

# MEMBER'S GUIDE TO ACCOUNT SETTLEMENT



# SUMMIT CREDIT UNION IS HERE TO HELP

We know this can be a challenging time for you and your family and it's natural to feel confused and overwhelmed as you deal with your loved one's financial affairs.

We're here to help you in every way possible. This booklet outlines the important details you need to know.

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## Notify Financial Institutions

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The first step in handling your loved one's financial affairs, is to notify each financial institution of their death.

### To notify Summit Credit Union:

Please call 608-243-5000 or 800-236-5560.

We will connect you with our Decedent Specialist who will review your loved one's accounts and look for the following:

- **Payable on Death (POD) beneficiaries.** These are assets that are turned over to a beneficiary upon a person's death, less any outstanding loans/fees.
- **Payment protection on loans.** This is insurance that pays for all or some portion of an outstanding loan.
- **Rights of survivorship accounts.** These are jointly owned accounts. Their assets are automatically transferred to the surviving person(s), less any outstanding loans/fees.

You'll typically hear from the Decedent Specialist within a few days of contacting Summit. At that time, they'll be able to share their findings and tell you which steps to take next.

## Contact Probate

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Probate is the process by which the court determines if a Will is authentic. Probate is designed to protect the family and to ensure that your loved one's intentions are honored and all debts and taxes are paid.

The court will use the Will to determine who is to be appointed executor of the estate—this is the person who carries out the terms of the Will. If there isn't a Will, the court will appoint a "personal representative," usually a spouse or relative, to act as executor. An attorney or financial institution may also be appointed as executor.

### *Are your loved one's assets subject to probate?*

To find out, consult an attorney.

**If they are,** go to probate court within a week to 10 days of the death. This may be a trying time for you, but it's best to settle these matters as quickly and accurately as possible. At this time, you'll file the Will if there is one.

**You might not have to go through the probate process** if your loved one's estate had accounts that were classified as "joint accounts with survivorship." In that case, those accounts will simply transfer to the other person(s) on the account.

## How long will the probate process take?

This can depend on a number of things including:

- How large and complex the deceased's estate is—a very large or complex estate could take months or years to settle
- State probate laws

### Information and documents you might need for probate:

- Deceased's full name and date of birth
- A certified copy of the death certificate
- A Will, if there is one
- A copy of the marriage certificate, if the deceased was your spouse. If the deceased was previously married, you will need to give this information to the court
- The name and addresses of all heirs, next of kin and beneficiaries
- A summary of the deceased's assets

For additional information about probate, please contact the following offices.

<b>Columbia County</b>	608-742-9636
<b>Dane County</b>	608-266-4331
<b>Dodge County</b>	920-386-3550
<b>Jefferson County</b>	920-674-7245
<b>Milwaukee County</b>	414-278-4444
<b>Racine County</b>	262-636-3137
<b>Rock County</b>	608-757-5635 or 608-757-5636
<b>Sauk County</b>	608-355-3226
<b>Waukesha County</b>	262-548-7468

## Estate Handling

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If you are the executor of your loved one's Will, it's very important to **keep the estate's finances separate from your own**. We recommend you open an estate account. This will help you avoid the tax, legal and family-related issues that can crop up all too easily during this process. To set up an Estate Account at Summit, you'll need the following:

- **Court documents designating an estate executor/administrator.** These are also known as Domiciliary Letters.
- **An Employer Identification Number (EIN) for the estate.** You can get this by filing form SS-4 with the IRS. You can find this form online at [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov) or by going to a U.S. Post Office or your local library. You can also call them at **800-829-1040**.

### Duties of Executor/Administrator\*

- Keep all interested persons informed of the status of the estate proceedings
- Complete the estate in a timely fashion
- Take possession of the assets (put in the estate account) and file an inventory, including date of death and values of all assets you have in your control

\*Wisconsin State Law Library. Personal Representative's Guide to Informal Estate Administration in Wisconsin document. Retrieved from [www.wicourts.gov/services/public/selfhelp/docs/probateguide.pdf](http://www.wicourts.gov/services/public/selfhelp/docs/probateguide.pdf)

- Give notice to creditors and interested persons by publication in the newspaper
- Manage assets—you may convert assets to cash, sell real estate, etc.
- Collect any income due to the decedent, like interest, dividends, rent, etc.
- Pay bills, settle proper claims or object to claims that are not appropriate
- Pay any taxes that are owed by the estate or decedent from the estate assets
- Complete final and fiduciary tax returns. File a closing certificate for fiduciaries obtained from the Department of Revenue
- Prepare a final Estate Account

## Account Handling

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It's important to settle your loved ones accounts as quickly as possible.

You'll need a certified copy of the death certificate to handle any of the following account issues.

### Savings and Checking Accounts

Here are the two critical things that will affect the steps you need to take now:

1. Was your loved one the only or primary member on the account, or was it a joint account?
2. Were there any automatic withdrawals or deposits going out of/into the account?

### Individual accounts

Until we receive a certified death certificate, Summit will continue reporting to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) under the deceased's Social Security Number (SSN), if they are listed as the primary member on the account(s). This could create problems for you with the IRS, so we recommend settling the account as quickly as you can.

