

**Chapter 11.04 RCW  
DESCENT AND DISTRIBUTION**

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*Inheritance rights of slayers or abusers: Chapter 11.84 RCW.*

**RCW 11.04.015 Descent and distribution of real and personal estate.** The net estate of a person dying intestate, or that portion thereof with respect to which the person shall have died intestate, shall descend subject to the provisions of RCW 11.04.250 and 11.02.070, and shall be distributed as follows:

(1) Share of surviving spouse or state registered domestic partner. The surviving spouse or state registered domestic partner shall receive the following share:

(a) All of the decedent's share of the net community estate; and  
(b) One-half of the net separate estate if the intestate is survived by issue; or

(c) Three-quarters of the net separate estate if there is no surviving issue, but the intestate is survived by one or more of his or her parents, or by one or more of the issue of one or more of his or her parents; or

(d) All of the net separate estate, if there is no surviving issue nor parent nor issue of parent.

(2) Shares of others than surviving spouse or state registered domestic partner. The share of the net estate not distributable to the surviving spouse or state registered domestic partner, or the entire net estate if there is no surviving spouse or state registered domestic partner, shall descend and be distributed as follows:

(a) To the issue of the intestate; if they are all in the same degree of kinship to the intestate, they shall take equally, or if of unequal degree, then those of more remote degree shall take by representation.

(b) If the intestate not be survived by issue, then to the parent or parents who survive the intestate.

(c) If the intestate not be survived by issue or by either parent, then to those issue of the parent or parents who survive the intestate; if they are all in the same degree of kinship to the intestate, they shall take equally, or, if of unequal degree, then those of more remote degree shall take by representation.

(d) If the intestate not be survived by issue or by either parent, or by any issue of the parent or parents who survive the intestate, then to the grandparent or grandparents who survive the intestate; if both maternal and paternal grandparents survive the intestate, the maternal grandparent or grandparents shall take one-half and the paternal grandparent or grandparents shall take one-half.

(e) If the intestate not be survived by issue or by either parent, or by any issue of the parent or parents or by any grandparent or grandparents, then to those issue of any grandparent or grandparents who survive the intestate; taken as a group, the issue of the maternal grandparent or grandparents shall share equally with the issue of the paternal grandparent or grandparents, also taken as a group; within each such group, all members share equally if they are all in the same degree of kinship to the intestate, or, if some be of unequal degree, then those of more remote degree shall take by representation. [2010 c 8 s 2001; 2007 c 156 s 27; 1974 ex.s. c 117 s 6; 1967 c 168 s 2; 1965 ex.s. c 55 s 1; 1965 c 145 s 11.04.015. Formerly RCW 11.04.020, 11.04.030, 11.04.050.]

**Application, construction—Severability—Effective date—1974 ex.s. c 117:** See RCW 11.02.080 and notes following.

*Appropriation to pay debts and expenses: Chapter 11.10 RCW.*

*Community property  
disposition: RCW 11.02.070.  
generally: Chapter 26.16 RCW.*

*Escheats: Chapter 11.08 RCW.*

*"Net estate" defined: RCW 11.02.005(12).*

*Payment of claims where estate insufficient: RCW 11.76.150.*

*Priority of sale, etc., as between realty and personalty: Chapter 11.10 RCW.*

**RCW 11.04.035 Kindred of the half blood.** Kindred of the half blood shall inherit the same share which they would have inherited if they had been of the whole blood, unless the inheritance comes to the intestate by descent, devise, or gift from one of his or her ancestors, or kindred of such ancestor's blood, in which case all those who are not of the blood of such ancestors shall be excluded from such inheritance: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That the words "kindred of such ancestor's blood" and "blood of such ancestors" shall be construed to include any child lawfully adopted by one who is in fact of the blood of such ancestors. [2010 c 8 s 2002; 1967 c 168 s 3; 1965 c 145 s 11.04.035. Formerly RCW 11.04.100, part.]

*"Degree of kinship" defined: RCW 11.02.005(3).*

**RCW 11.04.041 Advancements.** If a person dies intestate as to all his or her estate, property which he or she gave in his or her lifetime as an advancement to any person who, if the intestate had

died at the time of making the advancement, would be entitled to inherit a part of his or her estate, shall be counted toward the advancee's intestate share, and to the extent that it does not exceed such intestate share shall be taken into account in computing the estate to be distributed. Every gratuitous inter vivos transfer is deemed to be an absolute gift and not an advancement unless shown to be an advancement. The advancement shall be considered as of its value at the time when the advancee came into possession or enjoyment or at the time of the death of the intestate, whichever first occurs. If the advancee dies before the intestate, leaving a lineal heir who takes from the intestate, the advancement shall be taken into account in the same manner as if it had been made directly to such heir. If such heir is entitled to a lesser share in the estate than the advancee would have been entitled had he or she survived the intestate, then the heir shall only be charged with such proportion of the advancement as the amount he or she would have inherited, had there been no advancement, bears to the amount which the advancee would have inherited, had there been no advancement. [2010 c 8 s 2003; 1965 c 145 s 11.04.041. Formerly RCW 11.04.040, 11.04.120, 11.04.130, 11.04.140, 11.04.150, 11.04.160, and 11.04.170.]

**RCW 11.04.060 Tenancy in dower and by curtesy abolished.** The provisions of RCW 11.04.015, as to the inheritance of the husband and wife from each other take the place of tenancy in dower and tenancy by curtesy, which are hereby abolished. [1965 c 145 s 11.04.060. Prior: Code 1881 s 3304; 1875 p 55 s 3; RRS s 1343.]

