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GOVERNMENT CODE - GOV

TITLE 3. GOVERNMENT OF COUNTIES [23000 - 33205] (Title 3 added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424.)

DIVISION 4. EMPLOYEES [31000 - 33017] (Division 4 added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424.)

PART 3. RETIREMENT SYSTEMS [31200 - 33017] (Part 3 added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424.)

CHAPTER 3. County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 [31450 - 31898] (Chapter 3 added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424.)

ARTICLE 12. Death Benefit [31780 - 31792] (Article 12 added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424.)

31780. Upon the death before retirement of a member while in service or while physically or mentally incapacitated for the performance of his duty, if such incapacity has been continuous from discontinuance of service, or within one month after discontinuance of service unless the member's accumulated contributions have been paid to the member pursuant to Section 31628, the retirement system is liable for a death benefit which shall be paid:

(a) As provided in Section 31765 or 31765.1 or 31765.11 or 31781.1 or 31787, if the surviving spouse or guardian of one or more of the surviving children of the member so elects, or

(b) If no election is made pursuant to Section 31765, or 31765.1, or 31765.11, or 31781.1, or 31787 and no person is entitled to a survivor's allowance pursuant to Article 15.5 (commencing with Section 31841) or Article 16 (commencing with Section 31861) to such person as he nominates by written designation duly executed and filed with the board, before the death of the member, or

(c) If no such election is made, and a parent as defined in Article 15.5 but no other person is entitled to a survivor's allowance pursuant to Article 15.5 or 16 and a surviving spouse or child is designated as beneficiary, to such surviving spouse or child, or

(d) If no such election is made, no person is entitled to a survivor's allowance pursuant to Article 15.5 or 16, and a member has not nominated a beneficiary, to his estate.

(Amended by Stats. 1980, Ch. 58.)

31780.1. A child eligible to receive a survivor benefit under Section 31760.1, 31781.1, 31786, or 31787 shall be considered unmarried if the child is not married as of the date the member dies, whether or not the child was previously married. If the child thereafter marries, eligibility for the survivor benefit shall terminate, and the benefit shall not be reinstated if the child subsequently returns to unmarried status.

(Added by Stats. 1996, Ch. 493, Sec. 7. Effective January 1, 1997.)

31780.2. (a) Any benefits accorded to a spouse pursuant to this article and Article 11 (commencing with Section 31760), Article 15.5 (commencing with Section 31841), Article 15.6 (commencing with Section 31855), and Article 16 (commencing with Section 31861), or any of them, may be accorded to a domestic partner, as defined in Section 297 of the Family Code, who is registered with the Secretary of State pursuant to Division 2.5 (commencing with Section 297) of the Family Code. The county may also require the member and the member's domestic partner to have a current Affidavit of Domestic Partnership, in the form adopted by the county board of supervisors, on file with the county for at least one year prior to the member's retirement or death prior to retirement.

(b) If a member described in subdivision (a) has a surviving dependent child, the surviving dependent child shall receive the death and survivor's allowance until 18 years of age or until married, whichever occurs earlier, or until 22 years of age if enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited educational institution. When the member's surviving dependent child reaches 18 years of age or is no longer a dependent, whichever occurs earlier, or reaches 22 years of age if enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited educational institution, then the benefits accorded to a spouse, as specified in subdivision (a), may be accorded to a domestic partner pursuant to this section. However, if a surviving dependent child elects to receive a lump-sum payment, the lump-sum payment shall be shared among any surviving dependent children and the domestic partner, pursuant to this section, in a proportional manner.

(c) This section is not operative unless and until the county board of supervisors, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, makes this section operative in the county. In a county of the 10th class, as defined in Sections 28020 and 28031, the county board of supervisors may implement the benefits described in this section as determined through the collective bargaining process and based on actuarial cost estimates.

(d) This section shall not apply to any member whose death occurs on or after January 1, 2009.

(Amended by Stats. 2008, Ch. 197, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 2009.)

31781. The death benefit shall consist of:

(a) The member's accumulated contributions.

(b) An amount, provided from contributions by the county or district, equal to one-twelfth of the annual compensation earnable or pensionable compensation as defined in Section 7522.34, whichever is applicable, by the deceased during the 12 months immediately preceding the member's death, multiplied by the number of completed years of service under the system, but not to exceed 50 percent of such annual compensation. The computation for any absence shall be based on the compensation of the position held by the member at the beginning of the absence.

(Amended by Stats. 2022, Ch. 231, Sec. 18. (AB 1824) Effective January 1, 2023.)

