Title 38
Pensions, Bonuses, and Veterans’ Relief
Parts 0 to 17
Revised as of July 1, 2011

Containing a codification of documents of general applicability and future effect

As of July 1, 2011

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To cite the regulations in this volume use title, part and section number. Thus, 38 CFR 0.735–1 refers to title 38, part 0, section 735–1.
Explanation

The Code of Federal Regulations is a codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the Executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government. The Code is divided into 50 titles which represent broad areas subject to Federal regulation. Each title is divided into chapters which usually bear the name of the issuing agency. Each chapter is further subdivided into parts covering specific regulatory areas.

Each volume of the Code is revised at least once each calendar year and issued on a quarterly basis approximately as follows:

Title 1 through Title 16 .............................................................. as of January 1
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The appropriate revision date is printed on the cover of each volume.

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The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (Pub. L. 96-511) requires Federal agencies to display an OMB control number with their information collection request.
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An index to the text of “Title 3—The President” is carried within that volume.
The Federal Register Index is issued monthly in cumulative form. This index is based on a consolidation of the “Contents” entries in the daily Federal Register.

A List of CFR Sections Affected (LSA) is published monthly, keyed to the revision dates of the 50 CFR titles.

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RAYMOND A. MOSLEY,
Director,
Office of the Federal Register.
July 1, 2011.
THIS TITLE

Title 38—PENSIONS, BONUSES AND VETERANS’ RELIEF is composed of two volumes. The parts in these volumes are arranged in the following order: parts 0–17 and part 18 to end. The contents of these volumes represent all current regulations codified by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Armed Forces Retirement Home under this title of the CFR as of July 1, 2011.

For this volume, Michele Bugenhagen was Chief Editor. The Code of Federal Regulations publication program is under the direction of Michael L. White, assisted by Ann Worley.
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SOURCE: 31 FR 5828, Apr. 15, 1966, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Provisions

§ 0.735–1 Agency ethics officials.

(a) Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO). The Assistant General Counsel (023) is the designated agency ethics official (DAEO) for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Deputy Assistant General Counsel (023C) is the alternate DAEO, who is designated to act in the DAEO’s absence. The DAEO has primary responsibility for the administration, coordination, and management of the VA ethics program, pursuant to 5 CFR 2638.201–204.

(b) Deputy ethics officials. (1) The Regional Counsel are deputy ethics officials. They have been delegated the authority to act for the DAEO within their jurisdiction, under the DAEO’s supervision, pursuant to 5 CFR 2638.204.

(2) The alternate DAEO, the DAEO’s staff, and staff in the Offices of Regional Counsel, may also act as deputy ethics officials pursuant to delegations of one or more of the DAEO’s duties from the DAEO or the Regional Counsel.


§ 0.735–2 Government-wide standards.

For government-wide standards of ethical conduct and related responsibilities for Federal employees, see 5 CFR Part 735 and Chapter XVI.

[61 FR 13309, Mar. 20, 1996. Redesignated at 63 FR 33579, June 19, 1998]

Subpart B—Standards of Ethical Conduct and Related Responsibilities of Employees

SOURCE: 58 FR 61814, Nov. 23, 1993, unless otherwise noted.

§ 0.735–10 Cross-reference to employee ethical and other conduct standards and financial disclosure regulations.

Employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should refer to the executive branch-wide Standards of Ethical Conduct at 5 CFR part 2635, the executive branch-wide Employee Responsibilities and Conduct at 5 CFR part 735, and the executive branch-wide financial disclosure regulation at 5 CFR part 2634.

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(a) An employee shall not procure intoxicants or drugs for, or attempt to sell intoxicants or drugs to, patients or members, or give or attempt to give intoxicants or drugs to them unless officially prescribed for medical use;

(b) An employee shall not abuse patients, members, or other beneficiaries, whether or not provoked.

§ 0.735–12 Standards of conduct in special areas.

(a) Safety. (1) Employees will observe safety instructions, signs, and normal safety practices and precautions, including the use of protective clothing and equipment.

(2) An employee shall report each work-connected injury, accident or disease he or she suffers.

(b) Furnishing testimony. Employees will furnish information and testify freely and honestly in cases respecting employment and disciplinary matters.
Refusal to testify, concealment of material facts, or willfully inaccurate testimony in connection with an investigation or hearing may be ground for disciplinary action. An employee, however, will not be required to give testimony against himself or herself in any matter in which there is indication that he or she may be or is involved in a violation of law wherein there is a possibility of self-incrimination.

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§ 1.9 Description, use, and display of VA seal and flag.

(a) General. This section describes the official seal and distinguishing flag of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and prescribes the rules for their custody and use.

(b) Definitions. (1) VA means all organizational units of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) Embossed seal means an image of the official seal made on paper or other medium by using an embosser with a negative and positive die to create a raised impression.

(3) Official seal means the original(s) of the VA seal showing the exact form, content, and colors thereof.

(4) Replica means a copy of the official seal displaying the identical form, content, and colors thereof.

(5) Reproduction means a copy of the official seal displaying the identical form and content, reproduced in only one color.

(6) Secretary means the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(7) Deputy Secretary means the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(c) Custody of official seal and distinguishing flags. The Secretary or designee shall:

(1) Have custody of:

(i) The official seal and prototypes thereof, and masters, molds, dies, and other means of producing replicas, reproductions, and embossing seals and

(ii) Production, inventory, and loan records relating to items specified in paragraph (c)(1)(i) of this section, and

(2) Have custody of distinguishing flags, and be responsible for production, inventory, and loan records thereof.

(d) Official Seal—(1) Description of official seal. The Department of Veterans Affairs prescribes as its official seal, of which judicial notice shall be taken pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 302, the imprint illustrated below:
The official seal includes an American eagle clutching a cord in its talons. The cord binds a 13-star U.S. flag and a 50-star U.S. flag. In the field over the eagle is a pentagon formation of stars, with one point down. The words Department of Veterans Affairs and United States of America surround the eagle, stars, and flags. A rope motif makes up the outermost ring of the seal.

The eagle represents the eternal vigilance of all our nation’s veterans. The stars represent the five branches of military service. The crossed flags represent our nation’s history. The gold cord that binds the two flags, which is shown clutched in the eagle’s talons is symbolic of those who have fallen in the defense of liberty. Each of the various individual items placed together in the seal is a salute to the past, present, and future.

The colors used in the configuration are gold, brown, blue, white, silver, yellow, black, and red.

The colors are derived from the American flag and from nature. By invoking this symbolism, the color scheme represents the Nation’s commitment to its veterans.

(A) Display in or adjacent to VA facilities, in Department auditoriums, presentation rooms, hearing rooms, lobbies, and public document rooms.
(B) Offices of senior officials.
(C) Official VA distinguishing flags, adopted and utilized pursuant to paragraph (e)(2) of this section.
(D) Official awards, certificates, medals, and plaques.
(E) Motion picture film, video tape, and other audiovisual media prepared by or for VA and attributed thereto.
(F) Official prestige publications which represent the achievements or mission of VA.
(G) For other similar official purposes.
(H) For such other purposes as will tend to advance the aims, purposes and mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs as determined by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary.

(iii) Reproductions may be used only on:
(A) VA letterhead stationery.
(B) Official VA identification cards and security credentials.
(C) Business cards for VA employees.
(D) Official VA signs.
(E) Official publications or graphics issued by and attributed to VA, or joint statements of VA with one or more Federal agencies, State or local governments, or foreign governments.
(F) Official awards, certificates, and medals.
(G) Motion picture film, video tape, and other audiovisual media prepared by and for VA and attributed thereto.
(H) For other similar official purposes.
(I) For such other purposes as will tend to advance the aims, purposes and mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs as determined by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary.

(iv) Use of the official seal and embossed seals:
(A) Embossed seals may be used only on VA legal documents, including interagency or intergovernmental agreements with States, foreign patent applications, and similar official documents.
(B) The official seal may be used only for those purposes related to the conduct of Departmental affairs in furtherance of the VA mission.
(e) **Distinguishing flag.** (1) Description of distinguishing flag.
   (i) The base or field of the flag shall be blue and a replica of the official seal shall appear on both sides thereof.
   (ii) A Class 1 flag shall be of nylon banner, measure 4′4″ on the hoist by 5′6″ on the fly, exclusive of heading and hems, and be fringed on three edges with nylon fringe, 2½″ wide.
   (iii) A Class 2 flag shall be of nylon banner, measure 3′ on the hoist by 5′ on the fly, exclusive of heading and hems, and be fringed on three edges with nylon fringe, 2½″ wide.
   (iv) Each flag shall be manufactured in accordance with Department of Veterans Affairs Specification X–497G. The replica of the official seal shall be screen printed or embroidered on both sides.

(2) Use of distinguishing flag. (i) VA distinguishing flags may be used only:
   (A) In the offices of the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Assistant Secretaries and heads of field locations designated below:
      (1) Regional Offices.
      (2) Medical Centers and Outpatient Clinics.
      (3) Domiciliaries.
      (4) Marketing Centers and Supply Depots.
      (5) Data Processing Centers.
      (6) National Cemetery Offices.
      (7) Other locations as designated by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration.
   (B) At official VA ceremonies.
   (C) In Department auditoriums, official presentation rooms, hearing rooms, lobbies, public document rooms, and in non-VA facilities in connection with events or displays sponsored by VA, and public appearances of VA officials.
   (D) On or in front of VA installation buildings.
   (E) Other such official VA purposes or purposes as will tend to advance the aims, purposes and mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs as determined by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration.

(i) Unauthorized uses of the seal and flag. (1) The official seal, replicas, reproductions, embossed seals, and the distinguished flag shall not be used, except as authorized by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary, in connection with:
   (i) Contractor-operated facilities.
   (ii) Souvenir or novelty items.
   (iii) Toys or commercial gifts or premiums.
   (iv) Letterhead design, except on official Departmental stationery.
   (v) Matchbook covers, calendars and similar items.
   (vi) Civilian clothing or equipment.
   (vii) Any article which may disparage the seal or flag or reflect unfavorably upon VA.
   (viii) Any manner which implies Departmental endorsement of commercial products or services, or of the commercial user's policies or activities.

(2) Penalties for unauthorized use. Any person who uses the distinguishing flag, or the official seal, replicas, reproductions or embossed seals in a manner inconsistent with this section shall be subject to the penalty provisions of 18 U.S.C. 506, 701, or 1017, providing penalties for their wrongful use, as applicable.

[55 FR 49518, Nov. 29, 1990]
States after May 27, 1941. This subdivision authorizes and requires the furnishing of a flag only where the military or naval service does not furnish a flag immediately. The only cases wherein a flag is not supplied immediately are those of persons whose remains are interred outside the continental limits of the United States, or whose remains are not recovered or are recovered and not identified.

(iv) Any person who served in the organized military forces of the Commonwealth of the Philippines while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States pursuant to the military order of the President of the United States, dated July 26, 1941, including among such military forces organized guerrilla forces under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, or other competent authority in the Army of the United States, and who dies after separation from such service under conditions other than dishonorable, on or after April 25, 1951.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107(a))

(v) Any deceased member or former member of the Selected Reserve (as described in section 10143 of title 10) who is not otherwise eligible for a flag under this section or section 1482(a) of title 10 and who:

(A) Completed at least one enlistment as a member of the Selected Reserve or, in the case of an officer, completed the period of initial obligated service as a member of the Selected Reserve;

(B) Was discharged before completion of the person’s initial enlistment as a member of the Selected Reserve or, in the case of an officer, period of initial obligated service as a member of the Selected Reserve, for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; or

(C) Died while a member of the Selected Reserve.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2301(f)(1))

(b) Disposition of burial flags. (1) When a flag is actually used to drape the casket of a deceased veteran, it must be delivered to the next of kin following interment. Where the flag is not claimed by the next of kin it may be given upon request to a close friend or associate of the deceased veteran. Such action will constitute final and conclusive determination of rights under this section. (38 U.S.C. 2301)

(2) The phrase next of kin for the purpose of disposing of the flag used for burial purposes is defined as follows, with preference to entitlement in the order listed:

(i) Widow or widower.

(ii) Children, according to age (minor child may be issued a flag on application signed by guardian).

(iii) Parents, including adoptive, stepparents, and foster parents.

(iv) Brothers or sisters, including brothers or sisters of the half blood.

(v) Uncles or aunts.

(vi) Nephews or nieces.

(vii) Others—cousins, grandparents, etc. (but not in-laws).

(3) The phrase close friend or associate for the purpose of disposing of the burial flag means any person who because of his or her relationship with the deceased veteran arranged for the burial or assisted in the burial arrangements. In the absence of a person falling in either of these categories, any person who establishes by evidence that he or she was a close friend or associate of the veteran may be furnished the burial flag. Where more than one request for the burial flag is received and each is accompanied by satisfactory evidence of relationship or association, the head of the field facility having jurisdiction of the burial flag quota will determine which applicant is the one most equitably entitled to the burial flag.

