

RAO Newsletter - 2018-7

The Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) for Surviving Spouses is now a Permanent Benefit

The Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) is a benefit for surviving spouses who receive a Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity that is offset by a Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payment from the VA.

SSIA is now a permanent benefit. The benefit will now be paid at \$310 per month plus a cost-of-living adjustment each calendar year. The cost-of-living adjustment will begin in 2019.

It can be confusing to understand how SBP, DIC, and SSIA are paid, and how the laws and regulations treat different situations.

Here are the basics:

- Spouse SBP annuitants, except for those who remarry after age 57 (or in other specific circumstances), cannot receive full SBP and DIC at the same time (DIC payments made directly to children, or to a guardian on behalf of children, do not affect SBP child annuity payments).
- When we are informed by the VA that a spouse receiving an SBP annuity is receiving DIC, the law requires that DFAS deduct the amount of DIC received from the amount of SBP payable and pay the remaining amount of the SBP to the annuitant. This is called the SBP/DIC offset.
- If the SBP payment is greater than the DIC payment, a partial refund of premiums paid into the program during the service member's retirement will be made to the spouse.
- If the DIC payment is greater than the SBP payment, SBP will be stopped completely and all eligible basic spouse premiums paid into the program during the service member's retirement will be refunded.
- When a spouse is eligible to receive SBP and DIC, and those payments are subject to the SBP/DIC offset, the spouse will also receive the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA).

As with other laws and regulations, there are many exceptions and special circumstances that apply to these benefits. For additional information, please see our website at:

www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/survivors/Understanding-SBP-DIC-SSIA

(Information provided in DFAS Retiree Newsletter – June 2018)