



RRB District Office Role in SS Payments

March 13, 2007

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board
844 North Rush Street
Chicago Illinois, 60611-2092

Phone: (312) 751-7139
TTY: (312) 751-4701
Web: <http://www.rrb.gov>

715.5 General

In addition to offering assistance to current and potential railroad beneficiaries, RRB district offices assist SS beneficiaries whose SS benefits are being paid by the RRB. The beneficiaries can request status of initial and post-entitlement awards, report post-entitlement events and request counseling on the advantages of filing for SS benefits.

715.10 Explaining Advantages/Disadvantages Of Filing For SS Benefits

Under the 1974 Railroad Retirement Act (RRA), the advantages derived from filing for SS benefits are less than they were under the 1937 RRA. Explain the advantages or disadvantages of filing for SS benefits. Do not discourage beneficiaries from filing for SS benefits. Remember, each individual has the right to file for SS benefits whether it is advantageous or not. You may explain the effects of filing/not filing for social security benefits, but the decision to file or not file must be made by the beneficiary.

The following general guidelines will help you counsel individuals regarding the effect of SS benefits on an RR annuity.

715.10.1 Employee and Spouse

For the retired railroad employee and his wife, filing for SS benefits will usually cause no change in the total retirement income. The receipt of SS benefits generally causes 100% offset in tier I for the SS benefit without providing an increase in total monies paid.

There are certain instances in which it is to the employee's or spouse's advantage to file an application for SS benefits:

- A. The SS benefit exceeds the tier I amount - The RR tier I would be reduced to zero, but the excess SS amount would produce more total retirement income.
- B. There are children or other auxiliary beneficiaries entitled to SS benefits on any wage record - Children or other auxiliaries cannot receive benefits under the RRA. If these beneficiaries receive SS benefits, there is no corresponding offset in RR annuities. This would increase total retirement income.
- C. Long Island Railroad pension affected - All former employees of the Long Island Railroad should be encouraged to file for social security benefits if it appears they are eligible. Long Island Railroad pensions are reduced by the amount of the railroad retirement annuity when the retiree attains age 65. By receiving a social



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security benefit, the annuitant will lower the amount of the tier I and thus cause a lesser amount to be deducted from his Long Island Railroad pension.

If, however, both a husband and wife are eligible for employee and spouse annuities in addition to the Long Island pension, the various offsets and reductions should be carefully considered before the annuitants decide which options will provide the largest total family income.

- D. Excess earnings - For cases involving excess earnings, see the chart in FOM-I-1120.60 to determine the advantage or disadvantage that would apply by filing for SS benefits.

NOTE: The advantages listed in FOM 715.10.1A. through D. would not apply if both the employee and spouse are RR employees, each entitled to an employee and a spouse annuity. There would not be a full restoration of the employee annuity reduction in each spouse annuity tier II, thus reducing total retirement income.

715.10.2 Survivor Annuitants

In general, a survivor annuitant will not lose money by filing for SS benefits. The survivor tier I is reduced by the amount of the SS benefit; total income remains the same. If, however, the SS benefit exceeds the tier I amount, an increase in total income results.

A widow(er) will lose money by filing for SS benefits if (s)he is under age 70 and plans to work for wages over the yearly exempt amount. If excess earnings are involved, tier I is reduced by the amount of the SS benefit to which (s)he is entitled - not by the benefit payable. The result is a decrease in total income.

715.15 Accepting And Reporting SS Cancellation/Waiver Requests

715.15.1 Cancellation Requests

Field Office Procedure: If a railroad beneficiary who is receiving an SS benefit through the RRB comes to your office to cancel the SS application, do not send him to SSA. Attempt to explain the effect of withdrawal, if any, on his railroad retirement annuity, if any. If the beneficiary still wishes to cancel his SS application, accept and send a statement to the Office of Programs/Operations.