Summit will block automatic withdrawals out of this account as soon as a death certificate is received. It is critical to follow up with these companies and organizations so that you don't incur fees or charges.

- Notify any companies or organizations that are debiting from your loved one's accounts. Let them know your loved one has passed and to stop debiting the account. Although a phone call can be a good first step to make sure you're providing all the documents and information the company needs, you should also make the request in writing and save a copy of the letter.

Summit will take care of it for you. Once we've been notified of your loved one's death, we'll automatically close any debit cards in their name.

## Joint Accounts

If you are joint on an account you'll need to decide if you want to close or keep the account.

Until the account is closed:

- Debit transactions will continue to come out of the account
- A joint account holder is still able to use their debit card to access the account
- A joint owner can continue to write checks

## Government Payments

If your loved one was receiving government payments by direct deposit from a federal paying agency (such as Social Security, Veteran's Administration, DFAS, or Civil Service), you must notify them of the death as soon as possible.

Summit will return any government payments made after the date of death in the decedent's Social Security Number. This can be a complicated and challenging process so it's better to avoid it by quickly contacting the appropriate agencies.

### **Social Security Administration**

800-772-1213

### **Dept. of Veteran's Affairs**

800-827-1000

### **Civil Service**

888-767-6738

## Survivor Benefits

Contact the Social Security Administration as soon as possible to see if there are any survivor benefits. It can take up to 90 days to process a claim. To do that you'll need:

- A certified copy of the death certificate
- The Social Security Number (SSN) of the deceased
- The name of the deceased's employer
- The deceased's most recent W-2 forms or self-employment tax return showing earnings in the year of his or her death
- A certified or original birth certificate of the spouse and minor children
- Divorce papers if the divorced spouse is applying for benefits

## Certificates and Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs)

Certificates will continue to accrue dividends, depending on the type of ownership and decisions made about disbursing them.

- If the account is individually held: the funds will be disbursed to the estate or the beneficiary that the deceased specified.
- If the account is held jointly with rights of survivorship: Summit's Decedent Specialist will determine if the account can be retitled to the survivor, or if you need to establish a new account. If a new account is needed, the certificate will be opened with the same dividend rate and maturity date as the original.

IRAs are handled separately from other accounts. Once a copy of the death certificate is received:

- Summit will determine who the account beneficiaries are
- Summit will file a claim with the IRA plan administrator
- The plan will send each beneficiary a separate letter and form to choose payment options

## Consumer Loans

The first step will be to determine whether there's a payment protection plan on the loan. This pays off all or a portion of the loan.

- If there is payment protection, provide a copy of the death certificate and Summit will file a claim on the loan.

Once the claim is filed, it usually takes about three weeks for the process to be completed and the loan to be paid off.

- If there is no payment protection (or payment protection does not pay off the balance), the co-borrower/cosigner or the member's estate will be responsible for the balance.

Summit has the right to place a hold on any depository accounts also held in the decedent's name with Summit that have been pledged as security for any loan. Summit may apply the proceeds of any depository account to any loan in accordance with the membership agreement, terms of the loan and federal and state law.

## Credit Cards

What happens next depends on whether this was an individual or joint account.

### Individual Cards

In this case, the account is closed as soon as Summit is notified of the death – even if there were authorized signers on the account.

- Any outstanding balance is the responsibility of the member's estate
- Interest will stop accruing once we're notified of the death
- You should destroy all cards to this account immediately

### Joint Cards

It's up to the joint owner to decide whether to keep the account open or close it.

- Any joint cardholder may continue to use his or her card
- You must destroy any cards in the name of the decedent
- The remaining account balance becomes the responsibility of the joint cardholder
- Summit will reissue the card in the surviving joint card holder's name after receiving a copy of the death certificate

## Payable on Death (POD) Accounts

POD accounts are set up to be immediately payable to the person named on the account, upon the owner's death. This type of account does not have to go through probate, so they're an easy way to give beneficiaries access to money.

That said, the named person(s) won't necessarily get all the POD account assets immediately.

**Payout will depend on:**

- Individual or joint accounts. If the account was joint, it won't be paid out until all of the account owners listed have died.
- Outstanding loan obligations. These will be paid first and then the balance will be paid to the beneficiaries.

**To receive a payout:**

Once the Decedent Specialist determines that there is a payout and who the beneficiaries are, Summit can disburse funds.

**Please bring the following with you:**

- A certified copy of the death certificate
- A government-issued form of identification for each beneficiary

**What if the POD account is part of a trust?**

A trust account is established in the name of a legal trust and managed by the trustee and/or co-trustee as outlined in the trust agreement. Summit Credit Union does not administer trusts. We can't pay out directly to beneficiaries of the trust.

Once all initial trustees have passed, the successor trustee will need to provide an updated trust certification and death certificates for all initial trustees, so they can take over managing the trust per the trust agreement.

## Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at **608-243-5000** or **800-236-5560**, email us at **memberservice@summitcreditunion.com**, or stop by any branch.

We are here to help you in every way possible during this difficult time



Insured by NCUA





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