Family Information Guide

Family To-Do List

- ☐ Contact cemetery.
- ☐ Contact your attorney.
- ☐ Contact Social Security for benefits (1-800-772-1213).
- ☐ Contact bank(s) for account purposes and changes.
- ☐ Contact Veterans Administration for possible benefits (1-800-827-1000).
- ☐ Contact Washington State Department of Licensing to change titles/registration for cars, mobile homes, boats (360-902-3600 or www.wa.gov/dol).
- ☐ Contact your insurance companies to begin the claims process.
- ☐ Contact your broker or brokerage house regarding stocks and bonds.
- ☐ Contact unions/pension plans for benefits.
- ☐ Contact newspaper(s) to publish obituary.

Ordering Death Certificates

During your arrangement meeting, we will talk with you about death certificates—who requires them and how many to order. Currently they are $20 per certified copy. Once you decide on the number you need, we will order them for you from the county where the death occurred. Later, additional copies can always be obtained from the Washington State Department of Health or your local county health district. We'd be happy to order more copies for you.

Here is a key to help you figure out your number. Remember that people often order too many, and you can always get more.

Certified Copy Usually Needed:

Insurance claims
Stocks/bonds
Real estate
Each child under age 18 (recommended for their future needs)

Photocopy of Certified Usually Accepted:*

Department of Motor Vehicles (automobile title)
Savings & checking accounts, CDs
Social Security (lump sum benefit & survivors' benefits)
Union / Pension Benefits
Credit cards
Cellular phone accounts
Rental storage space
Internal Revenue Service (submit when filing last tax return)
Genealogy purposes

*You may need to show an original death certificate in person, whereupon they will make a photocopy and return the original to you. If they accept a faxed death certificate, be sure to keep the fax confirmation sheet for your records.

Social Security Benefits

Social Security survivor's benefits help ease the financial burden that follows a worker's death. Almost all children under the age of 18 will get monthly benefits if a working parent dies. Other family members may be eligible for benefits too.

Anyone who has worked and paid Social Security (FICA) taxes has been earning Social Security benefits for his or her family. The amount of work needed to pay survivor's benefits depends on the worker's age at the time of death. It may be as little as 1.5 years for a young worker. No one needs more than 10 years.

Who Can Get Survivor's Benefits?

- Widows and widowers age 60 or older (age 50 or older if disabled).
- Widows and widowers at any age if caring for the deceased's child(ren) who are under age 16 or disabled.
- Divorced wives and husbands age 60 or older, if married to the deceased 10 years or more.
- Widows, widowers, divorced wives, and divorced husbands age 50 or older if they are disabled and the disability started before or within 7 years of the worker's death.
- An unmarried child of the deceased who is younger than age 18 (or up to age 19 if he or she is a full-time student in an elementary or high school); or age 18 or older with a disability that began before age 22.
- A stepchild, grandchild, stepgrandchild or adopted child under certain circumstances.
- The deceased worker's parents, age 62 or older, who were dependent on the deceased for at least half of their support.

A Special One-Time Payment

In addition to the monthly benefits for family members, a one-time payment of $255 can be paid to a spouse who was living with the worker at the time of death. If there is none, it can be paid to a spouse or children who are eligible for benefits.

How to Apply for Benefits

You can apply for benefits by phone or by going to any Social Security office. Don't delay your application if you don't have all the information. If you don't have a document you need, Social Security can help you get it.

Information Needed

- Your Social Security number and the deceased worker's Social Security number.
- A death certificate. (Generally, the funeral director faxes a statement directly to the local Social Security office, which may be used for this purpose.)
- Proof of the deceased worker's earnings for the last year (W-2 forms or self-employment tax return).
- Your birth certificate.
- A marriage certificate, if you are applying for benefits as a widow, widower, or divorced wife/husband.
- A divorce decree, if you are applying for benefits as a divorced wife/husband.
- Children's birth certificates and Social Security numbers, if applying for children's benefits.
- Your checking and savings account information, if you want direct deposit for your benefits.
- You will need to submit original documents or copies certified by an issuing office. You can mail or bring them to the office. Social Security will make photocopies and return your original documents.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

If you are 65 or older, disabled, or blind, ask the Social Security representative about Supplemental Income (SSI) checks for people with limited income and resources. If you receive SSI, you may also qualify for Medicaid, food stamps, and other social services.

Reporting the Death

If your loved one was receiving benefits, you need to contact the Social Security Administration to report the death. (A Sacred Moment, as the funeral home, is also required to notify them.)

You must return the benefit received for the month of death or any later months. If benefits were paid by direct deposit, notify the bank or other financial institution. Request that any funds received for the month of death or later be returned to Social Security. If the benefits were paid by check, do not cash any checks received for the month in which the person dies or later. Return the checks to Social Security as soon as possible.

However, eligible family members may be able to receive death benefits for the month in which the beneficiary died.

For More Information

For more information, write or visit any Social Security office, or call the toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213 (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call the TTY number, 1-800-325-0778). All calls are treated confidentially. Specific questions can be answered weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Information by automated phone service is available 24/7. You may also visit the Social Security website at www.socialsecurity.gov and click on the survivors tab.

Local Social Security Offices
All offices use toll-free 1-800-772-1213, TTY: 1-800-325-0778

Everett 3809 Broadway Everett, WA 98201	Bellevue 505 106th Ave. NE Ste. 301 Bellevue, WA 98004	Lynnwood 18905 33rd Ave, Ste. 207 Lynnwood, WA 98036
Mt. Vernon 710 E College Way, Ste. A Mt. Vernon, WA 98273	North Seattle 13510 Aurora Ave N, Ste. B Seattle, WA 98133	Downtown Seattle 901 Lenora, Ste. 100 Seattle, WA 98121

Veteran's Benefits

If your loved one was an honorably discharged veteran, you are entitled to receive an American flag honoring their service to our country. All you need to do is provide us with a copy of their military discharge paper (DD-214) and we'll complete the necessary forms and obtain the flag for you.

Burial benefits include a free gravesite in any of our 131 national military cemeteries with available space. (We are fortunate for our proximity to the beautiful, pastoral Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent.) Benefits also include opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, all at no cost to your family.

Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains.

For spouses and dependents, free benefits include burial with the veteran, perpetual care, and the spouse or dependents' name and dates of birth and death inscribed on the veteran's headstone. Eligible spouses and dependents can receive these benefits even when they predecease the veteran.

For more information on your particular benefits, you can contact the National Veterans Administration at toll-free 1-800-827-1000.