



Handling the Finances of a Deceased Person

Upon contacting Members United Credit Union (MUCU) and informing us of your loved ones passing, information will be gathered by a Member Service Representative regarding the deceased member's account(s). The deceased member's account(s) will be reviewed, which may include filing any insurance claims, determining account adjustments, asking for submission of and verifying the validity of required legal documents, determining funds disbursement and any other assistance we can provide.

Deceased Member's Account Process at Members United

This section is to let you know what to expect as the deceased member's MUCU accounts are closed. We have included the more common frequently asked questions to help you understand the process.

What do I need to provide to MUCU when reporting a death?

To start the process of managing the member's accounts, we will need a copy of the death certificate. If you are appointed Personal Representative or Administrator, please provide us with a certified copy of the Letters Testamentary or Letters of Administration. Unfortunately, MUCU does not accept wills or provide legal advice. We understand that you may have questions and we encourage you to seek answers from a trusted legal professional.

Continuing Membership

Upon the death of a MUCU member, their family members remain eligible for membership. For more information about membership eligibility, call MUCU at 229.439.1448 or 1.888.822.1673 or visit www.membersunitedcreditunion.org.

Savings and Checking Accounts

How long will the deceased member's account at MUCU remain open?

We encourage you to close the accounts as soon as possible. We recommend that you try settling the deceased member's account within 90 days, however the ability to settle the account quickly can be different for each situation. Taking immediate action can help avoid any complications resulting from continued Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reporting under the deceased member's Social Security Number (SSN) since MUCU will report to the IRS under the deceased member's SSN until the account is closed. In certain circumstances, the account can be re-titled to the surviving spouse. When the account has a loan or Individual Retirement Account (IRA), the surviving joint owner will need to open a new MUCU membership.

What will happen to a Direct Deposit into a MUCU account?

Contact the agencies or companies depositing the funds to determine what is required. Funds may need to be returned to the paying party. If a Direct Deposit for pension is received after the date of death, MUCU is required to return the funds. If a Direct Deposit is received before or on the date of death, we will deposit the funds into the deceased member's account as normal.

What will happen to automatic payments deducted from the deceased member's MUCU account?

Automatic payments will continue to be deducted from the account until the account is closed. You will need to notify any companies that are debiting the account and advise them to stop automatic payments. As the personal representative or administrator of the estate, you may obtain copies of statements to review past account activity.

How do I reach the Social Security Administration concerning survivor benefits?

The Social Security Administration's toll-free number is 800.772.1213. You will want to notify the Social Security Administration as soon as possible to get the process started. You will need to provide them:

- Member's Social Security number
- Name of member's last employer
- Certified copy of the death certificate
- Member's most recent w-2 forms or self-employment tax return showing earnings
- Certified copy or original birth certificate of the spouse and any minor children
- Divorce papers if the surviving divorced spouse is applying for benefits
- The credit union or bank's name and account number for deposit of benefits.

Can I still use my own ATM and/or debit cards for the deceased member's account that I am a joint owner on?

Yes. You can either cancel your card(s) or keep them active until the account is closed. MUCU will automatically cancel the deceased member's card(s). As the joint account holder, you retain access to funds. However, if the account was held under the deceased member's social security number, close the joint account as soon as possible. Once the joint account(s) are closed and your new individual account(s) established, we can attach your existing debit card to the new accounts.

Can I still access the funds and write checks from the MUCU Checking, Money Market, and/or Second Savings account that I am joint owner on?

Yes—for a limited time. However, this account will be closed as soon as feasible. As a joint owner, you may be eligible for MUCU membership. If so, you can open your own Savings, Checking, and/or Money Market if you do not already have one.

Will I be able to access information on the estate if I am the designated personal representative of the estate, but I am not a joint owner on the deceased member's account, nor am I a MUCU member?

Yes, but you must provide a death certificate and court documents stating you are the personal representative or administrator. After you provide these documents MUCU can provide information about the member's accounts.

Share Certificates and Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs)

What will happen to the deceased member's Share Certificate?

