

Survivor Benefits After Retirement

[Survivor benefits](#) are paid to a spouse, beneficiary, or estate upon a member's death.

A [spouse](#), as defined in the *Pension Benefits Standards Act*, is automatically entitled to a survivor benefit unless they choose to waive that right by completing a waiver.

If you are receiving the Variable Benefit.

With the Variable Benefit option, you retain ownership of the funds in your account and each year withdraw a chosen amount (subject to statutory minima and maxima). In this case, the survivor benefit is the total balance available in your Variable Benefit Account at the time of your death.

A spouse can use the balance available in your Variable Benefit Account to select any benefit option available to a member¹. Any other beneficiary will receive the survivor benefit as a lump sum, less withholding tax.

If you are receiving the Internal Variable Annuity.

Your pension is paid for your lifetime regardless of the survivor benefit options selected.

When you retire, the value of your monthly pension will be adjusted based on the survivor benefit you select. For example, if you select survivor benefits that provide longer or higher payments to your beneficiary, your monthly pension payment will be lower.

The optional forms available for internal annuities are either [joint life](#) or single life [guarantee](#):

¹ A spouse need not have attained 55 years of age to commence a monthly benefit; however, in order to be

Option	Description	Note
Joint Life	A selected percentage of the selected benefit will continue to the spouse, if pre-deceased by the member.	Percentages available: 66.7%; 75%; 100%
Joint and Last Survivor	A percentage of the benefit will continue after the first death of either the spouse or the member.	Percentage available: 66.7%
Joint Life with Guarantee	Payments will continue in full (at 100%) for the lifetime of the member or spouse, whoever lives longer, and with a guaranteed minimum period.	Percentage available: 100% Guaranteed minimum period: 10 or 15 years
Single Life Guarantee²	Payments continue for the member's lifetime with an optional guarantee period selected by the member.	Guaranteed minimum period: 0, 5, 10 or 15 years

A spouse is automatically entitled to a minimum 60% joint life pension unless the spouse chooses to waive that right.

eligible to continue receiving the variable benefit, the spouse must be designated as specified [beneficiary](#).

² Your pension estimate and annual statements reflect calculations based on a single life pension.

Glossary

Beneficiary

A person who, on the death of a plan member or pensioner, may become entitled to a survivor benefit under the plan.

- Under the *Pension Benefits Standards Act*, a spouse is automatically entitled to the survivor benefit unless they choose to waive that entitlement. If you do not have a spouse or beneficiary, survivor benefits will be paid to your estate.
- If you do not have a spouse (or if your spouse has submitted a waiver), **primary** beneficiary(ies) can be appointed. An **alternate** beneficiary is entitled to benefits in the event that you no longer have a spouse or **primary** beneficiary.
- Under the *Income Tax Act*, a spouse can be appointed as **specified** beneficiary to allow variable benefit provisions to transfer to that beneficiary, for their lifetime.

Guarantee

A type of Single Life survivor benefit that can be selected at retirement.

With a Single Life Guarantee, the pension is paid for the member's lifetime, but if the member dies before the guarantee expires, the pension will be paid to the beneficiary for the remainder of the guarantee.

For example, if a member with a 10 year guarantee passes after 5 years, the beneficiary will continue to receive the pension for the 5 remaining years that are left on the guarantee (if the beneficiary is the estate, it will receive a lump-sum commuted value).

Joint life

A type of survivor benefit that can be selected at retirement. This option allows for a specified percentage of the pension to continue to the spouse for their lifetime following the death of the member.

For example, with a 60% Joint Life option, 100% of the pension is paid for the member's lifetime. Upon the member's death, 60% of the pension is paid for the surviving spouse's lifetime.

Spouse

Defined in the *Pension Benefits Standards Act* as:

- persons who are married to each other, and who have not been living separate and apart from each other for a continuous period longer than 2 years
OR
- persons who have been living with each other in a marriage-like relationship for a period of at least 2 years immediately preceding the date of transaction.

Survivor Benefits

Benefits payable under a pension plan to the surviving spouse, beneficiary, or estate of a deceased member or pensioner. Pension plans offer various types of survivor benefits, either in the form of a guarantee or a joint life option. Generally, the longer the guarantee period and/or the greater the amount continuing to the survivor, the lower the member's monthly pension payment.