

CIVILIAN BARGAINING UNIT FAQs

➤ What is PERC?

The Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) is a small, independent, quasi-judicial agency with a primary mission of adjudicating and facilitating mediation of public-sector labor and employment disputes. PERC also performs other essential non-adjudicatory functions such as registering labor organizations (unions) and conducting secret ballot elections throughout Florida for state and local government employees voting for or against establishing or maintaining union representation.

Website is the following: <https://perc.myflorida.com/>

➤ What does recertification mean?

A “bargaining unit” is a unit determined by the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC), or determined by the public employer and the public employee organization and approved by the commission, to be appropriate for the purposes of collective bargaining. The Civilian bargaining unit at PBSO was determined by the PBA and PBSO, approved by PERC in 2011, and issued certification number 1768. Once certified, the PBA was able to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement on behalf of PBSO civilian employees, whose positions were included under certification 1768.

“Recertification” is the process by which a union (for example, the PBA) seeks to continue to represent a bargaining unit (for example, PBSO civilians).

➤ When will we know the bargaining unit has been recertified?

We anticipate the recertification process to take up to several months. Due to a recent law change, PERC has been indicated with similar issues across the state regarding civilian units.

➤ Is our contract still good?

Per PERC, your CBA is still in effect during the recertification process.

➤ Why can't we have dues on payroll deduction?

Under Sec. 447.303(2)(a), F.S. (a new law amendment), an employee organization that has been certified as a bargaining agent to represent a bargaining unit the majority of whose employees eligible for representation are employed as law enforcement officers, correctional officers, or correctional probation officers, firefighters, 911 public safety telecommunicators, or emergency medical technicians or paramedics has the right to have its dues and uniform assessments for that bargaining unit deducted and collected by the employer. The law was amended March 22, 2024, to allow bargaining units the majority of whose employees included 911 operators, EMTs, and paramedics to have their dues deducted by their employer. Other groups are prevented from using dues deduction. Since 911

operators are not the majority of the employees in the civilian bargaining unit, PBSO can no longer deduct dues for civilian bargaining unit members.

➤ **Why isn't law enforcement going through this?**

Per the law, a bargaining unit the majority of whose employees eligible for representation are employed as law enforcement officers, correctional officers, correctional probation officers, firefighters, 911 public safety telecommunicators, emergency medical technicians or paramedics are exempt from the requirements for strictly civilian bargaining units. The law enforcement and correctional bargaining units consist entirely of employees in those positions; therefore, they are exempt from the statutory requirements for civilian bargaining units.

➤ **Is this just a grab for membership by the PBA?**

The statute requires the PBA to maintain dues paying membership of at least 60% of the entire civilian bargaining unit. If dues-paying membership falls below the 60% threshold, the PBA is required to file for recertification of the civilian bargaining unit annually. Otherwise, the bargaining unit's certification can be revoked. If a bargaining unit's certification is revoked, there is no longer a bargaining unit or CBA in effect. In other words, you would become an "at-will" employee.

➤ **Does this have anything to do with elections or politics?**

This has nothing to do with the election or politics. Simply about keeping your contract in place and keeping your bargaining unit recognized by the State of Florida based on the recent law change.

➤ **Why are we just hearing about this?**

PERC informed the PBA on July 30, 2024, that PBSO's civilian bargaining unit did not consist of a "majority" of 911 operators. The PBA's interpretation of the statute (which permitted PBSO's civilian unit to be exempt) was not interpreted the same way by PERC.

➤ **What if I do not want to be a member anymore?**

Membership in any union is not mandatory or required. It is your choice to be a dues-paying union member or not. However, the PBA needs a minimum of 60% of the bargaining unit to join as members to avoid recertifying your bargaining unit every year. The PBA would like your rights to be stable and uninterrupted.

➤ **I thought I paid for August in my last paycheck?**

No, those dues remitted only provided coverage through July 31st. August 1st is now due and payable.

➤ **What are the late fees?**

PBA does not charge late fees. If you are late or miss a payment, we will reach out to you to determine if there is an issue.

➤ **Other fees charged?**

The PBA does not pass on any fees charged by credit card companies. We absorb those fees and will not charge those to you. If, however, we are charged by the bank for insufficient funds or something of that nature, we will pass that fee on to you.

➤ **Is my membership still active?**

Yes, we will not be terminating anyone's membership while going through this transition.

➤ **What if I don't pay my dues?**

Your membership will be terminated after attempts to resolve the balance are not responded to or paid in full.

➤ **Can I change my choice of how I pay my dues?**

Yes. Please allow time to switch payment methods as they are queued up a few days before they are charged or deducted from your account.

➤ **What if I get a new credit card or it expires?**

Once a payment is declined, we will reach out to you to determine the situation and will work with you to resolve it quickly.

➤ **Will I get a bill?**

Yes, the PBA bills members on a quarterly basis. If you are paying or scheduled for payment on Bi-Monthly or Monthly you will get an invoice that will reflect your payments already applied.

➤ **Can I wait to pay until I get a bill?**

Yes. Please make sure your home address or PO Box are currently on file. We cannot mail the invoices to the Sheriff's Office.

➤ **I am a civilian employee of the Sheriff's Office but was never in the bargaining unit. Why am I having to go off Payroll deduction?**

The law was written that "no civilians" can have payroll deduction unless exempt regardless of bargaining unit status.