

Getting Started with Reporting the Death of a Spouse of a Deceased Federal Retiree

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This packet of information was assembled to assist family members to report the death of a spouse of a deceased federal retiree who was receiving a survivor's benefit from OPM under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). This is just basic "getting started" information to work with OPM; there are a lot of situations that require more involved procedures. Note that the form referenced in this packet can be accessed directly from the OPM website or by clicking on the hyperlinks shown in blue (put cursor on blue hyperlink and press "control" and click at the same time).

1. The first step is to inform OPM of the death of the deceased annuitant's spouse if the spouse was receiving a monthly survivor benefit after the death of the retiree. This can be done by contacting OPM either by phone, email, or the OPM website <https://rsreporting.opm.gov/AnnuitantDeath>. The OPM phone is 1-888-767-6738 (6:40am to 4:00pm CST). However, since March 2026, if you call that number, you will get a message directing you to use the OPM website due to "high call volume" (but really due to OPM staff shortages). If the phone contact is resumed, be patient and persistent. The phone number may be busy and can involve a 30 minute or more wait to talk with someone (there is a call-back option). But be persistent as the OPM person who answers the phone is always pleasant and knowledgeable. Do not contact the retiree's agency state office as they are not involved in the OPM process involving a retiree.

The following information is needed when reporting the death of a spouse to OPM:

- The deceased spouse's name, date of birth, and Social Security number
 - Date of death
 - The spouse's CSF retirement claim number
 - Name of the individual reporting the death, and his or her relationship to the deceased, along with return contact information, such as address, telephone number or email address.
2. It is recommended that several certified copies of the spouse's death certificate be obtained as soon as possible. Having extra certificates on hand permits each application to be filed without delay. OPM will accept a photocopy of the death certificate, but the Office of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (OFEGLI) must have a certified copy. If any of the beneficiaries are deceased, a photocopy of their death certificate is acceptable at OPM and OFEGLI.
 3. Note that the monthly survivor benefit terminates upon death, effective the first day of the month in which the survivor died. For example, if the survivor died on June 5, the survivor annuity terminates on June 1.
 4. If the annuitant is enrolled under FEGLI for Option C Family benefits, use OPM form [fe6dep](#) "Settlement of Claim; Option C-Family Life Insurance".
 5. The Social Security Administration should be notified of the spouse's death by contacting a local SS office or calling 1-800-772-1213.