

**UNIFORM REAL PROPERTY  
TRANSFER ON DEATH ACT (2009)**

Drafted by the

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF COMMISSIONERS  
ON UNIFORM STATE LAWS

and by it

APPROVED AND RECOMMENDED FOR ENACTMENT  
IN ALL THE STATES

at its

ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
MEETING IN ITS ONE-HUNDRED-AND-EIGHTEENTH YEAR  
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By

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF COMMISSIONERS  
ON UNIFORM STATE LAWS

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## **UNIFORM REAL PROPERTY TRANSFER ON DEATH ACT (2009)**

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.** This [act] may be cited as the Uniform Real Property Transfer on Death Act.

**SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS.** In this [act]:

(1) “Beneficiary” means a person that receives property under a transfer on death deed.

(2) “Designated beneficiary” means a person designated to receive property in a transfer on death deed.

(3) “Joint owner” means an individual who owns property concurrently with one or more other individuals with a right of survivorship. The term includes a joint tenant[,][ and] [owner of community property with a right of survivorship[,][ and tenant by the entirety]. The term does not include a tenant in common [or owner of community property without a right of survivorship].

(4) “Person” means an individual, corporation, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, limited liability company, association, joint venture, public corporation, government or governmental subdivision, agency, or instrumentality, or any other legal or commercial entity.

(5) “Property” means an interest in real property located in this state which is transferable on the death of the owner.

(6) “Transfer on death deed” means a deed authorized under this [act].

(7) “Transferor” means an individual who makes a transfer on death deed.

**SECTION 3. APPLICABILITY.** This [act] applies to a transfer on death deed made before, on, or after [the effective date of this [act]] by a transferor dying on or after [the effective date of this [act]].

**SECTION 4. NONEXCLUSIVITY.** This [act] does not affect any method of transferring property otherwise permitted under the law of this state.

**SECTION 5. TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED AUTHORIZED.** An individual may transfer property to one or more beneficiaries effective at the transferor's death by a transfer on death deed.

**SECTION 6. TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED REVOCABLE.** A transfer on death deed is revocable even if the deed or another instrument contains a contrary provision.

**SECTION 7. TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED NONTTESTAMENTARY.** A transfer on death deed is nontestamentary.

**SECTION 8. CAPACITY OF TRANSFEROR.** The capacity required to make or revoke a transfer on death deed is the same as the capacity required to make a will.

**SECTION 9. REQUIREMENTS.** A transfer on death deed:

(1) except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2), must contain the essential elements and formalities of a properly recordable inter vivos deed;

(2) must state that the transfer to the designated beneficiary is to occur at the transferor's death; and

(3) must be recorded before the transferor's death in the public records in [the office of the county recorder of deeds] of the [county] where the property is located.

***Legislative Note:** Because a transfer on death deed does not have present effect and is revocable, it may be useful to title searchers and insurers if the recording or indexing of the deed identifies it as a transfer on death deed. Information about how a recorder of deeds should record and index a transfer on death deed is available from the recorders of deeds in states having experience with such deeds. By way of example, the recorder of deeds of Clay County, Missouri, uses a grantor-grantee index that is fully searchable online, at [http://recorder.claycogov.com/pages/online\\_access.asp](http://recorder.claycogov.com/pages/online_access.asp).*

**SECTION 10. NOTICE, DELIVERY, ACCEPTANCE, CONSIDERATION NOT REQUIRED.** A transfer on death deed is effective without:

(1) notice or delivery to or acceptance by the designated beneficiary during the transferor's life; or

(2) consideration.

**SECTION 11. REVOCATION BY INSTRUMENT AUTHORIZED; REVOCATION BY ACT NOT PERMITTED.**

(a) Subject to subsection (b), an instrument is effective to revoke a recorded transfer on death deed, or any part of it, only if the instrument:

(1) is one of the following:

(A) a transfer on death deed that revokes the deed or part of the deed expressly or by inconsistency;

(B) an instrument of revocation that expressly revokes the deed or part of the deed; or

(C) an inter vivos deed that expressly revokes the transfer on death deed or part of the deed; and

(2) is acknowledged by the transferor after the acknowledgment of the deed being revoked and recorded before the transferor's death in the public records in [the office of the county recorder of deeds] of the [county] where the deed is recorded.

