



My family member died receiving Social Security and/or Veterans' benefits. Do I need to return those funds?

**Social Security benefits for a month are received the following month.** SSA benefits received by this person in February were for the month of January and payable because he or she was alive all through January. Similarly, the SSA benefit received by this person in March is for the month of February. It must be returned because he or she was not alive for the complete month of February.

Social Security benefits are payable to a person only if he or she is alive for the complete month. This applies whether the person was receiving SSA retirement, survivors or disability benefits based on either their own earnings or the record of someone else.

To illustrate this, if a person receiving Social Security benefits dies during February, even on the last day of the month, no benefit is payable to that person for February. No partial payments are made for a month – either you are eligible for benefits that month or you are not.

In contrast, Social Security *survivors* benefits are payable for the month of death. Continuing the example of the person dying in February, anyone eligible for survivors monthly benefits on the record of the deceased, such as a widow, widower or children, would receive benefits for all of February, the month of death, again even if the death occurred on the last day of the month.

Prevent the possible loss of benefits by always contacting Social Security when there is a death in the family. You can call the Social Security national toll-free number, 800-772-1213, (7:00am-7:00pm local time), TTY 800-325-0778, same national hours, or your local office. Local hours vary, especially for small offices, but are usually 9:00am-3:30pm.

**The same goes for Veterans' Benefits.** The beneficiary is not entitled to VA benefits for the month in which he/she dies, even if the individual dies on the last day of the month. Therefore, unless you are the beneficiary's spouse, you must return these funds immediately to VA.