



# OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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## STATE EMPLOYEES AND HAZARDOUS DUTY RETIREMENT STATUS

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You asked (1) how many state employees with hazardous duty retirement status are in positions not requiring hazardous duty work and (2) how many hazardous duty employees the state has and the additional costs for their retirement.

According to state law (CGS §§ 5-173 and 5-192n), hazardous duty retirement status allows an employee to retire after 20 years of service. Positions are designated as having hazardous duty retirement status either through legislation or collective bargaining, or the individual employee petitioning the State Employee Retirement Commission.

According to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), 90% of 9,779 state employees with hazardous duty retirement status work in three departments and the Judicial Branch. The counts for these agencies are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: The Four Departments with the Highest Number of Hazardous Duty Retirement Status Employees**

Department of Correction	4,941
Judicial Branch	1,892
Department of Public Safety	1,171
University of Connecticut Health Center	678

Source: DAS

Hazardous duty retirement costs the state about twice as much as regular retirement. The Office of Fiscal Analysis calculates that the State Employee Retirement System cost as a percent of payroll is 9.46% for Tier II regular employees and 18.03% for Tier II hazardous duty employees.

The bulk of employees earning hazardous duty retirement credit are in Tier II.

## **DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION**

According to Lena Ferguson, the Department of Correction (DOC) legislative liaison, all DOC employees in hazardous duty positions are considered to be doing hazardous duty work.

Previously, DOC placed some hazardous duty employees in non-hazardous duty positions, such as in the public information office. Ferguson said DOC is in the process of hiring non-hazardous duty employees for that office and is working to change the practice throughout the department.

Ferguson emphasized that employees can move up DOC's career ladder from hazardous to non-hazardous duty retirement status, though there are disincentives from taking that step. These non-hazardous positions include correctional services managers for the commissary and the prison industry shops.

## **JUDICIAL BRANCH**

Deborah Fuller, a spokesperson for the Judicial Branch, stated the breakdown for the roughly 1,600 hazardous duty retirement status employees is:

1. 500 plus adult probation officers (including supervisors),
2. 150 plus juvenile probation officers (including supervisors),
3. 200 plus juvenile detention workers (several job titles), and
4. 750 to 800 judicial marshals (including supervisors).

Fuller explained, “everyone in a job classification that has hazardous duty retirement status is deemed to be doing hazardous duty work, regardless of the individual assignment they may have. If an individual moves to a different job that is not classified as hazardous duty, they lose their hazardous duty retirement status.”

#### **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

The Department of Public Safety has not yet responded to our request for information. We will forward it to you as soon as we receive it.

#### **UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER**

The University of Connecticut Health Center currently has 650 hazardous duty employees according to liaison Joann Lombardo. Lombardo says there are 32 public safety officers and 618 in correctional managed health care (the contract the Health Center has with DOC to provide health care services to inmates). The 618 employees have direct contact with inmates in DOC facilities.

Lombardo stated all health center employees with hazardous duty retirement status are performing hazardous duty work.

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