



Pension Airwaves

Episode 14 - Beneficiaries (*Transcript*)

Hi there and thanks for tuning in to this short episode about beneficiaries in the Staff Pension Plan. Today, we'll touch on why it's important for all pension plan members to designate, or "name" a beneficiary, and to periodically review this designation throughout your career. We'll also recommend where you can find more learning resources to guide you on how to name a beneficiary, if you haven't already.

When you are hired in an eligible staff position, and you become a member of the UBC Staff Pension Plan, you are entitled to a pension benefit from the Plan right away. That means that whether you're a member for a day, a month, a year, 10 years, or for your entire career... you're accruing a benefit with the Plan. As you can see on your Annual Statements, it can really amount to a valuable benefit over time, especially after even just a few years of contributing.

This pension benefit, regardless of the value, is considered an asset. Other assets you might have, could include things like your house, car, family heirlooms, savings accounts, other items of high value, and... the list goes on. If you're single (ie. you don't have a spouse), then your pension benefit would be considered a personal asset, and if you're married (ie. you have a spouse) then it would be considered a family asset - we'll get more into the difference in just a moment.

Part of the responsibility of having personal or family assets, is to consider how these assets should be distributed in the event that you pass away, and to complete the necessary legal documents in advance of your passing. These documents are intended to clearly declare those wishes to the right people who can then honour those wishes on your behalf. This is part of estate planning, and we understand that it's not easy to think about what will happen to your assets when you pass away. But it's an important thing to consider for your own peace of mind, for your family's peace of mind, and it's something that everyone should consider, regardless of your age, your job, your marital status, or health status.

There are various laws in British Columbia that dictate how your stuff is dealt with when you pass away. Specifically, pension plans follow the laws outlined within the BC Pension Benefit Standards Act, or BC PBSA, and these laws require us to do our best to obtain beneficiary designations from members.

So what is a beneficiary?

Basically, a beneficiary is someone who inherits a benefit, or receives something of value when someone else passes away, based on a legal arrangement that's been made beforehand - for example, a legal will, or a beneficiary designation form. A beneficiary can be a person, an organization, a charity, or another entity, and you can name more than one beneficiary if you would like. If you have a spouse, then you **must** formally name your spouse as your primary beneficiary - they have a legal entitlement to your pension benefit, unless they've signed a legal waiver that essentially gives up their entitlement to that benefit. You can then name a secondary beneficiary if you like, in the event that both you and your spouse pass away. If you do not have a spouse, then you can name any beneficiary or combination of beneficiaries that you choose.

If you do not formally name a beneficiary with the Staff Pension Plan, then technically your benefit goes to your estate by default. However, when you choose to take the default route through inaction, it can be a much longer, more costly, more involved process for the Plan to pay your benefit to your estate. Your assets

may need to go through the probate process, which is expensive, time consuming and on public record. Your legal marital status may need to be investigated. And, this process can cause confusion, distress and disputes among family members during an already difficult time.

The main takeaway here is: if you take the time to formally name your beneficiary with the Plan, and periodically review your designation, you can simplify and expedite this process, which will hopefully bring you and your family peace of mind. And it honestly only takes a few moments.

Active Plan members can simply go into Workday. There's a slightly different process for brand new staff who are going through their onboarding process, versus current staff who have been here for a while already. We'll link to those Knowledge Base Articles in the notes below this episode and in the accompanying transcript [see *blue box below*]. These articles are super helpful and they show you step by step on how to do this in Workday.

For **UBC Workday**, visit isc.ubc.ca and then search for one of the below articles in the Workday Knowledge Base:

- *Enroll in Benefits & Pension* (for new Active members) - [KB0016796](#)
- *Change Beneficiaries* (for current Active members) - [KB0016820](#)

Active members can then check myPension in 4-6 weeks to make sure that their correct beneficiary is listed – just log into myPension with your CWL, and then select Beneficiaries.

Deferred and Retired Plan members can change their beneficiaries by submitting a separate *Beneficiary Designation Form* to the Pension Administration Office. These forms are available on the SPP website, but again, we'll provide links to where you can find these forms in the accompanying transcript [see *blue box below*].

Visit the **SPP Website** at staff.pensions.ubc.ca/resources/forms > General Forms

- *SPP Beneficiary Designation Form* (for Deferred members)
- *Post-Retirement Beneficiary Designation Form* (for Retired members)

Deferred and Retired Plan members can also double check their beneficiary listed in myPension using their CWL login, but if you forget your CWL, you can contact UBC IT and they will retrieve it for you, or you can contact us at the UBC Pension Administration Office.

If you need more information or more guidance with how to designate your beneficiary in the Staff Pension Plan, we have other resources on the SPP website, under Forms & Resources. Check out our [video](#) and our [info sheet](#) that talk about designating beneficiaries in the Plan. You can also reach out to SPP Member Services anytime to discuss.

This content has been compiled by the UBC Pension Administration Office for educational purposes. If there is any inconsistency between the contents of this communication and the pension plan documents or legislation, the plan documents and legislation will prevail. Updated August 2023.

If you have questions about the Pension Airwaves podcast, you can reach out to pension.comms@ubc.ca, or visit staff.pensions.ubc.ca/podcast.

If you have questions about the UBC Staff Pension Plan or your personal situation, you can reach out to SPP Member Services at spp@hr.ubc.ca, or visit staff.pensions.ubc.ca/contact.