Washington

Death Benefits Available to the Surviving Families of Law Enforcement Officers Killed in the Line of Duty

To obtain certified copies of registered personal documents, contact the Bureau of Vital Statistics: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Town Center 1, 101 Israel Road SE, Tumwater, WA 98501. (360) 236-4300. Submit written request to contactCHS@doh.wa.gov.
www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/BirthDeathMarriageandDivorce

State Death Benefits

Under Washington law, all full-time law enforcement officers and commissioned state troopers participate in the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' (LEOFF) or Washington State Patrol Retirement System (WSPRS) retirement systems. The survivor benefit amount is $236,443 (adjusted annually). The benefit will be paid to beneficiaries of members and duty-disability retirees of LEOFF and WSPRS "where death occurs as a result of injuries sustained in the course of employment." This is a separate benefit that has no effect on any other benefits payable from LEOFF and WSPRS.

The Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) has created a beneficiary form that pertains only to the $244,032 benefit. AN ACT Relating to the death benefits of a surviving spouse of a member of the law enforcement officers' and firefighters' retirement system or the state patrol retirement system; and amending RCW 41.26.510 and 43.43.285. BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON: Sec. 1. RCW 41.26.510 and 2010 c 261 s 1 are each amended to read as follows: (1) Except as provided in RCW 11.07.010, if a member or a vested member who has not completed at least ten years of service dies, the amount of the accumulated contributions standing to such member's credit in the retirement system at the time of such member's death, less any amount identified as owing to an obligee upon withdrawal of accumulated contributions pursuant to a court order filed under RCW 41.50.670, shall be paid to the member's estate, or such person or persons, trust, or organization as the member shall have nominated by written designation duly executed and filed with the department. If there be no such designated person or persons still living at the time of the member's death, such member's accumulated contributions standing to such member's credit in the retirement system, less any amount identified as owing to an obligee upon withdrawal of accumulated contributions pursuant to a court order filed under RCW. For more information contact the Department of Retirement System, PO Box 48380, Olympia, WA 98504. Office: (360) 664-7000.
www.drs.wa.gov
EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS
28B.15.380 Exemption from payment of fees at state universities.
The board of regents at Washington state universities may exempt the following class of persons from the payment of general tuition fees, operating fees, or service and activities fees exempt for individual instruction fees: Children after the age of nineteen years of any law enforcement officer or fire fighter who lost his life or became totally disabled in the line of duty while employed by any public law enforcement agency or full time volunteer fire department in this state. Contact your local police department or state university for specific details on entrance requirements.

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION
Immediate cash payment equal to 100% of the state’s average monthly wage; amount adjusted annually. Spouse receives 60% of employee’s wages with an additional 2% per child, up to a total of 70%. Minimum and maximum amounts apply and are adjusted annually. Children are considered dependent until age 18, age 23 if a full-time student at an accredited school, or longer if disabled. Upon remarriage, spouse receives lump-sum settlement of 24 times the monthly compensation rate or 50% of the remaining annuity value, whichever is less, and benefits terminate. Spouse may elect not to take lump-sum payment, in which case pension payments resume if the remarriage ends in death or divorce. In addition, medical bills related to firefighter’s work-related injuries or death are paid. For more information contact Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, P.O. Box 44000 (Mailing Address), Olympia, WA 98504-4000. Office: (360) 902-5800. www.lni.wa.gov

HEALTH BENEFITS
Health benefits vary depending upon police department benefits. Spouses of state and county officers may elect to continue to participate in the same benefit program in effect at the time of the officer’s death. Contact the Benefits Coordinator at your agency.

RETIREMENT/PENSION
Individual cities and municipalities are responsible for providing retirement and pension plans for law enforcement officers. Contact your local agency’s Benefits Assistance Officer.
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

PEER SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

Established in 1984, Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc., (C.O.P.S.), is a national, non-profit organization that works with law enforcement agencies, police organizations, mental health professional, and local peer-support organizations to provide assistance to surviving families of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. C.O.P.S. has become a “lifeline” to police survivors nationwide. Contact the C.O.P.S. National Office (573) 346-4911 or visit www.nationalcops.org/localchapters for information on a chapter in your area.

FUNERAL AND CREMATION BENEFITS

Dignity Memorial funeral, cremation and cemetery providers created the Public Servants Program for emergency service personnel. This program provides dignified and honorable tributes, at no cost, for career and volunteer law enforcement officers who fall in the line of duty. Visit their website for complete information @ www.dignitymemorial.com and look under Public Servants for details. You may also call 800-344-6489 and speak with a representative.

Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc. provides complimentary burial vaults and related services for fallen law enforcement officers. For more information visit www.wilbert.com or call (888) WILBERT.