(Authority: 72 Stat. 1114, 1169, as amended; 38 U.S.C. 501, 2301)
§ 1.11 Quarters for Department of Veterans Affairs employees in Government-owned or -rented buildings overseas.

Pursuant to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 5912, a U.S. citizen employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs permanently stationed in a foreign country may be furnished, without cost to him or her, living quarters, including heat, fuel, and light, in a Government-owned or -rented building. When in the interest of the service and when administratively feasible, an agreement may be entered into by the Under Secretary for Benefits or designee with another Federal agency, which is authorized to furnish quarters, to provide such quarters for Department of Veterans Affairs employees under the provisions of 31 U.S.C. 686. Quarters provided will be in lieu of any living quarters allowance to which the employee may otherwise be entitled.

(Authority: 72 Stat. 1114; 38 U.S.C. 501)

[33 FR 362, Jan. 10, 1968]

§ 1.15 Standards for program evaluation.

(a) The Department of Veterans Affairs will evaluate all programs authorized under title 38 U.S.C. These evaluations will be conducted so as to determine each program’s effectiveness in achieving its stated goals and in achieving such goals in relation to their cost. In addition, these evaluations will determine each program’s impact on related programs and its structure and mechanism for delivery of services. All programs will be evaluated on a continuing basis and all evaluations will be conducted by Department of Veterans Affairs staff assigned to an organizational entity other than those responsible for program administration. These evaluations will be conducted with sufficient frequency to allow for an assessment of the continued effectiveness of the programs.

(b) The program evaluation will be designed to determine if the existing program supports the intent of the law. A program evaluation must identify goals and objectives that support this intent, contain a method to measure fulfillment of the objectives, ascertain the degree to which goals and objectives are met, and report the findings and conclusions to Congress, as well as make them available to the public.

(c) The goals must be clear, specific, and measurable. To be clear they must be readily understood, free from doubt or confusion, and specific goals must be explicitly set forth. They must be measurable by objective means. These means can include use of existing record systems, observations, and information from other sources.

(d) All program evaluations require a detailed evaluation plan. The evaluation plan must clearly state the objectives of the program evaluation, the methodology to be used, resources to be committed, and a timetable of major phases.

(e) Each program evaluation must be objective. It must report the accomplishments as well as the shortcomings of the program in an unbiased way. The program evaluation must have findings that give decision-makers information which is of a level of detail and importance to enable decisions to be made affecting either direction or operation. The information in the program evaluation must be timely, and must contain information of sufficient currency that decisions based on the data in the evaluation can be made with a high degree of confidence in the data.

(f) Each program evaluation requires a systematic research design to collect the data necessary to measure the objectives. This research design should conform to the following:

(1) Rationale. The research design for each evaluation should contain a specific rationale and should be structured to determine possible cause and effect relationships.

(2) Relevancy. It must deal with issues currently existing within the program, within the Department, and within the environment in which the program operates.

(3) Validity. The degree of statistical validity should be assessed within the research design. Alternatives include an assessment of cost of data collection.
¶ 1.17 Evaluation of studies relating to health effects of radiation exposure.

(a) From time to time, the Secretary shall publish evaluations of scientific or medical studies relating to the adverse health effects of exposure to ionizing radiation in the “Notices” section of the Federal Register.

(b) Factors to be considered in evaluating scientific studies include:

(1) Whether the study’s findings are statistically significant and replicable.

(2) Whether the study and its findings have withstood peer review.

(3) Whether the study methodology has been sufficiently described to permit replication of the study.

(4) Whether the study’s findings are applicable to the veteran population of interest.

(5) The views of the appropriate panel of the Scientific Council of the Veterans’ Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards.

(c) When the Secretary determines, based on the evaluation of scientific or medical studies and after receiving the advice of the Veterans’ Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards and applying the reasonable doubt doctrine as set forth in paragraph (d)(1) of this section, that a significant statistical association exists between any disease and exposure to ionizing radiation, §3.311 of this chapter shall be amended to provide guidelines for the establishment of service connection.

(d)(1) For purposes of paragraph (c) of this section a significant statistical association shall be deemed to exist when the relative weights of valid positive and negative studies permit the conclusion that it is at least as likely as not that the purported relationship between exposure to ionizing radiation and a specific adverse health effect exists.

(2) For purposes of this paragraph a valid study is one which:

(i) Has adequately described the study design and methods of data collection, verification and analysis;

(ii) Is reasonably free of biases, such as selection, observation and participation biases; however, if biases exist, the investigator has acknowledged them and so stated the study’s conclusions that the biases do not intrude upon those conclusions; and

(iii) Has satisfactorily accounted for known confounding factors.

(3) For purposes of this paragraph a valid positive study is one which satisfies the criteria in paragraph (d)(2) of this section and whose findings are statistically significant at a probability level of .05 or less with proper accounting for multiple comparisons and subgroup analyses.

(4) For purposes of this paragraph a valid negative study is one which satisfies the criteria in paragraph (d)(2) of this section and has sufficient statistical power to detect an association between exposure to ionizing radiation and a specific adverse health effect if such an association were to exist.

(5) For purposes of assessing the relative weights of valid positive and negative studies, other studies affecting epidemiological assessments including case series, correlational studies and studies with insufficient statistical power as well as key mechanistic and animal studies which are found to have
particular relevance to an effect on human organ systems may also be considered.

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section, a significant statistical association may be deemed to exist between exposure to ionizing radiation and a specific disease if, in the Secretary's judgment, scientific and medical evidence on the whole supports such a decision.


§ 1.18 Guidelines for establishing presumptions of service connection for former prisoners of war.

(a) Purpose. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs will establish presumptions of service connection for former prisoners of war when necessary to prevent denials of benefits in significant numbers of meritorious claims.

(b) Standard. The Secretary may establish a presumption of service connection for a disease when the Secretary finds that there is at least limited/suggestive evidence that an increased risk of such disease is associated with service involving detention or internment as a prisoner of war and an association between such detention or internment and the disease is biologically plausible.

(1) Definition. The phrase “limited/suggestive evidence” refers to evidence of a sound scientific or medical nature that is reasonably suggestive of an association between prisoner-of-war experience and the disease, even though the evidence may be limited because matters such as chance, bias, and confounding could not be ruled out with confidence or because the relatively small size of the affected population restricts the data available for study.

(2) Examples. “Limited/suggestive evidence” may be found where one high-quality study detects a statistically significant association between the prisoner-of-war experience and disease, even though other studies may be inconclusive. It also may be satisfied where several smaller studies detect an association that is consistent in magnitude and direction. These examples are not exhaustive.

(c) Duration of detention or internment. In establishing a presumption of service connection under paragraph (b) of this section, the Secretary may, based on sound scientific or medical evidence, specify a minimum duration of detention or internment necessary for application of the presumption.

(d) Association. The requirement in paragraph (b) of this section that an increased risk of disease be “associated” with prisoner-of-war service may be satisfied by evidence that demonstrates either a statistical association or a causal association.

(e) Evidence. In making determinations under paragraph (b) of this section, the Secretary will consider, to the extent feasible:

(1) Evidence regarding the increased incidence of disease in former prisoners of war;

(2) Evidence regarding the health effects of circumstances or hardships similar to those experienced by prisoners of war (such as malnutrition, torture, physical abuse, or psychological stress);

(3) Evidence regarding the duration of exposure to circumstances or hardships experienced by prisoners of war that is associated with particular health effects; and

(4) Any other sound scientific or medical evidence the Secretary considers relevant.

(f) Evaluation of studies. In evaluating any study for the purposes of this section, the Secretary will consider:

(1) The degree to which the study's findings are statistically significant;

(2) The degree to which any conclusions drawn from the study data have withstood peer review;

(3) Whether the methodology used to obtain the data can be replicated;

(4) The degree to which the data may be affected by chance, bias, or confounding factors; and

(5) The degree to which the data may be relevant to the experience of prisoners of war in view of similarities or differences in the circumstances of the study population.
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(g) Contracts for Scientific Review and Analysis. To assist in making determinations under this section, the Secretary may contract with an appropriate expert body to review and summarize the scientific evidence, and assess the strength thereof, concerning the association between detention or internment as a prisoner of war and the occurrence of any disease, or for any other purpose relevant to the Secretary’s determinations.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1110)

§ 1.204 Information to be reported to the Office of Inspector General.

Criminal matters involving felonies will also be immediately referred to the Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations. VA management officials with information about possible criminal matters involving felonies will ensure and be responsible for prompt referrals to the OIG. Examples of felonies include but are not limited to, theft of Government property over $1000, false claims, false statements, drug offenses, crimes involving information technology systems and serious crimes against the person, i.e., homicides, armed robbery, rape, aggravated assault and serious physical abuse of a VA patient.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. App. 3)
[68 FR 17550, Apr. 10, 2003]

§ 1.205 Notification to the Attorney General or United States Attorney’s Office.

VA police and/or the OIG, whichever has primary responsibility within VA for investigation of the offense in question, will be responsible for notifying the appropriate United States Attorney’s Office, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 535.

[68 FR 17550, Apr. 10, 2003]
these rules and regulations to be posted in a conspicuous place on the property.

(1) **Closing property to public.** The head of the facility, or designee, shall establish visiting hours for the convenience of the public and shall establish specific hours for the transaction of business with the public. The property shall be closed to the public during other than the hours so established. In emergency situations, the property shall be closed to the public when reasonably necessary to ensure the orderly conduct of Government business. The decision to close a property during an emergency shall be made by the head of the facility or designee. The head of the facility or designee shall have authority to designate areas within a facility as closed to the public.

(2) **Recording presence.** Admission to property during periods when such property is closed to the public will be limited to persons authorized by the head of the facility or designee. Such persons may be required to sign a register and/or display identification documents when requested to do so by VA police, or other authorized individual. No person, without authorization, shall enter upon or remain on such property while the property is closed. Failure to leave such premises by unauthorized persons shall constitute an offense under this paragraph.

(3) **Preservation of property.** The improper disposal of rubbish on property; the spitting on the property; the creation of any hazard on property to persons or things; the throwing of articles of any kind from a building; the climbing upon the roof or any part of the building, without permission; or the willful destruction, damage, or removal of Government property or any part thereof, without authorization, is prohibited. The destruction, mutilation, defacement, injury, or removal of any monument, gravestone, or other structure within the limits of any national cemetery is prohibited.

(4) **Conformity with signs and emergency conditions.** The head of the facility, or designee, shall have authority to post signs of a prohibitory and directory nature. Persons, in and on property, shall comply with such signs of a prohibitory or directory nature, and during emergencies, with the direction of police authorities and other authorized officials. Tampering with, destruction, marring, or removal of such posted signs is prohibited.

(5) **Disturbances.** Conduct on property which creates loud or unusual noise; which unreasonably obstructs the usual use of entrances, foyers, lobbies, corridors, offices, elevators, stairways, or parking lots; which otherwise impedes or disrupts the performance of official duties by Government employees; which prevents one from obtaining medical or other services provided on the property in a timely manner; or the use of loud, abusive, or otherwise improper language; or unwarranted loitering, sleeping, or assembly is prohibited. In addition to measures designed to secure voluntary terminations of violations of this paragraph the head of the facility or designee may cause the issuance of orders for persons who are creating a disturbance to depart the property. Failure to leave the premises when so ordered constitutes a further disturbance within the meaning of this rule, and the offender is subject to arrest and removal from the premises.

(6) **Gambling.** Participating in games for money or for tangible or intangible things, or the operating of gambling devices, the conduct of a lottery or pool, or the selling or purchasing of numbers tickets, in or on property is prohibited.

(7) **Alcoholic beverages and narcotics.** Operating a motor vehicle on property by a person under the influence of alcoholic beverages, narcotic drugs, hallucinogens, marijuana, barbiturates, or amphetamines is prohibited. Entering property under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, marijuana, barbiturate, amphetamine, or alcoholic beverage (unless prescribed by a physician) is prohibited. The use on property of any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, marijuana, barbiturate, or amphetamine (unless prescribed by a physician) is prohibited. The introduction or possession of alcoholic beverages or any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, marijuana, barbiturate, and amphetamine on property is prohibited, except for liquor or drugs prescribed for use by medical authority for medical purposes. Provided such
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possession is consistent with the laws of the State in which the facility is located, liquor may be used and maintained in quarters assigned to employees as their normal abode, and away from the abode with the written consent of the head of the facility which specifies a special occasion for use and limits the area and period for the authorized use.