31781.01. Notwithstanding Section 31781, the death benefit of a member covered under Section 31751 shall consist of:

(a) The member's accumulated contributions.

(b) A lump sum of two thousand dollars (\$2,000) offset by any lump-sum death payment made under the federal Social Security Act.

(Added by Stats. 1980, Ch. 58.)

31781.1. (a) If a member of a retirement system established in a county subject to the provisions of Section 31676.1 would have been entitled to retirement in the event of a non-service-connected disability, but dies as the result of an injury or illness prior to retirement, the surviving spouse of the member shall have the right to elect, by written notice filed with the board, to receive and be paid in lieu of the death benefit provided in Sections 31780 and 31781, an "optional death allowance."

(b) The allowance shall consist of a monthly payment equal to 60 percent of the monthly retirement allowance to which the deceased member would have been entitled if the member had retired by reason of non-service-connected disability as of the date of the member's death.

(c) If the surviving spouse elects to receive the "optional death allowance" the payments due for this allowance shall be retroactive to the date of the deceased member's death, and shall continue throughout the life of the spouse.

(d) If the surviving spouse elects to receive the "optional death allowance," and thereafter dies leaving an unmarried surviving child or unmarried children of the deceased member under the age of 18 years, the "optional death allowance" shall thereafter be paid to those surviving children collectively until each child dies, marries, or reaches the age of 18 years. The right of any child to the allowance shall cease upon the child's death or marriage, or upon reaching the age of 18 years, and the entire amount of the allowance shall thereafter be paid collectively to each of the other qualified children.

(e) If the deceased member leaves no surviving spouse but leaves an unmarried child or children under the age of 18 years, the legally appointed guardian of the child or children shall make the election provided in this section on behalf of the surviving child or children that, in the guardian's judgment, is in the best interests of the surviving child or children. The election made shall be binding and conclusive upon all parties in interest.

(f) The rights and privileges conferred by this section upon the surviving spouse and each child of the deceased member are not dependent upon whether any of these persons have been nominated by the deceased member as the beneficiary of any death benefits and shall supersede the rights and claims of any other beneficiary so nominated.

(g) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the benefits otherwise payable to each child of the member shall be paid to each child up to the 22nd birthday of the child if the child remains unmarried and is regularly enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited school as determined by the board.

(h) For purposes of this section, "child" means a natural or adopted child of the deceased member, or a stepchild living or domiciled with the deceased member at the time of the member's death.

(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 275, Sec. 55. (AB 2101) Effective January 1, 2021.)

31781.11. The board of supervisors of a county of the first class as described by Sections 28020 and 28022 may, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, increase the amounts of the death benefits payable pursuant to Sections 31760.1, 31765.1, 31781.1, and 31785, with respect to a death occurring on or after the date this section becomes operative in a county, up to the amount of the monthly allowance to which the deceased member was or would have been entitled as of the date of his or her death.

(Added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 890, Sec. 1.)

31781.12. Notwithstanding Section 31781.1, each allowance paid pursuant to Section 31781.1 on account of a member who dies on or after the operative date of this section shall be equal to 65 percent of the monthly retirement allowance to which the deceased member would have been entitled, without modification in accordance with one of the optional settlements specified in this article, if he or she had retired, or been retired, by reason of a nonservice-connected disability as of the date of death.

This section shall only be applicable to Los Angeles County and shall not become operative until the board of supervisors of that county elects, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, to make this section operative in the county.

(Added by Stats. 2001, Ch. 778, Sec. 13. Effective October 13, 2001. Section conditionally operative by its own provisions.)

31781.13. (a) Notwithstanding Section 31781.1, each allowance paid on or after the operative date of this section pursuant to Section 31781.1 on account of a member who dies before the operative date of this section shall be equal to 65 percent of the monthly retirement allowance to which the deceased member would have been entitled, without modification in accordance with one of the optional settlements specified in this article, if he or she had retired, or been retired, by reason of a nonservice connected disability as of the date of death, adjusted for the net cost-of-living percentage increase, if any, awarded to that survivor prior to the operative date of this section.

(b) This section shall only be applicable to Los Angeles County and shall not become operative until the board of supervisors of that county elects, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, to make this section operative in the county.

(Added by Stats. 2001, Ch. 778, Sec. 14. Effective October 13, 2001. Section conditionally operative by its own provisions.)

