

**SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES TO
DOD 7000.14-R, VOLUME 7B, CHAPTER 52
“SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN - DEATH OF MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY/INACTIVE
DUTY TRAINING”**

Substantive revisions are denoted by a ★ preceding the section, paragraph, table or figure that includes the revision

PARAGRAPH	EXPLANATION OF CHANGE/REVISION	EFFECTIVE DATE
520402	This is an administrative change that corrects the reference in paragraph 520402.	Immediately

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CHAPTER 52

**SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN - DEATH OF MEMBER ON
ACTIVE DUTY/INACTIVE DUTY TRAINING**5201 AUTHORITY

Public Law 107-107, section 642, December 28, 2001, provided expanded and improved benefits under the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) program for qualified survivors of members whose death occurs in the line-of-duty while on active duty. Active duty is defined in 10 U.S.C. 101(d)(1). This includes members on active duty for annual training. Reserve members on active duty are included whether or not their orders specify a period of more than 30 days.

5202 ACTIVE DUTY DEATHS

SBP benefits under this section may be payable as provided in section [4601](#) of this regulation for a member who dies in the line-of-duty while on active duty. Limited benefits may be payable under this section when the death is not in the line-of-duty in the case of a member who is eligible to receive retired pay prior to the time of death. The status of such member is the same as those who met criteria for SBP annuity prior to September 10, 2001. On or after September 10, 2001, the following provisions apply.

520201. Death in Line-of-Duty. If the member was on active duty at the time of death and the death is in line-of-duty, then the death qualifies for SBP benefits under this section. See section 5204 for the annuity amount computation.

520202. Death is Not in Line-of-Duty. If the member is retirement eligible at the time of death while on active duty, then the SBP base amount is equal to the retired pay as if the member were retired for length of service under applicable law of the respective service of the deceased member. However, in the case of a death of a member who is not on active duty, or was on active duty but the death is determined to be not in the line-of-duty and the member is not eligible for retired pay, then the member's death does not qualify for SBP benefits. Also, see section 5204 on annuity amount computation.

5203 QUALIFIED ANNUITANTS

The annuity payment will be made based on the following priority.

520301. Former Spouse Based on the Court Order. The annuity is payable to a former spouse if the member is required by a court-order or spousal agreement or has made an election to provide such coverage. If there are multiple court-orders for former spouse elections, the court order with the earliest date will take precedence.

520302. Current Spouse. The annuity is payable to a surviving spouse unless the annuity is payable to a former spouse.

520303. Children. Children of the member when the former spouse is not eligible and either there is no surviving spouse or the surviving spouse later dies. The children are not qualified annuitants if there is a surviving spouse whose annuity is no longer payable as a result of remarriage under age 55. Also, see paragraph [440103](#) of this regulation.

520304. Insurable Interest and Others. A person with insurable interest or any other persons are not qualified to receive benefits under these provisions.

★5204 ANNUITY AMOUNT

The annuity is computed with a base amount equal to the amount of retired pay that would have been paid to the member had the member been retired on the date of death as follows:

520401. Qualified Death in the Line of Duty. The SBP base amount is equal to the retired pay as if the member retired with total (100 percent) disability or 75 percent of the appropriate retired pay base as prescribed in [10 U.S.C. 1201](#). However, for members who elected to receive the Career Status Bonus (see Volume 7A, section [6601](#) of this regulation) the SBP base amount will be computed using the Military Reform Act of 1986 (REDUX) method with the reduced cost-of-living-adjustment as prescribed in Title [10 U.S.C. 1401a](#)(b)(3). The annuity is normally computed at 55 percent reduced to 35 percent of the SBP base amount when the annuitant is age 62 or older. For members of the Reserve Components who die while serving on active duty on or after September 11, 2001, the retired pay base will be computed Title [10 U.S.C. 1407](#)(c)(3) as if the member had been entitled to basic pay for the 36 months preceding retirement or the entire period the member was a member of a uniformed service (if less than 36 months), regardless of whether the member served the entire period on active duty. No recomputed annuity benefits may be paid as a result of this computation for any period of entitlement that begins before November 1, 2004.

520402. Qualified Death Not in the Line-of-Duty. The SBP base amount will be computed as if the member retired for length of service based on the final basic pay or high-36 average applicable. However, for members who elected to receive the Career Status Bonus (see [Volume 7A](#), section 6601 of this regulation), the SBP base will be computed using the REDUX method with the reduced cost of living adjustment as prescribed in 10 U.S.C. 1401a(b)(3). The annuity is 55 percent and reduced to 35 percent when the annuitant is age 62 or older.

5205 SUPPLEMENTAL SBP (SSBP)

No SSBP benefits will be paid under these provisions to a surviving spouse or the former spouse of a member who dies while serving on active duty.