Headquarters Operations Procedure: In all cases, the Office of Programs/Operations (OP/Operations) will forward the beneficiary's statement to the appropriate SSA PSC. A breakdown of RR rates with and without SS benefit entitlement will be furnished to SSA



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if the beneficiary is entitled to both. The SS benefit and/or the RR annuity will be handled as follows:

- A. If the SS benefit has not been paid, OP/Operations will not process the SS payment; or
- B. If the SS benefit has been paid and there is no RR annuity or the RR annuity was not adjusted, the SS benefit will be suspended; or
- C. If the SS benefit has been paid and the RR annuity was adjusted, both benefits will remain in payment status.

EXCEPTION: If excess earnings are involved, the SS benefit will be suspended.

SSA will contact the beneficiary directly if further information is required. Upon receipt of the cancellation approval from SSA, OP/Operations will take action to terminate the SS benefit if still in payment status and adjust any RR annuity to the correct rate.

715.15.2 Waiver Requests

Field Office Procedure: An annuitant may choose to waive payment of SS benefits to avoid the reduction in his annuity. Field offices should advise individuals who are considering waiving the payment of a SS benefit to contact their local SSA field office. However, if the annuitant is insistent, field offices should accept the waiver statement or Form SSA-149 and forward it to Operations: Retirement Benefits Division or Survivor Benefits Division, as appropriate. Before furnishing any advice that will affect the payment of benefits, the field office should thoroughly question the annuitant to ensure all of the facts of the case are known and that the waiver of SS benefits would be appropriate.

Waiver of social security benefits can be most advantageous for dual annuitants because SS benefits that have been waived are not considered "payable" and consequently, do not cause a reduction in Tier I benefits.

The waiver of an SS benefit must be on Form SSA-149 or in the form of a written statement that clearly states the annuitant's desire to waive the SS benefit. The statement must be signed and dated by the annuitant. It should include both the RRB and SSA claim numbers as well as the date the annuitant is requesting the waiver to be effective. Any subsequent withdrawal of the waiver must be done in writing and will only be effective with the month the request for withdrawal is signed.

Headquarters Operations Procedure: In all cases, Operations: Retirement Benefits Division or Survivor Benefits Division will forward (fax if possible) the beneficiary's



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statement or Form SSA-149 to the appropriate SSA PC. A breakdown of RR rates with and without SS benefit entitlement will be furnished to SSA. The SS benefit and/or the RR annuity will be handled as follows:

- A. If the SS benefit has not been paid, Operations will NOT process the SS payment; or
- B. If the SS benefit has been paid and there is no RR annuity or the RR annuity was not adjusted, SS benefits will NOT be suspended until notification is received from SSA.
- C. If the SS benefit has been paid and the RR annuity was adjusted, both benefits will remain in payment status until SSA approves or denies the waiver.

EXCEPTION: If excess earnings are involved, the SS benefit will be suspended.

Upon notification of the waiver approval from SSA, Operations: Retirement Benefits Division or Survivor Benefits Division will take appropriate action to suspend the SS benefit and adjust any RR annuity to the correct rate.

If further information is needed, SSA will contact the beneficiary directly.

715.20 Accepting Post-Entitlement Reports

715.20.1 SSA District Office Role

The SSA district offices are directed to assist beneficiaries who come to them with reports of post-entitlement events or non-receipt of checks issued through the RRB. Reports of post-entitlement events are sent to the appropriate PSC; non-receipt of check statements are sent to the appropriate RRB district office after the SSA office has determined through the MBR that the beneficiary is in current payment status.

715.20.2 RRB District Office Role

Always accept post-entitlement reports or non-receipt of check statements. Do not refer the beneficiary back to SSA.

715.25 How To Report Post-Entitlement Events

715.25.1 Non-Receipt of Payments

Process reports of non-receipt according to the instructions in section 115.30.



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715.25.2 Change of Address

Use the FAST-COA system to change the address for an SS beneficiary whenever possible. If you are unable to process the change on FAST-COA, contact RVA-BSU for assistance.

715.25.3 Termination or Suspension Events

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) is not authorized to suspend or terminate social security (SS) benefits without permission from the Social Security Administration (SSA), unless the termination is due to the beneficiary's death. Suspension or termination of SS benefits for reasons other than death will be done by Headquarters staff, after receiving SSA's permission to do so.