For a Joint Account, certificates will be disbursed to the joint owner. The joint owner can then cash in the certificate without penalty, establish a new certificate at current dividend rates and terms, or transfer the certificate, as is, to a joint owner's MUCU account. If the joint owner does not have a MUCU account and is eligible for membership, an account can be opened and the certificate transferred. This new certificate can keep the same dividend rate and maturity date as the original.

If a joint tenant is not listed, the funds will be disbursed to any applicable beneficiary, the deceased member's estate or next of kin, via an affidavit of collection.

What will happen to the deceased member's IRA?

MUCU will close the IRA without any penalties from MUCU—even if the deceased member was under age 59 ½ or the maturity date of the IRA certificate had not been reached. If there isn't a beneficiary listed, the funds may be payable to the deceased member's estate.

Consumer Loans

We will determine if the member had voluntary payment protection on their MUCU loan and, if qualified, we will apply any voluntary payment protection proceeds towards their loan balance. Proceeds will be applied as of the date of death. Deposit account balances may also be applied to the outstanding loan balance. Surviving borrower(s), or the member's estate, are responsible for repaying any outstanding loan balances.

The estate must directly pay off remaining loan balances or provide Members Untied with the necessary documents to properly file a creditor's claim against the estate.

Credit Cards

What happens to the deceased member's MUCU credit card?

If the deceased was the only cardholder, the account will be closed. However, if there is a co-applicant on the account, the account may remain open and we will assist in re-qualifying the surviving co-applicant for the current credit limit and re-titling the credit card in the co-applicant's name. In some situations, the credit limit may be reduced or the credit card may be closed.

If I am the co-applicant on the MUCU credit card, can I continue using the card?

Yes, you can continue using your card and the balance becomes your responsibility unless notified otherwise.

The deceased member was the only one on the credit card. What should I do with his/her card?

The deceased member's card and those of any authorized users should be destroyed and sent back to MUCU.

What will happen to the unpaid balance on the credit card?

We will determine the date-of-death balance and apply Payment Protection Plan coverage proceeds when applicable. Individual accounts will then be closed. Accounts with co-applicants may remain open, but will be re-qualified and re-titled to reflect the co-applicant as the primary cardholder.

Should I continue making monthly payments on the account?

Yes, continue making monthly payments. If there is Loan Protection Insurance and/or a Payment Protection Plan, file a claim. If the claim is paid out through the insurance, money will be given back to the survivor/estate.

Will monthly statements continue to be issued? To whom will they be addressed?

The statements will continue to be addressed and sent to the Primary cardholder.

As an authorized user, am I liable for any balance on the deceased member's credit card account?

You are not entitled to use the account after the death of the account holder. You must either destroy or return your card to MUCU. As an authorized user, you are responsible for any charges made after the date of death and must apply for credit in your own right before the account can be re-titled and the balance assumed.

I am the co-applicant—am I liable for any unpaid balance on the credit card account?

Yes. If there is a balance after any Payment Protection Plan settlement, you are responsible for repayment. You are also responsible for any charges made after the date of death.

Real Estate: Mortgage Loans and Home Equity Loans

I am the co-borrower on the MUCU Mortgage. What happens now?

Please contact the MUCU loan department as soon as possible at 229.439.1448 or 888.822.1633.

What will happen to a Home Equity Line of Credit?

If there isn't a co-borrower on the Home Equity Line of Credit, the loan will be closed so no further disbursements will be allowed. If there is a co-borrower on the Home Equity Line of Credit, the co-borrower can continue to use it and be responsible for repayment.

Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance

As a service to its members MUCU provides complimentary Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance. If your loved one's death was an accident MUCU will contact the insurance companies and send the necessary information to see if the death qualifies under the policies. Any funds will be paid by the insurance companies directly to the named beneficiary or to the estate if a beneficiary has not been named.

What is Probate?

Probate is the legal process that verifies the will is valid in court. Probate also identifies the deceased member's property, pays any outstanding debts and taxes and properly distributes the assets. The court will use the Will to determine who was appointed as the "executor" of the estate. If there wasn't a will in place, the court will appoint the next of kin as "administrator" of the estate.

Will I need to go to probate court if a will is in place?

Yes, primarily because until the probate court identifies the will as valid, nothing from it can be enforced. Also real estate in the deceased member's name will need to have a "clear title" before it is sold.

