

Select Info *to* Know

Survivor Benefits Before Retirement

OPTrust Select provides benefits for your survivors should you die before starting your pension. As an OPTrust Select 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 OPTrust Select members who die before retirement, survivor benefits are payable in the following order:

1. Your spouse
2. Your designated beneficiary(s), or
3. Your estate.



Benefits to your spouse

Under pension law, your spouse 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 pre-retirement survivor benefits, you must not be living separate and apart at the time of your death.

If you and your common-law spouse do not have a child together, you must be living together continuously for three years before they qualify for a survivor benefit. If you want to ensure that your common-law spouse receives a survivor benefit in the event you die during this three-year period, you may designate them as a beneficiary. Once they meet the definition of spouse, it is a good idea to update your beneficiaries.

Benefits to your designated beneficiary(s)

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



What will my survivors receive?

Lump sum value of your pension

If you die before retirement, a lump sum amount equal to the value of your pension is payable. Your spouse is first in line for this payment, and they will have the option to receive this amount in the form of an immediate or future lifetime pension, or as a lump sum payment that can be transferred to an RRSP on a tax-sheltered basis or paid in cash less withholding tax.

If you do not have a spouse at the time of your death or your spouse has waived their entitlement to the survivor benefit, the lump sum amount is paid in cash, less withholding tax, to your designated beneficiary(s), or to your estate if you do not have a beneficiary.



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 to change or update your beneficiaries, please complete a [Member Spousal Information and Beneficiary Designation form](#) (OPTrust S1015) and submit it to OPTrust.

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



For more information please contact OPTrust

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

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