(b) If a transfer on death deed is made by more than one transferor:

(1) revocation by a transferor does not affect the deed as to the interest of another transferor; and

(2) a deed of joint owners is revoked only if it is revoked by all of the living joint

owners.

(c) After a transfer on death deed is recorded, it may not be revoked by a revocatory act on the deed.

(d) This section does not limit the effect of an inter vivos transfer of the property.

**SECTION 12. EFFECT OF TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED DURING TRANSFEROR'S LIFE.** During a transferor's life, a transfer on death deed does not:

(1) affect an interest or right of the transferor or any other owner, including the right to transfer or encumber the property;

(2) affect an interest or right of a transferee, even if the transferee has actual or constructive notice of the deed;

(3) affect an interest or right of a secured or unsecured creditor or future creditor of the transferor, even if the creditor has actual or constructive notice of the deed;

(4) affect the transferor's or designated beneficiary's eligibility for any form of public assistance;

(5) create a legal or equitable interest in favor of the designated beneficiary; or

(6) subject the property to claims or process of a creditor of the designated beneficiary.

**SECTION 13. EFFECT OF TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED AT TRANSFEROR'S DEATH.**

(a) Except as otherwise provided in the transfer on death deed[,][ or] in this section[,][ or in [cite state statutes on antilapse, revocation by divorce or homicide, survival and simultaneous death, and elective share, if applicable to nonprobate transfers]], on the death of the transferor, the following rules apply to property that is the subject of a transfer on death deed and owned by the transferor at death:

(1) Subject to paragraph (2), the interest in the property is transferred to the designated beneficiary in accordance with the deed.

(2) The interest of a designated beneficiary is contingent on the designated beneficiary surviving the transferor. The interest of a designated beneficiary that fails to survive the transferor lapses.

(3) Subject to paragraph (4), concurrent interests are transferred to the beneficiaries in equal and undivided shares with no right of survivorship.

(4) If the transferor has identified two or more designated beneficiaries to receive concurrent interests in the property, the share of one which lapses or fails for any reason is transferred to the other, or to the others in proportion to the interest of each in the remaining part of the property held concurrently.

(b) Subject to [cite state recording act], a beneficiary takes the property subject to all conveyances, encumbrances, assignments, contracts, mortgages, liens, and other interests to which the property is subject at the transferor's death. For purposes of this subsection and [cite state recording act], the recording of the transfer on death deed is deemed to have occurred at the transferor's death.

(c) If a transferor is a joint owner and is:

(1) survived by one or more other joint owners, the property that is the subject of a transfer on death deed belongs to the surviving joint owner or owners with right of survivorship; or

(2) the last surviving joint owner, the transfer on death deed is effective.

(d) A transfer on death deed transfers property without covenant or warranty of title even if the deed contains a contrary provision.

**Legislative Note:** *In light of the growing harmonization of the rules governing probate and nonprobate transfers, states enacting this act should consider extending to nonprobate mechanisms, such as transfer on death deeds, the probate rules governing antilapse, revocation by divorce, revocation by homicide, survival and simultaneous death, and the elective share of a surviving spouse.*

*One of the significant trends in the law of property in the twentieth century has been the growing harmonization of the constructional and substantive rules governing deathtime transfers, whether the transfers occur in or outside of the probate process. Section 7.2 of the Restatement (Third) of Property (Wills and Other Donative Transfers) provides: “Although a will substitute need not be executed in compliance with the statutory formalities required for a will, such an arrangement is, to the extent appropriate, subject to substantive restrictions on testation and to rules of construction and other rules applicable to testamentary dispositions.”*

*The Uniform Probate Code contains statutory provisions treating wills and will substitutes alike for many purposes, including (1) antilapse; (2) revocation by divorce; (3) revocation by homicide (the “slayer rule”); (4) survival and simultaneous death; and (5) the elective share of a surviving spouse.*

*In some cases, the harmonization is achieved by applying the relevant rule to any “governing instrument,” which is defined in Uniform Probate Code Section 1-201(18) as “a deed, will, trust, insurance or annuity policy, account with POD designation, security registered in beneficiary form (TOD), pension, profitsharing, retirement, or similar benefit plan, instrument creating or exercising a power of appointment or a power of attorney, or a dispositive, appointive, or nominative instrument of any similar type.” The Uniform Probate Code’s rules on revocation by divorce, revocation by homicide, and survival and simultaneous death apply to any governing instrument. See Uniform Probate Code Sections 2-702 (survival and simultaneous death), 2-803 (revocation by homicide), and 2-804 (revocation by divorce).*