On the other hand, the probate process may not be required if the deceased member's estate had accounts that were classified as "Joint Account—With Survivorship." It is best to consult an attorney to determine what property is or is not subject to probate.

Estate Accounts

Estate Accounts provide an efficient solution for holding estate assets in accounts while keeping them separate from the executor/administrator's personal accounts. Typically, the deceased member's assets are deposited into savings, then transferred, as needed, to checking for easy payment of taxes, debts and other obligations during the estate settlement process. Estate Accounts give the executor/administrator an accurate picture of the estate's assets at any given time, a real benefit when completing tax returns and other documentation.

Unfortunately, MUCU does not offer Estate Accounts at this time.

Specific concerns or questions regarding your responsibility as an estate administrator, the probate process or estate settlement process should be referred to an attorney, financial advisor or probate court official.

Duties of an Executor/Administrator

An executor/administrator, also known as a personal representative, is the person who is responsible for carrying out or "executing" the will's instructions. An individual executor/administrator can sometimes easily settle a simple estate on his or her own. However, large or complicated estates almost

always require legal advice. In many cases, it can be difficult to recognize without legal counsel whether an estate will be simple or complicated. The probate court may require an executor/administrator to be bonded to protect all interested parties against fraud, embezzlement or negligence by the executor/administrator. If you are named executor/administrator, it is your responsibility to pay debts or obligations, distribute the remaining assets to heirs and complete the necessary tax forms.

The following is a brief checklist of the typical duties of an executor/administrator in settling an estate:

- Consult an attorney and certified public accountant (CPA) about your exact duties as executor/administrator. While not required, checking with these professionals is helpful because they are familiar with local probate procedures and the steps required for settling an estate.
- File the will and initiate probate. As executor/administrator, it is your responsibility to file a will with the appropriate state probate court and to petition the court for “letters testamentary” or “letters of administration”. These documents provide legal proof that you are the executor/administrator of the estate. You should get several certified copies of these court documents to submit when handling certain financial transactions for the estate. You will give notice to all interested parties, including heirs, persons named in the will and creditors.
- Request several copies of the death certificate. You will need certified copies of the death certificate in order to conduct estate business. They can be obtained from the County Clerk’s Office in the county of the person’s death, or the funeral director may order them for you.
- Re-title property if necessary. If the estate includes unencumbered automobiles, boats, other vehicles or real estate, you can transfer titles either to the beneficiary named or to yourself, as executor/administrator. If no beneficiary is designated, you may, as executor/administrator, decide to sell the property and add the proceeds to the estate. You should seek the advice of an attorney before you decide to sell or re-title the property.
- List any indebtedness. As executor/administrator, it is your responsibility to pay off any debts at the time of the person’s death. You must notify all creditors of the death and invite them to submit claims to the estate. Usually each state sets a time limit for creditors to submit claims. Some assets are exempt from payment of debts. If nonexempt estate assets are insufficient to pay all claims, there is a strict order of priorities for payment. It is important to ascertain all creditors to ensure payments are not made out of the order of priorities. Some things to look for are Utility payments or bills, Hospital, doctor or other medical expenses, Loan payments or bills, & Credit card payments or bills.
- Close credit union, bank and brokerage accounts, and open an Estate Account. You should close any account owned solely by the deceased and transfer those assets to an account that will allow you to settle the deceased member’s bills and other obligations.

- Locate insurance policies and other assets payable to designated beneficiaries and file claims. Life insurance benefits (and other assets, such as retirement accounts and annuities) are often payable to designated beneficiaries and are not part of the estate. To file claims, you will need the policy numbers, full name of the deceased and certified copies of the death certificate.
- File taxes. Federal and state taxes for the deceased will need to be filed for the year in which he or she passed away and the year the account is closed. Consult the IRS, a CPA or your financial advisor for assistance.
- Close the estate accounts and distribute the remaining assets to beneficiaries. After making sure all estate debts have been paid, you can distribute any remaining assets to the beneficiaries and close the accounts.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 229.439.1448 or 888.822.1633 or stop by any branch. We are here to help you in every way possible during this difficult time.