

RCW 41.26.161 Death benefits—Nonduty connected. (1) In the event of the nonduty connected death of any member who is in active service, or who has vested under the provisions of RCW 41.26.090 with twenty or more service credit years of service, or who is on disability leave or retired, whether for nonduty connected disability or service, the surviving spouse shall become entitled, subject to RCW 41.26.162, to receive a monthly allowance equal to fifty percent of the final average salary at the date of death if active, or the amount of retirement allowance the vested member would have received at age fifty, or the amount of the retirement allowance such retired member was receiving at the time of death if retired for service or nonduty connected disability. The amount of this allowance will be increased five percent of final average salary for each child as defined in *RCW 41.26.030(7), subject to a maximum combined allowance of sixty percent of final average salary: PROVIDED, That if the child or children is or are in the care of a legal guardian, payment of the increase attributable to each child will be made to the child's legal guardian or, in the absence of a legal guardian and if the member has created a trust for the benefit of the child or children, payment of the increase attributable to each child will be made to the trust.

(2) If at the time of the death of a vested member with twenty or more service credit years of service as provided in subsection (1) of this section or a member retired for service or disability, the surviving spouse has not been lawfully married to such member for one year prior to retirement or separation from service if a vested member, the surviving spouse shall not be eligible to receive the benefits under this section.

(3) If there be no surviving spouse eligible to receive benefits at the time of such member's death, then the child or children of such member shall receive a monthly allowance equal to thirty percent of final average salary for one child and an additional ten percent for each additional child subject to a maximum combined payment, under this subsection, of sixty percent of final average salary. When there cease to be any eligible children as defined in *RCW 41.26.030(7), there shall be paid to the legal heirs of the member the excess, if any, of accumulated contributions of the member at the time of death over all payments made to survivors on his or her behalf under this chapter: PROVIDED, That payments under this subsection to children shall be prorated equally among the children, if more than one. If the member has created a trust for the benefit of the child or children, the payment shall be made to the trust.

(4) In the event that there is no surviving spouse eligible to receive benefits under this section, and that there be no child or children eligible to receive benefits under this section, then the accumulated contributions shall be paid to the estate of said member.

(5) If a surviving spouse receiving benefits under this section remarries after June 13, 2002, the surviving spouse shall continue to receive the benefits under this section.

(6) If a surviving spouse receiving benefits under the provisions of this section thereafter dies and there are children as defined in *RCW 41.26.030(7), payment to the spouse shall cease and the child or children shall receive the benefits as provided in subsection (3) of this section.

(7) The payment provided by this section shall become due the day following the date of death and payments shall be retroactive to that date. [2005 c 62 § 2; 2002 c 158 § 2; 1999 c 134 § 3.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 41.26.030 was alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k), changing subsection (7) to subsection (6).

Purpose—Effective date—1999 c 134: See notes following RCW 41.26.160.