

Group Life Insurance Beneficiary Designation Commonly Asked Questions

These are commonly asked questions about beneficiary designations under the Group Life Insurance Policy currently administered by The Standard. The Standard administers claims for life insurance benefits in accordance with the Policy terms and makes the ultimate decision on claim payments. The terms of the Policy supersede any discrepancy between this document and the Policy. Please refer to your Group Life Insurance Certificate for the Policy terms.

This document is for informational purposes and does not serve as legal advice. As with any other legal matter, The Standard recommends you seek legal advice from your attorney if you wish to do so.

Can I name more than one person as my beneficiary?

Yes. You may name as many persons as you wish. The beneficiary designation form allows room for you to designate the percentage you want to leave to each named beneficiary.

What if I don't name a beneficiary for my life insurance?

If you do not name a beneficiary, The Standard will pay the life benefit according to the "policy order." This means your surviving spouse will be paid the benefit as the first person listed in the order. If there is no spouse the benefit will be paid, in equal shares, to your surviving children; if none, then to your parents; if none, then to your siblings; if none, then to your estate. The same process would be followed if your designated beneficiary is no longer living at the time of your death.

What is a contingent beneficiary?

A contingent beneficiary is the person you may name to receive your life benefit if your primary beneficiary is no longer living at the time of your death.

Do I have to name my spouse as my beneficiary?

No. The Policy is set up to allow you to designate anyone you want as your beneficiary.

Do I have to name my spouse as beneficiary for 50 percent of my life benefit?

No, the Policy is set up to pay the percentage you list for each named beneficiary regardless of whether you have a spouse. Naming your beneficiary is strictly your personal decision. The Standard cannot provide you with legal advice on this matter.

If I do not name my spouse as beneficiary for at least 50 percent, can my spouse sue the named beneficiary to get at least 50 percent?

If you reside in a community property state, your spouse could contest for 50 percent of the benefit in court. However, that would be an issue involving your spouse, the named beneficiary, and the court, and a judge would decide that issue. The Standard will not decide whether a spouse who is not named as beneficiary has a valid community property claim to the benefit. The Standard will pay your life benefit to your named beneficiary, unless a court order requires payment to someone else.

Can I name my ex-spouse as my beneficiary?

Divorce automatically revokes a designation of your spouse as beneficiary that you made before the divorce. If you divorce and wish to keep your ex-spouse as your beneficiary, you must complete a new beneficiary designation after your divorce is final. The Standard will not pay the benefit to your ex-spouse unless you have named your ex-spouse as beneficiary after the divorce, you have remarried your ex-spouse, or a court order requires payment to your ex-spouse.

Who will get my life benefit if my primary beneficiary designation is revoked by state or federal law?

If you named a contingent beneficiary, this beneficiary will receive your benefit. If you did not name a contingent beneficiary The Standard will pay the benefit according to the “policy order.” This means your surviving spouse will be paid the benefit as the first person listed in the order. If there is no spouse, the benefit will be paid, in equal shares, to your surviving children; if none, then to your parents, if none, then to your siblings, if none, then to your estate.

Can I designate my child (who is less than age 18) to be my beneficiary?

Yes. However, when the life benefit is payable to your child who is under the legal age of 18, The Standard may place the funds in an interest bearing account maintained by The Standard until your child turns 18. For a child under age 18, a court-appointed guardian of the child’s estate may contact The Standard to collect the benefit. If there is no appointed guardian, your child, upon reaching age 18, may contact The Standard to collect the benefit.

What if I have children 18, 15 and 10, will they all get paid the benefit if I die?

You may name your three children to receive a designated percentage of the benefit. In this case, the percentage of the claim designated for your 18-year old child will be payable to that child upon your death since age 18 is considered the legal age. The percentage of the benefit designated to the children under age 18 maybe maintained by The Standard in an interest bearing account and paid when each child reaches age 18 or when a court-appointed guardian of the child’s estate contacts The Standard to collect the benefit.

If my will states that a relative will be responsible for my minor child, who do I name as a beneficiary?

A will generally has no effect on who will receive a life insurance benefit. The benefit can be paid to your relative only if you name this relative as your beneficiary or if your relative obtains legal guardianship of your child’s estate.

Who can I name on the beneficiary form if I have a will?

Even if you have a will, you may name any person you wish as your life insurance beneficiary. If you wish to have the benefit paid to your estate, you may name your estate as your beneficiary. After your death, the executor named in your probated will files the claim for benefits.

Can I name my trust as beneficiary?

Yes. After your death, your trustee (or successor trustee) files the claim for the life benefit.

If my spouse or children have Dependents Life Insurance, am I the beneficiary?

Yes, you as the insured member are automatically the beneficiary.

How often can I change my beneficiary?

You can change your beneficiary as often as you wish. Beneficiary forms are maintained by your benefits administration office. Visit them to complete and turn in an updated beneficiary form.