

Subpart B—Evidence of Age and Death

§ 219.20 When evidence of age is required.

(a) Evidence of age is required when an employee applies for an annuity under the Railroad Retirement Act or for Medicare coverage under title XVIII of the Social Security Act.

(b) Evidence of age is also required from a person who applies for a spouse's or divorced spouse's, widow's, widower's, surviving divorced spouse's, parent's, or child's annuity under the Railroad Retirement Act, or for Medicare coverage under title XVIII of the Social Security Act.

§ 219.21 Types of evidence to prove age.

(a) *Preferred evidence.* The best type of evidence to prove a claimant's age is—

(1) A birth certificate recorded before age 5;

(2) A church record of birth or baptism recorded before age 5; or

(3) Notification of registration of birth made before age 5.

(b) *Other evidence of age.* If an individual cannot obtain preferred evidence of age, he or she will be asked to submit other convincing evidence to prove age. The other evidence may be one or more of the following records, with the records of highest value listed first:

(1) Hospital birth record or certificate.

(2) Physician's or midwife's birth record.

(3) Bible or other family record.

(4) Naturalization record.

(5) Military record.

(6) Immigration record.

(7) Passport.

(8) Selective service registration record.

(9) Census record.

(10) School record.

(11) Vaccination record.

(12) Insurance record.

(13) Labor union or fraternal record.

(14) Employer's record.

(15) Marriage record.

(16) A statement signed by the individual giving the reason why he or she cannot obtain other convincing evi-

dence of age and the sworn statements of two other persons who have personal knowledge of the age that the individual is trying to prove.

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§ 219.22 When evidence of death is required.

(a) *When evidence of the employee's death is required.* Evidence to prove the employee's death is always required for payment of any type of survivor annuity or lump-sum payment based on the deceased employee's record. See parts 216 and 234 for types of survivor payments.

(b) *When evidence to prove death of other persons is required.* Evidence to prove the death of persons other than the employee is required when—

(1) A claimant, who is eligible for survivor benefits, dies after the employee;

(2) A residual lump sum (see part 234 of this chapter) is payable and a person whom the employee named to receive all or part of this payment dies before the employee, or such person dies after the employee but before receiving his or her share of the benefit; or

(3) There is reasonable doubt of the death of—

(i) Any person who, if alive, has priority over the applicant;

(ii) Any spouse whose death is alleged to have ended a previous marriage, if a later marriage in question cannot be presumed valid under state law; or

(iii) Any person the termination of whose entitlement would increase payments to other entitled persons.

§ 219.23 Evidence to prove death.

(a) *Preferred evidence of death.* The best evidence of a person's death is—

(1) A certified copy of or extract from the public record of death, or verdict of the coroner's jury of the state or community where death occurred; or a certificate or statement of death issued by a local registrar or public health official;

(2) A signed statement of the funeral director, attending physician, or official of an institution where death occurred;

(3) A certified copy of, or extract from, an official report or finding of

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death made by an agency or department of the United States or of a state; or

(4) If death occurred outside the United States, an official report of death by a United States Consul or other authorized employee of the State Department, or a certified copy of the public record of death in a foreign country.

(b) *Other evidence of death.* If the preferred evidence of death cannot be obtained, the individual who must furnish evidence of death will be asked to explain the reason therefor and to submit other convincing evidence, such as sworn statements of at least two persons who have personal knowledge of the death. These persons must be able to swear to the date, time, place, and cause of death.

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§ 219.24 Evidence of presumed death.

When a person cannot be proven dead but evidence of death is needed, the Board may presume he or she died at a certain time if the Board receives the following evidence:

(a) A certified copy of, or extract from, an official report or finding by an agency or department of the United States that a missing person is presumed to be dead as stated in Federal law (5 U.S.C. 5565). Unless other evidence is submitted showing an actual date of death, the Board will use the date on which the person was reported missing as the date of death.

(b) Signed statements by those in a position to know that facts and other records which show that the person has been absent from his or her residence for no apparent reason and has not been heard from for at least 7 years. If there is no evidence available that that person continued in life after the date of disappearance, the Board will use as the date of death the date the person disappeared.

(c) When a person has been missing for less than 7 years but may be presumed dead due to drowning or common disaster (fire, accident, etc.), signed statements from the applicant and individuals who know the circumstances surrounding the occurrence leading to the person's disappear-

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ance. The best evidence is statements from individuals who witnessed the occurrence or saw the missing person at the scene of the occurrence shortly before it happened.

Subpart C—Evidence of Relationship

§ 219.30 When evidence of marriage is required.

(a) *When an application is filed for benefits.* Documentary evidence of marriage is required when an individual files for a monthly annuity, lump-sum death payment, residual lump sum, or Medicare coverage, as the wife, husband, widow, widower, divorced spouse or surviving divorced spouse, or step-parent of the employee. A claimant may also be required to submit evidence of another person's marriage when that person's marriage is necessary to determine the applicant's entitlement to benefits under the Railroad Retirement Act.

(b) *State law.* In deciding whether the marriage to the employee is valid or not, in a case where the employee is living, the Board will follow the law of the state where the employee had a permanent home when the applicant filed an application; in a case where the employee is dead, the Board will follow the law of the state where the employee had a permanent home when he or she died.

(c) *Types of evidence.* What evidence will be required depends on whether the employee's marriage was a ceremonial marriage, a common-law marriage, or a marriage that can be deemed to be valid.

§ 219.31 Evidence of a valid ceremonial marriage.

(a) *Preferred evidence.* Preferred evidence of a ceremonial marriage is—

(1) A copy of the public record of the marriage, certified by the custodian of the record or by a Board employee;

(2) A copy of a church record of the marriage certified by the custodian of the record or by a Board employee; or

(3) The original certificate of marriage.

(b) *Other evidence of a ceremonial marriage.* If preferred evidence of a ceremonial marriage cannot be obtained, the