



The Washington Report

The Newsletter of the National Association of Police Organizations
Representing America's Finest

IMPORTANT REMINDER!

Deadline for 9/11 Responders to Apply for PSOB Benefits Under PAFRA is November 17, 2023

If you answered the call on 9/11 or in the days, weeks, or months after and you became disabled because of your exposure at Ground Zero or you are a family member of a 9/11 responder who died of their injuries from 9/11, you may be entitled to federal disability or death benefits through the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program.

On November 18, 2021, NAPO secured a significant victory with the enactment of the Protecting America's First Responders Act (PAFRA). This Act eased the requirements to qualify for federal disability benefits under PSOB Program. It also established a two-year window from enactment specifically for 9/11 responders to file a disability claim for an injury sustained in the line of duty as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, **assuming no claim had already been filed or the claim had been denied on the fact that the injury did meet the old disability requirements.** It also allows families of 9/11 responders catastrophically injured because of the attacks, but who died of those injuries prior to being able to apply for benefits, to apply for death benefits within the two-year window.

The two-year window is important because under PSOB statute, a claim has to be filed within 3 years of the injury or death and PSOB considers September 11, 2001 the date of injury for 9/11 responders. **The two-year window for 9/11 responders, who became catastrophically disabled or died of their injuries prior to 2021, to submit a claim ends November 17, 2023.** To meet the deadline, an officer or their family only need to start a claim application on the [PSOB website \(PSOB.gov\)](https://www.pso.gov) - the application does not need to be completed by November 17.

It is important to note that this window is only for those officers who became catastrophically disabled or died due to their injuries prior to the enactment of PAFRA. A 9/11 responder who becomes disabled or dies due to a 9/11-related illness after 2021 is eligible for PSOB death or disability benefits through the normal PSOB process, as long as the application is started within 3 years of the death or date of disability diagnosis.

PAFRA eased the strict requirements for disabled officers to qualify for PSOB disability benefits, ensuring that officers who are catastrophically injured in the line of duty, but can perform some level of meaningful work, would still qualify for the much-needed benefit. Further, officers who become quadriplegic, paraplegic, or blind due to the line of duty injury automatically qualify for the PSOB disability benefit.

If you have any questions on the PSOB Program or filing a claim under PAFRA, please contact NAPO's Director of Governmental Affairs, Andy Edmiston, at aedmiston@napo.org or (703) 549-0775 or you can contact the PSOB Customer Resource Center at 1-888-744-6513.