(8) Soliciting, vending, and debt collection. Soliciting alms and contributions, commercial soliciting and vending of all kinds, displaying or distributing commercial advertising, or collecting private debts in or on property is prohibited. This rule does not apply to (i) national or local drives for funds for welfare, health, or other purposes as authorized under Executive Order 12353, Charitable Fund Raising (March 23, 1982), as amended by Executive Order 12404 (February 10, 1983), and regulations issued by the Office of Personnel Management implementing these Executive Orders; (ii) concessions or personal notices posted by employees on authorized bulletin boards; and (iii) solicitation of labor organization membership or dues under 5 U.S.C. chapter 71.

(9) Distribution of handbills. The distributing of materials such as pamphlets, handbills, and/or flyers, and the displaying of placards or posting of materials on bulletin boards or elsewhere on property is prohibited, except as authorized by the head of the facility or designee or when such distributions or displays are conducted as part of authorized Government activities.

(10) Photographs for news, advertising, or commercial purposes. Photographs for advertising or commercial purposes may be taken only with the written consent of the head of the facility or designee. Photographs for news purposes may be taken at entrances, lobbies, foyers, or in other places designated by the head of the facility or designee.

(11) Dogs and other animals. Dogs and other animals, except seeing-eye dogs, shall not be brought upon property except as authorized by the head of the facility or designee.

(12) Vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Drivers of all vehicles in or on property shall drive in a careful and safe manner at all times and shall comply with the signals and directions of police and all posted traffic signs. The blocking of entrances, driveways, walks, loading platforms, or fire hydrants in or on property is prohibited; parking in unauthorized locations or in locations reserved for other persons or contrary to the direction of posted signs is prohibited. Creating excessive noise on hospital or cemetery premises by muffler cut out, the excessive use of a horn, or other means is prohibited. Operation of a vehicle in a reckless or unsafe manner, drag racing, bumping, overriding curbs, or leaving the roadway is prohibited.

(13) Weapons and explosives. No person while on property shall carry firearms, other dangerous or deadly weapons, or explosives, either openly or concealed, except for official purposes.

(14) Demonstrations. (i) All visitors are expected to observe proper standards of decorum and decency while on VA property. Toward this end, any service, ceremony, or demonstration, except as authorized by the head of the facility or designee, is prohibited. Jogging, bicycling, sledding and other forms of physical recreation on cemetery grounds is prohibited.

(ii) For the purpose of the prohibition expressed in this paragraph, unauthorized demonstrations or services shall be defined as, but not limited to, picketing, or similar conduct on VA property; any oration or similar conduct to assembled groups of people, unless the oration is part of an authorized service; the display of any placards, banners, or foreign flags on VA property unless approved by the head of the facility or designee; disorderly conduct such as fighting, threatening, violent, or tumultuous behavior, unreasonable noise or coarse utterance, gesture or display or the use of abusive language to any person present; and partisan activities, i.e., those involving commentary or actions in support of, or in opposition to, or attempting to influence, any current policy of the Government of the United States, or any private group, association, or enterprise.

(15) Key security. The head of the facility of designee, will determine which employees, by virtue of their duties, shall have access to keys or barrier-
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(19) Entry into areas posted as closed to the public or others (trespass), $50.
(18) Unauthorized demonstration or service in a national cemetery or on other VA property, $250.
(17) Creating a disturbance during a burial ceremony, $250.
(16) Disorderly conduct which creates loud, boisterous, and unusual noise, or which obstructs the normal use of entrances, exits, foyers, offices, corridors, elevators, and stairways or which tends to impede or prevent the normal operation of a service or operation of the facility, $250.
(15) Entering premises by unauthorized persons, $50.
(14) Unauthorized loitering, sleeping or assembly on property, $50.
(13) Gambling—participating in games of chance for monetary gain or personal property; the operation of gambling devices, a pool or lottery; or the taking or giving of bets, $200.
(12) Operation of a vehicle under the influence of alcoholic beverages or nonprescribed narcotic drugs, hallucinogens, marijuana, barbiturates, or amphetamines, $500.
(11) Disorderly conduct which creates loud, boisterous, and unusual noise, or which obstructs the normal use of entrances, exits, foyers, offices, corridors, elevators, and stairways or which tends to impede or prevent the normal operation of a service or operation of the facility, $250.
(10) Failure to depart premises by unauthorized persons, $50.
(9) Unauthorized solicitation of alms and contributions on premises, $50.
(8) Commercial soliciting or vending, or the collection of private debts on property, $50.
(7) Unauthorized photography on premises, $50.
(6) Unauthorized introduction on VA controlled property of alcoholic beverages or narcotic drugs, hallucinogens, marijuana, barbiturates, or amphetamines, $300.
(5) Unauthorized introduction on VA controlled property of alcoholic beverages or narcotic drugs, hallucinogens, marijuana, barbiturates, or amphetamines or the unauthorized giving of same to a patient or beneficiary, $500.
(4) Unlawful possession, manufacture, and/or use of such keys or barrier cards is prohibited. The surreptitious opening or attempted opening of locks or card-operated barrier mechanisms is prohibited.
(3) Sexual misconduct. Any act of sexual gratification on VA property involving two or more persons, who do not reside in quarters on the property, is prohibited. Acts of prostitution or solicitation for acts of prostitution on VA property is prohibited. For the purposes of this paragraph, an act of prostitution is defined as the performance or the offer or agreement to perform any sexual act for money or payment.
(2) Schedule of offenses and penalties. Conduct in violation of the rules and regulations set forth in paragraph (a) of this section subjects an offender to arrest and removal from the premises. Whomever shall be found guilty of violating these rules and regulations while on any property under the charge and control of VA is subject to a fine as stated in the schedule set forth herein or, if appropriate, the payment of fixed sum in lieu of appearance (forfeiture of collateral) as may be provided for in rules of the United States District Court. Violations included in the schedule of offenses and penalties may also subject an offender to a term of imprisonment of not more than six months, as may be determined appropriate by a magistrate or judge of the United States District Court:
(1) Improper disposal of rubbish on property, $200.
(2) Spitting on property, $25.
(3) Throwing of articles from a building or the unauthorized climbing upon any part of a building, $50.
(4) Willful destruction, damage, or removal of Government property without authorization, $500.
(5) Defacement, destruction, mutilation or injury to, or removal, or disturbance of, gravemarker or headstone, $500.
(6) Failure to comply with signs of a directive and restrictive nature posted for safety purposes, $50.
(7) Tampering with, removal, marking, or destruction of posted signs, $150.
(25) Parking in spaces posted as reserved for physically disabled persons, $50.

(26) Parking in no-parking areas, lanes, or crosswalks so posted or marked by yellow borders or yellow stripes, $25.

(27) Parking in emergency vehicle spaces, areas and lanes bordered in red or posted as EMERGENCY VEHICLES ONLY or FIRE LANE, or parking within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, $50.

(28) Parking within an intersection or blocking a posted vehicle entrance or posted exit lane, $25.

(29) Parking in spaces posted as reserved or in excess of a posted time limit, $15.

(30) Failing to come to a complete stop at a STOP sign, $25.

(31) Failing to yield to a pedestrian in a marked and posted crosswalk, $25.

(32) Driving in the wrong direction on a posted one-way street, $25.

(33) Operation of a vehicle in a reckless or unsafe manner, too fast for conditions, drag racing, overriding curbs, or leaving the roadway, $100.

(34) Exceeding posted speed limits:
(i) By up to 10 mph, $25.
(ii) By up to 20 mph, $50.
(iii) By over 20 mph, $100.

(35) Creating excessive noise in a hospital or cemetery zone by muffler cut out, excessive use of a horn, or other means, $50.

(36) Failure to yield right of way to other vehicles, $50.

(37) Possession of firearms, carried either openly or concealed, whether loaded or unloaded (except by Federal or State law enforcement officers on official business, $500.

(38) Introduction or possession of explosives, or explosive devices which fire a projectile, ammunition, or combustibles, $500.

(39) Possession of knives which exceed a blade length of 3 inches; switchblade knives; any of the variety of hatchets, clubs and hand-held weapons; or brass knuckles, $300.

(40) The unauthorized possession of any of the variety of incapacitating liquid or gas-emitting weapons, $200.

(41) Unauthorized possession, manufacture, or use of keys or barrier card-type keys to rooms or areas on the property, $200.

(42) The surreptitious opening, or attempted opening, of locks or card-operated barrier mechanisms on property, $500.

(43) Soliciting for, or the act of, prostitution, $250.

(44) Any unlawful sexual activity, $250.

(45) Jogging, bicycling, sledding or any recreational physical activity conducted on cemetery grounds, $50.

(c) Enforcement procedures. (1) VA administration directors will issue policies and operating procedures governing the proper exercise of arrest and other law enforcement actions, and limiting the carrying and use of weapons by VA police officers. VA police officers found qualified under respective VA administration directives and duly appointed heads of facilities for the purposes of 38 U.S.C. 902(b)(1), will enforce these rules and regulations and other Federal laws on VA property in accordance with the policies and operating procedures issued by respective VA administration directors and under the direction of the head of the facility.

(2) VA administration directors will prescribe training for VA police officers of the scope and duration necessary to assure the proper exercise of the law enforcement and arrest authority vested in them and to assure their abilities in the safe handling of situations involving patients and the public in general. VA police officers will successfully complete prescribed training in law enforcement procedures and the safe handling of patients as a condition of their retention of statutory law enforcement and arrest authority.

(3) Nothing contained in the rules and regulations set forth in paragraph (a) of this section shall be construed to abrogate any other Federal laws or regulations, including assimilated offenses under 18 U.S.C. 13, or any State or local laws and regulations applicable to the area in which the property is situated.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 901)

[50 FR 29226, July 18, 1985]
§ 1.300 Purpose.
Sections 1.300 through 1.303 prescribe policies and procedures for establishing parking fees for the use of Department of Veterans Affairs controlled parking spaces at VA medical facilities.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 8109)

[53 FR 25490, July 7, 1988]

§ 1.301 Definitions.
As used in §§ 1.300 through 1.303 of this title:

(a) Secretary means the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(b) Eligible person means any individual to whom the Secretary is authorized to furnish medical examination or treatment.

(c) Garage means a structure or part of a structure in which vehicles may be parked.

(d) Medical facility means any facility or part thereof which is under the jurisdiction of the Secretary for the provision of health-care services, including any necessary buildings and structures, garage or parking facility.

(e) Parking facilities includes all surface and garage parking spaces at a VA medical facility.

(f) Volunteer worker means an individual who performs services, without compensation, under the auspices of VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) at a VA medical facility, for the benefit of veterans receiving care at that medical facility.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 8109)

[53 FR 25490, July 7, 1988]

§ 1.302 Applicability and scope.
(a) The provisions of §§ 1.300 through 1.303 apply to VA medical facility parking facilities in the United States, its territories and possessions, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and to such parking facilities for the use of VA medical facilities jointly shared by VA and another Federal agency when the facility is operated by the VA. Sections 1.300 through 1.303 apply to all users of those parking facilities. Fees shall be assessed and collected at medical facilities where parking garages are constructed, acquired, or altered at a cost exceeding $500,000 (or, in the case of acquisition by lease, $100,000 per year). The Secretary, in the exercise of official discretion, may also determine that parking fees shall be charged at any other VA medical facility.

(b) All fees established shall be reasonable under the circumstances and shall cover all parking facilities used in connection with such VA medical facility.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 8109)

[53 FR 25490, July 7, 1988]
§ 1.460 Definitions.

For purposes of §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part, the following definitions apply:

Agreement. The term “agreement” means a document that a VA health care facility develops in collaboration with an Organ Procurement Organization, eye bank or tissue bank with written, detailed responsibilities and obligations of the parties with regard to identifying potential donors and facilitating the donation process.

Alcohol abuse. The term “alcohol abuse” means the use of an alcoholic beverage which impairs the physical, mental, emotional, or social well-being of the user.

Contractor. The term “contractor” means a person who provides services to VA such as data processing, dosage preparation, laboratory analyses or medical or other professional services. Each contractor shall be required to enter into a written agreement subjecting such contractor to the provisions of §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part; 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 7332; and 5 U.S.C. 552a and 38 CFR 1.576(g).

Deceased. The term “deceased” means death established by either neurological criteria (brain death) or cardiopulmonary criteria (cardiac death). Brain death is the irreversible cessation of all brain function. Cardiac death is the irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory function. In both cases, “irreversible” means
that function will not resume spontaneously and will not be restarted artificially.

Decision-making capacity. The term “decision-making capacity” has the same meaning set forth in 38 CFR 17.32(a).

Diagnosis. The term “diagnosis” means any reference to an individual’s alcohol or drug abuse or to a condition which is identified as having been caused by that abuse or any reference to sickle cell anemia or infection with the human immunodeficiency virus which is made for the purpose of treatment or referral for treatment. A diagnosis prepared for the purpose of treatment or referral for treatment but which is not so used is covered by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part. These regulations do not apply to a diagnosis of drug overdose or alcohol intoxication which clearly shows that the individual involved is not an alcohol or drug abuser (e.g., involuntary ingestion of alcohol or drugs or reaction to a prescribed dosage of one or more drugs).

