Group Life Insurance Beneficiary Designation FAQs

These are commonly asked questions about beneficiary designations under the Group Life Insurance Policy issued by Standard Insurance Company (The Standard). The Standard administers claims for life insurance benefits in accordance with the Group Policy terms and makes the ultimate decision on claim payments. The Group Policy terms supersede any discrepancy between these FAQs and the Group Policy. Please refer to your Group Life Insurance Certificate and Summary Plan Description or Certificate for the policy terms.

These FAQs are for informational purposes and do not serve as legal advice. As with any other legal matter, The Standard recommends that you consult with your legal advisor.



Can I name more than one person as my beneficiary?

Yes. You may name as many persons as you wish. The beneficiary designation form typically allows room for you to name the number of beneficiaries you want and the percentage of the life insurance benefits you want to leave for each beneficiary. If you do need more room, remember to sign and date any additional designations that you attach to the form.

Why should I name a beneficiary for my life insurance?

If you do not name a beneficiary, The Standard will pay the life insurance benefits according to the policy order. Typically, that means your surviving spouse would be paid the benefits as the first person listed in the order; if none, then the benefits would 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, unless you have named a contingent beneficiary.

What is a contingent beneficiary?

A contingent beneficiary is the person you may name to receive your life insurance benefits if your primary beneficiary is no longer living at the time of your death. If you do not name a contingent beneficiary and your designated beneficiary is no longer living at the time of your death, then The Standard typically will pay the life insurance benefits according to the policy order, as described above.

Do I have to name my spouse as beneficiary?

No. The Group Policy is written to allow you to designate anyone you want as your beneficiary.

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Do I have to name my spouse as beneficiary for a portion of my life benefits?

No. The Group Policy is written 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 live in a community property state and do not name my spouse as beneficiary for a portion of the benefits, can my spouse sue the named beneficiary to get a portion of the benefits?

If state law governs the Group Policy and you live in a community property state (Arizona, California, Idaho, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Washington or Wisconsin), your spouse may have a legal claim for a portion of the benefits under community property law. However, that would be an issue involving your spouse and the named beneficiary, to be decided by a court of law. The Standard will not decide whether a spouse who is not named as a beneficiary has a valid community property claim to the benefits. The Standard will pay your life benefits to your named beneficiary, unless a court order requires payment to someone else.

Can I name my ex-spouse as beneficiary?

If state law governs the Group Policy, in many states divorce (or annulment) automatically revokes a designation of your ex-spouse as a 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. In general, if state law revokes the designation of your ex-spouse, then The Standard cannot pay the benefits 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 benefits if my primary beneficiary designation is revoked by law?

If you named a contingent beneficiary, this beneficiary will receive your benefits. If you did not name a contingent beneficiary The Standard typically will pay the benefits according to the policy order as described above.

Can I designate my minor child or children to be my beneficiary?

Yes. However, when the life benefits are payable to your child who is under the age of majority (usually age 18 or 21, depending on state law), The Standard may place the funds in an interest-bearing account maintained by The Standard until your child reaches the age of majority. For a child under the age of majority, a court-appointed guardian of the child's estate may contact The Standard to collect the benefits.

If you wish to have your minor children receive your life benefits, you should consult with your legal advisor to determine the best way to accomplish this under the laws of your state of residence.

What if I have children aged 18, 15 and 10? Will they all get paid the benefits if I die?

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

If my will states that a relative (or other trusted individual) will be responsible for my minor child, who do I name as a beneficiary?

A will generally has no effect on who will receive life insurance benefits. The benefits can be paid to the individual named in your will only if that person is also named as your beneficiary or if he/she obtains legal guardianship of your child's estate.

Can I designate a relative (or other trusted individual) to receive life insurance benefits in trust for my minor children?

Yes, but the individual will need to obtain legal guardianship of your child's estate before The Standard can make payment.

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

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

Can the attorney in fact I name in my Power of Attorney complete my beneficiary designation form, and can he/she name him/herself as beneficiary?

A Power of Attorney must grant your attorney in fact specific authority, by the terms of the Power of Attorney document or applicable law, to make or change a beneficiary designation. Broad general grants of authority in a Power of Attorney often are not sufficient to make such a designation. If you have questions, consult your legal advisor.

Can I name a trust* as beneficiary?

Yes. However, if you name a trust as beneficiary, a valid trust must exist at the time of your death. If the trust was never established, is not in existence, or has been revoked by the time you die, then The Standard cannot honor that beneficiary designation and will be required to pay the benefits to a contingent beneficiary or under the policy order. You should consult your legal advisor as to how to establish a valid trust and determine if naming a trust as beneficiary is appropriate for your financial and estate-planning needs.

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

Typically, 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 typically are maintained by your benefits administration office. If so, you should request, complete and return beneficiary forms to that office.

* Trust definition: Generally, a trust is a written document under which money or other assets are transferred from one person (the grantor) to another person or institution such as a bank (the trustee), to be managed and used for the benefit of a third person (the beneficiary). There are two basic types of trusts: living (or inter vivos) trusts and testamentary trusts. Living trusts are created during the lifetime of the grantor. Life insurance proceeds which are distributed to a living trust will avoid probate. Testamentary trusts are drafted as part of a will and take effect after the death of the grantor. Proceeds distributed through a testamentary trust pass through the probate process after the grantor's death because the trust is included in the will.

This policy has exclusions, limitations, reduction of benefits, and terms under which the policy may be continued in force or terminated. Please contact your employer for additional information, including costs and complete details of coverage.

The Standard is a marketing name for StanCorp Financial Group, Inc. and subsidiaries. Insurance products are offered by Standard Insurance Company of Portland, Oregon in all states except New York. Product features and availability vary by state and are solely the responsibility of Standard Insurance Company.

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Assigning Beneficiaries FAQ
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