union and a notice is posted at each of the interchanges notifying employees.

What if MassDOT doesn’t post and fill the 86 positions before the end of manual toll collection?

If MassDOT doesn’t post and fill 86 MER jobs before manual toll collection ends, qualified employees hired before January 31, 2014 who are displaced by AET will be placed in a Special Candidate Pool. These individuals will be given preference over other candidates for these jobs, to the extent permitted by civil service laws. They will remain in the pool until MassDOT has posted and filled the 86 positions, no employee remains in the pool or the expiration of three (3) years from the end of manual toll collection.

Can I go into the Special Candidate Pool if I accept the Alternate Retention Stipend?

No. If you accept the Alternate Retention Stipend or accept a job at MassDOT you are not eligible for the Special Candidate Pool. However, if you voluntarily leave the pool within six (6) month of your layoff you will be eligible for the ARS.

I heard that there is money available for training courses and educational programs. How can I participate?

MassDOT has committed \$750,000 for training and education programs to assist employees with obtaining jobs within MassDOT or elsewhere within the public or private sector. Under this program MassDOT and Teamsters Local 127 agreed that a maximum of 100 employees would each be eligible for up to \$7500 in assistance. Selection for the program was based on seniority. Eligible employees were required to complete the skills and career assessment program run by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Career Centers. Funds must be used by June 30, 2018. Participating employees should contact their local career center for information about accessing available funds.

CAREER CENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

<i>Boston Career Link</i> 1010 Harrison Avenue Boston, MA 02119 617-541-1400	<i>CareerPoint</i> 850 High Street Holyoke, MA 01040 413-532-4900
<i>Employment and Training Resources</i> 1671 Worcester Road Framingham, MA 01701 508-766-5700	<i>FutureWorks</i> One Federal Street Bldg. 103-3 Springfield, MA 01105 413-858-2800
<i>Workforce Central Career Center</i> 44 Front Street, 6 th Floor Worcester, MA 01608 508-799-1600	

Where can I find out about job opportunities at MassDOT?

MassDOT jobs are posted on the MassDOT website at:

<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Employment.aspx>.

To get automatic notices about new job postings, go online and fill out a job interest card for each position you're interested in applying for. For assistance using this site you can contact Cara Niddrie at 857-368-9678.

How do I contact the State Retirement Board?

The Board's web site can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/retirement>

You can reach a state Retirement Board representative at the following numbers:

Boston Office:	(617)-367-7770
Toll Free:	1-800-392-6014 (Mass only)
Springfield Office:	(413)-730-6135

Does the Employee Assistance Unit provide any services for people who are affected by AET implementation?

Yes. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential, professional counseling/referral service available to all employees free of charge. Through EAP employees can access counselling services to help deal with work and personal issues including challenges associated with adjusting to new life situations, family, depression, anxiety and reducing effects of stress, just to name a few. There are multiple sites throughout the Commonwealth. For more information or to schedule an appointment please call 617.222.5381.