You may accept any report from an SS beneficiary whose benefits are being paid by the RRB regarding events such as: excess earnings, marriage, divorced spouse remarries, students ceasing full-time attendance, etc. Take a statement from the beneficiary if possible. Send that statement or your memorandum to the Office of Programs/Operations. You will not be responsible for establishing controls or policing for students or representative payees. Necessary investigation is done by SSA.

715.30 Accepting Refund Of SS Payments

There will be occasions when an SS beneficiary or his representative will make a refund of social security benefits to your office. This may happen when SSA sends an overpayment letter and the beneficiary wishes to refund the overpayment directly to the RRB. You may accept a refund of SS benefits when the RRB is or has been paying the SS benefit. Do not accept a refund of SS benefits if SSA is making payment or, if the refund is for repayment of payments issued after the death of the beneficiary (also see section 115.41).

When accepting these refunds, be sure the check or money order is made payable to the Railroad Retirement Board, not the Social Security Administration. Also, the refund should bear the RR employee's surname and the railroad claim number.

There may be instances when an individual brings or sends the refund already made out to the Social Security Administration. BFO/DRD will not accept this refund since the RRB cannot endorse it. Explain this to the individual and return the refund to him.

When you accept a refund, complete Form G-27 (Receipt of Remittance) according to existing instructions. Give the original Form G-27 to the person making the refund; forward two copies with the refund to the Lockbox.



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715.35 Tracing Initial SS Payments

715.35.1 SSA District Office Handling

Before a beneficiary receives the initial SS award letter, Form Letter SSA-30 (see exhibit 16), the Social Security Administration (SSA) district office should be dealt with directly in requesting status of the SS benefit payment. According to the SSA Claims Manual, the SSA district office is to be sure that the PSC has completed the processing of the beneficiary's claim before an inquiry is sent to the RRB. The SSA district office does this by checking the Master Beneficiary Record (MBR).

The MBR contains a code called Ledger Account File (LAF). This code indicates the payment status of the claim. LAF code E means that the claim was transmitted to the RRB for payment. See Appendix B of FOM-I-15 for other SSA LAF code descriptions.

If the MBR indicates that the claim was set up for transmission to the RRB, the district office will assist the inquirer in directing a communication directly to the RRB district office. If the PSC has not completed processing of the claim, the district office will contact the PSC for status.

715.35.2 RRB District Office Handling

When a beneficiary comes to your office requesting status of the initial SS payment, first determine if the SS award letter (Form Letter SSA-30) was received.

- A. If the beneficiary has received the Form Letter SSA-30 - Check the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen to verify that the SS award was received and entered into RRB's system. Also check the "TYPE OF ACTIVITY" and "NLAF" fields on the screen to determine if the payment is currently due. If the POLO record exists, and the STATUS line on the screen indicates "MANUAL HANDLING REQ," access SOLAR to determine if Headquarters has begun processing the award. (See FOM 1551.15.2)

If the message "SOLAR RECORD FOUND BUT NOT OPENED" is displayed at the bottom of the SOLAR Main Menu screen or the claim status on SOLAR's Status Information screen is "PENDING EXAMINER," "AWD RET FOR CORR" or "REJECT PENDING EXAMINER," follow the tracing schedule as indicated below. Before taking action to trace with Headquarters, always check SOLAR to determine if the status of the SOLAR award has changed. If the "Type of Activity" is "Deferred Award," use the tracing schedule in FOM 715.35.2.A.1. If the "Type of Activity" is "Current Pay" use the tracing schedule in FOM 715.35.2.1.2-4.



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If the STATUS line of the POLO screen indicates "SOLAR MM/DD/CCYY XXXX," the award has been paid via SOLAR. The voucher date and voucher number of the award are displayed.

1. "Type of Activity" is "Deferred Award" - The initial award is not currently payable as of date of transmission, the SSA Run Date.