31781.2. In lieu of accepting in cash the death benefit payable under Section 31781 or 31781.01, the surviving spouse of a member who dies prior to reaching the minimum retirement age and who at the date of the member's death has 10 or more years of service to the member's credit, shall have the option to leave the amount of the death benefit on deposit in the retirement system until the earliest date when the deceased member could have retired had the member lived, and at that time receive the retirement allowance provided for in Section 31765, 31765.1, or 31765.11, whichever is applicable.

If, at the death of the spouse, the spouse is survived by one or more unmarried children of the member, under the age of 18 years, the retirement allowance shall continue to the child or children, collectively, until every child dies, marries, or attains the age of 18 years. If the spouse dies, either before or after the death of the member, without either making the election or receiving any portion of the death benefit, and no part of the death benefit had been paid to any person, prior to the payment of any benefits, the legally appointed guardian of the children shall make the election herein provided for on behalf of the surviving children as, in the guardian's judgment, may appear to be in their interest and advantage, and the election so made shall be binding and conclusive upon all parties in interest.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the benefits otherwise payable to the children of the member shall be paid to those children up to the 22nd birthdays of the children if the children remain unmarried and are regularly enrolled as full-time students in an accredited school as determined by the board.

(Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 186, Sec. 17. (SB 634) Effective January 1, 2022.)

31781.3. The surviving spouse of a member who dies in service after five years of service or as a result of service-connected injury or disease may elect, in lieu of the death benefit in Section 31781 or the life annuity provided in Section 31781.1 or 31787, the benefit that is the sum of both of the following:

(a) An amount, provided from contributions by the county or district, equal to one-twelfth of the annual compensation earnable or pensionable compensation as defined in Section 7522.34, whichever is applicable, by the deceased during the 12 months immediately preceding his or her death, multiplied by the number of completed years of service under the system, but not to exceed 50 percent of that compensation.

(b) A monthly allowance as provided in Section 31781.1 or 31787 reduced by a monthly amount which is the actuarial equivalent of the amount in subdivision (a) as applied to the life of the surviving spouse.

(Amended by Stats. 2014, Ch. 741, Sec. 9. (AB 2474) Effective January 1, 2015.)

31781.31. Notwithstanding Sections 31781.1 and 31781.3, the surviving spouse of a member subject to Section 31751 who dies in service after 10 years of service, or as a result of service-connected injury or disease, may elect, in lieu of the life annuity provided in Section 31765.11 or the death benefit provided in Section 31781.01, the benefit that is the sum of both of the following:

(a) An amount, provided from contributions by the county or district, equal to one-twelfth of the annual compensation earnable or pensionable compensation as defined in Section 7522.34, whichever is applicable, by the deceased during the 12 months immediately preceding his or her death, multiplied by the number of completed years of service under the system, but not to exceed 50 percent of that compensation.

(b) A monthly allowance as provided in Section 31765.11 reduced by a monthly amount which is the actuarial equivalent of the amount in subdivision (a) as applied to the life of the surviving spouse.

(Amended by Stats. 2014, Ch. 741, Sec. 10. (AB 2474) Effective January 1, 2015.)

31782. The nomination of a beneficiary under this system, other than nominations under optional settlements 2, 3 and 4, may be revoked at the pleasure of the person who made it and a different beneficiary nominated by written designation duly executed and filed with the board.

(Amended by Stats. 1953, Ch. 789.)

31783. If the nominated beneficiary cannot be found by the board, or if the nominated beneficiary is the estate of the deceased person, the board in its discretion may pay to the undertaker who conducted the funeral all or a portion of the amount payable as a death benefit, but not more than the funeral expenses of the deceased person as evidenced by the sworn itemized statement of the undertaker and by such other documents as the board may require. Payment so made is a full discharge of the board and system for the amount so paid.

(Added by Stats. 1947, Ch. 424.)

31783.5. (a) Whenever a person or estate entitled to payment of a member's accumulated contributions or any other benefit fails to claim the payment or cannot be located, the amount owed from the retirement fund shall be administered in accordance with subdivision (c).

(b) The board shall attempt to locate the claimant through means that the board in its sound discretion deems reasonable including, but not limited to, a registered or certified letter mailed to the last known address of the claimant.

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the amounts described in subdivision (a) shall be held for the claimant. If the amounts are not claimed within five years after the last attempted contact with the claimant, the amounts shall be deposited in and become a part of the pension reserve fund. The board may at any time after transfer of unclaimed amounts upon receipt of information satisfactory to it, authorize the return of amounts so held in reserve to the credit of the claimant. Those amounts shall be paid only to claimants who have not yet attained the age for mandatory distribution under the Internal Revenue Code.

(Amended by Stats. 2024, Ch. 117, Sec. 9. (AB 2770) Effective January 1, 2025.)

