

## Handling the Finances of a Deceased Person

Suffolk Federal understands that this is a difficult and overwhelming time for you and your family. We will do our best to assist you through the difficult and challenging task of settling your loved one's financial business. Suffolk Federal cannot provide legal counsel or advice and the following is for informational purposes only. If you are the Executor or Administrator of the Estate, please consult with an attorney, financial adviser or probate court official for specific concerns or questions regarding your responsibilities, the probate process or estate settlement.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

#### **Q: What do I need to provide to Suffolk Federal when reporting a death?**

A: Suffolk Federal requires an original death certificate. A member service representative will make a copy of the certificate for our records. If you are the appointed Executor or Administrator of the Estate, please provide Suffolk Federal with original Letters of Testamentary or Letters of Administration.

#### **Q: What agencies should I notify of a loved one's death?**

A: The three credit reporting agencies (to minimize the risk of identity theft).

A: Social Security Administration. In most cases, the funeral director will report the person's death to the Social Security Administration; otherwise, the surviving spouse or the representative of the estate should notify the administration.

A: Employers paying out pension benefits

A: Investment broker

A: Any entity that is depositing benefits into the deceased account

#### **Q: What is the difference between Letters of Testamentary and Letters of Administrations?**

A: Letters of Testamentary – Formal document with seal issued by the court of proper jurisdiction empowering the person responsible for carrying out the instructions in a will to undertake his/her duties, specifically, the Executor/Executrix.

A: Letters of Administration – Formal document with seal issued by the court of proper jurisdiction appointing person or entity as administrator of the estate. These Letters are issued when the decedent has died without a will or when the names executor under the will is not available or competent to serve.

#### **Q: If I have a Power of Attorney, am I allowed to access or receive information on the affected membership?**

A: No. All Power of Attorney rights are revoked once the member has passed, unless you are a joint account holder or have been appointed the executor or personal representative of the estate.

**Q: How soon should I notify Suffolk Federal?**

A: As soon as possible, even though you have not received a death certificate. It is important to notify Suffolk Federal so the membership can be coded as deceased and we can address any reclamation(s) that need to be returned.

**Q: Joint owner would like to conduct business as usual by using his/her debit card and write checks on a joint account with a deceased member?**

A: Yes, they can do so as long as funds are available and are not part of potential reclamations for the decedent.

**Q: How long will a deceased member's membership remain open?**

A: This will vary from member to member. Once all transactions have been settled and all required documents have been received, then we will close the membership. Basic accounts with no loans or IRA's, and if reclamations have been returned; then the membership can be closed in approximately 30 days (pending other credit/debits transactions).

**Q: Executor/Administrator of the Estate wants to have access to the decedent's account information? Can they use the accounts as a regular member would?**

A: Yes. The Executor/Administrator can obtain any account information; as long as the proper documentation is on file and it has been determined they have the authority.

A: No. The Executor/Administrator cannot use the account (s) as a normal member would. They would have to set up an Estate account at another financial institution (Suffolk Federal does not offer Estate Accounts) in order for them to conduct business.

**Q: Member passed away and has an IRA or IRA CD?**

A: Suffolk Federal requires an original death certificate and a Suffolk Federal Member Service Representative will make a copy and forward the certificate to the Decedent Settlement Department. Once all the required documentation is received, Suffolk Federal will file a claim with our IRA administrator. The designated beneficiaries can expect to receive documentation once the claim is filed.

**Q: If I bring in my family member's Last Will and Testament will Suffolk Federal take it as proof of me being that heir to the will?**

A: No. Suffolk Federal requires Letters of Testamentary or Administrations issued from the Surrogates Court before any information is disclosed.

**Q: The decedent had a joint account, but the surviving member wants to keep the membership?**

A: Yes. The surviving member can keep the membership. However, if the decedent is the primary, then the surviving individual needs to be listed as primary, and titles of ownership will need to be switched. If the surviving family member is adding additional joint parties or ITF, then all associated parties will be required to sign an account change card.

**Q: The social security number on the membership does not match the social security number on the verified copy of the death certificate?**

A: Unfortunately, this is common. If Suffolk Federal's records do not match the Social Security number referenced on the death certificate, then we would require the Social Security Card of the decedent.

Alternatively, if the death certificate is incorrect, then the family member will need to obtain an "amended" certificate from the registrar's office from the town in which the member passed away. Note: The funeral home could be another option for guidance.

