

G Fund means the Government Securities Investment Fund established under 5 U.S.C. 8438(b)(1)(A);

Investment fund means the C Fund, the F Fund, the G Fund, or any other TSP investment fund created subsequent to December 27, 1986;

Order of precedence means the order in which a death benefit will be paid, as specified in 5 U.S.C. 8424(d);

Participant means any person with an account in the Thrift Savings Fund;

Thrift Savings Fund means the Fund described in 5 U.S.C. 8437;

Thrift Savings Plan or *TSP* means the Federal Retirement Thrift Savings Plan established by the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986, codified in pertinent part at 5 U.S.C. 8431 *et seq.*;

TSP record keeper means the entity that is engaged by the Board to perform record keeping service for the Thrift Savings Plan. As of June 13, 1997, the TSP record keeper is the National Finance Center, United States Department of Agriculture, whose mailing address is National Finance Center, TSP Service Office, P.O. Box 61135, New Orleans, Louisiana 70161-1135;

Withdrawal election means a request for the payment of a participant's vested account balance filed under 5 CFR 1650, subpart B.

[62 FR 32429, June 13, 1997, as amended at 64 FR 31062, June 9, 1999]

§ 1651.2 Entitlement to benefits.

(a) *Death benefit payments made before the participant has completed a withdrawal election.* If a participant dies before completing a withdrawal election, the account will be paid to the individual or individuals surviving the participant in the following order of precedence:

(1) To the beneficiary or beneficiaries designated by the participant on a properly completed and filed Form TSP-3, Designation of Beneficiary, in accordance with § 1651.3;

(2) If there is no designated beneficiary, to the widow or widower of the participant in accordance with § 1651.5;

(3) If none of the above in paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section, to the child or children of the participant and descendants of deceased children by

representation in accordance with § 1651.6;

(4) If none of the above in paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) of this section, to the parents of the participant or the surviving one of them in accordance with § 1651.7;

(5) If none of the above in paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(4) of this section, to the duly appointed executor or administrator of the estate of the participant in accordance with § 1651.8;

(6) If none of the above in paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(5) of this section, to the next of kin of the participant who are entitled under the laws of the state of the participant's domicile at the date of the participant's death in accordance with § 1651.9.

(b) *Death benefit payments made after the participant has completed a withdrawal election.* (1) The death benefit will be paid in accordance with the order of precedence as set forth in paragraph (a) of this section if the Board learns that the participant has died after having completed an election to withdraw his or her TSP account balance in the form of a single payment or monthly payments (whether or not the participant has requested that all or part of such payments be transferred to an eligible retirement plan), but the account balance has not yet been paid out in accordance with such election.

(2) The death benefit will be paid as a single payment to the joint life annuitant if the Board learns that the participant has died after having completed an election to withdraw his or her TSP account balance in the form of a joint life annuity, but the annuity has not yet been purchased.

(3) The death benefit will be paid pro rata as a single payment to the beneficiary(ies) designated on Form TSP-11-B, Beneficiary Designation for a TSP Annuity, if both the participant and the joint annuitant die after the participant has completed an election to withdraw his or her TSP account balance in the form of a joint life annuity that includes a cash refund, but before the annuity has been purchased.

(4) The death benefit will be paid in accordance with the order of precedence as set forth in paragraph (a) of this section, if the Board learns that—

(i) Both the participant and the joint annuitant have died after the participant has completed an election to withdraw his or her TSP account balance in the form of a joint life annuity that does not include a cash refund, but the annuity has not yet been purchased; or

(ii) Both the beneficiary(ies) named under a cash refund election and the joint annuitant have died after the participant has completed an election to withdraw, but the annuity has not yet been purchased.

(5) The death benefit will be paid *pro rata* to the beneficiary(ies) designated on the Form TSP-11-B if the Board learns that the participant has died after having completed an election to withdraw his or her TSP account balance in the form of a single life annuity that includes either a cash refund or 10-year certain feature, but the annuity has not yet been purchased.

(6) The death benefit will be paid in accordance with the order of precedence set forth in paragraph (a) of this section if the Board learns that the participant and all beneficiaries designated on a Form TSP-11-B have died after the participant has completed an election to withdraw his or her TSP account balance in the form of a single life annuity that includes either a cash refund or a 10-year certain feature, but the annuity has not yet been purchased.

(7) The death benefit will be paid in accordance with the order of precedence as set forth in paragraph (a) of this section if a participant dies after having completed an election to withdraw his or her TSP account balance in the form of a single life annuity that does not include either a cash refund or 10-year certain feature, but before the annuity has been purchased.

(8) If a participant dies after the annuity purchase has been completed, benefit payments will be provided in accordance with the annuity method selected.

(c) If a participant dies with any portion of his or her TSP account in an investment fund other than the G Fund, the Board will transfer the entire account into the G Fund after receiving written notice of the participant's death. The account will continue to ac-

crue earnings at the G Fund rate in accordance with 5 CFR part 1645 until it is paid in accordance with the order of precedence set forth in paragraph (a) of this section.

[62 FR 32429, June 13, 1997, as amended at 64 FR 31062, June 9, 1999]

§ 1651.3 Designation of beneficiary.

(a) *Filing requirements.* In order to designate a beneficiary of a TSP account, the participant must complete and file Form TSP-3, Designation of Beneficiary, unless Form TSP-11-B is used for this purpose. All Forms TSP-3 and TSP-11-B signed on or after January 1, 1995, must be received by the TSP record keeper on or before the participant's date of death. If the Form TSP-3 was received and accepted by the participant's employing agency before January 1, 1995, the TSP record keeper will process it and determine its validity when it is received from the employing agency. A valid Form TSP-3 remains in effect until it is properly canceled or changed as described in § 1651.4.

(b) *Eligible beneficiaries.* Any individual, firm, corporation, or legal entity, including the U.S. Government, may be designated as a beneficiary. Any number of beneficiaries can be named to share the death benefit. A beneficiary may be designated without the knowledge or consent of the beneficiary or the knowledge or consent of the participant's spouse.

(c) *Validity requirements.* In order to be valid, a Form TSP-3 must be signed by the participant in the presence of two witnesses, or the participant must acknowledge his or her signature on the Form TSP-3 in the presence of two witnesses. A witness must be age 21 or older, and a witness designated as a beneficiary on the Form TSP-3 will not be entitled to receive a death benefit payment. If a witness is the only named beneficiary, the Form TSP-3 is invalid. If more than one beneficiary is named, the share of the witness beneficiary will be allocated among the remaining beneficiaries *pro rata*.

(d) *Will.* A will, or any document other than Form TSP-3 or Form TSP-11-B, may not be used to designate a beneficiary(ies) of a TSP account.