



When a Member Falls Ill or Passes Away

The following is important information to help guide NYSTRS members and their loved ones through difficult times.

Active Member

◆ If an active member is critically ill or facing a significant surgery:

The member may file for disability protection. See our video “Filing for Disability Protection: What you Need to Know” on the Benefits > Disability Retirement page at NYSTRS.org. The member may file a disability retirement application:

- a. Online using their MyNYSTRS account (notary not needed); OR
- b. By completing and filing pages 1, 2 and 7 of the *Disability Retirement Application Package*, available on the Forms page at NYSTRS.org (application may be faxed; notary needed).

If the member passes away from the condition noted on the disability retirement application, the beneficiary(ies) may receive the Largest Non-Declining Lump Sum benefit and 50% of the member’s Paragraph 2 Death Benefit. This is typically more than the beneficiary would receive for an In-Service Death Benefit.

◆ If an active member passes away*:

Please notify NYSTRS by calling (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6110.

The member’s named beneficiary(ies) will receive the eligible member’s In-Service Death Benefit and the member’s contributions balance.

Retired Member

◆ If a retired member passes away*:

The beneficiary should call NYSTRS at (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6140 to report the death. This will ensure the beneficiary(ies) receives any promised benefits in a timely manner. An original or certified copy of the death certificate will need to be submitted to NYSTRS. The beneficiary should also contact the retiree’s:

- Former employer, which may have provided health insurance.
- Applicable union to collect on life insurance policy(ies) that might be in effect.
 - New York State United Teachers: (800) 626-8101
 - United University Professionals: (800) 342-4206
 - School Administrators Association of New York: (518) 782-0600

Power of Attorney

Active and retired members may authorize an agent to act on their behalf regarding NYSTRS benefit transactions (e.g., filing for retirement or disability protection).

- Members who already have a properly executed Power of Attorney document may submit it to NYSTRS’ Legal Department at the address shown below for review.
- Members who do not have a Power of Attorney may use NYSTRS’ *Special Durable Power of Attorney Form*, available on the Forms page at NYSTRS.org.

If you have questions about Powers of Attorney, contact NYSTRS at (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6250.

**Funeral directors typically report deaths to the Social Security Administration. However, next of kin should confirm notification occurred. If it did not, it is the family’s responsibility to do so.*

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