*For the elective share, the Uniform Probate Code treats wills and will substitutes alike by defining the decedent’s “augmented estate” to include both probate and nonprobate transfers. See Uniform Probate Code Section 2-203(a).*

*For antilapse, the Uniform Probate Code has separate sections treating wills (Section 2-603) and will substitutes (Sections 2-706 and 2-707), but the latter are modeled on the former.*

*See also the Legislative Note to Section 14 on disclaimers.*

**SECTION 14. DISCLAIMER.** A beneficiary may disclaim all or part of the beneficiary’s interest as provided by [cite state statute or the Uniform Disclaimer of Property Interests Act (1999/2006) (UPC Article II, Part 11)].

**Legislative Note:** *States should check their disclaimer statutes for any necessary amendments. The following are conforming amendments to the Uniform Disclaimer of Property Interests Act (1999/2006):*

**SECTION 12. DELIVERY OR FILING.**

(a) In this section, “beneficiary designation” means an instrument, other than an instrument creating a trust, naming the beneficiary of:

- (1) an annuity or insurance policy;
- (2) an account with a designation for payment on death;
- (3) a security registered in beneficiary form;
- (4) a pension, profit-sharing, retirement, or other employment-related benefit plan; or
- (5) any other nonprobate transfer at death.

(b) Subject to subsections (c) through (l), delivery of a disclaimer may be effected by personal delivery, first-class mail, or any other method likely to result in its receipt.

(c) In the case of an interest created under the law of intestate succession or an interest created by will, other than an interest in a testamentary trust:

- (1) a disclaimer must be delivered to the personal representative of the decedent’s estate; or
- (2) if no personal representative is then serving, it must be filed with a court having jurisdiction to appoint the personal representative.

(d) In the case of an interest in a testamentary trust:

- (1) a disclaimer must be delivered to the trustee then serving, or if no trustee is then serving, to the personal representative of the decedent’s estate; or
- (2) if no personal representative is then serving, it must be filed with a court having jurisdiction to enforce the trust.

(e) In the case of an interest in an inter vivos trust :

- (1) a disclaimer must be delivered to the trustee then serving;
- (2) if no trustee is then serving, it must be filed with a court having jurisdiction to enforce the trust; or
- (3) if the disclaimer is made before the time the instrument creating the trust becomes irrevocable, it must be delivered to the settlor of a revocable trust or the transferor of the interest.

(f) In the case of an interest created by a beneficiary designation which is disclaimed made before the time the designation becomes irrevocable, ~~the~~ disclaimer must be delivered to the person making the beneficiary designation.

(g) In the case of an interest created by a beneficiary designation which is disclaimed made after the time the designation becomes irrevocable,;

- (1) ~~the~~ the disclaimer of an interest in personal property must be delivered to the person obligated to distribute the interest; and
- (2) the disclaimer of an interest in real property must be recorded in [the office of the county recorder of deeds] of the [county] where the real property that is the subject of the disclaimer is located.

(h) In the case of a disclaimer by a surviving holder of jointly held property, the disclaimer must be delivered to the person to whom the disclaimed interest passes.

(i) In the case of a disclaimer by an object or taker in default of exercise of a power of appointment at any time after the power was created:

- (1) the disclaimer must be delivered to the holder of the power or to



*the fiduciary acting under the instrument that created the power; or*

*(2) if no fiduciary is then serving, it must be filed with a court having authority to appoint the fiduciary.*

*(j) In the case of a disclaimer by an appointee of a nonfiduciary power of appointment:*

*(1) the disclaimer must be delivered to the holder, the personal representative of the holder's estate or to the fiduciary under the instrument that created the power ; or*

*(2) if no fiduciary is then serving, it must be filed with a court having authority to appoint the fiduciary.*

*(k) In the case of a disclaimer by a fiduciary of a power over a trust or estate, the disclaimer must be delivered as provided in subsection (c), (d), or (e), as if the power disclaimed were an interest in property.*

*(l) In the case of a disclaimer of a power by an agent, the disclaimer must be delivered to the principal or the principal's representative.*