31784. The person to whom the whole or any part of a death benefit is payable may, at any time before payment thereof, elect in writing to have such death benefit or part thereof paid over a period not to exceed 10 years in monthly installments, plus interest on the unpaid balance thereof, at a rate to be determined by the board. If such person dies before all such installments are paid, the board shall pay the balance in one lump sum to his estate or person entitled to receive his property.

(Added by Stats. 1951, Ch. 575.)

31785. Upon the death of any safety member, after retirement for service or non-service-connected disability from a retirement system established in a county subject to the provisions of Section 31676.1 or 31695.1, 60 percent of the member's retirement allowance if not modified in accordance with one of the optional settlements specified in Article 11 (commencing with Section 31760), shall be continued throughout life to the member's surviving spouse. If there is no surviving spouse entitled to an allowance hereunder or if the surviving spouse dies before every child of the deceased safety member attains the age of 18 years, then the allowance which the surviving spouse would have received had the surviving spouse lived, shall be paid to the surviving spouse's child or children under that age, collectively, to continue until every child dies or attains that age; provided, that no child shall receive any allowance after marrying or attaining the age of 18 years. No allowance, however, shall be paid under this section to a surviving spouse unless the surviving spouse was married to the safety member at least one year prior to the date of the member's retirement.

Any qualified surviving spouse or children of a member of a pension system established pursuant to either Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 31900) or Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 32200), who shall have been retired on or before December 31, 1951, shall be paid a retirement allowance pursuant to the provisions of this section. In cases where the death of a member occurred prior to January 1, 1952, the payment of the retirement allowance to the qualified surviving spouse or children shall be made effective on January 1, 1952.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the benefits otherwise payable to the children of the member shall be paid to those children up to the 22nd birthdays of the children if the children remain unmarried and are regularly enrolled as full-time students in an accredited school as determined by the board.

The superseding rights pursuant to this section shall not affect benefits payable to a named beneficiary as provided under Section 31789, 31789.01, 31789.1, 31789.12, 31789.13, 31789.2, 31789.3, 31789.5, or 31790.

(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 275, Sec. 57. (AB 2101) Effective January 1, 2021.)

31785.1. (a) Notwithstanding Section 31481 or 31785, upon the death of any safety member, after retirement for service or non-service-connected disability from a retirement system established in a county pursuant to this chapter, 60 percent of the safety member's retirement allowance if not modified in accordance with one of the optional settlements specified in Article 11 (commencing with Section 31760), shall be continued to the member's surviving spouse for life. If there is no surviving spouse entitled to an allowance under this section or if the surviving spouse dies before every child of the deceased safety member attains the age of 18 years, then the allowance that the surviving spouse would have received had the surviving spouse lived, shall be paid to the surviving spouse's child or children under that age, collectively, to continue until each child dies or attains that age. However, no child may receive any allowance after marrying or attaining the age of 18 years.

(b) No allowance may be paid under this section to a surviving spouse unless the surviving spouse was married to the safety member at least two years prior to the date of death and has attained the age of 55 years on or prior to the date of death.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the benefits otherwise payable to the children of the member shall be paid to the children up to the 22nd birthdays of the children if the children remain unmarried and are regularly enrolled as full-time students in an accredited school as determined by the board.

(d) No allowance may be paid pursuant to this section to any person who is entitled to an allowance pursuant to Section 31785.

(e) The superseding rights pursuant to this section do not affect benefits payable to a named beneficiary as provided under Section 31789, 31789.01, 31789.1, 31789.12, 31789.13, 31789.2, 31789.3, 31789.5, or 31790.

(f) This section is not applicable in any county until the board of retirement, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, makes this section applicable in the county. The board's resolution may designate a date, which may be prior or subsequent to the date of the resolution, as of which the resolution and this section shall be operative in the county.

(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 275, Sec. 58. (AB 2101) Effective January 1, 2021.)

31785.4. Notwithstanding Section 31785, each survivor allowance paid pursuant to Section 31785 on account of a safety member who retires on or after the operative date of this section shall be equal to 65 percent of the member's monthly retirement allowance, if not modified in accordance with one of the optional settlements specified in Article 11 (commencing with Section 31760).

This section shall only be applicable to Los Angeles County and shall not become operative until the board of supervisors of that county elects, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, to make this section operative in the county.

(Added by Stats. 2001, Ch. 778, Sec. 15. Effective October 13, 2001. Section conditionally operative by its own provisions.)