If the "NLAF" is an "E," benefits are not payable because of advance filing. Trace by HSL directed to ICS 60 days after the "Next Action Date" or "DOEC" on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen. These will be the same date. The initial payment cannot be processed until 30 days or more after this date. If necessary, trace again after 10 days.

NOTE: Some deferred awards are selected by SOLAR in advance of the date of entitlement (DOEC) and can be set up by claims examiners and authorized early. These awards have the claim status of "AWD PENDING VOUCH" until the voucher date when the award is selected for payment. PAM refers these transactions out of the system a few days after receipt for manual handling because RRB's records indicate there is less than 120 months of RR service or less than 60 months after 1995, for the RRB claim number on the PAM transaction.

If RRB's records indicate there are 120 or more months of service, or 60 or more months of service after 1995, the transaction pends in the PAM system until the DOEC when the award is payable. At that time if PAM determines manual handling is required, SOLAR selects the award.

If the "NLAF" is a "D2," benefits are not payable because of earnings. RRB cannot process an initial award until SSA sends another transmittal with a "NLAF" of "E." Do not trace with ICS.

2. SS entitlement only ("PURE") cases - Trace by HSL directed to ICS or SIS 30 days after the date on the Form SSA-30 or 30 days after the "SSA Run Date" on the POLO CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen. If necessary, trace again after 10 days.
3. RR annuity in pay status, SS not awarded - Trace by HSL directed to ICS or SIS 60 days after the date on the Form SSA-30 or 60 days after the "SSA Run Date" on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen. If necessary, trace again after 45 days.
4. Any dire need situation - Trace by phone to the appropriate section 30 days after the date on the Form SSA-30 or 30 days after the "SSA Run



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Date" on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen. If necessary, trace again after 10 days.

5. RRB field office has determined case should not be certified to the RRB - Trace by HSL directed to Retirement CSG. Provide the identifying data along with the date on the Form SSA-30 and/or the "SSA Run Date" on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen.
- B. If the beneficiary has not received the SSA award notice - Contact the beneficiary's local SSA district office so they can determine if the PSC has completed processing the award. If you have determined that the case should not be certified to RRB, give that information to the local SSA district office.
- C. If the message "NO RR CREDITS ON RRBCAN" appears on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen - This message occurs when there are no RR credits for the RRB claim number provided by SSA. This is an indication that SSA transmitted the record using an incorrect number. In most cases, SSA has used the beneficiary's own SS number rather than the RR employee's number.

Obtain the correct RRB claim number or the correct RR employee SS number. Do not refer the beneficiary to SSA. Contact RPC via HSL to advise them of the correct number so payment of the award can be expedited. See Exhibit 18 for the format to be used for the message.

- D. If the message "LESS THAN 120 SM and 60 SM" appears on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen - This message occurs when the record in SEARCH indicates there are 1 to 119 months of RR service, or 1 to 59 months after 1995, for the RRB claim number provided by SSA. SSA believes the RR employee has 120 or more months of service, or 60 or more months after 1995.

The employee may have military service or sufficient lag service to increase the total number of months to 120 or more, or 60 or more after 1995. In some situations, the beneficiary has some railroad service, but is the spouse of an RR employee, and SSA has transmitted the record under the spouse's own SS number rather than the RR employee's SS number.

Contact the beneficiary or RR employee to determine if one of the situations described above applies. Do not refer the beneficiary to SSA. If the RR employee has military service, obtain proof of the military service. If lag or military service will give the employee 120 months or more of service, or 60 months or more after 1995, or if the spouse's SS number was used, contact RPC via HSL to advise them of the situation and provide information regarding military service if appropriate. See Exhibits 19-21 for the formats to be used for the HSL



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messages. Forward proof of military service to RPC with an accompanying Form G-115x.

If none of the above situations apply, and the field office determines that the RR employee does not have 120 months of RR service, or 60 months of RR service after 1995, contact Headquarters as instructed in 715.35.2.A.5.

