

MEMO# 27231

May 9, 2013

GAO Report on the Death Master File of the Social Security Administration

[27231]

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TO:

TRANSFER AGENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE No. 36-13

RE: GAO REPORT ON THE DEATH MASTER FILE OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

The U.S. Government Accountability Office ("GAO") is conducting an ongoing review on the Death Master File ("DMF") of the Social Security Administration ("SSA"). Inasmuch as mutual fund transfer agents may rely on the DMF in searching for lost or missing shareholders or verifying the death of a shareholder, you may be interested in the GAO's "Preliminary Observations on the Death Master File," which it published yesterday. [*](#) While the GAO's review of the DMF will continue throughout 2013, according to their preliminary observations:

The [SSA's] procedures for handling and verifying death reports may allow for erroneous death information in the [DMF] because SSA does not verify certain death reports or record others.

. . . SSA verifies no death reports for individuals who are not [current SSA program] beneficiaries, regardless of the source [of the death information].

Because there are a number of death reports that SSA does not verify, the agency risks including incorrect death information in the DMF, such as including living individuals in the file or not including deceased individuals.

According to the GAO's report, its work on this matter is ongoing so it has no recommendations at this time. The GAO does, however, plan to issue its final report later in 2013, which presumably will include recommendations to address concerns it identifies.

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endnotes

[\[*\]](#) A copy of the GAO's report and a summary of it are available at:
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-574T>.

Source URL: <https://icinew-stage.ici.org/memo-27231>

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