§ 19.11 Survivor benefits.

§ 19.11–1 Kinds of survivor benefits.

If a participant or former participant dies in active service or after retirement, regular survivor annuities are payable under terms of this section to an eligible surviving spouse, former spouse or child. Also, if all rights to annuity and survivor annuity terminate prior to exhaustion of the participant’s lump-sum credit, a lump-sum payment is made pursuant to §19.13. In addition to the above, an additional survivor annuity, and a supplemental survivor annuity may be payable to an eligible survivor under §§ 19.10–5 and 19.10–6, respectively. If any participant or former participant makes an election, files a spousal agreement or becomes subject to a court order to provide a regular survivor annuity for a spouse or former spouse and does not subsequently become entitled to leave a survivor annuity under these regulations (because of separation from the Service and withdrawal of contributions, death after separation but before commencement of a deferred annuity, or for any other reason), none will be paid and such election, spousal agreement, or court order to provide such survivor annuity will have no force or effect.

§ 19.11–2 Regular survivor annuity for a former spouse.

(a) Divorce prior to retirement. If a participant or former participant is divorced prior to commencement of annuity, any former spouse shall be entitled to a pro rata share of such a principal's maximum regular survivor annuity (based on service performed prior to the divorce) unless a different amount is elected in a spousal agreement filed with PER/ER/RET within 12 months after the divorce becomes final or at the time of the retirement, whichever occurs first, or unless a different amount is specified by a court prior to the death of the principal. The principal’s annuity shall be reduced at the commencing date under §19.10–2 in order to provide the survivor annuity committed to the former spouse.

(b) Divorce after retirement. In the event an annuitant is divorced after retirement (commencement of annuity), the maximum survivor annuity that may be provided for that former spouse is limited to the amount provided for that person at the time of retirement. Within that limit, the former spouse is entitled to a pro rata share of the participant’s maximum survivor benefit (based on service performed prior to the divorce) unless a different amount was elected in a spousal agreement filed with PER/ER/RET at the time of retirement, or in the case of retirement before February 15, 1981, filed with PER/ER/RET within 12 months after the divorce becomes final, or unless a different amount is specified by a court prior to the death of the principal. For this purpose, a joint election filed with PER/ER/RET at the time of retirement is considered a spousal agreement. If the survivor annuity for the former spouse is reduced at the time of the divorce (because the pro rata share or the amount specified in a spousal agreement or court order is less than the amount elected at retirement), the principal’s annuity shall be recomputed and paid, effective on the date the survivor benefit is reduced, as if the lower amount had been elected at the outset of retirement.

(c) Death or remarriage of former spouse and transfer of survivor benefit to a spouse. Remarriage below age 60 or death of a former spouse while a principal is alive will disqualify the former spouse for benefits under this section. In the event of such a remarriage or death of a former spouse, the portion of a principal’s survivor annuity committed to that person will become available for transfer to any spouse. If such a remarriage or death of the