Disclose or disclosure. The term “disclose” or “disclosure” means a communication of patient identifying information, the affirmative verification of another person’s communication of patient identifying information, or the communication of any information from the record of a patient who has been identified.

Drug abuse. The term “drug abuse” means the use of a psychoactive substance for other than medicinal purposes which impairs the physical, mental, emotional, or social well-being of the user.

Eye bank and tissue bank. The term “eye bank and tissue bank” means an “establishment” as defined in 21 CFR 1271.3, pursuant to section 361 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 264) that has a valid, current registration with the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as required under 21 CFR part 1271.

Individual. The term “individual” means a veteran, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101(2), or a dependent of a veteran, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 101(3) and (4)(A).

Infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The term “infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)” means the presence of laboratory evidence for human immunodeficiency virus infection. For the purposes of §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part, the term includes the testing of an individual for the presence of the virus or antibodies to the virus and information related to such testing (including tests with negative results).

Informant. The term “informant” means an individual who is a patient or employee or who becomes a patient or employee at the request of a law enforcement agency or official and who at the request of a law enforcement agency or official observes one or more patients or employees for the purpose of reporting the information obtained to the law enforcement agency or official.

Near death. The term “near death” means that in the clinical judgment of the patient’s health care provider based on defined clinical triggers, the patient’s death is imminent.

Organ Procurement Organization. The term “Organ Procurement Organization” (OPO) means an organization that performs or coordinates the procurement, preservation, and transportation of organs and maintains a system of locating prospective recipients for available organs.

Patient. The term “patient” means any individual or subject who has applied for or been given a diagnosis or treatment for drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, or sickle cell anemia in order to determine that individual’s eligibility to participate in a treatment or rehabilitation program. The term patient includes an individual who has been diagnosed or treated for alcoholism, drug abuse, HIV infection, or sickle cell anemia in order to determine an individual’s eligibility to participate in a treatment or rehabilitation program. The term “patient” for the purpose of infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) means the presence of laboratory evidence for human immunodeficiency virus infection.
virus or sickle cell anemia, includes one tested for the disease.

Patient identifying information. The term “patient identifying information” means the name, address, social security number, fingerprints, photograph, or similar information by which the identity of a patient can be determined with reasonable accuracy and speed either directly or by reference to other publicly available information. The term does not include a number assigned to a patient by a treatment program, if that number does not consist of, or contain numbers (such as social security, or driver’s license number) which could be used to identify a patient with reasonable accuracy and speed from sources external to the treatment program.

Person. The term “person” means an individual, partnership, corporation, Federal, State or local government agency, or any other legal entity.

Practitioner. The term “practitioner” has the same meaning set forth in 38 CFR 17.32(a).

Procurement organization. The term “procurement organization” means an organ procurement organization, eye bank, and/or tissue bank as defined in this section.

Records. The term “records” means any information received, obtained or maintained, whether recorded or not, by an employee or contractor of VA, for the purpose of seeking or performing VA program or activity functions relating to drug abuse, alcoholism, tests for or infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, or sickle cell anemia regarding an identifiable patient. A program or activity function relating to drug abuse, alcoholism, infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, or sickle cell anemia includes evaluation, treatment, education, training, rehabilitation, research, or referral for one of these conditions. Sections 1.460 through 1.499 of this part apply to a primary diagnosis, or other information which identifies, or could reasonably be expected to identify, a patient as having a drug or alcohol abuse condition, infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, or sickle cell anemia includes evaluation, treatment, drug dependence, but only if such diagnosis or information is received, obtained or maintained for the purpose of seeking or performing one of the above program or activity functions. Sections 1.460 through 1.499 of this part do not apply if such diagnosis or other information is not received, obtained or maintained for the purpose of seeking or performing a function or activity relating to drug abuse, alcoholism, infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, or sickle cell anemia for the patient in question. Whenever such diagnosis or other information, not originally received or obtained for the purpose of obtaining or providing one of the above program or activity functions, is subsequently used in connection with such program or activity functions, those original entries become a “record” and §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part thereafter apply to those entries. Segregability: these regulations do not apply to records or information contained therein, the disclosure of which (the circumstances surrounding the disclosure having been considered) could not reasonably be expected to disclose the fact that a patient has been connected with a VA program or activity function relating to drug abuse, alcoholism, infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, or sickle cell anemia.

(1) The following are examples of instances whereby records or information related to alcoholism or drug abuse are covered by the provisions of §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part:

(i) A patient with alcoholic delirium tremens is admitted for detoxification. The patient is offered treatment in a VA alcohol rehabilitation program which he declines.

(ii) A patient who is diagnosed as a drug abuser applies for and is provided VA drug rehabilitation treatment.

(iii) While undergoing treatment for an unrelated medical condition, a patient discusses with the physician his use and abuse of alcohol. The physician offers VA alcohol rehabilitation treatment which is declined by the patient.

(2) The following are examples of instances whereby records or information related to alcoholism or drug abuse are not covered by the provisions of §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part:
(i) A patient with alcoholic delirium tremens is admitted for detoxification, treated and released with no counseling or treatment for the underlying condition of alcoholism.

(ii) While undergoing treatment for an unrelated medical condition, a patient informs the physician of a history of drug abuse fifteen years earlier with no ingestion of drugs since. The history and diagnosis of drug abuse is documented in the hospital summary and no treatment is sought by the patient or offered or provided by VA during the current period of treatment.

(iii) While undergoing treatment for injuries sustained in an accident, a patient’s medical record is documented to support the judgment of the physician to prescribe certain alternate medications in order to avoid possible drug interactions in view of the patient’s enrollment and treatment in a non-VA methadone maintenance program. The patient states that continued treatment and follow-up will be obtained from private physicians and VA treatment for the drug abuse is not sought by the patient nor provided or offered by the staff.

(iv) A patient is admitted to the emergency room suffering from a possible drug overdose. The patient is treated and released; a history and diagnosis of drug abuse may be documented in the hospital summary. The patient is not offered treatment for the underlying conditions of drug abuse, nor is treatment sought by the patient for that condition.

Surrogate. The term “surrogate” has the same meaning set forth in 38 CFR 17.32(a).

Third party payer. The term “third party payer” means a person who pays, or agrees to pay, for diagnosis or treatment furnished to a patient on the basis of a contractual relationship with the patient or a member of his or her family or on the basis of the patient’s eligibility for Federal, State, or local governmental benefits.

Treatment. The term “treatment” means the management and care of a patient for drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the human immunodeficiency virus, or sickle cell anemia, or a condition which is identified as having been caused by one or more of these conditions, in order to reduce or eliminate the adverse effects upon the patient. The term includes testing for the human immunodeficiency virus or sickle cell anemia.

Undercover agent. The term “undercover agent” means an officer of any Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency who becomes a patient or employee for the purpose of investigating a suspected violation of law or who pursues that purpose after becoming a patient or becoming employed for other purposes.

VHA health care facility. The term “VHA health care facility” means a VA medical center, VA emergency room, VA nursing home or other facility as defined in 38 U.S.C. 1701(3).

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332, 7334

§ 1.461 Applicability.

(a) General—(1) Restrictions on disclosure. The restrictions on disclosure in these regulations apply to any information whether or not recorded, which:

(i) Would identify a patient as an alcohol or drug abuser, an individual tested for or infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hereafter referred to as HIV, or an individual with sickle cell anemia, either directly, by reference to other publicly available information, or through verification of such an identification by another person; and

(ii) Is provided or obtained for the purpose of treating alcohol or drug abuse, infection with the HIV, or sickle cell anemia, making a diagnosis for that treatment, or making a referral for that treatment as well as for education, training, evaluation, rehabilitation and research program or activity purposes.

(2) Restriction on use. The restriction on use of information to initiate or substantiate any criminal charges against a patient or to conduct any criminal investigation of a patient applies to any information, whether or not recorded, which is maintained for the purpose of treating drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the HIV, or sickle cell anemia,
making a diagnosis for that treatment, or making a referral for that treatment as well as for education, training, evaluation, rehabilitation, and research program or activity purposes.

(b) Period covered as affecting applicability. The provisions of §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part apply to records of identity, diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment pertaining to any given individual maintained over any period of time which, irrespective of when it begins, does not end before March 21, 1972, in the case of diagnosis or treatment for drug abuse; or before May 14, 1974, in the case of diagnosis or treatment for alcoholism or alcohol abuse; or before September 1, 1973, in the case of testing, diagnosis or treatment of sickle cell anemia; or before May 20, 1988, in the case of testing, diagnosis or treatment for an infection with the HIV.

(c) Exceptions—(1) Department of Veterans Affairs and Armed Forces. The restrictions on disclosure in §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part do not apply to communications of information between or among those components of VA who have a need for the information in connection with their duties in the provision of health care, adjudication of benefits, or in carrying out administrative responsibilities related to those functions, including personnel of the Office of the Inspector General who are conducting audits, evaluations, healthcare inspections, or non-patient investigations, or between such components and the Armed Forces, of information pertaining to a person relating to a period when such person is or was subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Information obtained by VA components under these circumstances may be disclosed outside of VA to proseute or investigate a non-patient only in accordance with §1.495 of this part. Similarly, the restrictions on disclosure in §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part do not apply to communications of information to the Department of Justice or U.S. Attorneys who are providing support in civil litigation or possible litigation involving VA.

(2) Contractor. The restrictions on disclosure in §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part do not apply to communications between VA and a contractor of information needed by the contractor to provide his or her services.

(3) Crimes on VA premises or against VA personnel. The restrictions on disclosure and use in §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part do not apply to communications from VA personnel to law enforcement officers which:

(i) Are directly related to a patient’s commission of a crime on the premises of the facility or against personnel of VA or to a threat to commit such a crime; and

(ii) Are limited to the circumstances of the incident, including the patient status of the individual committing or threatening to commit the crime, that individual’s name and address to the extent authorized by 38 U.S.C. 5701(f)(2), and that individual’s last known whereabouts.

(4) Undercover agents and informants. (i) Except as specifically authorized by a court order granted under §1.495 of this part, VA may not knowingly employ, or admit as a patient, any undercover agent or informant in any VA drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, HIV infection, or sickle cell anemia treatment program.

(ii) No information obtained by an undercover agent or informant, whether or not that undercover agent or informant is placed in a VA drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, HIV infection, or sickle cell anemia treatment program pursuant to an authorizing court order, may be used to criminally investigate or prosecute any patient unless authorized pursuant to the provisions of §1.494 of this part.

(iii) The enrollment of an undercover agent or informant in a treatment unit shall not be deemed a violation of this section if the enrollment is solely for the purpose of enabling the individual to obtain treatment for drug or alcohol abuse, HIV infection, or sickle cell anemia.

(d) Applicability to recipients of information—(1) Restriction on use of information. In the absence of a proper §1.494 court order, the restriction on the use of any information subject to §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part to initiate or substantiate any criminal charges against a patient or to conduct any criminal investigation of a patient applies to any person who obtains that
information from VA, regardless of the status of the person obtaining the information or of whether the information was obtained in accordance with §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part. This restriction on use bars, among other things, the introduction of that information as evidence in a criminal proceeding and any other use of the information to investigate or prosecute a patient with respect to a suspected crime. Information obtained by undercover agents or informants (see paragraph (c) of this section) or through patient access (see §1.469 of this part) is subject to the restriction on use.

(2) Restrictions on disclosures—third-party payers and others. The restrictions on disclosure in §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part apply to third-party payers and persons who, pursuant to a consent, receive patient records directly from VA and who are notified of the restrictions on redisclosure of the records in accordance with §1.476 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(e) and 7334)

§ 1.462 Confidentiality restrictions.

(a) General. The patient records to which §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part apply may be disclosed or used only as permitted by these regulations and may not otherwise be disclosed or used in any civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative proceedings conducted by any Federal, State, or local authority. Any disclosure made under these regulations must be limited to that information which is necessary to carry out the purpose of the disclosure.

(b) Unconditional compliance required. The restrictions on disclosure and use in §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part apply whether the person seeking the information already has it, has other means of obtaining it, is a law enforcement or other official, has obtained a subpoena, or asserts any other justification for a disclosure or use which is not permitted by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part. These provisions do not prohibit VA from acting accordingly when there is no disclosure of information.

(c) Acknowledging the presence of patients: responding to requests. (1) The presence of an identified patient in a VA facility for the treatment or other VA program activity relating to drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the HIV, or sickle cell anemia may be acknowledged only if the patient’s written consent is obtained in accordance with §1.475 of this part or if an authorizing court order is entered in accordance with §§1.490 through 1.499 of this part. Acknowledgment of the presence of an identified patient in a facility is permitted if the acknowledgment does not reveal that the patient is being treated for or is otherwise involved in a VA program or activity concerning drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the HIV, or sickle cell anemia.

