

When you join the IBEW Local 353 there are a lot of forms to fill out. Some of the forms are about joining the pension and benefits plans. Those forms ask about beneficiaries.

What is a Beneficiary?

A beneficiary is someone who receives the value of your pension and life insurance if you pass away. There are rules about who receives your pension, but not your life insurance.

You need to decide who your beneficiary should be. You have to think to yourself, who would suffer financially from your death? For your pension, if you die before retirement and have an eligible spouse, they will receive your death benefit. If you are receiving a joint and survivor pension and had an eligible spouse on your date of retirement and you die before them, they will be entitled to a survivor benefit from the pension plan (even if you no longer live with them and have a different spouse when you die).

Naming a beneficiary makes things a little easier for them, so that if something happened to you, they have some financial support. It's money provided to make sure that the financial hardship of your loss is partially covered.

It's important to name and update your beneficiaries so that your loved ones are supported when you are no longer here. No matter what stage of life of you are in, or how old you are, it's never too soon to plan for the unexpected. That means it's important to check and update your designated beneficiaries as your life changes. Make sure you're reviewing your beneficiaries throughout your career with the IBEW Local 353 and updating them when necessary.

If you're actively participating in the IBEW Local 353 Benefit Plan your designated beneficiary(ies) will receive a payment upon your death. You may name anyone you like as a beneficiary for your life insurance or retiree death benefit.

Things are a little different under your pension plan. If you pass away before your retirement, your eligible spouse will receive a death benefit from the pension plan. If you don't have an eligible spouse, the pension death benefit payment will be paid to your designated beneficiary. If you had neither an eligible spouse or a designated beneficiary, the death benefit would be payable to your estate.

If you pass away after you retire and you were receiving a joint and survivor pension, and you had an eligible spouse when you retired, they will be eligible to receive a spousal survivor benefit upon your death. This is true, even if you separate from your spouse during your retirement. If you get a new spouse after retirement, your new spouse will not be eligible for a spousal survivor benefit. If you didn't have a spouse when you retired, then any guaranteed portion of your pension that has not been paid to you, will be paid to your designated beneficiary or, if you did not designate a beneficiary, then it will be paid to your estate.

Under Ontario pension law, your "spouse" is the person with whom you are living who is:
(a) married to you, or (b) not married to you but has been living with you in a conjugal relationship for at least three years, or (c) not married to you but living with you in a relationship of some permanence if you are the parents of a child as defined in the *Family Law Act*.

Designating Your Beneficiaries

TEIBAS will identify and pay death benefits to your designated beneficiaries based on the signed forms we have on file. You can update your beneficiary at any time by using the change of beneficiary forms available on myteibas.com and teibas.com.

To update your beneficiary for your Group RRSP you can do so online at [My Canada Life at Work](http://MyCanadaLifeatWork) where you can review your personal information, select investments and designate a plan beneficiary for your Group RRSP. This will ensure your assets are paid to your named beneficiary instead of your estate, in the event of death. Adding or updating your beneficiary online is easy: • Sign on to mycanadalifeatwork.com • Select your initials at the top right of the screen and then select Your Profile • Select the Beneficiaries icon and update your primary and contingent beneficiaries as needed. If you have questions, you can call Canada Life at 1-800-724-3402.

If you don't have a spouse or children, it's still important to name a beneficiary. You could choose a close relative, a good friend, or a charity that's important to you.

For your pension, even if you have a spouse, you should add a contingent beneficiary. This is in case you and your spouse die at the same time (like in a car accident), or your spouse dies before you do, your contingent beneficiary will get your pension without it having to go through your estate and be subject to probate.

For your life insurance you can name anyone you wish as your beneficiary, and even name more than one person. If you name more than one person, benefits will be divided according to your instructions (your instructions must total 100% of the benefit). If no specific instructions are provided benefits will be distributed equally among your beneficiaries. If no beneficiary is named, or your beneficiary(ies) die(s) before you, benefits will be paid to your estate. If you wish to name a minor as a beneficiary, you will also need to appoint a trustee.

If you don't name a beneficiary at all, your life insurance and pension (unless you have an eligible spouse) will be paid to your estate and subject to probate and other taxes. You should review your beneficiary designates every year, and after major life events.

Avoiding conflicting documents

Remember to update your beneficiaries to match what is in your will. Your pension, benefit and life insurance forms are first filled out when you join the union. After that they don't often get revisited. But everyone's circumstances change over time, and your beneficiaries may need to change too. If your documents with TEIBAS aren't updated your life insurance and pension may not be paid out in accordance with your more current wishes, and even conflict.

TEIBAS Tip: Remember to always consult with a professional like an estate lawyer, tax advisor, and/or retain independent legal advice when it comes to decisions about your finances.

Questions? You can email us at members@teibas.com or call us at 416-637-6789, toll-free: 1-800-267-0602.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this document is not meant to convey legal or financial advice, but rather provide information. We have made every effort to make sure this information is accurate but if there is a difference between the information contained here and legal plan documents, the official plan documents will apply. Always consult your own legal or financial advisor.

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