

## Death Benefit

### Designating a Beneficiary

It is extremely important that you maintain a current Beneficiary Designation on file with SURS. When a significant event occurs in your life such as marriage, birth, death, divorce, or any change in family status, contact SURS to update your designation. You can also update your beneficiaries on the SURS [Member Website](#) [1].

You may name any person, firm, corporation, or other legal entity (including your estate) as primary or contingent beneficiary for a death benefit. You may change your designation at any time.

If you divorce, your spouse is disqualified for survivor benefits. After your divorce, you must designate or redesignate your former spouse as your beneficiary for him or her to be eligible for any lump-sum death benefit.

On the Beneficiary Designation form, you are asked to name primary beneficiary(ies) and contingent beneficiary(ies). If your primary beneficiary predeceases you, the benefit will be paid to any remaining primary beneficiaries. If no primary beneficiaries are living, the benefit will be paid to your contingent beneficiaries. If you have not filed a Beneficiary Designation with SURS, the death benefit will be paid to your estate.

### Benefits Paid After Your Death - Traditional & Portable

In the Portable and Traditional Benefit Packages, there are two types of benefits that may be paid after your death: Death benefits and Survivor benefits. The benefit paid depends on whether you die before or after retirement, and whether you have a qualifying survivor.

A survivor benefit is paid as a monthly amount to a qualifying survivor. The death benefit is usually paid in a lump sum to someone you name on your Beneficiary Designation who may or may not be a family member.

Consult your member guide for more specific information on death and survivor benefits.

### Benefits Paid After Your Death ? Self-Managed Plan

#### Death Before Retirement

The beneficiary under SMP is the spouse, unless the spouse has given written consent for the member to name an alternate beneficiary. Your spouse could elect to use the lump-sum death benefit to purchase an annuity contract. If there is no spouse, your designated beneficiaries will receive the death benefit.

### ***Active Members***

- If your death occurs while actively employed and **before** establishing 1.5 years of service credit, the death benefit is the current value of employee accumulations.
- If your death occurs while actively employed and **after** establishing 1.5 years of service credit, the death benefit is the current value of employee and employer accumulations.

### ***Inactive Members***

- If your employment terminates prior to your death and you had established less than 5 years of service credit, the death benefit is the current value of employee accumulations.
- If your employment terminates prior to your death and you had established 5 years of service credit, the death benefit is the current value of employee and employer accumulations.

### **Death After Retirement**

If your death occurs after you have retired, benefits to your designated beneficiaries will be determined by the annuity contract purchased at the time of your retirement.

#### **Tags:**

[All Plan Types](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

[Benefits](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

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**Source URL:** <https://ww.surs.org/death-benefit>

#### **Links**

[1] <https://ww.surs.org/login>

[2] <https://ww.surs.org/tags/all-plan-types>

[3] <https://ww.surs.org/tags/benefits>