715.40 Tracing SS Post-Entitlement Actions

715.40.1 SSA District Office Handling

When a beneficiary requests status of a post-entitlement action such as a reinstatement, the SSA district office will once again check the MBR for current payment status. If the benefit is in anything other than current payment status, the district office will request status from the PSC. The PSC will then take action to transmit the post-entitlement action to the RRB. If the MBR shows current payment status, the district office will assist the beneficiary in directing the inquiry to the appropriate RRB district office.

715.40.2 RRB District Office Handling

When a beneficiary requests status of a post-entitlement action, take the following action:

- A. The beneficiary is receiving SS benefits only:
 1. Check the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen to determine if the PAM system mechanically handled the post-entitlement event;
 2. If the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen shows that the action was referred to an examiner for manual handling and the action is not an award, trace by HSL or phone as described below. If the action is an award, access SOLAR to determine if Headquarters has begun processing the award. (See FOM 1551.15.2) If the message "SOLAR RECORD FOUND BUT NOT OPENED" is displayed at the bottom of the SOLAR Main Menu screen or the claim status on SOLAR's Status Information screen is "PENDING EXAMINER," "AWD RET FOR CORR" or "REJECT PENDING EXAMINER," follow the tracing schedule. Before taking action to trace with Headquarters, always check SOLAR to determine if the status of the SOLAR award has changed. Trace by HSL to RPC or SPS 30 days after the "SSA Run Date" on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen. In dire need cases, trace by phone instead of HSL to the appropriate section; or



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If the STATUS line of the POLO screen indicates "SOLAR MM/DD/CCYY XXXX," the award has been paid via SOLAR. The voucher date and voucher number of the award are displayed; or

3. If the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen shows that the action is pending on PAM (status on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen shows CHICO, RASI, PROCESSING or PENDING), wait five business days before initiating tracing action as shown in 2., above; or
4. If the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen does not contain data on the case, take a statement from the beneficiary concerning the post-entitlement event and forward it with a memorandum addressed to RPC or SPS. Request the section to contact the PSC for verification of the post-entitlement action and to advise you of the status.

B. The beneficiary is receiving combined RR/SS benefits:

1. Check the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen to determine if the post-entitlement action was transmitted to the RRB.

NOTE: Under current program restrictions, most post-entitlement award actions for an RR/SS beneficiary must be rejected from the PAM system for manual examiner handling.

2. If the action was transmitted and the action is not an award, trace by HSL as described below. If the action is an award, access SOLAR to determine if Headquarters has begun processing the award. (See FOM 1551.15.2.) If the message "SOLAR RECORD FOUND BUT NOT OPENED" is displayed at the bottom of the SOLAR Main Menu screen or the claim status on SOLAR's Status Information screen is "PENDING EXAMINER," "AWD RET FOR CORR" or "REJECT PENDING EXAMINER," follow the tracing schedule. Before taking action to trace with Headquarters, also check SOLAR to determine if the status of the SOLAR award has changed. Trace by HSL to RPC or SPS 30 days after the "SSA Run Date" on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen; or

If the STATUS line on the POLO screen indicates "SOLAR MM/DD/CCYY XXXX," the award has been paid via SOLAR. The voucher date and voucher number of the award are displayed; or

3. If the post-entitlement action does not appear on the POLO SSA CERTIFICATION - STATUS screen, take a statement from the beneficiary regarding the post-entitlement event if you have not already done so.



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Forward the statement along with a memorandum addressed to RPC or SPS. Request RPC or SPS to contact the PSC for verification of the post-entitlement action and to advise you of status.

715.45 Representative Payee Discrepancies

Representative payee discrepancies can occur when a beneficiary is receiving both RR and SS benefits. The discrepancies must be resolved so the beneficiary can be paid in a combined check to a common payee.

715.45.1 RRB Is Paying Beneficiary Direct - SSA Has Representative

Payee Headquarters will accept SSA's payee determination for payment of both RR and SS benefits and request copies of SSA's payee selection material.

When SSA payee selection material is received, you will receive copies of the material so that you can set up a representative payee file. The Office of Programs/Operations will also request you to issue the proper informational booklet to the payee, explain the responsibilities of the payee under the RRA and secure the proper certification form.

