

DD-93 Video Transcript

Documentary excerpts:

Our lives change on a daily basis...

We don't know what's going to happen on the way home from work.

If I die tonight is everything going to be taken care of?

What's my plan?

Even as a Soldier myself...I was always told complete the DD93. It's very important. Make sure you sign it. Make sure it's up to date. But never was really told why. When I came to Casualty I saw why. I saw this form come to life at the soldier's life ends.

The Soldier that is assured that the home front is taken care of is 100% focused on the mission and that saves lives.

It's sad and heartbreaking often to see a soldier's legacy maybe not being completely filled because of lack of preparation.

This is something that can simply be avoided by taking 10 to 15 minutes out of your time to memorialize what you would or would not like to have done in a situation like that.

If we get it right, it's like bands of excellence.

The consequences are huge.

This one particular document...the DD Form 93...

DD Form 93...

DD 93..

Take the time.

Do it. Do it. Do it.

Narrator:

The Record of Emergency Data - DD Form 93 - expresses your wishes regarding a number of critical issues. These include the following:

- Which next of kin should be notified? Who are your primary and secondary next of kin? Who should not be notified because they are not in good health?
- Who will be responsible for making funeral arrangements, in the event that you die? That is, who will be the Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of your remains?
- How...and to whom should applicable entitlements be distributed, such as the death gratuity benefit and unpaid pay and allowances?

The form also provides space for you to make additional important remarks.

If you are Active Duty, you must update the DD Form 93:

- During out-processing for a permanent change of station (PCS) and/or pre-separation processing;
- When you arrive at a new duty station;
- During any record audit; and

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-In conjunction with the Soldier Readiness Program.(SRP)

In addition, you must review and update DD Form 93 whenever the status of any family member changes, such as a new address, a marriage, a divorce, the birth of a child, or the death of a family member.

If you are a member of the Army Reserve or Army National Guard, you must review your form at a minimum:

-During in-processing to a new troop program unit;

-In conjunction with a nationwide deployment or mobilization readiness exercise;

-Annually, in your month of birth; and

-Whenever the status of your family situation changes.

Remember: Information that is not current can delay notification of your loved ones; give rise to family disputes regarding benefits; prevent a family member from traveling to your bedside if you are injured, ill or wounded; or delay payment of benefits to your beneficiaries.

Let's go through the form step-by-step:

The first section contains your personal information.

In Block 1, enter your full last name, first name, and middle initial.

In Block 2, enter your social security number.

In Block 3a, indicate "Army" with an "X".

Block 3b is your Reporting Unit/Duty Station. Enter its Unit Identification Code. You can get this information from your unit. It's also on your Enlisted Record Brief (ERB) or Officer Record Brief (ORB).

If you're married, enter your spouse's last name, first name, and middle initial in Block 4a.

This information must match the information contained in DEERS. Even if you are in the process of filing for divorce, you must enter your spouse's name.

When the divorce is finalized and there is a divorce decree, you should update DD Form 93 and DEERS immediately.

If you are single, divorced, or widowed, mark the appropriate block in 4a.

If you are married, enter the address where your spouse "physically" lives and telephone number. Do not enter a mailing address if it is different from the physical location.

If listing a rural route or if the address is hard to find, provide detailed directions in the remarks block or attach a map. Also, if your spouse has a second home or frequently visits another address, list these in the remarks block.

Remember: because this form is used for notification, the Army must know where and how to contact your family members if you become a casualty.

Include your spouse's civilian title, or military rank and service, if applicable, in the address block.

Block 5 contains information about your children.

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Enter the last name, if different from your own, first name, and middle initial of all children. If you don't have any, indicate "none."

Include illegitimate children if you acknowledge them or if their paternity has been confirmed by a judicial decree.

If applicable, include the child's civilian title or military rank and service.

Indicate the child's relationship to you, such as son, daughter, stepson or stepdaughter, adopted son or daughter, or ward.

If the children are not living with you and/or your current spouse, include the address, name, relationship, and telephone number of the person with whom your child or children are living.

In Block 6, enter your father's name, physical address, and telephone number.

Do not enter the mailing address if different from the physical location. For example, do not enter a post office box; instead list the actual physical location.

If applicable, include your father's civilian title or military rank and service.