31785.5. (a) Notwithstanding Section 31785, each survivor allowance paid on or after the operative date of this section pursuant to Section 31785 on account of a safety member who retires before the operative date of this section shall be equal to 65 percent of the member's monthly retirement allowance, if not modified in accordance with one of the optional settlements specified in Article 11 (commencing with Section 31760), as adjusted for the net cost-of-living percentage increase, if any, awarded to that survivor prior to the operative date of this section.

(b) This section shall only be applicable to Los Angeles County and shall not become operative until the board of supervisors of that county elects, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, to make this section operative in the county.

(Added by Stats. 2001, Ch. 778, Sec. 16. Effective October 13, 2001. Section conditionally operative by its own provisions.)

31786. Upon the death of any member after retirement for service-connected disability, the member's retirement allowance as it was at the member's death if not modified in accordance with one of the optional settlements specified in Article 11 (commencing with Section 31760), shall be continued throughout life to the member's surviving spouse. If there is no surviving spouse entitled to an allowance hereunder or if the surviving spouse dies before every child of such deceased member attains the age of 18 years, then the allowance which the surviving spouse would have received had the surviving spouse lived, shall be paid to the surviving spouse's child or children under said age, collectively, to continue until every such child dies or attains said age; provided, that no child shall receive any allowance after marrying or attaining the age of 18 years. No allowance, however, shall be paid under this section to a surviving spouse unless the surviving spouse was married to the member prior to the date of the member's retirement. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the benefits otherwise payable to the children of the member shall be paid to those children up to the 22nd birthdays of the children if the children remain unmarried and are regularly enrolled as full-time students in an accredited school as determined by the board.

(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 275, Sec. 59. (AB 2101) Effective January 1, 2021.)

31786.1. (a) Notwithstanding Section 31481 or 31786, upon the death of any member after retirement for service-connected disability, the member's retirement allowance as it was at the member's death if not modified in accordance with one of the optional settlements specified in Article 11 (commencing with Section 31760), shall be continued to the member's surviving spouse for life. If there is no surviving spouse entitled to an allowance under this section or if the surviving spouse dies before every child of the deceased member attains the age of 18 years, then the allowance that the surviving spouse would have received had the surviving

spouse lived, shall be paid to the surviving spouse's child or children under that age, collectively, to continue until each child dies or attains that age. However, no child may receive any allowance after marrying or attaining the age of 18 years.

(b) No allowance may be paid under this section to a surviving spouse unless the surviving spouse was married to the member at least two years prior to the date of death and has attained the age of 55 years on or prior to the date of death.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the benefits otherwise payable to the children of the member shall be paid to the children up to the 22nd birthdays of the children if the children remain unmarried and are regularly enrolled as full-time students in an accredited school as determined by the board.

(d) No allowance may be paid pursuant to this section to any person who is entitled to an allowance pursuant to Section 31786.

(e) The superseding rights pursuant to this section do not affect benefits payable to a named beneficiary as provided under Section 31789, 31789.01, 31789.1, 31789.12, 31789.13, 31789.2, 31789.3, 31789.5, or 31790.

(f) This section is not applicable in any county until the board of retirement, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, makes this section applicable in the county. The board's resolution may designate a date, which may be prior or subsequent to the date of the resolution, as of which the resolution and this section shall be operative in the county.

(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 275, Sec. 60. (AB 2101) Effective January 1, 2021.)

31787. (a) If a member would have been entitled to retirement in the event of a service-connected disability, but dies prior to retirement as the result of injury or disease arising out of and in the course of the member's employment, the surviving spouse of the member shall have the right to elect, by written notice filed with the board, to receive and be paid in lieu of the death benefit provided for in Sections 31780 and 31781, an optional death allowance.

(b) The optional death allowance shall consist of a monthly payment equal to the monthly retirement allowance to which the deceased member would have been entitled if the member had retired by reason of a service-connected disability as of the date of the member's death.

(c) If the surviving spouse elects to receive the optional death allowance, the payments due for this allowance shall be retroactive to the date of the deceased member's death, and shall continue throughout the life of the spouse.

(d) If the surviving spouse elects to receive the optional death allowance, and thereafter dies leaving an unmarried surviving child or unmarried children of the deceased member under the age of 18 years, the optional death allowance shall thereafter be paid to those surviving children collectively until each child dies, marries, or reaches the age of 18 years. The right of any child to the allowance shall cease upon the child's death or marriage, or upon reaching the age of 18 years, and the entire amount of the allowance shall thereafter be paid collectively to each of the other qualified children.

