

**WAC 415-02-710 What is the \$150,000 death benefit?** (1) **What is the \$150,000 death benefit?** This is a benefit consistent with workers' compensation law, Title 51 RCW. The benefit may be nontaxable under applicable federal law. It is payable to LEOFF, PERS, PSERS, SERS, TRS, and WSPRS beneficiaries if the member died as a result of:

(a) An injury sustained in the course of employment; or

(b) An occupational disease or infection that arose naturally and proximately out of employment.

(2) **Who is covered?** Deceased members of LEOFF, PERS, PSERS, SERS, TRS, and WSPRS. If the deceased was a member of another plan, please contact the department.

(3) **Who will determine eligibility for the benefit?** The Washington state department of labor and industries (L&I) will determine eligibility consistent with Title 51 RCW and applicable retirement statutes in chapter 41.26 RCW (LEOFF), chapter 41.40 RCW (PERS), chapter 41.37 RCW (PSERS), chapter 41.35 RCW (SERS), chapter 41.32 RCW (TRS), or chapter 43.43 RCW (WSPRS).

(4) **Who will receive the \$150,000 death benefit?**

(a) **LEOFF Plan 2, PERS, PSERS, SERS, TRS, and WSPRS Plan 2:** The person(s) the member designated as his or her beneficiary(ies) for his or her retirement plan will receive the benefit **unless** the member designated a **different** beneficiary(ies) for the \$150,000 death benefit. If the member did not designate a beneficiary for either the plan or death benefit, then the member's death benefit shall be paid to the member's surviving spouse as if in fact the spouse had been nominated by written designation, or if there is no surviving spouse, then to the member's estate.

(b) **LEOFF Plan 1 and WSPRS Plan 1:** In these plans, the member's surviving spouse is automatically the beneficiary for the member's retirement plan. The member may designate a different person(s) for the \$150,000 death benefit. If the member did not designate a beneficiary for either the plan or death benefit, then the member's death benefit shall be paid to the member's surviving spouse as if in fact the spouse had been nominated by written designation, or if there is no surviving spouse, then to the member's estate.

(5) **How do I apply for the benefit?** To apply:

(a) Obtain an application from the department.

(b) Submit a correctly completed application to the department. The department will submit the application to L&I.

(6) **How will I receive the benefit?** L&I will notify you and the department of approval or disapproval of eligibility. If you are approved, you may choose to have the department send the lump sum payment directly to you or to your bank.

(7) **How will DRS treat the \$150,000 payment for tax purposes?**

(a) The department will treat the payment as nontaxable.

(b) The department does not guarantee that payments should or should not be designated as exempt from federal income tax.

(c) The department does not guarantee that it was correct in withholding or not withholding taxes from the death benefit payment.

(d) The department does not:

(i) Represent or guarantee that any particular federal or state income, payroll, personal property or other tax consequence will occur because of its nontaxable determination; or

(ii) Assume any liability for your compliance with the Internal Revenue Code.

(e) You should consult with your own tax advisor regarding all questions of federal or state income, payroll, personal property or

other tax consequences regarding any payments you receive from the department.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 41.50.050(5), 41.04.017, 41.26.048, 41.32.053, 41.35.115, 41.40.0931, 41.40.0932, 43.43.285. WSR 08-11-102, § 415-02-710, filed 5/20/08, effective 6/20/08; WSR 06-18-009, § 415-02-710, filed 8/24/06, effective 9/24/06. Statutory Authority: RCW 41.50.050(5), 41.04.017, 41.26.048, 41.32.053, 41.35.115, 41.40.0932, 43.43.285. WSR 03-24-050, § 415-02-710, filed 11/26/03, effective 1/1/04.]