(2) Any answer to a request for a disclosure of patient records which is not permissible under §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part must be made in a way that will not affirmatively reveal that an identified individual has been, or is being diagnosed or treated for drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the HIV, or sickle cell anemia. These regulations do not restrict a disclosure that an identified individual is not and never has been a patient.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§ 1.463 Criminal penalty for violations.

Under 38 U.S.C. 7332(g), any person who violates any provision of this statute or §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part shall be fined not more than $5,000 in the case of a first offense, and not more than $20,000 for a subsequent offense.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(g))

§ 1.464 Minor patients.

(a) Definition of minor. As used in §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part the term “minor” means a person who has not attained the age of majority specified in the applicable State law, or if no age of majority is specified in the applicable State law, the age of eighteen years.

(b) State law not requiring parental consent to treatment. If a minor patient acting alone has the legal capacity under the applicable State law to apply for and obtain treatment for drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the HIV, or sickle cell anemia, any written consent for disclosure

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§ 1.465 Incompetent and deceased patients.

(a) Incompetent patients other than minors. In the case of a patient who has been adjudicated as lacking the capacity, for any reason other than insufficient age, to manage his or her own affairs, any consent which is required under §§ 1.460 through 1.499 of this part may be given by a court appointed legal guardian.

(b) Deceased patients—(1) Vital statistics. Sec. 1.460 through 1.499 of this part do not restrict the disclosure of patient identifying information relating to the cause of death of a patient under laws requiring the collection of death or other vital statistics or permitting inquiry into the cause of death.

(2) Consent by personal representative. Any other disclosure of information identifying a deceased patient as being treated for drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the HIV, or sickle cell anemia is subject to §§ 1.460 through 1.499 of this part. If a written consent to the disclosure is required, the Under Secretary for Health or designee may, upon the prior written request of the next of kin, executor/executrix, administrator/administratrix, or other personal representative of such deceased patient, disclose the contents of such records, only if the Under Secretary for Health or designee determines such disclosure is necessary to obtain survivorship benefits for the deceased patient’s survivor. This would include not only VA benefits, but also payments by the Social Security Administration, Worker’s Compensation Boards or Commissions, or other Federal, State, or local government agencies, or nongovernment entities, such as life insurance companies.

(d) Minor applicant for service lacks capacity for rational choice. Facts relevant to reducing a threat to the life or physical well-being of the applicant or any other individual may be disclosed to the parent, guardian, or other person authorized under State law to act in the minor’s behalf if the appropriate VA facility director judges that:

(1) A minor applicant for services lacks capacity because of extreme youth or mental or physical condition to make a rational decision on whether to consent to a disclosure under § 1.475 of this part to his or her parent, guardian, or other person authorized under State law to act in the minor’s behalf, and

(2) The applicant’s situation poses a substantial threat to the life or physical well-being of the applicant or any other individual which may be reduced by communicating relevant facts to the minor’s parent, guardian, or other person authorized under State law to act in the minor’s behalf.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§ 1.465 Incompetent and deceased patients.

(a) Incompetent patients other than minors. In the case of a patient who has been adjudicated as lacking the capacity, for any reason other than insufficient age, to manage his or her own affairs, any consent which is required under §§ 1.460 through 1.499 of this part may be given by a court appointed legal guardian.

(b) Deceased patients—(1) Vital statistics. Sec. 1.460 through 1.499 of this part do not restrict the disclosure of patient identifying information relating to the cause of death of a patient under laws requiring the collection of death or other vital statistics or permitting inquiry into the cause of death.

(2) Consent by personal representative. Any other disclosure of information identifying a deceased patient as being treated for drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the HIV, or sickle cell anemia is subject to §§ 1.460 through 1.499 of this part. If a written consent to the disclosure is required, the Under Secretary for Health or designee may, upon the prior written request of the next of kin, executor/executrix, administrator/administratrix, or other personal representative of such deceased patient, disclose the contents of such records, only if the Under Secretary for Health or designee determines such disclosure is necessary to obtain survivorship benefits for the deceased patient’s survivor. This would include not only VA benefits, but also payments by the Social Security Administration, Worker’s Compensation Boards or Commissions, or other Federal, State, or local government agencies, or nongovernment entities, such as life insurance companies.
Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 1.468 Relationship to Federal statutes protecting research subjects against compulsory disclosure of their identity.

(a) Research privilege description. There may be concurrent coverage of patient identifying information by the provisions of §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part and by administrative action taken under Sec. 303(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 241(d) and the implementing regulations at 42 CFR Part 2a); or Sec. 502(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 872(c) and the implementing regulations at 21 CFR 1316.21). These "research privilege" statutes confer on the Secretary of Health and Human Services and on the Attorney General, respectively, the power to authorize researchers conducting certain types of research to withhold from all persons not connected with the research the names and other identifying information concerning individuals who are the subjects of the research.

(b) Effect of concurrent coverage. Sections 1.460 through 1.499 of this part restrict the disclosure and use of information about patients, while administrative action taken under the research privilege statutes and implementing regulations protects a person engaged in applicable research from being compelled to disclose any identifying characteristics of the individuals who are the subjects of that research. The issuance under §§1.490 through 1.499 of this part of a court order authorizing a disclosure of information about a patient does not affect an exercise of authority under these research privilege statutes. However, the research privilege granted under 21 CFR 291.505(g) to treatment programs using methadone for maintenance treatment does not protect from compulsory disclosure any information which is permitted to be disclosed under those regulations. Thus, if a court order entered in accordance with §§1.490 through 1.499 of this part authorizes a VA facility to disclose certain information about its patients, the facility may not invoke the research privilege under 21 CFR 291.505(g) as a defense to a subpoena for that information.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§ 1.467 Restrictions on the use of identification cards and public signs.

(a) No facility may require any patient to carry on their person while away from the facility premises any card or other object which would identify the patient as a participant in any VA drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, HIV infection, or sickle cell anemia treatment program. A facility may require patients to use or carry cards or other identification objects on the premises of a facility. Patients may not be required to wear clothing or colored identification bracelets or display objects openly to all facility staff or others which would identify them as being treated for drug or alcohol abuse, HIV infection, or sickle cell anemia.

(b) Treatment locations should not be identified by signs that would identify individuals entering or exiting these locations as patients enrolled in a drug or alcohol abuse, HIV infection, or sickle cell anemia program or activity.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§ 1.466 Security for records.

(a) Written records which are subject to §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part must be maintained in a secure room, locked file cabinet, safe or other similar container when not in use. Access to information stored in computers will be limited to authorized VA employees who have a need for the information in performing their duties. These security precautions shall be consistent with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a).

(b) Each VA facility shall adopt in writing procedures related to the access to and use of records which are subject to §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§ 1.468 Relationship to Federal statutes protecting research subjects against compulsory disclosure of their identity.

(a) Research privilege description. There may be concurrent coverage of patient identifying information by the provisions of §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part and by administrative action taken under Sec. 303(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 241(d) and the implementing regulations at 42 CFR Part 2a); or Sec. 502(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 872(c) and the implementing regulations at 21 CFR 1316.21). These “research privilege” statutes confer on the Secretary of Health and Human Services and on the Attorney General, respectively, the power to authorize researchers conducting certain types of research to withhold from all persons not connected with the research the names and other identifying information concerning individuals who are the subjects of the research.

(b) Effect of concurrent coverage. Sections 1.460 through 1.499 of this part restrict the disclosure and use of information about patients, while administrative action taken under the research privilege statutes and implementing regulations protects a person engaged in applicable research from being compelled to disclose any identifying characteristics of the individuals who are the subjects of that research. The issuance under §§1.490 through 1.499 of this part of a court order authorizing a disclosure of information about a patient does not affect an exercise of authority under these research privilege statutes. However, the research privilege granted under 21 CFR 291.505(g) to treatment programs using methadone for maintenance treatment does not protect from compulsory disclosure any information which is permitted to be disclosed under those regulations. Thus, if a court order entered in accordance with §§1.490 through 1.499 of this part authorizes a VA facility to disclose certain information about its patients, the facility may not invoke the research privilege under 21 CFR 291.505(g) as a defense to a subpoena for that information.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)
§ 1.469 Patient access and restrictions on use.

(a) Patient access not prohibited. Sections 1.460 through 1.499 of this part do not prohibit a facility from giving a patient access to his or her own records, including the opportunity to inspect and copy any records that VA maintains about the patient, subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a(d)(1)) and 38 CFR 1.577. If the patient is accompanied, giving access to the patient and the accompanying person will require a written consent by the patient which is provided in accordance with §1.475 of this part.

(b) Restrictions on use of information. Information obtained by patient access to patient record is subject to the restriction on use of this information to initiate or substantiate any criminal charges against the patient or to conduct any criminal investigation of the patient as provided for under §1.461(d)(1) of this part.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334

§§ 1.470–1.474 [Reserved]

DISCLOSURES WITH PATIENT’S CONSENT

§ 1.475 Form of written consent.

(a) Required elements. A written consent to a disclosure under §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part must include:

(1) The name of the facility permitted to make the disclosure (such a designation does not preclude the release of records from other VA health care facilities unless a restriction is stated on the consent).

(2) The name or title of the individual or the name of the organization to which disclosure is to be made.

(3) The name of the patient.

(4) The purpose of the disclosure.

(5) How much and what kind of information is to be disclosed.

(6) The signature of the patient and, when required for a patient who is a minor, the signature of a person authorized to give consent under §1.464 of this part; or, when required for a patient who is incompetent or deceased, the signature of a person authorized to sign under §1.465 of this part in lieu of the patient.

(7) The date on which the consent is signed.

(8) A statement that the consent is subject to revocation at any time except to the extent that the facility which is to make the disclosure has already acted in reliance on it. Acting in reliance includes the provision of treatment services in reliance on a valid consent to disclose information to a third party payer.

(9) The date, event, or condition upon which the consent will expire if not revoked before. This date, event, or condition must ensure that the consent will last no longer than reasonably necessary to serve the purpose for which it is given.

(b) Expired, deficient, or false consent. A disclosure may not be made on the basis of a consent which:

(1) Has expired;

(2) On its face substantially fails to conform to any of the requirements set forth in paragraph (a) of this section;

(3) Is known to have been revoked; or

(4) Is known, or through a reasonable effort could be known, by responsible personnel of VA to be materially false.

(c) Notification of deficient consent. Other than the patient, no person or entity may be advised that a special consent is required in order to disclose information relating to an individual participating in a drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, HIV, or sickle cell anemia program or activity. Where a person or entity presents VA with an insufficient written consent for information protected by 38 U.S.C. 7332, VA must, in the process of obtaining a legally sufficient consent, correspond only with the patient whose records are involved, or the legal guardian of an incompetent patient or next of kin of a deceased patient, and not with any other person.

(d) It is not necessary to use any particular form to establish a consent referred to in paragraph (a) of this section, however, VA Form 10-5345, titled Request for and Consent to Release of Medical Records Protected by 38 U.S.C. 7332, may be used for such purpose.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(a)(2) and (b)(1)}
§ 1.476 Prohibition on redisclosure.

Each disclosure under §§ 1.460 through 1.499 of this part made with the patient’s written consent must be accompanied by a written statement similar to the following:

This information has been disclosed to you from records protected by Federal confidentiality rules (38 CFR Part 1). The Federal rules prohibit you from making any further disclosure of this information unless further disclosure is expressly permitted by the written consent of the person to whom it pertains or as otherwise permitted by 38 CFR Part 1. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is NOT sufficient for this purpose. The Federal rules restrict any use of the information to criminally investigate or prosecute any alcohol or drug abuse patient or patient with sickle cell anemia or HIV infection.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§ 1.477 Disclosures permitted with written consent.

If a patient consents to a disclosure of his or her records under § 1.475 of this part, a facility may disclose those records in accordance with that consent to any individual or organization named in the consent, except that disclosures to central registries and in connection with criminal justice referrals must meet the requirements of §§ 1.478 and 1.479 of this part, respectively.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(b)(1))

§ 1.478 Disclosures to prevent multiple enrollments in detoxification and maintenance treatment programs; not applicable to records relating to sickle cell anemia or infection with the human immunodeficiency virus.

(a) Definitions. For purposes of this section:

(1) Central registry means an organization which obtains from two or more member programs patient identifying information about individuals applying for maintenance treatment or detoxification treatment for the purpose of avoiding an individual’s concurrent enrollment in more than one program.

(2) Detoxification treatment means the dispensing of a narcotic drug in decreasing doses to an individual in order to reduce or eliminate adverse physiological or psychological effects incident to withdrawal from the sustained use of a narcotic drug.

(3) Maintenance treatment means the dispensing of a narcotic drug in the treatment of an individual for dependence upon heroin or other morphine-like drugs.