(e) If the deceased member leaves no surviving spouse but leaves an unmarried child or children under the age of 18 years, the legally appointed guardian of the child or children shall make the election provided in this section on behalf of the surviving child or children that, in the guardian's judgment, is in the best interests of the surviving child or children. The election made shall be binding and conclusive upon all parties in interest.

(f) The rights and privileges conferred by this section upon the surviving spouse and each child of the deceased member are not dependent upon whether any of those persons have been nominated by the deceased member as the beneficiary of any death benefits and shall supersede the rights and claims of any other beneficiary so nominated.

(g) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the benefits otherwise payable to each child of the member shall be paid to each child up to the 22nd birthday of the child if the child remains unmarried and is regularly enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited school as determined by the board.

(h) For purposes of this section, "child" means a natural or adopted child of the deceased member, or a stepchild living or domiciled with the deceased member at the time of the member's death.

(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 275, Sec. 61. (AB 2101) Effective January 1, 2021.)

31787.5. (a) A surviving spouse of a member who is killed in the performance of duty or who dies as the result of an accident or an injury caused by external violence or physical force, incurred in the performance of the member's duty, now or hereafter entitled to receive a death allowance under Section 31787, shall be paid an additional amount for each of the member's children during the lifetime of the child, or until the child marries or reaches the age of 18 years, as follows, subject to the limitation in subdivision (b):

(1) For one child, 25 percent of the allowance provided in Section 31787.

(2) For two children, 40 percent of the allowance provided in Section 31787.

(3) For three or more children, 50 percent of the allowance provided in Section 31787.

(b) If a benefit payable under this section, when added to a benefit payable under Section 31787, exceeds the maximum benefit payable by a tax-qualified pension plan under the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C.A. Sec. 401 et. seq.), the benefit payable under this section shall be reduced to the amount required to meet that benefit limit.

(c) If the surviving spouse does not have legal custody of the member's children, the allowance provided by this section shall be payable to the person to whom custody of the children has been awarded by a court of competent jurisdiction for each child during the lifetime of the child, or until the child marries or reaches the age of 18 years.

(d) The allowance provided by this section shall be payable to the surviving spouses of members whose duties consist of active law enforcement or active fire suppression or any other class or group of members as the retirement board shall fix. The allowance provided by this section is not payable to the surviving spouses of members described in Section 31469.2.

(e) Any child whose eligibility for an allowance pursuant to this section commenced on or after October 1, 1965, shall lose that eligibility effective on the date of the child's adoption.

(f) This section shall become operative in any county, which has adopted the provisions of this chapter but which has not previously adopted the provisions of this section on October 1, 1965. Each surviving spouse of a member or other person having legal custody of a member's child or children who is paid an additional amount for each of the member's children because of the amendments to this section enacted at the 1965 or 1967 Regular Session shall receive those payments as they accrue from and after October 1 of the year during which this section was amended to provide for the payment to the member's child or children of that allowance, but the surviving spouse or other person shall not be given a claim for any increase in those benefits for a time prior to that date.

(g) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the benefits otherwise payable to the children of the member shall be paid to those children up to the 22nd birthdays of the children if the children remain unmarried and are regularly enrolled as full-time students in an accredited school as determined by the board.

(Amended by Stats. 2020, Ch. 275, Sec. 62. (AB 2101) Effective January 1, 2021.)

31787.6. A surviving spouse of a safety member who is killed in the performance of duty or who dies as the result of an accident or injury caused by external violence or physical force, incurred in the performance of his or her duty, shall be paid the following amount in addition to all other benefits provided by this chapter:

A one-time lump-sum benefit equal to an amount, provided from contributions by the county or district, equal to the annual compensation earnable or pensionable compensation as defined in Section 7522.34, whichever is applicable, by the deceased at his or her monthly rate of compensation at the time of his or her death.

This section is not applicable to members described in Section 31469.2.

(Amended by Stats. 2014, Ch. 741, Sec. 11. (AB 2474) Effective January 1, 2015.)

31787.65. (a) For purposes of Section 31787, the final compensation upon which the special death benefit is calculated for the eligible surviving spouse or eligible children of a safety member killed in the performance of his or her duty shall be increased at any time the increase is effective and to the extent the compensation is increased for then-active members employed in the job classification and membership category that was applicable to the deceased member at the time of the injury, or the onset of the disease, causing death. The deceased member's final compensation shall be deemed to be subject to further increases hereunder only until the earlier of (1) the death of the surviving spouse or eligible children or (2) the date that the deceased member would have attained the age of 50 years.

