

§1612. Death benefit

1. Amount; recipients. In a case in which the chief determines under rules adopted pursuant to this section that a law enforcement officer has died while in the line of duty, in a case in which the State Fire Marshal determines under rules adopted pursuant to this section that a firefighter has died while in the line of duty, in a case in which the director determines under rules adopted pursuant to this section that an emergency medical services person has died while in the line of duty or in a case in which the Commissioner of Corrections determines under rules adopted pursuant to this section that a Department of Corrections law enforcement officer or corrections officer has died while in the line of duty prior to July 1, 2021, the State shall pay a benefit of \$100,000. When determining whether an individual has died while in the line of duty, the chief, the State Fire Marshal, the director or the Commissioner of Corrections, as applicable, shall evaluate whether an individual who died by suicide died as a result of events or actions experienced by the individual while in the line of duty.

Beginning July 1, 2021 and annually thereafter, the benefit amount must be indexed to the Consumer Price Index whenever there is a percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index from July 1st to June 30th of the previous year. A firefighter, law enforcement officer, emergency medical services person, Department of Corrections law enforcement officer or corrections officer who dies while in the line of duty must be paid the benefit amount as indexed immediately prior to that firefighter's, law enforcement officer's, emergency medical services person's, Department of Corrections law enforcement officer's or corrections officer's death. The Department of Administrative and Financial Services shall adopt rules to calculate the annual percentage increase in the death benefit.

The State shall pay the benefit as follows:

A. If there is no surviving child of the firefighter, law enforcement officer, emergency medical services person, Department of Corrections law enforcement officer or corrections officer, to the surviving spouse of the person; [PL 2023, c. 433, §4 (AMD).]

B. If there is a surviving child or children and a surviving spouse of the firefighter, law enforcement officer, emergency medical services person, Department of Corrections law enforcement officer or corrections officer, 1/2 to the surviving child or children in equal shares and 1/2 to the surviving spouse; [PL 2023, c. 433, §4 (AMD).]

C. If there is no surviving spouse of the firefighter, law enforcement officer, emergency medical services person, Department of Corrections law enforcement officer or corrections officer, to the child or children in equal shares; or [PL 2023, c. 433, §4 (AMD).]

D. If there is no surviving child or spouse, to the parent or parents of the firefighter, law enforcement officer, emergency medical services person, Department of Corrections law enforcement officer or corrections officer in equal shares. [PL 2023, c. 433, §4 (AMD).]

[PL 2023, c. 433, §4 (AMD).]

2. Interim benefit payment. Interim benefits may be paid as follows.

A. When the State Fire Marshal determines upon showing of need and prior to final action that the death of a firefighter is a death for which a benefit will probably be paid, the State Fire Marshal may make an interim benefit payment not exceeding \$3,000 to the individual or individuals entitled to receive a benefit under subsection 1 in the manner set out in subsection 1. [PL 2001, c. 439, Pt. CCCCC, §4 (NEW).]

B. When the chief determines upon showing of need and prior to final action that the death of a law enforcement officer is a death for which a benefit will probably be paid, the chief may make an interim benefit payment not exceeding \$3,000 to the individual or individuals entitled to receive a benefit under subsection 1 in the manner set out in subsection 1. [PL 2023, c. 433, §5 (AMD).]

C. When the director determines upon showing of need and prior to final action that the death of an emergency medical services person is a death for which a benefit will probably be paid, the director may make an interim benefit payment not exceeding \$3,000 to the individual or individuals entitled to receive a benefit under subsection 1 in the manner set out in subsection 1. [PL 2001, c. 439, Pt. CCCCC, §4 (NEW).]

D. When the Commissioner of Corrections determines upon showing of need and prior to final action that the death of a Department of Corrections law enforcement officer or corrections officer is a death for which a benefit will probably be paid, the commissioner may make an interim benefit payment not exceeding \$3,000 to the individual or individuals entitled to receive a benefit under subsection 1 in the manner set out in subsection 1. [PL 2023, c. 433, §6 (AMD).]
[PL 2023, c. 433, §§5, 6 (AMD).]

3. Deduction of interim payment. The State Fire Marshal, the chief, the director or the Commissioner of Corrections, as the case may be, shall deduct the amount of an interim payment made pursuant to subsection 2 from the amount of any final benefit paid to the individual or individuals entitled to receive a benefit under subsection 1.
[PL 2019, c. 658, §6 (AMD).]

4. Repayment of interim payment; waiver. If a final benefit is not paid, the recipient or recipients of any interim payment under subsection 2 are liable for repayment of the amount received. The State Fire Marshal in the case of a firefighter, the chief in the case of a law enforcement officer, the director in the case of an emergency medical services person or the Commissioner of Corrections in the case of a Department of Corrections law enforcement officer or a corrections officer may waive all or part of the repayment if that official determines that undue hardship would result from that repayment.
[PL 2023, c. 433, §7 (AMD).]

5. Execution or attachment prohibited. A benefit paid under this section is not subject to execution or attachment.
[PL 2001, c. 439, Pt. CCCCC, §4 (NEW).]

6. Other benefits. The death benefit payable under this section may not be considered a benefit paid under "similar law" for purposes of Title 5, sections 18005 and 18605 and may not be used to reduce any accidental death benefit amount payable under those provisions or under any other provision of law.
[PL 2019, c. 658, §6 (AMD).]

7. Payment from the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund. Benefits are payable from the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund as provided in Title 5, section 1532, subsection 6. If funds in the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund are insufficient to pay a death benefit when due, the benefit must be paid as soon as a sufficient balance exists.
[PL 2009, c. 421, §3 (AMD).]

8. Rulemaking. The State Fire Marshal, the chief, the Emergency Medical Services' Board and the Department of Corrections shall adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this section, except that the Department of Administrative and Financial Services shall adopt rules as required by subsection 1. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.
[PL 2019, c. 658, §6 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2001, c. 439, §CCCC4 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 451, §X13 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 2, §A12 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 2, §A14 (AFF). PL 2009, c. 421, §3 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 658, §6 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 433, §§4-7 (AMD).

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