(4) Member program means a non-VA detoxification treatment or maintenance treatment program which reports patient identifying information to a central registry and which is in the same State as that central registry or is not more than 125 miles from any border of the State in which the central registry is located.

(b) Restrictions on disclosure. VA may disclose patient records to a central registry which is located in the same State or is not more than 125 miles from any border of the State or to any non-VA detoxification or maintenance treatment program not more than 200 miles away for the purpose of preventing the multiple enrollment of a patient only if:

(1) The disclosure is made when:

(i) The patient is accepted for treatment;

(ii) The type or dosage of the drug is changed; or

(iii) The treatment is interrupted, resumed or terminated.

(2) The disclosure is limited to:

(i) Patient identifying information;

(ii) Type and dosage of the drug; and

(iii) Relevant dates.

(3) The disclosure is made with the patient’s written consent meeting the requirements of § 1.475 of this part, except that:

(i) The consent must list the name and address of each central registry and each known non-VA detoxification or maintenance treatment program to which a disclosure will be made; and

(ii) The consent may authorize a disclosure to any non-VA detoxification or maintenance treatment program established within 200 miles after the consent is given without naming any such program.

(c) Use of information limited to prevention of multiple enrollments. A central registry and any non-VA detoxification or maintenance treatment program to
which information is disclosed to prevent multiple enrollments may not re-
disclose or use patient identifying in-
formation for any purpose other than
the prevention of multiple enrollments
unless authorized by a court order un-
der §§1.490 through 1.499 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§ 1.479 Disclosures to elements of the
criminal justice system which have
referred patients.

(a) VA may disclose information
about a patient from records covered
by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part to
those persons within the criminal jus-
tice system which have made partici-
pation in a VA treatment program a con-
dition of the disposition of any
criminal proceedings against the pa-
tient or of the patient’s parole or other
release from custody if:

(1) The disclosure is made only to
those individuals within the criminal
justice system who have a need for the
information in connection with their
duty to monitor the patient’s progress
(e.g., a prosecuting attorney who is
withholding charges against the pa-
tient, a court granting pretrial or
posttrial release, probation or parole
officers responsible for supervision of
the patient); and

(2) The patient has signed a written
consent as a condition of admission to
the treatment program meeting the re-
quirements of §1.475 of this part (ex-
cept paragraph (a)(8) which is inconsis-
tent with the revocation provisions
of paragraph (c) of this section) and
the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c)
of this section.

(b) Duration of consent. The written
consent must state the period during
which it remains in effect. This period
must be reasonable, taking into ac-
count:

(1) The anticipated length of the
treatment recognizing that revocation
of consent may not generally be ef-
fected while treatment is ongoing;

(2) The type of criminal proceeding
involved, the need for the information
in connection with the final disposition
of that proceeding, and when the final
disposition will occur; and

(3) Such other factors as the facility,
the patient, and the person(s) who will
receive the disclosure consider perti-
nent.

(c) Revocation of consent. The written
consent must state that it is revocable
upon the passage of a specified amount
of time or the occurrence of a specified,
ascertainable event. The time or occur-
rence upon which consent becomes rev-
ocable may be no earlier than the indi-
vidual’s completion of the treatment
program and no later than the final
disposition of the conditional release
or other action in connection with
which consent was given.

(d) Restrictions on redisclosure and use.
A person who receives patient informa-
tion under this section may redisclose
and use it only to carry out that per-
son’s official duties with regard to the
patient’s conditional release or other
action in connection with which the
consent was given, including parole.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§§ 1.480–1.483 [Reserved]

DISCLOSURES WITHOUT PATIENT
CONSENT

§ 1.484 Disclosure of medical informa-
tion to the surrogate of a patient
who lacks decision-making capac-
ity.

A VA medical practitioner may dis-
lose the content of any record of the
identity, diagnosis, prognosis, or treat-
ment of a patient that is maintained in
connection with the performance of
any VA program or activity relating to
drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol
abuse, infection with the human im-
munodeficiency virus, or sickle cell
anemia to a surrogate of the patient
who is the subject of such record if:

(a) The patient lacks decision-mak-
ing capacity; and

(b) The practitioner deems the con-
tent of the given record necessary for
the surrogate to make an informed de-
cision regarding the patient’s treat-
ment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7331, 7332)
(76 FR 6696, Feb. 8, 2011)

§ 1.485 Medical emergencies.

(a) General rule. Under the procedures
required by paragraph (c) of this sec-
tion, patient identifying information
from records covered by §§1.460 through
1.499 of this part may be disclosed to medical personnel who have a need for information about a patient for the purpose of treating a condition which poses an immediate threat to the health of any individual and which requires immediate medical intervention.

(b) Special rule. Patient identifying information may be disclosed to medical personnel of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) who assert a reason to believe that the health of any individual may be threatened by an error in the manufacture, labeling, or sale of a product under FDA jurisdiction, and that the information will be used for the exclusive purpose of notifying patients or their physicians of potential dangers.

(c) Procedures. Immediately following disclosure, any VA employee making an oral disclosure under authority of this section shall make an accounting of the disclosure in accordance with the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a(c) and 38 CFR 1.576(c)) and document the disclosure in the patient’s records setting forth in writing:

1. The name and address of the medical personnel to whom disclosure was made and their affiliation with any health care facility;
2. The name of the individual making the disclosure;
3. The date and time of the disclosure;
4. The nature of the emergency (or error, if the report was to FDA);
5. The information disclosed; and
6. The authority for making the disclosure (§1.485 of this part).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(b)(2)(A))

§ 1.486 Disclosure of information related to infection with the human immunodeficiency virus to public health authorities.

(a) In the case of any record which is maintained in connection with the performance of any program or activity relating to infection with the HIV, information may be disclosed to a Federal, State, or local public health authority, charged under Federal or State law with the protection of the public health, and to which Federal or State law requires disclosure of such record, if a qualified representative of such authority has made a written request that such record be provided as required pursuant to such law for a purpose authorized by such law. In the case of a State law, such law must, in order for VA to be able to release patient name and address information in accordance with §1.486 through 1.499 of this part to an authorized representative of a procurement organization for the purpose of facilitating determination of whether the individual is a suitable potential organ, eye, or tissue donor if:

(a) The individual is currently an inpatient in a VHA health care facility;
(b) The individual is, in the clinical judgment of the individual’s primary health care provider, near death or deceased;
(c) The VHA health care facility has a signed agreement with the procurement organization in accordance with the applicable requirements of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); and
(d) The VHA health care facility has confirmed with HHS that it has certified or recertified the organ procurement organization as provided in the applicable HHS regulations. VA medical centers must verify annually in January of each calendar year with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that an eye bank or tissue bank has complied with the FDA registration requirements of 21 CFR part 1271 and that the registration status is active before permitting an eye bank or tissue bank to receive protected health information.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5701(k), 7332(b)(2)(E))

§ 1.486a Eye, organ and tissue donation.

A VHA health care facility may disclose the individually-identified medical record information of an individual covered by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part to an authorized representative of a procurement organization for the purpose of facilitating determination of whether the individual is a suitable potential organ, eye, or tissue donor if:

(a) The individual is currently an inpatient in a VHA health care facility;
§ 1.487 Disclosure of information related to infection with the human immunodeficiency virus to the spouse or sexual partner of the patient.

(a) Subject to paragraph (b) of this section, a physician or a professional counselor may disclose information or records indicating that a patient is infected with the HIV if the disclosure is made to the spouse of the patient, or to an individual whom the patient has, during the process of professional counseling or of testing to determine whether the patient is infected with such virus, identified as being a sexual partner of such patient.

(b) A disclosure under this section may be made only if the physician or counselor, after making reasonable efforts to counsel and encourage the patient to provide the information to the spouse or sexual partner, reasonably believes that the patient will not provide the information to the spouse or sexual partner and that the disclosure is necessary to protect the health of the spouse or sexual partner.

(c) A disclosure under this section may be made only if the physician or counselor, after making reasonable efforts to counsel and encourage the patient to provide the information to the spouse or sexual partner, reasonably believes that the patient will not provide the information to the spouse or sexual partner and that the disclosure is necessary to protect the health of the spouse or sexual partner.

(d) A disclosure under this section may be made only if the physician or counselor, after making reasonable efforts to counsel and encourage the patient to provide the information to the spouse or sexual partner, reasonably believes that the patient will not provide the information to the spouse or sexual partner and that the disclosure is necessary to protect the health of the spouse or sexual partner.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(b)(2)(C))

§ 1.488 Research activities.

Subject to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5701, 38 CFR 1.500–1.527, the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a), 38 CFR 1.575–1.584 and the following paragraphs, patient medical record information covered by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part may be disclosed for the purpose of conducting scientific research.

(a) Information in individually identifiable form may be disclosed from records covered by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part for the purpose of conducting scientific research if the Under Secretary for Health or designee makes a determination that the recipient of the patient identifying information:

1. Is qualified to conduct the research.

2. Has a research protocol under which the information:

   (i) Will be maintained in accordance with the security requirements of §1.466 of this part (or more stringent requirements); and

   (ii) Will not be redisclosed except as permitted under paragraph (b) of this section.

3. Has furnished a written statement that the research protocol has been reviewed by an independent group of three or more individuals who found that the rights of patients would be adequately protected and that the potential benefits of the research outweigh any potential risks to patient confidentiality posed by the disclosure of records.

(b) A person conducting research may disclose information obtained under paragraph (a) of this section only back to VA and may not identify any individual patient in any report of that research or otherwise disclose patient identities.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(b)(2)(B))

§ 1.489 Audit and evaluation activities.

Subject to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5701, 38 CFR 1.500–1.527, the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a), 38 CFR 1.575–1.584, and the following paragraphs, patient medical record information covered by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part may be disclosed outside VA for the purposes of conducting audit and evaluation activities.

(a) Records not copies. If patient records covered by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part are not copied, patient identifying information may be disclosed in the course of a review of records on VA facility premises to any person who agrees in writing to comply with the limitations on redisclosure and use in paragraph (d) of this section and:

1. Where audit or evaluation functions are performed by a State or Federal governmental agency on behalf of VA; or

2. Who is determined by the VA facility director to be qualified to conduct the audit or evaluation activities.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(b)(2)(B))
§ 1.492

(b) Copying of records. Records containing patient identifying information may be copied by any person who:

(1) Agrees in writing to:
   (i) Maintain the patient identifying information in accordance with the security requirements provided in §1.466 of this part (or more stringent requirements);
   (ii) Destroy all the patient identifying information upon completion of the audit or evaluation; and
   (iii) Comply with the limitations on disclosure and use in paragraph (d) of this section.

(2) The VA medical facility director determines to be qualified to conduct the audit or evaluation activities.

(c) Congressional oversight. Records subject to §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part upon written request may be released to congressional committees or subcommittees for program oversight and evaluation if such records pertain to any matter within the jurisdiction of such committee or subcommittee.

(d) Limitation on disclosure and use. Records containing patient identifying information disclosed under this section may be disclosed only back to VA and used only to carry out an audit or evaluation purpose, or, to investigate or prosecute criminal or other activities as authorized by a court order entered under §1.494 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(b)(2)(D))

§ 1.491 Confidential communications.

(a) A court order under §§1.490 through 1.499 of this part may authorize disclosure of confidential communications made by a patient to a treatment program in the course of diagnosis, treatment, or referral for treatment only if:

(1) The disclosure is necessary to protect against an existing threat to life or of serious bodily injury, including circumstances which constitute suspected child abuse and neglect and verbal threats against third parties;

(2) The disclosure is necessary in connection with investigation or prosecution of an extremely serious crime, such as one which directly threatens loss of life or serious bodily injury, including homicide, rape, kidnapping, armed robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, or child abuse and neglect; or

(3) The disclosure is in connection with litigation or an administrative proceeding in which the patient offers testimony or other evidence pertaining to the content of the confidential communications.

(b) [Reserved]

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§ 1.490 Legal effect of order.

The records to which §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part apply may be disclosed if authorized by an appropriate order of a court of competent jurisdiction granted after application showing good cause therefore. In assessing good cause the court is statutorily required to weigh the public interest and the need for disclosure against the injury to the patient or subject, to the physician-patient relationship, and to the treatment services. Upon the granting of such order, the court, in determining the extent to which any disclosure of all or any part of any record is necessary, is required by statute to impose appropriate safeguards against unauthorized disclosure. An order of a court of competent jurisdiction to produce records subject to §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part will not be sufficient unless the order reflects that the court has complied with the requirements of 38 U.S.C. 7332(b)(2)(D). Such an order from a Federal court compels disclosure. However, such an order from a State court only acts to authorize the Secretary to exercise discretion pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 5701(b)(5) and 38 CFR 1.511 to disclose such records. It does not compel disclosure.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(b)(2)(D))

§ 1.492 Order not applicable to records disclosed without consent to researchers, auditors and evaluators.

