

## CHAPTER 852

## INTESTATE SUCCESSION

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**852.01 Basic rules for intestate succession.** (1) **WHO ARE HEIRS.** The net estate of a decedent which he has not disposed of by will, whether he dies without a will, or with a will which does not completely dispose of his estate, passes to his surviving heirs as follows:

(a) To the spouse:

1. If there are no surviving issue of the decedent, the entire estate;

2. If there are surviving issue all of whom are issue of the surviving spouse also, the first \$25,000 (reduced, in case of partial intestacy, by any amount given the spouse by the will) plus one-half of the balance if there is only one surviving child and no surviving issue of a deceased child, or if only the issue of one deceased child survives, but one-third of the balance in other cases; property distributed to satisfy the dollar amount under this provision is valued at current fair market value at time of distribution;

3. If there are surviving issue one or more of whom are not issue of the surviving spouse, one-half of the estate if there is only one surviving child and no issue of a deceased child, or if only the issue of one deceased child survives, and in other cases one-third of the estate.

(b) To the issue, the share of the estate not passing to the spouse under par. (a), or the entire estate if there is no surviving spouse; if the issue are all in the same degree of kinship to the decedent they take equally, but if they are of unequal degree then those of more remote degrees take by representation.

(c) If there is no surviving spouse or issue, to the parents.

(d) If there is no surviving spouse, issue or parent, to the brothers and sisters and the issue of any deceased brother or sister by representation.

(e) If there is no surviving spouse, issue, parent or brother or sister, to the issue of brothers and sisters; if such issue are all in the same degree of kinship to the decedent they take equally, but if they are of unequal degree then those of more remote degrees take by representation.

(f) If there is no surviving spouse, issue, parent or issue of a parent, to the grandparents.

(g) If there is no surviving spouse, issue, parent, issue of a parent, or grandparent, to the intestate's next of kin in equal degree.

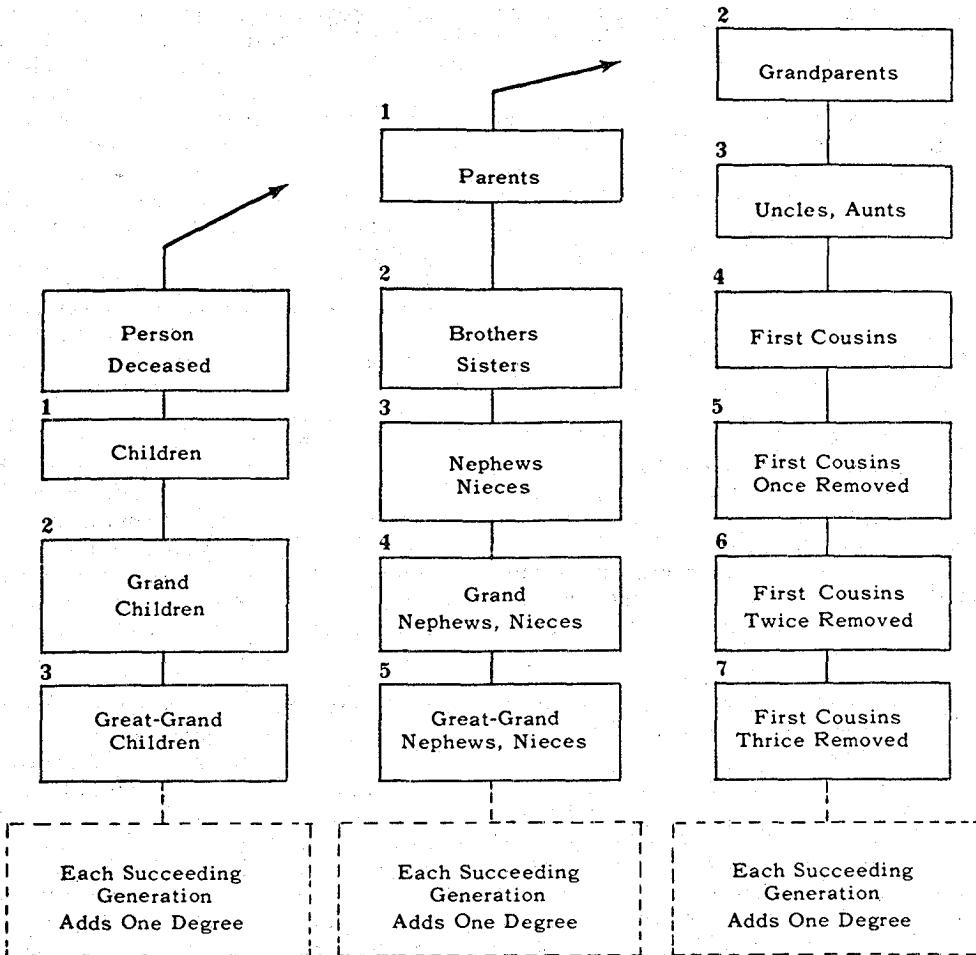
**(2) REQUIREMENT THAT HEIR SURVIVE DECEDENT FOR 72 HOURS.** If any person who would otherwise be an heir under sub. (1) dies within 72 hours of the time of death of the decedent, the net estate not disposed of by will passes under this section as if that person had predeceased the decedent. In any case where the time of death of the decedent or of the person who would otherwise be an heir, or the times of death of both, cannot be determined, and it cannot be established that the person who would otherwise be an heir has survived the decedent by at least 72 hours, it is presumed that such person died within 72 hours of the decedent's death. In computing time for purposes of this subsection, local standard time at the place of death of the decedent is used.