After contacting the payee, if you feel he is unacceptable, send a memo to BRC containing the reasons you feel he is unacceptable. If a more acceptable payee surfaces in your area, include that person's name and address for referral to SSA. Any change of payee recommendations must be cleared by SSA. In the meantime, payments will continue to go out to SSA's payee unless you have developed information regarding misuse of funds by that payee.

715.45.2 RRB Has Representative Payee - SSA Is Paying Beneficiary Direct

The SS payment will be certified to the RRB representative payee. Meanwhile, Headquarters will send photocopies of RRB payee selection material to SSA. SSA will usually accept the RRB payee.

If SSA insists on paying the beneficiary direct, the Office of Programs/Operations (OP/Operations) will request you to investigate the beneficiary's competence.

- A. Beneficiary competent - Include your findings in a memo to the OP/Operations and take action to discharge the representative payee and close your representative payee file. Along with the memo, send to the OP/Operations any material in your representative payee file that is not already recorded in the OP/Operations folder.



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- B. Beneficiary incompetent - Include your findings in a memo to the OP/Operations, which will forward the information to SSA.

715.45.3 RRB Has Representative Payee That Differs From SSA's Representative Payee

The SS benefit will not be paid pending investigation by the RRB district office. The RR annuity will continue to be paid to the representative payee selected by the RRB. The Office of Programs/Operations (OP/Operations) will request you to reconcile the payee discrepancy and accept SSA's payee if possible.

- A. SSA's payee is accepted - Both the RR and SS benefit will be paid to the same payee. Close the old representative payee file and set up a new one. Issue the proper informational booklet to the new payee, explain the payee's responsibilities under the RRA and secure the proper certification form.
- B. SSA's payee is not acceptable - Include your findings in a memo to the OP/Operations and state the reasons you feel SSA's payee is unacceptable.

715.50 Appeals

715.50.1 Initial Social Security Awards

An SS beneficiary has 60 days from the date on the SSA award certificate (not the RRB notice) in which to request SSA to reconsider its decision on his SS claim.

715.50.2 Social Security Post-Entitlement Actions

- A. Overpayments - SSA releases all letters explaining an overpayment of SS benefits certified by the RRB except when the overpayment resulted from the beneficiary's death. The SS letter gives the beneficiary 60 days to request a reconsideration of the determination.
- B. All other post-entitlement actions - RRB releases notices to beneficiaries for all SS benefit adjustments other than overpayments. The beneficiary may ask SSA to reconsider its decision of a post-entitlement action within 60 days of the date on the RRB notice. All RRB notices about post-entitlement actions must contain SSA's reconsideration paragraph as shown in exhibit 17.

715.50.3 RR Annuity Adjustment Resulting from an SS Award

An adjustment made in the RR annuity because of an SS award or adjustment can be appealed by the beneficiary under the RRB's regular appeal procedure by first



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requesting reconsideration within 60 days of the date on the RRB notice of adjustment. This reconsideration request is made to the RRB and not to SSA.

715.55 Handling Appeal Requests

When a beneficiary expresses a desire to appeal an SS award or adjustment action, accept his statement requesting reconsideration and forward it to the Office of Programs/Operations. Headquarters will either send it directly to the PSC or request action by the SSA on-site representative, depending on the circumstances involved.

If a beneficiary wishes to appeal the RR adjustment in his annuity resulting from his SS award, handle his appeal request according to current Office of Programs appeal procedure.

715.60 Use Of Railroad Retirement Application To Protect The Social Security Filing Date

715.60.1 General

Section 5(b) of the 1974 Railroad Retirement Act (RRA) provides that an application for an RR annuity may be deemed to be an application for any benefit to which the applicant may be entitled under the RRA or the SS Act with the exception of Supplemental Security Income, Title XVI Payments.

The intent of Section 5(b) is to protect the beneficiary's filing date for any monthly benefit that they are entitled to under Title II of the Social Security Act on any person's wage record. Although the RR application protects the filing date, the applicant must still file a separate SS application in order to receive the benefit.