(b) This section applies only to a county of the seventh class, as defined by Sections 28020 and 28028, as amended by Chapter 1204 of the Statutes of 1971, and shall not be operative until the board of supervisors, by resolution, makes this section applicable in the county. A resolution to make this section operative in the county shall specify whether these provisions apply retroactively or prospectively only.

(Added by Stats. 2009, Ch. 583, Sec. 1. (SB 345) Effective January 1, 2010.)

31789. Upon the death of any person after retirement and while receiving a retirement allowance from this system, or any superseded system, there shall be paid to his estate or to such beneficiary as he shall nominate by written designation duly executed and filed with the board, the sum of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) to be provided from contributions of the county or district.

This section applies to every member who dies after this section becomes operative whether he has retired before or after the operative date or effective date of this section.

This section shall not be operative in any county until such time as the board of supervisors shall, by resolution adopted by majority vote, make the provisions of this section applicable in such county.

(Amended by Stats. 1971, Ch. 282.)

31789.01. Notwithstanding Sections 31786, 31787, and 31787.5, upon the death, after retirement and while receiving a retirement allowance from this system, of any person who was covered under Section 31751, there shall be paid to the member's estate, or to such beneficiary as the member shall nominate by written designation duly executed and filed with the board, the sum of two thousand dollars (\$2,000) to be provided from contributions of the county or district, offset by any lump-sum death payment made under the federal Social Security Act.

(Added by Stats. 1980, Ch. 58.)

31789.1. Upon the death of any member after retirement and while receiving a retirement allowance from this system, or any superseded system, there shall be paid to his estate or to such beneficiary as he shall nominate by written designation duly executed and filed with the board, the sum of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750).

This section applies to every member who dies after this section becomes operative whether he has retired before or after the operative date or effective date of this section.

Only one death benefit payment shall be paid under this section or under Section 31789, and shall be paid by the system subject to Section 31789 and this section where the member rendered his last active service.

This section shall not become operative in any county until such time as the board of retirement determines that its benefits may be financed from surplus earnings of the retirement fund. Upon this determination by the retirement board, the provisions of this section shall become operative.

Upon adoption by any county providing benefits pursuant to this section, of Article 5.5 (commencing with Section 31510) of this chapter, the board of retirement shall, instead, pay those benefits from the Supplemental Retiree Benefits Reserve established pursuant to Section 31510.8.

(Amended by Stats. 1983, Ch. 886, Sec. 8.)

31789.12. Notwithstanding Section 31789.1, the board may increase the sum payable pursuant to Section 31789.1 to one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

Upon adoption by any county providing benefits pursuant to this section, of Article 5.5 (commencing with Section 31610) of this chapter, the board of retirement shall, instead, pay those benefits from the Supplemental Retiree Benefits Reserve established pursuant to Section 31618.

(Amended by Stats. 1989, Ch. 149, Sec. 1.)

31789.13. Upon the death of any person while receiving a retirement allowance from the system, the board of retirement may supplement the sum payable pursuant to Section 31789 by an amount of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) from the surplus earnings established pursuant to Section 31592.2.

This section applies to every retiree who dies after this section becomes operative whether retired before or after the operative date of this section.

This section shall not become operative in any county until such time as the board of retirement determines that this supplemental benefit can be financed from the surplus earnings established pursuant to Section 31592.2 which exceed 1 percent of the total assets of the retirement system.

The total of the death benefits paid pursuant to Section 31789 and this section shall not exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000). The death benefits payable pursuant to Section 31789 and this section shall be paid only by the system which is subject to Section 31789 and this section and in which the member rendered his or her last service.

(Added by Stats. 1986, Ch. 441, Sec. 1. Effective July 22, 1986.)

31789.2. Upon the death of any person after retirement and while receiving a retirement allowance from this system, or any superseded system, there shall be paid to his estate, or to such beneficiary as he shall nominate by written designation duly executed and filed with the board, the sum of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750).

This section applies to every member who dies after this section becomes operative whether he has retired before or after the operative date or effective date of this section.

The death benefit provided by this section shall be paid in lieu of a payment under Section 31789 or 31789.1 and may be paid in part, from contributions of the county or district in accordance with Section 31789, and in part, from surplus earnings of the retirement system in accordance with Section 31789.1.

This section shall not be operative in any county until such time as the board of supervisors shall, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, make the provisions of this section applicable in such county and until such time as the board of retirement, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, determines that its portion of the benefits may be financed from surplus earnings of the retirement fund.