A court order under §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part may not authorize qualified personnel, who have received patient identifying information from VA without consent for the purpose of conducting research, audit or evaluation, to disclose that information or use it to conduct any criminal investigation or prosecution of a patient.
However, a court order under §1.495 of this part may authorize disclosure and use of records to investigate or prosecute VA personnel.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§1.493 Procedures and criteria for orders authorizing disclosures for noncriminal purposes.

(a) Application. An order authorizing the disclosure of patient records covered by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part for purposes other than criminal investigation or prosecution may be applied for by any person having a legally recognized interest in the disclosure which is sought. The application may be filed separately or as part of a pending civil action in which it appears that the patient records are needed to provide evidence. An application must use a fictitious name, such as John Doe, to refer to any patient and may not contain or otherwise disclose any patient identifying information unless the patient is the applicant or has given a written consent (meeting the requirements of §1.475 of this part) to disclosure or the court has ordered the record of the proceeding sealed from public scrutiny.

(b) Notice. The patient and VA facility from whom disclosure is sought must be given:

(1) Adequate notice in a manner which will not disclose patient identifying information to other persons; and

(2) An opportunity to file a written response to the application, or to appear in person, for the limited purpose of providing evidence on whether the statutory and regulatory criteria for the issuance of the court order are met.

(c) Review of evidence: Conduct of hearing. Any oral argument, review of evidence, or hearing on the application must be held in the judge’s chambers or in some manner which ensures that patient identifying information is not disclosed to anyone other than a party to the proceeding, the patient, or VA, unless the patient requests an open hearing in a manner which meets the written consent requirements of §1.475 of this part. The proceeding may include an examination by the judge of the patient records referred to in the application.

(d) Criteria for entry of order. An order under this section may be entered only if the court determines that good cause exists. To make this determination the court must find that:

(1) Other ways of obtaining the information are not available or would not be effective; and

(2) The public interest and need for the disclosure outweigh the potential injury to the patient, the physician-patient relationship and the treatment services.

(e) Content of order. An order authorizing a disclosure must:

(1) Limit disclosure to those parts of the patient’s record which are essential to fulfill the objective of the order;

(2) Limit disclosure to those persons whose need for information is the basis for the order; and

(3) Include such other measures as are necessary to limit disclosure for the protection of the patient, the physician-patient relationship and the treatment services; for example, sealing from public scrutiny the record of any proceeding for which disclosure of a patient’s record has been ordered.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)

§1.494 Procedures and criteria for orders authorizing disclosure and use of records to criminally investigate or prosecute patients.

(a) Application. An order authorizing the disclosure or use of patient records covered by §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part to criminally investigate or prosecute a patient may be applied for by VA or by any person conducting investigative or prosecutorial activities with respect to the enforcement of criminal laws. The application may be filed separately, as part of an application for a subpoena or other compulsory process, or in a pending criminal action. An application must use a fictitious name such as John Doe, to refer to any patient and may not contain or otherwise disclose patient identifying information unless the court has ordered the record of the proceeding sealed from public scrutiny.

(b) Notice and hearing. Unless an order under §1.495 of this part is sought with an order under this section, VA must be given:
§ 1.495 Procedures and criteria for orders authorizing disclosure and use of records to investigate or prosecute VA or employees of VA.

(a) Application. (1) An order authorizing the disclosure or use of patient records covered by §§ 1.460 through 1.499 of this part to criminally or administratively investigate or prosecute VA (or employees or agents of VA) may be applied for by an administrative, regulatory, supervisory, investigatory, law enforcement, or prosecutorial agency having jurisdiction over VA activities.

(2) The application may be filed separately or as part of a pending civil or criminal action against VA (or agents or employees of VA) in which it appears that the patient records are needed to provide material evidence. The application must use a fictitious name, such as John Doe, to refer to any patient and may not contain or otherwise disclose any patient identifying information unless the court has ordered the record of the proceeding sealed from public scrutiny or the patient has given a written consent (meeting the requirements of § 1.475 of this part) to that disclosure.

(b) Notice not required. An application under this section may, in the discretion of the court, be granted without notice. Although no express notice is required to VA or to any patient whose records are to be disclosed, upon implementation of an order so granted VA or the patient must be afforded an opportunity to seek revocation or amendment of that order, limited to the presentation of evidence on the statutory

(1) Adequate notice (in a manner which will not disclose patient identifying information to third parties) of an application by a person performing a law enforcement function;

(2) An opportunity to appear and be heard for the limited purpose of providing evidence on the statutory and regulatory criteria for the issuance of the court order; and

(3) An opportunity to be represented by counsel.

(c) Review of evidence: Conduct of hearings. Any oral argument, review of evidence, or hearing on the application shall be held in the judge’s chambers or in some other manner which ensures that patient identifying information is not disclosed to anyone other than a party to the proceedings, the patient, or VA. The proceeding may include an examination by the judge of the patient records referred to in the application.

(d) Criteria. A court may authorize the disclosure and use of patient records for the purpose of conducting a criminal investigation or prosecution of a patient only if the court finds that all of the following criteria are met:

(1) The crime involved is extremely serious, such as one which causes or directly threatens loss of life or serious bodily injury including, but not limited to, homicide, rape, kidnapping, armed robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, and child abuse and neglect.

(2) There is a reasonable likelihood that the records will disclose information of substantial value in the investigation or prosecution.

(3) Other ways of obtaining the information are not available or would not be effective.

(4) The potential injury to the patient, to the physician-patient relationship and to the ability of VA to provide services to other patients is outweighed by the public interest and the need for the disclosure.

(5) If the applicant is a person performing a law enforcement function, VA has been represented by counsel independent of the applicant.

(e) Content of order. Any order authorizing a disclosure or use of patient records under this section must:

(1) Limit disclosure and use to those parts of the patient’s record which are essential to fulfill the objective of the order;

(2) Limit disclosure to those law enforcement and prosecutorial officials who are responsible for, or are conducting, the investigation or prosecution, and limit their use of the records to investigation and prosecution of extremely serious crime or suspected crime specified in the applications; and

(3) Include such other measures as are necessary to limit disclosure and use to the fulfillment on only that public interest and need found by the court.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7332(c))
and regulatory criteria for the issuance of the court order.
(c) Requirements for order. An order under this section must be entered in accordance with, and comply with the requirements of, §1.493(d) and (e) of this part.
(d) Limitations on disclosure and use of patient identifying information. (1) An order entered under this section must require the deletion of patient identifying information from any documents made available to the public.
(2) No information obtained under this section may be used to conduct any investigation or prosecution of a patient, or be used as the basis for an application for an order under §1.494 of this part.
(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)
§ 1.496 Orders authorizing the use of undercover agents and informants to criminally investigate employees or agents of VA.
(a) Application. A court order authorizing the placement of an undercover agent or informant in a VA drug or alcohol abuse, HIV infection, or sickle cell anemia treatment program as an employee or patient may be applied for by any law enforcement or prosecutorial agency which has reason to believe that employees or agents of the VA treatment program are engaged in criminal misconduct.
(b) Notice. The VA facility director must be given adequate notice of the application and an opportunity to appear and be heard (for the limited purpose of providing evidence on the statutory and regulatory criteria for the issuance of the court order), unless the application asserts a belief that:
(1) The VA facility director is involved in the criminal activities to be investigated by the undercover agent or informant; or
(2) The VA facility director will intentionally or unintentionally disclose the proposed placement of an undercover agent or informant to the employees or agents who are suspected of criminal activities.
(c) Criteria. An order under this section may be entered only if the court determines that good cause exists. To make this determination the court must find:
(1) There is reason to believe that an employee or agent of a VA treatment program is engaged in criminal activity;
(2) Other ways of obtaining evidence of this criminal activity are not available or would not be effective; and
(3) The public interest and need for the placement of an undercover agent or informant in the VA treatment program outweigh the potential injury to patients of the program, physician-patient relationships and the treatment services.
(d) Content of order. An order authorizing the placement of an undercover agent or informant in a VA treatment program must:
(1) Specifically authorize the placement of an undercover agent or an informant;
(2) Limit the total period of the placement to six months;
(3) Prohibit the undercover agent or informant from disclosing any patient identifying information obtained from the placement except as necessary to criminally investigate or prosecute employees or agents of the VA treatment program; and
(4) Include any other measures which are appropriate to limit any potential disruption of the program by the placement and any potential for a real or apparent breach of patient confidentiality; for example, sealing from public scrutiny the record of any proceeding for which disclosure of a patient’s record has been ordered.
(e) Limitation on use of information. No information obtained by an undercover agent or informant placed under this section may be used to criminally investigate or prosecute any patient or as the basis for an application for an order under §1.494 of this part.
(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7334)
§§ 1.497–1.499 [Reserved]
RELEASE OF INFORMATION FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLAIMANT RECORDS
NOTE: Sections 1.500 through 1.527 concern the availability and release of information from files, records, reports, and other papers and documents in Department of Veterans Affairs custody pertaining to claims under
any of the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. As to the release of information from Department of Veterans Affairs records other than claimant records, see §§1.550 through 1.558. Sections 1.500 through 1.526 implement the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5701, 5702.

[32 FR 10848, July 25, 1967]


§ 1.500 General.

(a) Files, records, reports, and other papers and documents pertaining to any claim filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs, whether pending or adjudicated, and the names and addresses of present or former personnel of the armed services, and their dependents, in the possession of the Department of Veterans Affairs, will be deemed confidential and privileged, and no disclosure therefrom will be made except in the circumstances and under the conditions set forth in §§1.501 through 1.526.

(b) A claimant may not have access to or custody of official Department of Veterans Affairs records concerning himself or herself nor may a claimant inspect records concerning himself or herself. Disclosure of information from Department of Veterans Affairs records to a claimant or his or her duly authorized agent or representative may be made, however, under the provisions of §§1.501 through 1.526.

(c) Each administration, staff office, and field facility head will designate an employee(s) who will be responsible for initial action on (granting or denying) requests to inspect or obtain information from or copies of records under their jurisdiction and within the purview of §§1.501 through 1.526 unless the regulations in this part currently contain such designations. The request should be made to the office concerned (having jurisdiction of the record desired) or, if not known, to the Director or Veterans Assistance Officer in the nearest VA regional office, or to the VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420. Personal contacts should normally be made during the regular duty hours of the office concerned, which are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, for VA Central Office and most field facilities. Any legal question arising in a field facility concerning the release of information will be referred to the appropriate Regional Counsel for disposition as contemplated by §13.401 of this chapter. In central office such legal questions will be referred to the General Counsel. Any administrative question will be referred through administrative channels to the appropriate administration or staff office head.

(d) Upon denial of a request under paragraph (c) of this section, the responsible Department of Veterans Affairs official or designated employee will inform the requester in writing of the denial and advise him or her that he or she may appeal the denial. The requester will also be furnished the title and address of the Department of Veterans Affairs official to whom the appeal should be addressed. (See §1.527.) In each instance of denial of a request, the denial will be made a matter of record and the record will contain a citation to the specific provision of Department of Veterans Affairs regulations upon which the denial is based.


§ 1.501 Release of information by the Secretary.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Deputy Secretary may release information, statistics, or reports to individuals or organizations when in the Secretary’s or Deputy Secretary’s judgment such release would serve a useful purpose.


§ 1.502 Disclosure of the amount of monetary benefits.

The monthly rate of pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, retirement pay, subsistence allowance, or educational assistance allowance of any beneficiary shall be made known to any person who applies for such information.

[32 FR 10848, July 25, 1967]
§ 1.503 Disclosure of information to a veteran or his or her duly authorized representative as to matters concerning the veteran alone.

Information may be disclosed to a veteran or his or her duly authorized representative as to matters concerning himself or herself alone when such disclosure would not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the veteran. If the veteran be deceased, matters concerning him or her may be disclosed to his widow, children, or next of kin if such disclosure will not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the person in whose behalf information is sought or cause repugnance or resentment toward the decedent.

[13 FR 6999, Nov. 27, 1948]

§ 1.504 Disclosure of information to a widow, child, or other claimant.

Information may be disclosed to a widow, widower, child, or other dependent parent or other claimant, or the duly authorized representative of any of these persons as to matters concerning such person alone when such disclosure will not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the person to whom the inquiry relates. If the person concerning whom the information is sought is deceased, matters concerning such person may be disclosed to the next of kin if the disclosures will not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the person in whose behalf the information is sought or cause repugnance or resentment toward the decedent.

[13 FR 6999, Nov. 27, 1948, as amended at 54 FR 34980, Aug. 23, 1989]

§ 1.505 Genealogy.

Information of a genealogical nature when its disclosure will not be detrimental to the memory of the veteran and not prejudicial, so far as may be apparent, to the interests of any living person or to the interests of the Government may be released by the Department of Veterans Affairs or in the case of inactive records may be released by the Archivist of the United States if in the Archivist’s custody.

