

CHAPTER 15

DECEASED AFFAIRS

NOTE: This chapter should be read in conjunction with local activity instructions and with any negotiated agreements between your activity and an exclusively recognized labor organization. Contract language will generally take precedence over conflicting provisions in this manual. Areas of uncertainty should be discussed with the Human Resources Office.

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DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidance on handling employee affairs upon their death.

2. REPORT TO HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

Death of a civil service employee should be reported immediately to the HRO, which will immediately notify the HRSC-NW and will assist the cognizant activity or department with necessary action and also lend assistance to the employee's family. The activity head or deputy will also be informed of the occurrence.

3. NOTIFICATION OF DEATH

The head of the appropriate department or equivalent management official and higher will expeditiously notify the next of kin or the person designated by the employee. Every effort will be made to assure that official notification is made before the family learns of the death through unofficial sources or the news media. When an employee resides locally with the next of kin, a representative of the activity appointed by the activity head, usually the department head or the immediate supervisor within the department will personally make notification of death.

4. DIFFERENT OR ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

HRO should be consulted if the death occurs when the individual meets one of the following conditions:

- Overseas.
- On temporary duty away from the employing activity.
- Serving under a transportation agreement.
- Living beyond commuting distance from the next of kin or designee.
- On federal property.
- On duty.

5. ASSISTANCE TO SURVIVORS.

a. If the employee resided locally with beneficiaries, the HRSC-NW will be responsible for advising a deceased employee's survivors concerning their entitlement to rights and benefits and assisting them in making the necessary claims.

b. Typical Entitlements

- Unpaid compensation
- Federal life insurance benefits
- Civil service retirement annuities or refunds (CSRS or FERS)
- Health benefits coverage.

c. Job-Connected Death

- 1) Survivors of an employee whose death resulted from job-connected causes may be entitled to benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (workers' compensation).
- 2) The Injury Compensation Program Administrator shall be notified as of the circumstances of the death and the name and address of the next of kin as soon after the death as is practical.

6. LETTER OF CONDOLENCE

Within a reasonable period of time, a letter of condolence prepared by the representative designated by the activity head for the Activity Head's signature should be sent to the next of kin. The letter should be personal and sympathetic in tone and should offer assistance to the employee's family whenever possible. If death occurs while the employee is separated from the next of kin, the letter will include additional information concerning circumstances of death, transportation of remains, and any other appropriate facts. See Appendix 15A Condolence Letter Example.

**APPENDIX 15A
CONDOLENCE LETTER EXAMPLE**

*Mrs. Jane Doe
PO Box 123
Bremerton, WA 99999*

Dear Mrs. Doe:

My deepest sympathy to you in the recent death of your husband. Although this is an extremely difficult time for you and your family, it is important that you know your husband was a truly valued member of our team. We all share in your sorrow and loss.

The Human Resources Service Center, Northwest Region, is available and ready to assist you with the benefits your husband earned as a career federal employee. At a time suitable for you, please contact the Human Resources Center Employee Benefits Division, 360-315-8070, and arrangements will be made to meet with you or someone on your behalf.

Sincerely,

*HEAD OF ACTIVITY
HEAD OF ACTIVITY TITLE*

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