### **Comment**

*The rules set forth in Section 12 are designed ~~so that anyone who has the duty to distribute the disclaimed interest will be notified~~ to provide notice of the disclaimer. For example, a disclaimer of an interest in a decedent's estate must be delivered to the personal representative of the estate. A disclaimer is required to be filed in court only ~~when there is no one person or entity to whom delivery can be made~~ in very limited circumstances.*

**SECTION 15. RECORDING OF DISCLAIMER.** *If an instrument transferring an interest in or power over property subject to a disclaimer is required or permitted by law to be filed, recorded, or registered, the disclaimer may be so filed, recorded, or registered. Except as otherwise provided in Section 12(g)(2), failure to file, record, or register the disclaimer does not affect its validity as between the disclaimant and persons to whom the property interest or power passes by reason of the disclaimer.*

### **Comment**

*This section permits the recordation of a disclaimer of an interest in property ownership of or title to which is the subject of a recording system. This section expands on the corresponding provision of previous Uniform Acts which ~~only~~ referred to permissive recording of a disclaimer of an interest in real property. While local practice may vary, disclaimants should realize that in order to establish the chain of title to real property, and to ward off creditors and bona fide purchasers, the disclaimer may have to be recorded. This section does not change the law of the state governing notice. The reference to Section 12(g)(2) concerns the disclaimer of an interest in real property created by a "beneficiary designation" as that term is defined in Section 12(a). Such a disclaimer must be recorded.*

**SECTION 15. LIABILITY FOR CREDITOR CLAIMS AND STATUTORY ALLOWANCES .**

**Alternative A**

A beneficiary of a transfer on death deed is liable for an allowed claim against the transferor's probate estate and statutory allowances to a surviving spouse and children to the extent provided in [cite state statute or Section 6-102 of the Uniform Probate Code].

**Alternative B**

(a) To the extent the transferor's probate estate is insufficient to satisfy an allowed claim against the estate or a statutory allowance to a surviving spouse or child, the estate may enforce the liability against property transferred at the transferor's death by a transfer on death deed.

(b) If more than one property is transferred by one or more transfer on death deeds, the liability under subsection (a) is apportioned among the properties in proportion to their net values at the transferor's death.

(c) A proceeding to enforce the liability under this section must be commenced not later than [18 months] after the transferor's death.

**End of Alternatives**

*Legislative Note: Alternative A is for a state with an existing statute governing creditors' rights in nonprobate transfers, such as Uniform Probate Code Section 6-102. States are encouraged to enact such statutes, thereby treating nonprobate transfers comprehensively. Alternative B is a second-best approach, supplying creditor protection but governing only transfer on death deeds and not other nonprobate mechanisms.*

**[SECTION 16. OPTIONAL FORM OF TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED.** The following form may be used to create a transfer on death deed. The other sections of this [act] govern the effect of this or any other instrument used to create a transfer on death deed:



TRANSFER ON DEATH

At my death, I transfer my interest in the described property to the beneficiaries as designated above.

Before my death, I have the right to revoke this deed.

SIGNATURE OF OWNER OR OWNERS MAKING THIS DEED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature [(SEAL)] \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature [(SEAL)] \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

(insert acknowledgment for deed here)

(back of form)

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE USE OF THIS FORM

What does the Transfer on Death (TOD) deed do? When you die, this deed transfers the described property, subject to any liens or mortgages (or other encumbrances) on the property at your death. Probate is not required. The TOD deed has no effect until you die. You can revoke it at any time. You are also free to transfer the property to someone else during your lifetime. If you do not own any interest in the property when you die, this deed will have no effect.

How do I make a TOD deed? Complete this form. Have it acknowledged before a notary public or other individual authorized by law to take acknowledgments. Record the form in each [county] where any part of the property is located. The form has no effect unless it is acknowledged and recorded before your death.

Is the “legal description” of the property necessary? Yes.

How do I find the “legal description” of the property? This information may be on the deed you received when you became an owner of the property. This information may also be available in [the office of the county recorder of deeds] for the [county] where the property is located. If you are not absolutely sure, consult a lawyer.

Can I change my mind before I record the TOD deed? Yes. If you have not yet recorded the deed and want to change your mind, simply tear up or otherwise destroy the deed.

