

**Department of Employee Trust Funds
State Agency Health Insurance Administration Manual**

Chapter 14 — Employee Death

1401 How to Report an Employee Death

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1401 Report an Employee Death to ETF Immediately

In the event that an employee dies, please contact the Department of Employee Trust Funds immediately to report the death. Contact ETF via phone at 1-877-533-5020 or by visiting our website at etf.wi.gov and using the *Contact ETF* function.

The employer is responsible for determining and entering the health insurance coverage end date in myETF Benefits. For single coverage, the end date is the end of the month of the employee's death (a payroll refund may be required). For family coverage, it is the end of the month through which premiums have been paid (no payroll refund will be required).

1402 Surviving Spouse and Dependents

In the event an employee or annuitant with family health coverage dies, the surviving spouse/domestic partner and/or eligible dependents will continue coverage. The surviving spouse/domestic partner may continue coverage indefinitely; dependent children (as defined under the State Group Health Insurance Program) may continue coverage as long as they remain eligible under the program. There will be no employer contribution towards the monthly premium.

If the surviving spouse/domestic partner and dependents **do not** wish to continue coverage, ETF must receive a signed written request. Should the surviving spouse/domestic partner (or annuitant) and dependent(s) not elect to continue coverage, coverage will end the last day of the month for which premiums have been paid.

Upon notification of the death of an employee or annuitant who has family coverage, ETF will send the surviving spouse and dependents information about continuation rights and use of sick leave credits to pay health insurance premiums. Premiums are due no later than the first of the month following the last month through which the decedent's premiums are paid. Premiums will be deducted from accumulated sick leave conversion credits or any WRS annuity the dependent may be receiving. If there is no sick leave or annuity, or the annuity is insufficient to allow for the deduction of the premium, the survivor must pay the premium directly to the health plan.

Survivors may not add persons to the policy who were not covered at the time of death, unless the individual was previously insured under the contract of the deceased employee and regains eligibility.

If an employee is covered under a spouse's/domestic partner's insurance plan outside of the

State Group Health Insurance Program (through a private employer or a participating local employer) and the state employee dies, the surviving spouse/domestic partner does not have access to the deceased state employee's accumulated sick leave.

Note: The employer must promptly certify accumulated and supplemental sick leave credits through the Accumulated Sick Leave System (AcSL) upon the death of an employee (refer to Chapter 12.)

1403 Surviving Spouse who is also a State Employee Eligible for Coverage

When an employee with family coverage dies, and the surviving spouse/domestic partner is also an eligible employee, the insured surviving spouse has two options:

1. Enroll as an employee and receive the employer contribution share toward premium. This allows the surviving spouse/dependents the right to lifetime coverage even if the spouse does not meet the retirement eligibility requirements.
 - If the surviving spouse/domestic partner and/or dependent(s) are already covered under the State Group Health Insurance Program, the decedent's sick leave credits will automatically be banked for use.
 - Once the decedent's sick leave credits are banked, the surviving spouse/domestic partner and/or dependent(s) may use the banked sick leave credits when one of the following occurs:
 - An involuntary loss of health insurance coverage (e.g., terminating employment).
 - A retirement; in order to use the deceased employee's inactivated sick leave credits, the spouse/domestic partner must meet the eligibility requirements upon retirement as stated in Chapter 10, subchapter 1001.
2. Enroll as the surviving spouse/domestic partner and retain coverage indefinitely as indicated in subchapter 1402. Premiums will be paid through accumulated sick leave conversion credits, WRS annuity, or directly by the surviving spouse/domestic partner to the health plan.