You may list someone other than your natural, biological father -- for example, a stepfather -- as long as you also include the same information about your biological father in the Continuation Remarks section.

If your father is unknown or deceased, indicate this on the form. If you list someone other than your natural, biological father, indicate the relationship, such as "stepfather."

In Block 7, enter your mother's name, physical address, and telephone number.

If applicable, include your mother's civilian title or military rank and service.

You may list someone other than your natural, biological mother -- for example, a stepmother, as long as you include the same information about your biological mother in the Continuation Remarks section.

If applicable, indicate whether your mother is unknown or deceased. If not your natural, biological mother, note the relationship - such as stepmother.

The box, "Do Not Notify Due to Ill Health" is used to identify those next-of-kin whom you do not want notified, due to their ill health. You may indicate whom you want the Army to notify instead.

In Block 8a, list these by relationship, such as "father, John Smith" or "daughter, Jane Smith." If you do not want to exclude anyone from notification, enter "None."

In Block 8b, list the name, relationship, and address of the person or persons you want notified instead. If "None" is entered in Item 8a, leave 8b blank.

If you are placed in the category of "missing," Block 9 is used by the Army to provide information on your whereabouts and status to a person or persons other than your primary next of kin or immediate family. In Block 9, record the name, address, and phone number of each person you want notified.

Section 2 of DD Form 93 contains very important benefits-related information.

Block 11 addresses death gratuity beneficiaries. The death gratuity is a one-time, non-taxable payment to help surviving family members, or designated beneficiaries deal with the financial hardships that accompany the loss of a Soldier.

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The payment is for designated survivors of a deceased Soldier who died while on active-duty, or a Soldier who died within 120 days of separation or retirement from active duty if the Department of Veterans' Affairs determines that the death resulted from a service-connected injury or illness.

In Block 11a, enter the first name, middle initial, and last name of the person or persons whom you want to receive the death gratuity payment. In Block 11b, enter your relationship with each person designated.

You may designate anywhere from one up to ten people who will receive all or a portion of the death gratuity payment. Portions must be in 10% increments.

In Block c, enter the full physical address - not a separate mailing address - and telephone number for each person designated.

In Block 11d, indicate the percentage to be paid to each person. You can designate 100% to be paid to one person or you can designate that the money be divided among the persons you identify.

For example, you may enter 50% to your spouse, and 50% to your father.

If you intend to name a minor child as a beneficiary, make sure you seek legal advice first. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will not make a payment directly to a minor child.

There are also some special considerations for married Soldiers.

If you are married but elect to give any part of the death gratuity to anyone other than your spouse, the law requires the Army to notify your spouse. This is called a "spousal notification."

If you are legally separated but still married, or if your divorce has not yet been finalized by a court decree, the Army must still notify your spouse if you elect to give any portion of the Death Gratuity to someone else.

If you're unsure about your situation, consult a legal assistance attorney immediately.

The Army will not tell your spouse whom you elected to give the death gratuity to, nor will the Army tell your spouse how much of the death gratuity will go to someone else.

The Army will only tell your spouse that you elected to give a portion of the death gratuity to someone other than them.

To prevent confusion, surprise, or disappointment, it is important to discuss your decision with your spouse whenever you make a change to your DD Form 93.

To expedite payment of the Death Gratuity, it's essential to make specific and accurate designations.

If you do not wish to designate a beneficiary, enter "None." If you enter "None," or if the full amount of the payment is not designated, the entire amount or the balance that is not designated will be paid by law according to the following:

- To the surviving spouse
- To surviving children
- To the surviving parents or, if they are deceased, to their survivors, or
- To the duly appointed executor or administrator of the estate

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If there are none of the above, the payment will be made to other next of kin who are entitled under the laws of your domicile at the time of your death, to receive the Death Gratuity Payment.

Upon the death of a Soldier, any pay and allowances due, but not paid to the Soldier, are paid to the designated beneficiary or beneficiaries.

Unpaid pay and allowances include unpaid basic pay, payment of accrued leave, amount due for travel, per diem expenses, and unpaid installments of variable reenlistment bonuses.

You may designate anyone to receive this payment.

In Block 12a, enter the first name, middle initial, last name and relationship of the person or persons you want to receive unpaid pay and allowances.

