

## Railroad Retirement Board

## § 222.15

(c) In order for a claimant who has applied for a monthly survivor annuity to establish a deemed marriage, the claimant must have been living in the same household as the employee at the time of the employee's death (see § 222.16).

(d) If the husband, wife, widow(er), remarried widow(er), or surviving divorced spouse of the employee is a claimant for a monthly annuity on a basis other than age or disability, a child-in-care determination is required (see §§ 222.17 and 222.18).

### § 222.11 Determination of marriage relationship.

A claimant will be considered to be the husband, wife, or widow(er) of an employee if the law of the State in which the employee has or had a permanent home would recognize that the claimant and employee were validly married, or if a deemed marriage is established.

(a) Generally, State courts will find that a claimant and employee were validly married if—

(1) The employee and claimant were married in a civil or religious ceremony (see § 222.12) or

(2) The employee and claimant live together in a common-law marriage relationship which is recognized under applicable State law (see § 222.13), and no impediment to the marriage existed at the time it took place.

(b) A deemed marriage relationship may be established as described in § 222.14.

### § 222.12 Ceremonial marriage relationship.

A valid ceremonial marriage is one which would be recognized as valid by the courts of the State in which the marriage ceremony took place. Generally, State law provides various procedures which must be followed, such as designation of who may perform the marriage ceremony, what licenses or witnesses are required, and similar rules. A ceremonial marriage may be a civil or religious ceremony, or a ceremony which follows tribal customs, Chinese customs, or similar traditional procedures.

### § 222.13 Common-law marriage relationship.

Under the laws of some States, a common-law marriage is one which is not solemnized in a formal ceremony, but is generally evidenced by a consummated agreement to marry between two persons legally capable of making a marriage contract, followed by cohabitation. The laws of the various States which recognize common-law marriage delineate specific factors which must be present in order to establish a valid common-law marriage in those States.

### § 222.14 Deemed marriage relationship.

If a ceremonial or common-law marriage relationship cannot be established under State law, a claimant may still be found to have the relationship as spouse of an employee based upon a deemed marriage. A claimant is deemed to be the wife, husband, or widow(er) of the employee if the person's marriage to the employee would have been valid under State law except for a legal impediment, and all of the following requirements are met:

(a) The claimant married the employee in a civil or religious ceremony.

(b) The claimant went through the marriage ceremony in good faith. Good faith means that at the time of the ceremony the claimant did not know that a legal impediment existed, or if the claimant did know, he or she thought that it would not prevent a valid marriage.

(c) The claimant was living in the same household as the employee (see § 222.16) when he or she applied for the spouse annuity or when the employee died.

[54 FR 42949, Oct. 19, 1989, as amended at 65 FR 20726, Apr. 18, 2000]

### § 222.15 When spouse is living with employee.

A spouse, or widow(er) is living with the employee if—

(a) He or she and the employee are living in the same household; or

(b) The employee is contributing to the support of the spouse or widow(er); or

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(c) The employee is under court order to contribute to the support of the spouse or widow(er).

**§ 222.16 When spouse is living in the same household with employee.**

(a) Living in the same household means that the employee and spouse customarily live together as a married couple in the same residence.

(b) The employee and spouse are also considered members of the same household when they live apart but expect to resume or continue living together after a temporary separation.

(c) If the employee and spouse were separated solely for medical reasons, the Board will consider them “living in the same household” even if the separation was likely to be permanent.

**§ 222.17 “Child in care” when child of the employee is living with the claimant.**

“Child in care” means a child who has been living with the claimant for at least 30 consecutive days unless—

(a) The child is in active military service;

(b) The child is 18 years old (16 with respect to male spouse, divorced spouse, surviving divorced spouse, or remarried widow(er) annuities) or older and is not disabled;

(c) The child is 18 years old (16 with respect to male spouse, divorced spouse, surviving divorced spouse, or remarried widow(er) annuities) or older with a mental disability and the claimant does not exercise parental control and responsibility; or

(d) The child is 18 years old (16 with respect to male spouse, divorced spouse, surviving divorced spouse, or remarried widow(er) annuities) or older with a physical disability, but it is not necessary for the claimant to perform personal services for the child.

(e) Parental control and responsibility for the care and welfare of the child means that the parent supervises the child’s activities and makes important decisions about the child’s needs either alone or with another person. Personal services are services such as dressing, feeding and managing money which the child cannot do alone because of a disability.

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**§ 222.18 “Child in care” when child of the employee is not living with the claimant.**

(a) *When child is in care.* A child living apart from a claimant is in that claimant’s care if—

(1) The child lives apart or is expected to live apart from the claimant for not more than six months; or

(2) The child is under 18 years old (16 with respect to male spouse, divorced spouse, surviving divorced spouse, or remarried widow(er) annuities), the claimant supervises the child’s activities and makes important decisions about his or her needs, and one of the following circumstances applies:

(i) The child is living apart because of attendance at school but generally spends a vacation of at least 30 consecutive days with the claimant each year, and, if the claimant and the child’s other parent are separated, the school must look to the claimant for decisions about the child’s welfare.

(ii) The child is living apart because of the claimant’s employment but the claimant makes regular and substantial contributions to the child’s support. “Contributing to support” is defined in § 222.42.

(iii) The child is living apart because of the child’s or the claimant’s physical disability; or

(3) The child is 18 years old (16 with respect to male spouse, divorced spouse, surviving divorced spouse, or remarried widow(er) annuities) or older and is mentally disabled and the claimant supervises the child’s activities, makes important decisions about the child’s needs, and helps in the child’s upbringing and development.

(b) *When child is not in care.* A child living apart from a claimant is not in the claimant’s care if—

(1) The child is in active military service; or

(2) The child is living with his or her other parent; or

(3) A court order removed the child from the claimant’s custody and control; or

(4) The claimant gave the right to custody and control of the child to someone else; or

(5) The claimant is mentally disabled.