



FROM THE DESK OF

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Longevity of Railroad Retirement Beneficiaries

Every three years, the Railroad Retirement Board's Chief Actuary conducts a study of the longevity of its annuitants, as part of a valuation of future revenues and benefit payments. The following questions and answers summarize the results of the most recent longevity study.

1. What were the study's findings on the life expectancy of retired male railroaders?

The most recent data reflected a continued improvement in longevity. Using data through 2016, the study indicated that, on the average, a male railroader retiring at age 60 can be expected to live another 22.5 years, or 270 months. Studies done three, six and nine years ago indicated life expectancies of 22.4, 21.9 and 21.3 years, respectively, for this category of beneficiary. The study also indicated that a male railroader retiring at age 62 can be expected to live another 20.8 years (approximately 250 months), while the previous three studies indicated life expectancies of 20.7, 20.1, and 19.6 years, respectively. A male railroader retiring at age 65 can be expected to live another 18.3 years (approximately 220 months). The previous studies indicated life expectancies of 18.2, 17.7, and 17.1 years, respectively, for this category of beneficiary.

2. How did these life expectancy figures compare to those of disabled annuitants?

As would be expected, disabled annuitants have a shorter average life expectancy than those who retire based on age. At age 60, a disabled railroader has an average life expectancy of 18 years, or 4.5 years less than a nondisabled male annuitant of the same age. Studies done three, six and nine years ago indicated life expectancies of 17.7, 17.2 and 16.4 years, respectively, for this category of beneficiary. Nonetheless, the difference in life expectancy at age 60 between disabled annuitants and annuitants who retire based on age has remained relatively stable, ranging between 4.5 and 4.9 years.

3. Are women still living longer than men?

In general, women still live longer than men. This is shown both in the Railroad Retirement Board's life expectancy studies of male and female annuitants and by other studies of the general United States population.

For example, at age 60 a retired female railroader is expected on the average to live 25.6 years, 3.1 years longer than a retired male railroader of the same age; and at age 65, a retired female

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railroader is expected on the average to live 21.1 years, 2.8 years longer than her male counterpart. Spouses and widows age 65 have average life expectancies of 21 years and 19 years, respectively.

4. Can individuals use life expectancy figures to predict how long they will live?

Life expectancy figures are averages for large groups of people. Any particular individual's lifetime may be much longer or shorter than the life expectancy of his or her age and group.

According to the study, from a group of 1,000 retired male employees at age 65, 933 will live at least 5 years, 822 at least 10 years, 658 at least 15 years, and 448 at least 20 years. Of female age annuitants at age 65, 578 will be alive 20 years later.

5. Where can I access the Railroad Retirement Board's longevity study?

The entire longevity study is available on the agency's website, **RRB.gov**, under the **Financial and Reporting** tab (**Financial, Actuarial and Statistical**).

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