How do I “record” the TOD deed? Take the completed and acknowledged form to [the office of the county recorder of deeds] of the [county] where the property is located. Follow the instructions given by the [county recorder] to make the form part of the official property records. If the property is in more than one [county], you should record the deed in each [county].

Can I later revoke the TOD deed if I change my mind? Yes. You can revoke the TOD deed. No one, including the beneficiaries, can prevent you from revoking the deed.

How do I revoke the TOD deed after it is recorded? There are three ways to revoke a recorded TOD deed: (1) Complete and acknowledge a revocation form, and record it in each [county] where the property is located. (2) Complete and acknowledge a new TOD deed that disposes of the same property, and record it in each [county] where the property is located. (3) Transfer the property to someone else during your lifetime by a recorded deed that expressly revokes the TOD deed. You may not revoke the TOD deed by will.

I am being pressured to complete this form. What should I do? Do not complete this form under pressure. Seek help from a trusted family member, friend, or lawyer.

Do I need to tell the beneficiaries about the TOD deed? No, but it is recommended. Secrecy can cause later complications and might make it easier for others to commit fraud.

I have other questions about this form. What should I do? This form is designed to fit

some but not all situations. If you have other questions, you are encouraged to consult a lawyer.]

**Legislative Note:** *This section and the next section are bracketed for states wishing to provide optional statutory forms. An enacting jurisdiction should review its statutory requirements for deeds and for acknowledgments and amend the statutory forms provided in Sections 16 and 17 where necessary for conformity with those requirements. If an enacting jurisdiction changes the act, the jurisdiction should review the answers to the common questions in Sections 16 and 17 to ensure the answers remain accurate.*

**[SECTION 17. OPTIONAL FORM OF REVOCATION.** The following form may be used to create an instrument of revocation under this [act]. The other sections of this [act] govern the effect of this or any other instrument used to revoke a transfer on death deed.

(front of form)

REVOCATION OF TRANSFER ON DEATH DEED

NOTICE TO OWNER

This revocation must be recorded before you die or it will not be effective. This revocation is effective only as to the interests in the property of owners who sign this revocation.

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Owner or Owners of Property Making This Revocation:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing address

Legal description of the property:  
\_\_\_\_\_

REVOCATION

I revoke all my previous transfers of this property by transfer on death deed.

SIGNATURE OF OWNER OR OWNERS MAKING THIS REVOCATION

\_\_\_\_\_ [(SEAL)]\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
[(SEAL)]  
Date

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

(insert acknowledgment here)

(back of form)

## COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE USE OF THIS FORM

How do I use this form to revoke a Transfer on Death (TOD) deed? Complete this form.

Have it acknowledged before a notary public or other individual authorized to take acknowledgments. Record the form in the public records in [the office of the county recorder of deeds] of each [county] where the property is located. The form must be acknowledged and recorded before your death or it has no effect.

How do I find the “legal description” of the property? This information may be on the TOD deed. It may also be available in [the office of the county recorder of deeds] for the [county] where the property is located. If you are not absolutely sure, consult a lawyer.

How do I “record” the form? Take the completed and acknowledged form to [the office of the county recorder of deeds] of the [county] where the property is located. Follow the instructions given by the [county recorder] to make the form part of the official property records. If the property is located in more than one [county], you should record the form in each of those [counties].

I am being pressured to complete this form. What should I do? Do not complete this form under pressure. Seek help from a trusted family member, friend, or lawyer.

I have other questions about this form. What should I do? This form is designed to fit

some but not all situations. If you have other questions, consult a lawyer.]

**SECTION 18. UNIFORMITY OF APPLICATION AND CONSTRUCTION.** In applying and construing this uniform act, consideration must be given to the need to promote uniformity of the law with respect to its subject matter among the states that enact it.

**SECTION 19. RELATION TO ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES IN GLOBAL AND NATIONAL COMMERCE ACT.** This [act] modifies, limits, and supersedes the federal Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act, 15 U.S.C. Section 7001, et seq., but does not modify, limit, or supersede Section 101(c) of that act, 15 U.S.C. Section 7001(c), or authorize electronic delivery of any of the notices described in Section 103(b) of that act, 15 U.S.C. Section 7003(b).

**SECTION 20. REPEALS.** The following are repealed:

*Legislative Note: This section is for states wishing to replace their transfer on death deed statutes with this Act.*

**SECTION 21. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This [act] takes effect ....