In Block 12b, enter the physical address and telephone number for each beneficiary.

As with the Death Gratuity, when you designate more than one beneficiary, you must also indicate the percentage each beneficiary will receive. Indicate this percentage in Block 12c. The percentages can be allocated in any increment, but they must add up to 100%.

You are strongly encouraged to designate a beneficiary for unpaid pay and allowances. If, however, you choose to not designate a beneficiary, enter "By Law."

In this case, the payments will be made by precedence of law, according to the following:

- Surviving spouse
- Children and their descendants, by representation
- Father and mother in equal parts or, if either is deceased, the survivor
- Legal representative; or
- Person entitled under the law of the domicile of the deceased Soldier

As we mentioned earlier, always seek legal advice before you name a minor child as a beneficiary. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) cannot issue a payment directly to a minor child; therefore, you must consult with your legal assistance office to make other legal arrangements that suit your particular situation to reserve monies for your minor children.

The final key section of DD Form 93 is designating the Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of your remains, should you die. This person is called the PADD.

You may only designate someone from among these family members to be the PADD: your spouse (if married); any blood relative of legal age; or an adult adoptive relative.

If you have none of the above, you can name a person serving in loco parentis - that is, legally in place of a parent.

You cannot designate any other person other than a family member or a person serving in loco parentis; doing so will invalidate the designation.

The PADD designation is very important.

This person will be asked to make all important decisions related to the return of your remains if you should die while on active duty.

He or she will decide whether you are buried or cremated, where you'll be buried or inurned, whether or not there will be a church service or a graveside service, whether you will have

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military funeral honors rendered, in what kind of attire you will be buried or cremated, and what will happen to any subsequent remains that may be recovered.

A Casualty Assistance officer will be assigned to help the PADD make these arrangements.

Think about this designation carefully and discuss it with your family beforehand. The PADD should be someone whom you trust to carry out your wishes and ideally whom other family members respect and trust as well.

Enter the name, relationship, physical address, and telephone number of the person you designate as the PADD.

He or she must be selected from one of the family members discussed earlier: a spouse, an adult blood relative, an adult adoptive relative, or if you have no relative who falls in those categories, you may designate a person serving in loco parentis.

Other members of your family may not necessarily agree with your decision. The Army will not become involved in family disputes and will comply with your wishes to the extent possible.

However, if a civil court order prohibits the Army from transferring custody of the remains, or granting control to the person you designated, or the court grants custody of the remains to a person other than the person you designated, the Army will comply with the court order.

You may have a perfectly good reason to designate a blood relative other than your spouse (if married) or a parent (if single). For example, you may be legally separated from your spouse or your spouse may not want the responsibility.

However, this decision warrants counseling by a senior NCO or civilian equivalent to help ensure that you've thought through your decision.

The counselor will advise you to communicate your choice with family members to avoid additional unnecessary anguish.

If the person you designate declines to be the PADD, is not eligible to be the PADD, or the designated person does not survive you, then a legal order of precedence will apply.

The DD Form 93 allows you to include additional remarks or continuation of other items. If you are adding more information to an item in the form, indicate its number in the continuation area.

You can use this space to list the name, address, and relationship of other persons you want notified as well as other dependents.

This section offers you a lot of flexibility in recording important information that wasn't requested on the form but might be very useful in the casualty notification and assistance process.

This can include:

- Detailed directions to residences, especially to hard-to-find relatives;
- Language barriers to expect;
- The existence and location of a will;
- Additional private insurance information;
- Contact information for family members not listed in the main form;
- Contact information for your spouse's or your parents' employer; or

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-The address and telephone number of a location at which your spouse may spend extended time during your deployment.

Also use this area to designate a non-medical attendant from among your adult family members and a desired geographic area for medical rehabilitation in the event you are injured or become incapacitated.

If you need additional space, attach a supplemental sheet of paper.

Finally, you must sign the DD Form 93, either with an electronic signature or manually. If signing manually, have your signature witnessed. Include your rank, rate or grade, if applicable.

And, if you are signing manually, be sure to enter the full date signed. Once this document is signed, dated, and - if necessary -- witnessed, the DD Form 93 is considered a legal document.

By taking the time to communicate your concerns and wishes thoroughly on DD Form 93, you will enable the Army to better act on your behalf.