

GOOD to KNOW

QUICK FACTS
ON SURVIVOR
BENEFITS
AFTER
RETIREMENT
JUNE 2021



Survivor Benefits After Retirement

The OPSEU Pension Plan provides valuable benefits for your survivors should you die after starting your pension. As a member, it is important that you keep your spousal information and beneficiary designations up to date with OPTrust so that we can pay any survivor benefits in accordance with your wishes.

Order in which survivor benefits are payable

For members who die after retirement, survivor benefits are payable in the following order:

1. Your spouse (if eligible)
2. Your eligible children (if applicable)
3. Your designated beneficiary(s), or
4. Your estate.

Benefits to your spouse

Under pension law, your spouse at retirement is automatically entitled to survivor benefits when you die, regardless of any beneficiary you may designate, unless your spouse has waived their right to survivor benefits.

For pension purposes, a “spouse” is someone who you are married to or have been living with in a common-law relationship for at least three years, or a shorter period if you are in a relationship of some permanence and are the parents of a child. For your spouse to qualify for survivor benefits, you must not be living separate and apart when your pension starts.

If you do not have a spouse when your pension starts, or if your spouse at retirement dies, you may have the option to provide a new spouse with a lifetime survivor pension.

Benefits to your eligible child

Survivor benefits are payable to eligible child(ren) if you die without a spouse.

An “eligible child” is dependent on you or your spouse and under the age of 18, or, if over the age of 17, is in continuous full-time attendance at a secondary school or post-secondary institution for up to five years following secondary school.

Benefits to your designated beneficiary(s)

If you die without a spouse or eligible children, any survivor benefits would be payable to the person(s) you designate as your beneficiary. If you name more than one beneficiary, survivor benefits will be divided equally among them.

A “beneficiary” can be any individual or any organization you wish to name to receive survivor benefits.

Benefits to your estate

If you die without a spouse or eligible children and you do not have a beneficiary, any survivor benefits would be payable to your estate.

Paying pensions today, preserving pensions for tomorrow.



What will my survivors receive?

Survivor pension

If you have a spouse when your pension starts, after your death they are automatically entitled to receive a pension equal to 60% of your pension, payable for their lifetime.

You may have the option to increase the survivor pension for your spouse at retirement to an amount equal to 65%, 70% or 75% of your pension. In that case, we calculate the cost and permanently reduce your pension accordingly to pay for the increased survivor pension. Once your pension begins, your election to provide an increased survivor pension cannot be changed or cancelled, even if your spouse dies before you.

Your spouse remains entitled to a survivor pension even if your relationship ends after retirement unless your spouse makes arrangements to waive the survivor pension.

Post-retirement spouse

If you do not have a spouse when your pension starts, or if your spouse at retirement subsequently dies, you have the option to provide a new spouse with a lifetime survivor pension (of 50%, 55%, 60%, 65%, 70% or 75% of your lifetime pension) by taking a permanent reduction to your pension to pay for the survivor pension. If you are interested in providing a new spouse with a lifetime survivor pension, you should apply to OPTrust within 90 days of them meeting the definition of "spouse," otherwise a [Certificate of Health](#) (OPTrust 1011) form completed by your physician certifying you are in good health will be required.

The option to provide a survivor pension for a new spouse is not available to members who have separated from the spouse they had at retirement unless that spouse waives the survivor pension, or to members who have eligible children.

Benefits to your eligible child

If you don't have a spouse at the time of your death but you have eligible children, the 60% survivor pension is split among them for as long as they qualify.

Residual balance

Upon your death or the death of your survivors, whichever occurs later, a residual balance may be payable if the total of your contributions plus interest at your retirement date exceeds the total pension payments paid to you and your survivors, if applicable. This residual balance is payable as a lump sum cash payment, less withholding tax, to your designated beneficiary(s), or to your estate if you do not have a beneficiary. After receiving your pension for a few years, the residual balance is usually exhausted.



How do I update my information?

It is important to review and keep your spousal information and beneficiaries up to date with OPTrust to ensure that survivor benefits are paid according to your wishes.

If you want your child(ren) or other individuals to receive any survivor benefits in the event of your death, you may list them as beneficiaries using your [Online Services](#) account. If you do not have access to an Online Services account, you can name beneficiaries on the ***Member Spousal Information and Beneficiary Designation*** (OPTrust 1015) form.

NOTE: Any beneficiary designations you make in a Will may revoke and replace any beneficiary designations you made using your Online Services account or that you made on an OPTrust form that was signed and dated before you completed the Will, and vice versa. If you designate beneficiaries for your pension from OPTrust in a Will, please provide a copy to OPTrust.



For more information please contact OPTrust

This information is a summary of certain benefits offered under the primary schedule of the OPSEU Pension Plan and is not applicable to OPTrust Select. All information is current as of the date of publication.

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