**Q: Do we require an original death certificate on a joint account?**

A: Yes. We require an original death certificates on all members. However, Suffolk Federal does not retain the original certificate. A staff member will verify the certificate is an original certificate and we will retain a photo copy for our records. Original documents help to minimize identity theft.

**Q: How are Trust Accounts handled?**

A: Suffolk Federal requires a copy of the Trust documents, original death certificates, and contact information of the Surviving Trustee's and/or Successor Trustee's (if any). If there is no other Trustee's then Suffolk Federal requires contact information of the attorney whom is handling the Trust of the decedent.

**Q: How are Certificates of Deposit handled?**

A: If the deceased member has certificates of deposits with Suffolk Federal, the decedent could have designated beneficiaries for each Certificate of Deposit. We recommend that you go to a local Suffolk Federal branch with original death certificate and, if required, Letters of Testamentary and/or Administration before we can disclose detailed information regarding the certificate of deposits.

## **CONSUMER LOANS & CREDIT CARDS**

### **Consumer Loans:**

Suffolk Federal will determine if the member had voluntary payment protection on their Suffolk Federal loan(s). Suffolk Federal will submit a life claim, and once credit claim payment is received the proceeds will be applied to the decedent loan, as of date of death. Deposit account balance(s) may also be applied to the outstanding loan balance. Surviving borrower(s) or the member's estate is responsible for repaying any outstanding loan balances.

**Q: I'm going through my deceased family members bank statements and I see they have a loan/credit card with Suffolk Federal? What do I do?**

A: To start the deceased settlement process, Suffolk Federal will need to see an original death certificate, and must be provided with all the contact information for the person who will be handling the decedent's financial matters. If an estate is being set up then we will need contact information for the Executor/Administrator of the estate and the Attorney handling the estate. Once received all the documentation will be forwarded to Suffolk Federal's legal counsel, who in turn will contact the individual handling the financial affairs of the decedent. If the decedent loan(s) was covered through CUNA Life Insurance, (this would have been set up by the decedent

prior to their death) Suffolk Federal will submit a Life Claim and the credit proceeds would be applied to the loan(s).

**Q: I am a co-borrower on a loan and the other party has passed away. Am I still responsible in paying?**

A: Yes. Continue to make payments on the loan and provide Suffolk Federal with an original death certificate. Also, you have the option to apply for a new loan solely in your name, or you can leave the existing loan as is.

**Q: Can Suffolk Federal use the funds in the decedents opened accounts to repay the loan?**

A: Yes. By law financial institutions have the right to the funds in any account the decedent was the primary account holder and Suffolk Federal may use the funds towards repayment of the loans the decedent held with Suffolk Federal.

**Q: My family member has a vehicle loan with Suffolk Federal with no co-borrowers? What happens to the vehicle?**

A: Once Suffolk Federal receives notification of the member passing, we will require an original death certificate. The Decedent Settlement Department would speak to the family of the decedent to inquire as to their intentions with the vehicle. If the decision is to keep the vehicle, Suffolk Federal will require payment in full. Once the loan is paid Suffolk Federal will issue a lien release. Should the family decide to surrender the vehicle, Suffolk Federal will send out a third party vehicle recovery agent to pick up the vehicle.

**Q: What will happen regarding a Personal Line of Credit or a Home Equity Line of Credit?**

A: If the decedent was the sole owner, Suffolk Federal will remove the limit to prevent further disbursements. If there is a co-borrower, the co-borrower will continue to use the credit limit and will be responsible for paying the outstanding balance.

#### **Credit Cards:**

**Q: I am a co borrower/cardholder on the decedent's VISA account, can I continue to use the card?**

A: Yes. As a borrower you are responsible to repay any unpaid balances. You are also responsible for any charges made after the date of death. Additionally, it is recommended that you either close the VISA account or transfer the account to your own name.

**Q: What should I do with the decedent's VISA card if he/she was the sole borrower?**

A: Please destroy the card or return the card to Suffolk Federal. Any card tied to the affected account will be deactivated.

**Q: I am an authorized card user on the decedent's VISA account. Can I continue to use the card?**

A: No. Unfortunately you are not authorized to use the credit card after the card holder's death. You must either destroy or return the card to Suffolk Federal.