**RCW 11.04.071 Survivorship as incident of tenancy by the entirety abolished.** The right of survivorship as an incident of tenancy by the entirety is abolished. [1965 c 145 s 11.04.071.]

*Joint tenancy: Chapter 64.28 RCW.*

*Safe deposit repository—Lease provision ineffective to create joint tenancy or transfer at one lessee's death: RCW 11.02.130.*

**RCW 11.04.081 Inheritance by and from any child not dependent upon marriage of parents.** For the purpose of inheritance to, through, and from any child, the effects and treatment of the parent-child relationship shall not depend upon whether or not the parents have been married. [1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 42 s 24; 1965 c 145 s 11.04.081. Formerly RCW 11.04.080 and 11.04.090.]

*Effect of decree of adoption: RCW 26.33.260.*

*"Issue" includes all lawfully adopted children: RCW 11.02.005(11).*

**RCW 11.04.085 Inheritance by adopted child.** A lawfully adopted child shall not be considered an "heir" of his or her natural parents for purposes of this title. [2010 c 8 s 2004; 1965 c 145 s 11.04.085.]

*Effect of decree of adoption: RCW 26.33.260.*

*"Issue" includes lawfully adopted children: RCW 11.02.005(11).*

**RCW 11.04.095 Inheritance from stepparent avoids escheat.** If a person dies leaving a surviving spouse or surviving domestic partner and issue by a former spouse or former domestic partner and leaving a will whereby all or substantially all of the deceased's property passes to the surviving spouse or surviving domestic partner or having before death conveyed all or substantially all his or her property to the surviving spouse or surviving domestic partner, and afterwards the latter dies without heirs and without disposing of his or her property by will so that except for this section the same would all escheat, the issue of the spouse or domestic partner first deceased who survive the spouse or domestic partner last deceased shall take and inherit from the spouse or domestic partner last deceased the property so acquired by will or conveyance or the equivalent thereof in money or other property; if such issue are all in the same degree of kinship to the spouse or domestic partner first deceased they shall take equally, or, if of unequal degree, then those of more remote degree shall take by representation with respect to such spouse or such domestic partner first deceased. [2008 c 6 s 905; 1965 c 145 s 11.04.095. Prior: 1919 c 197 s 1; RCW 11.08.010; RRS s 1356-1.]

**Part headings not law—Severability—2008 c 6:** See RCW 26.60.900 and 26.60.901.

**RCW 11.04.230 United States savings bond—Effect of death of co-owner.** If either co-owner of United States savings bonds registered in two names as co-owners (in the alternative) dies without having presented and surrendered the bond for payment to a federal reserve bank or the treasury department, the surviving co-owner will be the sole and absolute owner of the bond. [1965 c 145 s 11.04.230. Prior: 1943 c 14 s 1; Rem. Supp. 1943 s 11548-60.]

**RCW 11.04.240 United States savings bond—Effect of beneficiary's survival of registered owner.** If the registered owner of United States savings bonds registered in the name of one person payable on death to another dies without having presented and surrendered the bond for payment or authorized reissue to a federal reserve bank or the treasury department, and is survived by the beneficiary, the beneficiary will be the sole and absolute owner of the bond. [1965 c 145 s 11.04.240. Prior: 1943 c 14 s 2; Rem. Supp. 1943 s 11548-61.]

**RCW 11.04.250 When real estate vests—Rights of heirs.** When a person dies seized of lands, tenements or hereditaments, or any right thereto or entitled to any interest therein in fee or for the life of another, his or her title shall vest immediately in his or her heirs or devisees, subject to his or her debts, family allowance, expenses of administration, and any other charges for which such real estate is liable under existing laws. No administration of the estate of such

decedent, and no decree of distribution or other finding or order of any court shall be necessary in any case to vest such title in the heirs or devisees, but the same shall vest in the heirs or devisees instantly upon the death of such decedent: PROVIDED, That no person shall be deemed a devisee until the will has been probated. The title and right to possession of such lands, tenements, or hereditaments so vested in such heirs or devisees, together with the rents, issues, and profits thereof, shall be good and valid against all persons claiming adversely to the claims of any such heirs, or devisees, excepting only the personal representative when appointed, and persons lawfully claiming under such personal representative; and any one or more of such heirs or devisees, or their grantees, jointly or severally, may sue for and recover their respective shares or interests in any such lands, tenements, or hereditaments and the rents, issues, and profits thereof, whether letters testamentary or of administration be granted or not, from any person except the personal representative and those lawfully claiming under such personal representative. [2010 c 8 s 2005; 1965 c 145 s 11.04.250. Prior: 1895 c 105 s 1; RRS s 1366.]

*Right to possession and management of estate: RCW 11.48.020.*

**RCW 11.04.290 Vesting of title.** RCW 11.04.250 through 11.04.290 shall apply to community real property and also to separate estate; and upon the death of either spouse or either domestic partner, title of all community real property shall vest immediately in the person or persons to whom the same shall go, pass, descend or be devised, as provided in RCW 11.04.015, subject to all the charges mentioned in RCW 11.04.250. [2008 c 6 s 930; 1965 c 145 s 11.04.290. Prior: 1895 c 105 s 5; RRS s 1370.]

**Part headings not law—Severability—2008 c 6:** See RCW 26.60.900 and 26.60.901.