

RCW 63.30.130 Knowledge of death of insured or annuitant. (1)

In this section, "death master file" means the United States social security administration death master file or other database or service that is at least as comprehensive as the United States social security administration death master file for determining that an individual reportedly has died.

(2) With respect to a life or endowment insurance policy or annuity contract for which an amount is owed on proof of death, but which has not matured by proof of death of the insured or annuitant, the company has knowledge of the death of an insured or annuitant when:

(a) The company receives a death certificate or court order determining that the insured or annuitant has died;

(b) Due diligence, performed as required under chapter 48.23 RCW and rules promulgated thereunder to maintain contact with the insured or annuitant or determine whether the insured or annuitant has died, validates the death of the insured or annuitant;

(c) The company conducts a comparison for any purpose between a death master file and the names of some or all of the company's insureds or annuitants, finds a match that provides notice that the insured or annuitant has died, and validates the death;

(d) (i) The administrator or the administrator's agent conducts a comparison for the purpose of finding matches during an examination conducted under RCW 63.30.570 through 63.30.690 between a death master file and the names of some or all of the company's insureds or annuitants, finds a match that provides notice that the insured or annuitant has died, and the company validates the death.

(ii) The administrator or the administrator's agent may not exercise the authority provided in (d) (i) of this subsection (2) when the company has conducted a death master file comparison, relevant to the period under examination, in accordance with (c) of this subsection (2) and subsection (3) of this section; or

(e) The company:

(i) Receives notice of the death of the insured or annuitant from an administrator, beneficiary, policy owner, relative of the insured, or trustee or from a personal representative or other legal representative of the insured's or annuitant's estate; and

(ii) Validates the death of the insured or annuitant.

(3) The following rules apply under this section:

(a) A death master file match under subsection (2) (c) and (d) of this section occurs if the criteria for an exact or partial match are satisfied as provided by:

(i) Law of this state other than this chapter;

(ii) A rule or policy adopted by the office of the insurance commissioner; or

(iii) Absent a law, rule, or policy under (a) (i) or (ii) of this subsection standards in the national conference of insurance legislators' "model unclaimed life insurance benefits act" as published in 2014.

(b) The death master file match does not constitute proof of death for the purpose of submission to an insurance company of a claim by a beneficiary, annuitant, or owner of the policy or contract for an amount due under an insurance policy or annuity contract.

(c) The death master file match or validation of the insured's or annuitant's death does not alter the requirements for a beneficiary, annuitant, or owner of the policy or contract to make a claim to receive proceeds under the terms of the policy or contract.

(d) If no provision in Title 48 RCW or rules promulgated thereunder establishes a time for validation of a death of an insured or annuitant, the insurance company shall make a good faith effort using other available records and information to validate the death and document the effort taken not later than 90 days after the insurance company has notice of the death.

(4) This chapter does not affect the determination of the extent to which an insurance company before January 1, 2023, had knowledge of the death of an insured or annuitant or was required to conduct a death master file comparison to determine whether amounts owed by the company on a life or endowment insurance policy or annuity contract were presumed abandoned or unclaimed. [2022 c 225 § 210.]