

Changes to the VAFR Death Benefit Plan

The VAFR Death Benefit Plan was established in 1984 during the presidency of Gary Clatterbuck. The purpose of the plan is to render aid to the designated beneficiary or the estate of any member of the VAFR Death Benefit Plan at the time of the member's death.

To qualify for membership in the Death Benefit Plan you must be a member of the VAFR. The membership of the VAFR consists of the membership of all agency members, VAFR Individual members, VAFR Life members and AVAVRS members. The best way to join the plan is through your agency. If your agency does not participate in the plan, you are still able to join as an individual plan member.

Upon the death of a member of the plan, each plan member is charged an assessment fee. The assessment fee is billed to your agency and your agency is responsible for payment of the fees. Your agency may choose to collect the assessment from you or pay the fee for you. Individual plan members are billed directly and are responsible for the payment of their assessment fees.

In the fall of 2020, President Connie Moore appointed a special study committee to review the plan and recommend any changes and/or updates that may be needed. The study committee completed its work and submitted its report and recommendations to the VAFR Board of Directors in mid-December 2020. The Board subsequently approved the recommendations at its meeting held on January 9, 2021.

So, what has changed?

Based on the recommendations of the study committee, the Death Benefit Plan Board of Directors and voted to dissolve. As a result, the Death Benefit Plan Board of Directors has been replaced with a committee consisting of the Chaplain and four (4) At-Large Directors appointed by the President. The new Death Benefit Plan Committee is required to meet a minimum of two times a year and make a report to the Board of Governors. This new committee is responsible for the promotion of the plan, the development and maintenance of all policies and procedures of the plan, and ensuring the plan is being properly administered.

To maintain your membership in the Death Benefit Plan, you must maintain your membership in the VAFR and stay current in the payment of your assessment fees. As stated earlier, the membership of VAFR consists of the membership of all agency members, VAFR Individual members, VAFR Life members, and AVAVRS members. Should you find yourself in the unfortunate position of losing your VAFR membership due to your agency disbanding, being dismissed from the VAFR, or deciding to cancel its membership in the VAFR, you will now be given a six (6) month grace period to allow you time to re-establish membership in the VAFR by either joining another VAFR or AVAVRS member agency or becoming a VAFR Individual member.

For the first time since the establishment of the Death Benefit Plan in 1984, the new member fee and the assessment fee have increased. The new member fee has been increased from \$3.00 to \$6.00. The assessment fee has increased from \$0.50 to \$0.75. Also, along with the fee changes, the billing cycle for the assessment fees has changed from a quarterly basis to a semi-annual basis. Assessments fees for deaths that occur in the months of October through March will be billed in April. Assessments fees for deaths that occur in the months of April through September will be billed in October.

Another change is the addition of twelve months plan membership being required prior to death to be eligible to receive plan benefits, however this requirement may be waived in the case of an accidental death.

With the increase to the assessment fee and to ensure benefit payments do not exceed assessment fees to be collected, the benefit payout schedule has been revised and adjusted. As a result, based on the current membership size, the current death benefit payment is \$1,250.00.

All the forms for the Death Benefit Plan have been revised and include detailed instructions. These are all posted on the VAFR website.

If you or your agency has any questions or would like more information about the Death Benefit Plan, please contact Greg Burton, Death Benefit Plan Committee Chair, at emt4crs@yahoo.com or contact the VAFR office.