

**Subpart C—Evidence of Relationship**

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**Subpart A—General Evidence Requirements**

**§ 219.1 Introduction.**

As described in parts 216 (Eligibility for an Annuity), 234 (Lump-Sum Payments), and 222 (Family Relationships), certain requirements must be met before benefits may be paid under the Railroad Retirement Act. This part contains the basic rules for evidence that is required to support a claimant's claim for monthly or lump-sum benefit payments under the Railroad Retirement Act. Part 219 describes when evidence is required and what types of documents can be used as evidence. Part 222 defines and explains family relationships for which evidence requirements are stated in part 219. Special evidence requirements for disability annuities are found in part 220 of this chapter.

**§ 219.2 Definitions.**

As used in this subpart—

*Annuity* means a recurring payment due an entitled person for a calendar month and made to him or her on the first day of the following month.

*Apply* means to sign a form or statement that the Board accepts as an application.

*Claimant* means the person who files an application for an annuity or lump-sum payment for himself, herself, or some other person.

*Benefit* means any employee annuity, spouse annuity, survivor annuity, or lump-sum payment under the Railroad Retirement Act.

*Convincing evidence* means one or more pieces of evidence that proves to the satisfaction of the Board that an individual meets a requirement for eligibility for benefits. See § 219.7 for guides the Board uses in deciding whether evidence is convincing.

*Eligible* means that a person meets all of the requirements for payment of benefits but has not yet applied therefor.

*Entitled* means that a person has applied for and has proved his or her right to payment of benefits.

*Evidence* means any record or document or testimony that helps to show whether a person is eligible for benefits. It may also be used to establish

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whether the person is still entitled to benefits.

*Representative* means a person who acts on behalf of a claimant in regard to his or her claim for benefits from the Board and in the presentation of evidence to support the claim.

### §219.3 When evidence is required.

(a) *To prove initial eligibility.* The Board will ask for evidence to prove a claimant is eligible for benefits when he or she applies for benefits. Usually the Board will ask the claimant to furnish specific kinds of evidence or information by a certain date to prove initial eligibility for benefits. If evidence or information is not received by that date, the Board may decide that the claimant is not eligible for benefits and will deny his or her application.

(b) *To prove continued entitlement.* After a claimant establishes entitlement to an annuity, the Board may ask that annuitant to produce by a certain date information or evidence needed to decide whether he or she may continue to receive an annuity or whether the annuity should be reduced or stopped. If the information is not received by the date specified, the Board may decide that the person is no longer entitled to benefits or that his or her annuity should be stopped or reduced.

### §219.4 Who is responsible for furnishing evidence.

(a) *Claimant or representative responsible.* When evidence is required to prove a person's eligibility for or right to continue to receive annuity or lump-sum payments, that claimant or his or her representative is responsible for obtaining and submitting the evidence to the Board.

(b) *What to do when required evidence will be delayed.* When the required evidence cannot be furnished within the specified time, the claimant or representative who was asked to furnish the evidence or information should notify the Board and explain why there will be a delay. If the delay is caused by illness, failure to receive the information from another source, or a similar situation, the claimant will be allowed a reasonable time to secure the evidence or information. If the information is not received within a reason-

able time as determined by the Board, the claimant or representative who was asked to furnish the evidence or information will be notified of the effect that his or her failure to furnish the evidence or information will have on the claimant's eligibility to receive or continue to receive payments.

### §219.5 Where and how to provide evidence.

(a) *When Board office is accessible.* A claimant or representative should give his or her evidence to an employee of the Railroad Retirement Board office where he or she files the application. An employee of the Board will tell the claimant or representative what is needed and how to get it.

(b) *When Board office is not accessible.* A claimant who lives in an area where there is no Board office or who is unable to travel to a Board office may send evidence to the Board office nearest to where the claimant lives. A claimant who lives outside the United States may take evidence to the American embassy or consulate or other Foreign Service Office nearest to where he or she lives or send it to the headquarters of the Board.

### §219.6 Records as evidence.

(a) *General.* If a claimant or an annuitant provides an original document or record as evidence to prove eligibility or continued entitlement to payments, where possible, a Board employee will make a photocopy or transcript of these original documents or records and return the original documents to the person who furnished them. A claimant may also submit certified copies of original records as described in paragraph (c) of this section. The Board may also accept uncertified copies as described in paragraph (d) of this section.

(b) *Foreign-language documents.* If the evidence submitted is a foreign-language document, the Board may require that the record be translated. An acceptable translation includes, but is not limited to, a translation certified by a United States consular official or employee of the Department of State authorized to certify evidence, or by an employee of the Board or the Social Security Administration.