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Retirement Management of FIREFIGHTERS in KOREA

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Abstract

Among the ways to improve the treatment of firefighters, firefighter retirement management is important, and to look at the previous studies, many results derived show that firefighters are worried about life after retirement because there is poor practice of retirement management due to lack of retirement management system. Thus, this study attempts to examine the retirement management system of public firefighters to improve the treatment for firefighters, and to investigate current problems and future improvement strategies. To improve the retirement management of Korean fire bodies, the following should be urgently improved. First, the public firefighter's retirement management system should be settled. Currently, in the case of firefighting organizations, the regulations on retirement management are insufficient, and there is also a lack of legal and institutional arrangements for dedicated organizations, personnel and/or programs. Because of this, public firefighters are complaining about the inconvenience that they should do their own retirement management themselves. Since the retirement management system is so insufficient as compared to other private companies and general public officers and police officers, the legal system for firefighter retirement management should be provided first. Second, it is necessary to establish a special organization that specializes only in retirement management in the firefighting organization, and it is necessary to employ the appropriate personnel for the firefighting retirement management organization and operate various retirement management programs. Third, it is necessary to maintain a cooperative relationship with other organizations' retirement management systems, such as introducing private retirement management programs and attracting beneficial lectures, by benchmarking organizations that are currently performing well in retirement management such as private companies. This is because retirement management of firefighting organizations is at the basic stage, and it is considered that the linkage with other organizations will have a synergy effect. Lastly, firefighters have insufficient retirement management owing to the difficulty managing every single day without thinking about the future because they have difficulty in working conditions and environment. Therefore, if the firefighters' working environment and treatment are urgently improved, it is judged that there is room for mind enough to consider retirement management.

[Keywords] Retirement Management, Firefighters, Korea, Better Treatment, Retirement System

1. Introduction

The fact that the treatment for firefighters is poor is not the case of either yesterday or today. Recently, the treatment of the poorer firefighters has become more controversial, and it is found that many firefighters suffer from senile diseases. Particularly, out of 10

firefighter special health checkups, 7 showed health abnormalities. In addition, chronic geriatric diseases such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes and hearing loss were common. This is because firefighters are ex-

posed to toxic fumes in fire suppression, rescue and emergency sites, and are always in extreme tension[1].

On the one hand, Mun Jaemin's government is trying to change policy to improve the treatment of firefighters, and as part of that effort, the government is trying to make the Fire Department increase its independence, public firefighters become public officials and to increase the number of public firefighters. On the other hand, efforts are being made to improve the treatment of firefighters, such as building a firefighter trauma center[2].

In particular, among the ways to improve the treatment of firefighters, firefighter retirement management is important, and to look at the previous studies, many results derived show that firefighters are worried about life after retirement because there is poor practice of retirement management due to lack of retirement management system[3]. Thus, this study attempts to examine the retirement management system of public firefighters to improve the treatment for firefighters, and to investigate current problems and future improvement strategies.

2. Theoretical Discussion on Retirement Management for Public Firefighters

The concept of retirement is defined in various ways by scholars. However, it seems to be a product of relatively industrial society. In farming society, there is little difference between the time of stopping farming and the ending of life. However, when entering the industrial society, free contracts establish a certain contractual relationship between the company and the worker, and set the age at which they can actively engage in production activities to make a contract. And, after this age, as it is seen as a retirement, it should be seen as a relatively recent system.

Public firefighter's retirement management is a system or role activity that supports and manages retirement preparation before and after retirement so that public firefighters can prepare for retirement[4].

In the previous studies on retirement management of public officials, there are relatively many studies on retirement management of general public employees. There are also relatively many studies on retirement of specific positions such as police officers and soldiers. Previous studies have focused on retirement management in terms of legal, institutional, operational, financial, and collaborative perspectives for efficient retirement.

However, research on the retirement management of public firefighters is rarely conducted except for a few studies. Lee(2014) conducted a survey on the demand for retirement management of public firefighters scheduled for retirement in Seoul. Lee & Lee(2014) also conducted research on the status of retirement management and policy support for public firefighters in Seoul. In addition, Ryu & Nam & Cho & Lee(2017) conducted an empirical study on the retirement management of public firefighters in Busan. These studies suggest that public firefighters lack the preparation for retirement, there is no institutional mechanism for effective retirement management and that education and various programs for retirement management are inadequate compared to the private sector[3][4][5].

3. Current Status and Problems of Firefighter Retirement Management in Korea

It can be viewed as a statistical result that public firefighters die the fastest after retirement. The average death age for firefighters was found to be 69 of age, which is the fastest after retirement among other civil service jobs. It seems that public firefighters' work and working styles are affected by mainly by exposure to toxic gases in dangerous places, and biorhythm degradation due to excessive work and shift work[6].

As for the status of firefighter retirement management, in Ryu & Nam & Cho & Lee's (2017) studies, 71% of public firefighters in Busan responded that they worried about retirement, and regarding the worries, there were 50% of the worries about living, 32% of health worries about their own, and 9% of

mental health worries. Also, according to Lee's (2014) study, public firefighters in Seoul were positive about the retirement itself, but the level of readiness for retirement is low, and the level of preparation for re-employment, start-up, and social service was found to be insufficient [3][4].

4. Improvement Direction for Fire-fighter Retirement Management in Korea

Therefore, to improve the retirement management of Korean fire organizations in the future, the following should be urgently improved. Above all, the public firefighter's retirement management system should be settled. At present, the regulations on retirement management are insufficient in the case of firefighting organizations, and there is also insufficient legal institutional apparatus in terms of dedicated organizations or workforce for retirement. Because of this, public firefighters are calling for the inconvenience of doing retirement management themselves. Since the retirement management system for firefighters is insufficient compared to other private companies and general public officers and police officers, the legal and institutional system for firefighter retirement management should be provided first. Second, it is urgent to establish a dedicated organization that specializes only in retirement management in firefighting organizations. The dedicated organization for fire retirement management is considered to be required to employ the appropriate personnel and operate various retirement management programs. Third, it is necessary to maintain a cooperative relationship with retirement management systems of other organizations, such as introducing private retirement management programs and attracting beneficial lectures, by benchmarking organizations that are currently performing well in retirement management such as private companies. This is because retirement management of firefighting organizations is at the basic stage, and it is considered that the linkage with

other organizations will have a synergy effect. Lastly, firefighters have insufficient retirement management owing to the difficulty managing every single day without thinking about the future because they have difficulty in working conditions and environment. Therefore, if the firefighters' working environment and treatment are urgently improved, it is judged that there is room for mind enough to consider retirement management [7][8][9][10][11][12][13].

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