

RCW 11.18.200 Liability of beneficiary of nonprobate asset—

Abatement. (1) Unless expressly exempted by statute, a beneficiary of a nonprobate asset that was subject to satisfaction of the decedent's general liabilities immediately before the decedent's death takes the asset subject to liabilities, claims, estate taxes, and the fair share of expenses of administration reasonably incurred by the personal representative in the transfer of or administration upon the asset. The beneficiary of such an asset is liable to account to the personal representative to the extent necessary to satisfy liabilities, claims, the asset's fair share of expenses of administration, and the asset's share of any applicable estate taxes under chapter 83.110A RCW. Before making demand that a beneficiary of a nonprobate asset account to the personal representative, the personal representative must give notice to the beneficiary, in the manner provided in chapter 11.96A RCW, that the beneficiary is liable to account under this section.

(2) The following rules govern in applying subsection (1) of this section:

(a) A beneficiary of property passing at death under a community property agreement takes the property subject to the decedent's liabilities, claims, estate taxes, and administration expenses as described in subsection (1) of this section. However, assets existing as community or separate property immediately before the decedent's death under the community property agreement are subject to the decedent's liabilities and claims to the same extent that they would have been had they been assets of the probate estate.

(b) A beneficiary of property held in joint tenancy form with right of survivorship, including without limitation United States savings bonds or similar obligations, takes the property subject to the decedent's liabilities, claims, estate taxes, and administration expenses as described in subsection (1) of this section to the extent of the decedent's beneficial ownership interest in the property immediately before death.

(c) A beneficiary of payable-on-death or trust bank accounts, bonds, securities, or similar obligations, including without limitation United States bonds or similar obligations, takes the property subject to the decedent's liabilities, claims, estate taxes, and administration expenses as described in subsection (1) of this section, to the extent of the decedent's beneficial ownership interest in the property immediately before death.

(d) A beneficiary of a transfer on death deed or of deeds or conveyances made by the decedent if possession has been postponed until the death of the decedent takes the property subject to the decedent's liabilities, claims, estate taxes, and administration expenses as described in subsection (1) of this section, to the extent of the decedent's beneficial ownership interest in the property immediately before death.

(e) A trust for the decedent's use of which the decedent is the grantor is subject to the decedent's liabilities, claims, estate taxes, and administration expenses as described in subsection (1) of this section, to the same extent as the trust was subject to claims of the decedent's creditors immediately before death under RCW 19.36.020.

(f) A trust not for the use of the grantor but of which the decedent is the grantor and that becomes effective or irrevocable only upon the decedent's death is subject to the decedent's claims, liabilities, estate taxes, and expenses of administration as described in subsection (1) of this section.

(g) Anything in this section to the contrary notwithstanding, nonprobate assets that existed as community property immediately before the decedent's death are subject to the decedent's liabilities and claims to the same extent that they would have been had they been assets of the probate estate.

(h) The liability of a beneficiary of life insurance is governed by chapter 48.18 RCW.

(i) The liability of a beneficiary of pension or retirement employee benefits is governed by chapter 6.15 RCW.

(j) An inference may not be drawn from (a) through (i) of this subsection that a beneficiary of nonprobate assets other than those assets specifically described in (a) through (i) of this subsection does or does not take the assets subject to claims, liabilities, estate taxes, and administration expenses as described in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) Nothing in this section derogates from the rights of a person interested in the estate to recover any applicable estate tax under chapter 83.110A RCW or from the liability of any beneficiary for estate tax under chapter 83.110A RCW.

(4) Nonprobate assets that may be responsible for the satisfaction of the decedent's general liabilities and claims abate together with the probate assets of the estate in accord with chapter 11.10 RCW. [2014 c 58 s 21; 1999 c 42 s 605; 1997 c 252 s 3; 1994 c 221 s 19.]

Uniformity of application and construction—Relation to electronic signatures in global and national commerce act—2014 c 58: See RCW 64.80.903 and 64.80.904.

Effective date—1999 c 42: See RCW 11.96A.902.

Application—1997 c 252 ss 1-73: See note following RCW 11.02.005.

Effective dates—1994 c 221: See note following RCW 11.100.035.