5206 LINE OF DUTY DETERMINATION

520601. Purpose. For the purpose of determining eligibility for SBP benefits, a member's death will generally be considered to have occurred in line-of-duty unless the death:

- A. Occurred while the member was not serving on active duty;
- B. Was the result of the member's own intentional misconduct or willful negligence; or
- C. Occurred during a period of unauthorized absence.

520602. Investigation to Determine the Cause of Death. The military services will conduct an investigation and make a written finding as to whether a member's death on or after September 10, 2001, was in the line-of-duty while the member was on active duty. The written finding must describe the circumstances under which the member died, and it must also address whether the death was caused by the member's own intentional misconduct or willful negligence, or whether the death occurred during a period of unauthorized absence.

5207 RESPONSIBILITIES

520701. Military Services. The military services must review the death of each member who died on active duty to ascertain whether the death was in the line-of-duty and whether there are any qualified survivors entitled to SBP annuity. The military services will inform the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) of their line-of-duty determinations using the DD Form 1300, "Report of Casualty;" Block 10 of the DD Form 261, "Report of Investigation Line of Duty and Misconduct Status;" or any other form authorized under individual Service regulations. However, all line-of-duty determinations must be supported by a written finding which describes the circumstances of death that support the line-of-duty determination.

520702. DFAS. DFAS does not require a copy of the written finding, only an official communication from the Service to indicate the Service's determination that the death is in the line-of-duty – YES or NO. Once DFAS receives the determination, DFAS will compute and pay SBP annuities to qualified survivors for qualified deaths.

5208 INACTIVE DUTY TRAINING DEATH

520801. Authority. Public Law 108-136, section 644, November 24, 2003, provides benefits under the Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP) for qualified annuitants of a Reserve Component member who dies from injuries or illness incurred or aggravated while performing inactive duty training and the death is determined to have occurred in the line-of-duty. This section applies to deaths that occur as a result of inactive duty training performed on or after September 10, 2001.

520802. Death in Line-of-Duty. On or after September 10, 2001, qualified survivors of a member who is not retirement eligible and dies from injuries or illness incurred or aggravated while performing inactive duty training and the death is determined to be in line-of-duty, may be eligible for RCSBP benefits under Title [10 U.S.C. 1448](#)(f)(1)(B).

520803. Death Not in Line-of-Duty. The death of a Reserve Component member who is **NOT** retirement eligible and whose death is determined to have occurred “**not in line-of-duty**”, does not qualify under this section.

520804. Qualified Annuitants. The annuity payment will be made based on the following priority.

A. Former Spouse by Court-Order. The annuity is payable to the former spouse if the member was required under a court-order or spousal agreement to provide an annuity to the former spouse upon becoming eligible to participate in the RCSBP or if the member has made an election to provide an annuity to the former spouse.

B. Current Spouse. The annuity is payable to the current surviving spouse unless the annuity is payable to the former spouse.

C. Children. Children of the member when the former spouse is not eligible and either there is no surviving spouse or the surviving spouse later dies. The children are not qualified annuitants if a surviving spouse loses entitlement to the annuity for a reason other than death. See paragraph [440103](#) of this regulation.

520805. Annuity Amount. The annuity payable for a death that occurred while performing inactive-duty training under this section is computed pursuant to [10 U.S.C. 1451](#)(c) (see [Table 46-1](#), Rule 10).

520806. Supplemental SBP (SSBP). No SSBP benefit is payable under this section to a surviving spouse or the former spouse of a member who dies while performing inactive-duty training.

520807. Line-of-Duty Determination. For the purpose of determining eligibility for SBP benefits under this section, a service member's death will be generally considered to be in line of duty unless:

A. The death occurred while the member was not serving on inactive duty training,

B. The death was the result of the member's own intentional misconduct or willful negligence, or

C. The death occurred from injuries or illness incurred or aggravated during a period of unauthorized absence.

520808. Responsibilities. The Military Services will make determination and a written finding as to whether a member's death occurred in the line-of-duty from injuries or illness incurred or aggravated while performing inactive-duty training on or after September 10, 2001. A written finding must describe the circumstances under which the member died, and it must also address whether the death was caused by the member's own intentional misconduct or willful negligence. Once DFAS receives the determination, DFAS will compute and pay the annuity to qualified survivors.

**SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN - DEATH OF MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY/INACTIVE
DUTY TRAINING**

5201 - AUTHORITY

ASD (FMP)(MPP) Memo, May 1, 2002

520401

Public Law 108-375, section 641, October 28, 2004
DUSD Memo, December 23, 2004

5208 - INACTIVE DUTY TRAINING DEATH

Public Law 108- 136, section 644,
November 24, 2003
DUSD (P&R) Memo, April 27, 2004