**(3) ESCHEAT.** If there are no heirs of the decedent under subs. (1) and (2), the net estate escheats to the state to be added to the capital of the school fund.

**852.03 Related rules.** (1) **MEANING OF REPRESENTATION.** When representation is called for by s. 852.01 (1) (b), (d) or (e), succession is accomplished as follows: the estate is divided into as many shares as there are surviving heirs in the nearest degree of kinship and deceased persons in the same degree who left issue who survive decedent, each surviving heir in the nearest degree receiving one share and the share of each deceased person in the same degree being divided among his issue in the same manner until each part passes to a surviving heir.

**(2) COMPUTING DEGREES OF KINSHIP.** The degree of kinship is computed according to the rules of the civil law, as follows: [See Figure 852.03 (2) following]

**Figure 852.03 (2)**



**(3) RELATIVES OF THE HALF BLOOD.** Relatives of the half blood take the same share as if they had been of the whole blood.

**(4) POSTHUMOUS HEIRS.** A person may be an heir under s. 852.01 even though born after the death of the decedent if that person was conceived before decedent's death.

illegitimate child or his issue is entitled to take in the same manner as a legitimate child by intestate succession from and through (a) his mother, and (b) his father if the father has either been adjudicated to be such under ss. 52.21 to 52.45, or has admitted in open court that he is the father, or has acknowledged himself to be the father in writing signed by him.

**852.05 Status of illegitimate person for purposes of intestate succession.** (1) An

(2) Property of an illegitimate person passes in accordance with s. 852.01 except that the

father or his kindred can inherit only if the father has been adjudicated to be such under ss. 52.21 to 52.45.

(3) This section does not apply to a child legitimated by the subsequent marriage of his parents under s. 245.25, and status of an illegitimate child who is legally adopted is governed by s. 851.51.

**852.09 Assignment of home as part of share of surviving spouse.**

(1) If the intestate estate includes an interest in a home, the interest of the decedent is assigned to the surviving spouse as part of his or her share under s. 852.01 unless the surviving spouse files with the court at or before the hearing on the final account a written request that the home not be so assigned. The interest of the decedent in the home is valued with all liens deducted. Inventory value is prima facie the value of the interest in the home. If the value exceeds the share of the surviving spouse under s. 852.01, the court may either (a) assign the interest in the home to the surviving spouse subject to a lien in favor of the other heirs for their respective interests in the excess, or (b) assign the interest in the home to the surviving spouse upon payment by the latter to the personal representative of the amount by which the value of the interest exceeds the spouse's share.

(2) Home means any dwelling in the estate of the decedent which at the time of his death the surviving spouse occupies or intends to occupy; if there are several such dwellings, any one may be selected by the surviving spouse. It includes but is not limited to any of the following: a house, a mobile home, a duplex or multiple apartment building one unit of which is occupied by the surviving spouse, or a building used in part for a dwelling and in part for commercial or business purposes. The home includes all of the surrounding land, unless the court in its discretion sets off part of the land as severable from the remaining land. On petition of the surviving spouse or of any interested person that part of the land is not necessary for dwelling purposes and that it would be inappropriate to assign all of the surrounding land as the home, the court may set off for the home so much of the land as is necessary for a dwelling. In determining whether to allow a division of the land and in determining how much land should be set off, the court shall take into account the use and marketability of the parcels set off as the home and the remaining land. The

court shall deny a petition for division unless division is clearly appropriate under the circumstances and can be made without prejudice to the rights of all persons interested in the estate.

**852.11 Advancement in intestate estate.**

(1) **WHEN GIFT IS AN ADVANCE.** A gift by the decedent during his lifetime to an heir is an advance against his intestate share to be taken into account by the court in the final judgment only if: (a) there is a writing by the decedent clearly stating that the gift is an advance whether or not such writing is contemporaneous with the gift or (b) the heir states by writing or in court that the gift was an advance.

(2) **DEATH OF ADVANCEE BEFORE DECEDENT.**

If a gift is made during lifetime to a prospective heir and such gift would have been an advance under sub. (1) but for the death of the prospective heir prior to the decedent or within the time limited by s. 852.01 (2), the amount of the advance shall be taken into account in computing the shares of the issue of the prospective heir to whom the gift was made, whether or not the issue take by representation.

(3) **VALUATION.** If any gift is an advance, its value shall be determined as of the time when the heir comes into possession or enjoyment of the property advanced, or the time of death of the decedent if that occurs first.

**852.13 Right to renounce intestate share.**

Any person to whom property would otherwise pass under s. 852.01 may renounce all or part of the property. A renunciation shall be made by filing a signed declaration of renunciation with the court and serving a copy on the personal representative, if any, within 6 months after the date of the decedent's death. For cause shown the court may grant additional time by order entered within or after such 6-month period. No interest in the property renounced vests in such person, but the renounced property passes as if such person had predeceased the decedent. However, a renunciation is invalid to the extent that the person renouncing has prior to filing the renunciation effectively assigned or contracted to assign the renounced property, if prior to entry of the final judgment, or earlier distribution by the personal representative in reliance on the renunciation, the assignee files with the court a copy of the assignment or contract and serves a copy on the personal representative.

History: 1973 c. 233