

Sec. 3307.49. In lieu of accepting the payment of the accumulated account of a member who dies before service retirement, a beneficiary, as determined in section 3307.48 of the Revised Code, may elect to forfeit the accumulated account and to substitute certain other benefits under division (A) or (B) of this section.

(A) If a deceased member was eligible for a service retirement allowance as provided in section 3307.38 of the Revised Code, a surviving spouse or other sole dependent beneficiary may elect to receive a monthly benefit computed as the joint-survivor allowance designated as option 1 in section 3307.50 of the Revised Code, which the member would have received had he retired on the last day of the month of death and had he at that time selected such joint-survivor plan. Payment shall begin with the month subsequent to the member's death.

(B) If a deceased member had completed at least one and one-half years of credit for Ohio service, with at least one-quarter year of Ohio contributing service credit within the two and one-half years prior to the date of death, or was receiving at the time of death a disability retirement allowance as provided in section 3307.43 of the Revised Code, certain designated beneficiaries may elect to receive monthly benefits as provided in divisions (B)(1) and (5) of this section.

(1) Number of qualified dependents affecting the benefit	Annual benefit as a per cent of decedent's final average salary or	Monthly benefit shall not be less than
1	25%	\$ 96
2	40	186
3	50	236
4	55	236
5 or more	60	236

(2) Benefits shall begin as qualified dependents meet eligibility requirements as follows:

(a) Spouse of the deceased member, who is age sixty-two, or ANY age ~~if~~ if the deceased member had ten or more years of Ohio service credit, ~~or regardless of age if~~ THE SPOUSE IS caring for a dependent child, or ~~regardless of age if~~ THE SPOUSE IS adjudged physically or mentally incompetent.

(b) Dependent child shall be any unmarried child of the deceased member under age eighteen, or under age twenty-two if the child is attending an institution of learning or training pursuant to a program designed to complete in each school year the equivalent of at least two-thirds of the full-time curriculum requirements of such institution and as further determined by board policy, or regardless of age if adjudged physically or mentally incompetent. If not domiciled in the deceased member's household at time of death, to qualify as a dependent child the

deceased member must have contributed to one-half or more of the child's support during the twelve-month period prior to death. "Child" as used in this section includes a legally adopted child. If a court hearing for an interlocutory decree for adoption has been held prior to the time of the member's death, the child shall qualify for the monthly benefit notwithstanding the fact that the final decree of adoption, adjudging the surviving spouse as the adoptive parent, is made subsequent to the death of the member.

(c) A dependent parent aged sixty-five or more who received at least one-half of his support from the member during the twelve-month period immediately preceding the member's death.

(3) "Physically or mentally incompetent" as used in this section may be determined by a court of jurisdiction, or by a physician appointed by the retirement board. Incapability of earning a living because of a physically or mentally disabling condition shall meet the qualifications of this division.

(4) Benefits to a qualified dependent shall terminate upon marriage, remarriage, abandonment, adoption, or during active military service, except that benefits terminated under this division due to a first remarriage shall resume if the EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS:

(a) THE remarriage ceases within two years due to divorce, annulment, dissolution, or death;

(b) REGARDLESS OF ITS DURATION, THE REMARRIAGE CEASES DUE TO DIVORCE, ANNULMENT, DISSOLUTION, OR DEATH AND THE DEPENDENT ATTAINS OR HAS ATTAINED AGE SIXTY-TWO.

If the surviving spouse of a deceased member remarries after attaining the age of sixty-two, the benefits provided by this division shall continue. Upon the death of any subsequent spouse who was a member of the public employees retirement system, state ~~teacher~~ TEACHERS retirement system, or school employees retirement system, the surviving spouse of such member may elect to continue receiving benefits under this division, or to receive survivor's benefits, based upon the subsequent spouse's membership in one or more of the systems, for which such surviving spouse is eligible under this section or section 145.45 or 3309.45 of the Revised Code. If the surviving spouse elects to continue receiving benefits under this division, such election shall not preclude the payment of benefits under this division to any other qualified dependent.

Benefits shall begin or resume on the first day of the month following the attainment of eligibility and shall terminate on the first day of the month following loss of eligibility.

(5) Benefits to a qualified spouse shall be paid in the amount determined for the first qualifying dependent in division (B)(1) of this section, but shall not be less than one hundred six dollars per month if the deceased member had ten or more years of Ohio service credit. All other qualifying dependents shall share equally in the benefit or remaining portion thereof.

(6) The beneficiary of a member who is also a member of the public employees retirement system, or the school employees retirement system, must forfeit the member's accumulated contributions in those sys-

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tems, if he elects to receive a survivor benefit. Such benefit shall be exclusively governed by section 3307.41 of the Revised Code.

(7) If the survivor benefits due and paid under this section are in a total amount less than the member's accumulated account that was transferred from the teachers' savings fund, school employees' retirement fund, and public employees' retirement fund, to the survivors' benefit fund, then the difference between the total amount of the benefits paid shall be paid to the beneficiary under section 3307.48 of the Revised Code.

(8) ON AND AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS AMENDMENT:

(a) REGARDLESS OF AGE, IF THE SURVIVING SPOUSE OF A DECEASED MEMBER WHO DIED PRIOR TO THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS AMENDMENT WITH TEN OR MORE YEARS OF OHIO SERVICE CREDIT HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE MONTHLY BENEFITS UNDER DIVISIONS (B)(1) TO (5) OF THIS SECTION, THE SURVIVING SPOUSE SHALL RECEIVE THE BENEFITS.

(b) BENEFITS TO A SURVIVING SPOUSE THAT WERE TERMINATED PRIOR TO THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS AMENDMENT DUE TO A FIRST REMARRIAGE SHALL RESUME, REGARDLESS OF THE DURATION OF THE REMARRIAGE, IF THE REMARRIAGE HAS CEASED DUE TO DIVORCE, ANNULMENT, DISSOLUTION, OR DEATH AND THE SURVIVING SPOUSE ATTAINS OR HAS ATTAINED AGE SIXTY-TWO.

SECTION 4. This act is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety. The reason for such necessity lies in the fact that the State Teachers Retirement System seeks to implement the increase in benefits promptly to give retirees the benefit of the increase as soon as possible. Therefore, this act shall go into immediate effect.

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