Upon adoption by any county providing benefits pursuant to this section, of Article 5.5 (commencing with Section 31510) of this chapter, only that portion of those benefits which is paid from surplus earnings described in Section 31592.2 shall be paid, instead, from the Supplemental Retiree Benefits Reserve established pursuant to Section 31510.8.

(Amended by Stats. 1983, Ch. 886, Sec. 9.)

31789.3. (a) Upon the death of any person after retirement and while receiving a retirement allowance from this system, or any superseded system, there shall be paid to his or her estate or to the beneficiary as he or she shall nominate by written designation duly executed and filed with the board, an amount determined by the board of supervisors to be provided from contributions of the county or district. The board of supervisors shall, by resolution adopted by majority vote, fix and determine an amount that shall not exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

(b) This section applies to every member who dies after this section becomes operative whether he or she has retired before or after the operative date or effective date of this section.

(c) The death benefit provided by this section shall be paid in lieu of a payment under Section 31789 or 31789.1.

(d) This section shall not be operative in any county until such time as the board of supervisors shall, by resolution adopted by majority vote, make the provisions of this section applicable in the county.

(Added by Stats. 1997, Ch. 439, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 1998.)

31789.5. (a) Upon the death of any person after retirement and while receiving a retirement allowance from this system, or any superseded system, there shall be paid to his or her estate, or to the beneficiary as he or she shall nominate by written designation duly executed and filed with the board, an amount determined by the board of supervisors. The board of supervisors shall, by resolution adopted by majority vote, fix and determine an amount that may not exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

(b) This section applies to every member who dies after this section becomes operative whether he or she has retired before or after the operative date or effective date of this section.

(c) The death benefit provided by this section shall be paid in lieu of a payment under Section 31789 or 31789.1 and may be paid in part, from contributions of the county or district in accordance with Section 31789, and in part, from surplus earnings of the retirement system in accordance with Section 31789.1.

(d) The death benefit provided by this section may, at the election of the board of retirement, be provided through a group life insurance policy if the cost of that policy to the system is the same or less than the cost to the system, county, or district of other methods of providing the benefit.

(e) This section may not be operative in any county until the board of supervisors, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, makes this section applicable in the county and the board of retirement, by resolution adopted by a majority vote, determines that its portion of the cost of the benefits may be financed from surplus earnings of the retirement fund.

(f) Upon adoption, by any county providing benefits pursuant to this section, of Article 5.5 (commencing with Section 31610), only that portion of those benefits that is paid from surplus earnings described in Section 31592.2 shall be paid, instead, from the Supplemental Retiree Benefits Reserve established pursuant to Section 31618.

(Amended by Stats. 2004, Ch. 441, Sec. 7. Effective January 1, 2005.)

31790. Upon the death of any person before retirement which person shall have to his credit at least 10 years of service with the county or district, there shall be paid to his estate or to such beneficiary as he shall nominate by written designation duly executed and filed with the board, the sum of seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750) to be provided from the contributions of the county or district.

This section shall not be operative in any county until such time as the board of supervisors shall, by resolution adopted by majority vote, make the provisions hereof applicable to the county.

(Amended by Stats. 1971, Ch. 282.)

31791. Notwithstanding Section 31760.1, 31765.1, 31781.1, 31781.2, 31785, 31786, 31787, or 31787.5, the board of supervisors of a county of the first class as described by Sections 28020 and 28022 may, by resolution adopted by a majority vote and with respect to the death benefit payable pursuant to any, all, or any combination of, those sections, take any or all of the following actions:

(a) Increase the maximum age for eligible children who remain unmarried and are regularly enrolled as full-time students in an accredited school as determined by the board, to the age of 23 years.

(b) Provide for payment of the death benefit to any surviving children for such period as those children remain legally incompetent to act as adults regardless of age.

(Added by Stats. 1985, Ch. 890, Sec. 2.)

31792. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter to the contrary, the board may, by a resolution adopted, pursuant to both this section and Section 31768, by a majority vote and with respect only to persons who first become members on or after the effective date of the resolution, act as follows:

(a) Elect to increase, by $33\frac{1}{3}$ percent, the amounts payable pursuant to any one or more of Sections 31781.1, 31785, and 31785.1.

(b) Elect to decrease, by 20 percent, the amounts payable pursuant to any one or more of Sections 31786, 31786.1, and 31787.

This section shall apply only to a county of the first class, as defined by Section 28020, as amended by Chapter 1204 of the Statutes of 1971, and Section 28022, as amended by Chapter 43 of the Statutes of 1961.

(Added by Stats. 1993, Ch. 286, Sec. 2. Effective January 1, 1994.)