715.60.2 RRB District Office Actions

All annuity applications ask if the applicant wants to use the application to protect the filing date for social security benefits. Complete Form RR-8 for each applicant who answered "Yes" to the question on the application. Send the original Form RR-8 to the SSA district office servicing the applicant's home address; transmit the carbon copy to the Office of Programs/Operations with the application. When SSA receives the Form RR-8, they will contact the applicant to secure an SS application.



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720 Medicare For SS Beneficiaries

720.5 Jurisdiction

The RRB assumes Medicare jurisdiction for all persons whose SS benefits are certified to the RRB for payment. This includes people who would not be considered qualified railroad retirement beneficiaries (QRRBs). These beneficiaries are "deemed" QRRBs for Medicare purposes.

720.10 RRB Responsibilities

The RRB is responsible for setting up a Health Insurance (HI) record, issuing the Medicare ID card and collecting supplementary medical insurance (SMI) premiums from beneficiaries whose SS benefits are paid by the RRB. Palmetto GBA will process the Part B Medicare claims.

720.15 SMI Premium Collection

720.15.1 Social Security Entitlement Only

- A. SS benefit payable - SMI premiums will be deducted from the monthly benefit payable unless the rate is lower than the premium amount. If the monthly SS rate is lower than the premium amount, the beneficiary will be billed directly for the SMI premiums by the RRB.
- B. SS benefit not payable due to work deductions, etc., for an indefinite period of time - SMI premiums will be collected by the RRB through direct billing.
- C. SS benefit not payable for a short time (e.g., for recovery of an overpayment) - SMI premiums will be deducted at the time of reinstatement.

720.15.2 Combined Railroad and Social Security Entitlement

If a beneficiary is receiving a combined RR/SS benefit, the premiums will always be deducted from the RR portion due to current processing limitations. If the RR portion is lower than the premium amount, the beneficiary will be billed directly for the premiums, even though the SS benefit is large enough for premium deductions.

720.15.3 Combined RR/SS Entitlement - RR Rate Equals Zero

If an RR annuity rate equals zero due to reductions in tier I for SS benefits, worker's compensation, etc., the SMI premiums will be collected as follows:



RRB District Office Role in SS Payments

March 13, 2007

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Chicago Illinois, 60611-2092

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- A. RR annuity in suspense - The annuitant will be billed directly for SMI premiums.
- B. RR annuity terminated or constructive award made - SMI premiums will be deducted from the SS benefit.

720.20 SMI Premium Arrearages

SMI premium arrearages occur when premiums are due but unpaid for months in which the railroad annuity or SS benefit has not been paid.

Sometimes the RRB receives an SS benefit from the Social Security Administration (SSA) with a Medicare entitlement date that is in the past. This happens frequently in disability cases. When this occurs, past premiums must be deducted from the benefits payable.

720.20.1 Entitlement to Social Security Benefits Only

- A. Premium arrearage less than 6 months or 50% of benefit accrual - The entire arrearage will be deducted from the SS accrual. The award notice released by the RRB will explain the amount of the premiums deducted and the months for which they are due.
- B. Premium arrearage more than 6 months or 50% of benefit accrual - Medicare coverage and premium deductions will be effective with the month of examiner handling. The enrollee will be notified of the start of premium deductions but not the retroactive premiums. Medicare examiners will determine if the equitable relief provisions apply and will implement recovery for the premium arrearage.

If the beneficiary is offered equitable relief but subsequently asks for waiver or protests the arrearage amount, it is SSA's responsibility to determine a final method of recovery and notify the RRB.

If the equitable relief provisions do not apply, Medicare coverage will remain effective with the month of examiner handling.

720.20.2 Entitlement to Railroad and Social Security Benefits

The premium arrearage will be recovered from the railroad annuity according to current instructions.



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720.25 Transfers Of Medicare Jurisdiction

Whenever SS payment jurisdiction changes from RRB to the Social Security Administration (SSA), Medicare jurisdiction will also be transferred for entitled beneficiaries. Headquarters will transfer the benefit and Medicare jurisdiction at the same time and will advise SSA of the paid-through dates. Also, see FOM-I-705.50.