[13 FR 6999, Nov. 27, 1948]


(a) All records or documents required for official purposes by any department or other agency of the U.S. Government or any state unemployment compensation agency acting in an official capacity for the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be furnished in response to an official request, written, or oral, from such department or agency. If the requesting department or agency does not indicate the purpose for which the records or documents are requested and there is doubt as to whether they are to be used for official purposes, the requesting department or agency will be asked to specify the purpose for which they are to be used.

(b) The Under Secretary for Benefits, Director of Insurance Service, or designee of either in Central Office, is authorized to release information to OSGLI (Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance) for the purpose of aiding in the settlement of a particular insurance case.

[33 FR 2994, Feb. 15, 1968]

§ 1.507 Disclosures to members of Congress.

Members of Congress shall be furnished in their official capacity in any case such information contained in the Department of Veterans Affairs files as may be requested for official use. However, in any unusual case, the request will be presented to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or staff or administration head for personal action. When the requested information is of a type which may not be furnished a claimant, the member of Congress shall be advised that the information is furnished to him or her confidentially in his official capacity and should be so treated by him or her. (See 38 U.S.C. 5701.) Information concerning the beneficiary designation of a United States Government Life Insurance or National Service Life Insurance policy is deemed confidential and privileged and during
the insured’s lifetime shall not be disclosed to anyone other than the insured or his or her duly appointed fiduciary unless the insured or the fiduciary authorizes the release of such information.

[32 FR 10848, July 25, 1967]

§ 1.508 Disclosure in cases where claimants are charged with or convicted of criminal offenses.

(a) Where incompetent claimants are charged with, or convicted of, offenses other than those growing out of their relationship with the Department of Veterans Affairs and in which it is desired to disclose information from the files and records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Regional Counsel, Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, or the General Counsel if the General Counsel deems it necessary and proper, may disclose to the court having jurisdiction so much of the information from the files and records of the Department of Veterans Affairs relating to the mental condition of such beneficiaries, the same to be available as evidence, as may be necessary to show the mental condition of the accused and the time of its onset. This provision, however, does not alter the general procedure for handling offenses growing out of relations with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) When desired by a U.S. district court, the Regional Counsel or the General Counsel may supply information as to whether any person charged with crime served in the military or naval service of the United States and whether the Department of Veterans Affairs has a file on such person. If the file is desired either by the court or by the prosecution or defense, it may be produced only in accord with §§1.501 through 1.526.


§ 1.509 Disclosure to courts in proceedings in the nature of an inquest.

The Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, Regional Counsels, and facility heads are authorized to make disclosures to courts of competent jurisdiction of such files, records, reports, and other documents as are necessary and proper evidence in proceedings in the nature of an inquest into the mental competency of claimants and other proceedings incident to the appointment and discharge of guardians, curators, or conservators to any court having jurisdiction of such fiduciaries in all matters of appointment, discharge, or accounting in such courts.

[32 FR 10848, July 25, 1967]

§ 1.510 Disclosure to insurance companies cooperating with the Department of Justice in the defense of insurance suits against the United States.

Copies of records from the files of the Department of Veterans Affairs will, in the event of litigation involving commercial insurance policies issued by an insurance company cooperating with the Department of Justice in defense of insurance suits against the United States, be furnished to such companies without charge, provided the claimant or his or her duly authorized representative has authorized the release of the information contained in such records. If the release of information is not authorized in writing by the claimant or his or her duly authorized representative, information contained in the files may be furnished to such company if to withhold same would tend to permit the accomplishment of a fraud or miscarriage of justice. However, before such information may be released without the consent of the claimant, the request therefor must be accompanied by an affidavit of the representative of the insurance company, setting forth that litigation is pending, the character of the suit, and the purpose for which the information desired is to be used. If such information is to be used adversely to the claimant, the affidavit must set forth facts from which it may be determined by the General Counsel or Regional Counsel whether the furnishing of the information is necessary to prevent the perpetration of a fraud or other injustice. The averments contained in such affidavit should be considered in connection with the facts shown by the claimant’s file, and, if
such consideration shows the disclosure of the record is necessary and proper to prevent a fraud or other injustice, information as to the contents thereof may be furnished to the insurance company or copies of the records may be furnished to the court, workmen's compensation, or similar board in which the litigation is pending upon receipt of a subpoena duces tecum addressed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or the head of the office in which the records desired are located. In the event the subpoena requires the production of the file, as distinguished from the copies of the records, no expense to the Department of Veterans Affairs may be involved in complying therewith, and arrangements must be made with the representative of the insurance company causing the issuance of the subpoena to insure submission of the file to the court without expense to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

[32 FR 10848, July 25, 1967]

\$ 1.511 Disclosure of claimant records in connection with judicial proceedings generally.

(a)(1) Where a suit (or legal proceeding) has been threatened or instituted against the Government, or a prosecution against a claimant has been instituted or is being contemplated, the request of the claimant or his or her duly authorized representative for information, documents, reports, etc., shall be acted upon by the General Counsel in Central Office, or the Regional Counsel for the field facility, who shall determine the action to be taken with respect thereto. Where the records have been sent to the Department of Justice in connection with any such suit (or legal proceeding), the request will be referred to the Department of Justice, Washington, DC, through the office of the General Counsel, for attention. Where the records have been sent to an Assistant U.S. Attorney, the request will be referred by the appropriate Regional Counsel to the Assistant U.S. Attorney. In all other cases where copies of documents or records are desired by or on behalf of parties to a suit (or legal proceeding), whether in a Federal court or any other, such copies shall be disclosed as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section where the request is accompanied by court process, or paragraph (e) of this section where the request is not accompanied by court process. A court process, such as a court order or subpoena duces tecum should be addressed to either the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or to the head of the field facility at which the records desired are located. The determination as to the action to be taken upon any request for the disclosure of claimant records received in this class of cases shall be made by the component having jurisdiction over the subject matter in Central Office, or the division having jurisdiction over the subject matter in the field facility, except in those cases in which representatives of the component or division have determined that the records desired are to be used adversely to the claimant, in which event the process will be referred to the General Counsel in Central Office or to the Regional Counsel for the field facility for disposition.

(2) Where a claim under the provisions of the Federal Tort Claims Act has been filed, or where such a claim can reasonably be anticipated, no information, documents, reports, etc., will be disclosed except through the Regional Counsel having jurisdiction, who will limit the disclosure of information to that which would be available under discovery proceedings, if the matter were in litigation. Any other information may be disclosed only after concurrence in such disclosure is provided by the General Counsel.

(b) Disclosures in response to Federal court process—(1) Court order. Except for drug and alcohol abuse, human immunodeficiency virus and sickle cell anemia treatment records, which are protected under 38 U.S.C. 7332, where the records sought are maintained in a VA Privacy Act system of records, and are retrieved by the name or other personal identifier of a living claimant who is a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence, a Federal court order is the process necessary for the disclosure of such records. Upon receipt of a Federal court order directing disclosure of claimant records, such records will be disclosed. Disclosure of records protected under 38 U.S.C. 7332 will be made
in accordance with provisions of paragraph (g) of this section.

(2) Subpoena. Except for drug and alcohol abuse, human immunodeficiency virus and sickle cell anemia treatment records, which are protected under 38 U.S.C. 7332, where the records sought are maintained in a VA Privacy Act system of records, and are retrieved by the name or other personal identifier of a claimant, a subpoena is not sufficient authority for the disclosure of such records and such records will not be disclosed, unless the claimant is deceased, or either is not a citizen of the United States, or is an alien not lawfully admitted for permanent residence. Where one of these exceptions applies, upon receipt of a State or local court order directing disclosure of claimant records, disclosure of such records will be made in accordance with the provisions set forth in paragraph (c)(3) of this section. Disclosure of records protected under 38 U.S.C. 7332 will be made in accordance with provisions of paragraph (g) of this section.

(3) A disclosure of records in response to the receipt of a Federal court process will be made to those individuals designated in the process to receive such records, or to the court from which the process issued. Where original records are produced, they must remain at all times in the custody of a representative of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and, if offered and received in evidence, permission should be obtained to substitute a copy so that the original may remain intact in the record. Where a court process is issued by or on behalf of a party litigant other than the United States, such party litigant must prepay the costs of copies in accordance with fees prescribed by §1.530(i) and any other costs incident to producing the records.

(2) State or local court subpoena. Except for drug and alcohol abuse, human immunodeficiency virus and sickle cell anemia treatment records, which are protected under 38 U.S.C. 7332, where the records sought are maintained in a VA Privacy Act system of records, and are retrieved by the name or other personal identifier of a claimant, a subpoena is not sufficient authority for the disclosure of such records and such records will not be disclosed, unless the claimant is deceased, or, either is not a citizen of the United States, or is an alien not lawfully admitted for permanent residence. Where one of these exceptions applies, upon receipt of a State or local court subpoena directing disclosure of claimant records, disclosure of such records will be made in accordance with the provisions set forth in paragraph (c)(3), of this section. Regarding the disclosure of 7332 records, a subpoena is insufficient for such disclosure. Specific provisions for the disclosure of these records are set forth in paragraph (g) of this section.

(3) Where the disclosure provisions of paragraph (c) (1) or (2) of this section apply, disclosure will be made as follows:

(i) When the process presented is accompanied by authority from the claimant; or,

(ii) In the absence of claimant disclosure authority, the Regional Counsel having jurisdiction must determine whether the disclosure of the records is necessary to prevent the perpetration of fraud or other injustice in the matter in question. To make such a determination, the Regional Counsel may
require such additional documentation, e.g., affidavit, letter of explanation, or such other documentation which would detail the need for such disclosure, set forth the character of the pending suit, and the purpose for which the documents or records sought are to be used as evidence. The claimant’s record may also be considered in the making of such determination. Where a court process is received, and the Regional Counsel finds that additional documentation will be needed to make the foregoing determination, the Regional Counsel, or other employee having reasonable knowledge of the requirements of this regulation, shall contact the person causing the issuance of such court process, and advise that person of the need for additional documentation. Where a court appearance is appropriate, and the Regional Counsel has found that there is an insufficient basis upon which to warrant a disclosure of the requested information, the Regional Counsel, or other employee having reasonable knowledge of the requirement of this regulation, shall contact the person causing the issuance of such court process, and advise that person of the need for additional documentation.

(d) Notice requirements where disclosures are made pursuant to court process. Whenever a disclosure of Privacy Act protected records is made in response to the process of a Federal, State, or local court, the custodian of the records disclosed will make reasonable efforts to notify the subject of such records that such subject’s records were disclosed to another person under compulsory legal process. Such notice should be accomplished when the process compelling disclosure becomes a matter of public record. Generally, a notice sent to the last known address of the subject would be sufficient to comply with this requirement.

(e) Disclosures in response to requests when not accompanied by court process. Requests received from attorneys or others for copies of records for use in suits in which the Government is not involved, not accompanied by a court process, will be handled by the component or division having jurisdiction over the subject matter. If the request can be complied with under §1.503 or §1.504, and under the Privacy Act (to the extent that such records are protected by the Privacy Act), the records requested will be disclosed upon receipt of the required fee. If, however, the records cannot be furnished under such authority, the applicant will be advised of the procedure to obtain copies of records as set forth in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.

(f) Suits by or against the Secretary under 38 U.S.C. 3720. Records pertaining to the loan guaranteed, insured, or made by the Department of Veterans Affairs may be made available by the General Counsel or the Regional Counsel subject to the usual rules of evidence, and where authorized under the Privacy Act, after clearance with the Department of Justice or U.S. Attorney if appropriate.

(g) Disclosure of drug abuse, alcohol abuse, human immunodeficiency virus and sickle cell anemia treatment or related records under court process. Disclosure of these types of records, which are protected from unauthorized disclosure under 38 U.S.C. 7332, may be made...
only in response to an appropriate order of a court of competent jurisdiction granted after application showing good cause therefore. In assessing good cause the court is required to weigh the public interest and the need for disclosure against the injury to the patient or subject, to the physician-patient relationship, and to the treatment services. The court, in determining the extent to which any disclosure of all or any part of any record is necessary, shall impose appropriate safeguards against unauthorized disclosure. As to a Federal court order satisfying the requirements of this paragraph, the records will be disclosed as provided in such order. As to a State or local court order satisfying the requirements of this subsection, the disclosure of the records involved is conditioned upon satisfying the provisions set forth in paragraph (c)(3) of this section. If the aforementioned section is satisfied, and a disclosure of records is to be forthcoming, the records will be disclosed as provided in the court order.


§ 1.512 Disclosure of loan guaranty information.

(a) The disclosure of records or information contained in loan guaranty files is governed by the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552; the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a; the confidentiality provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5701, and the provisions of 38 CFR 1.500–1.584. In addition, the release of names and addresses and the release of certificates of reasonable value, appraisal reports, property inspection reports, or reports of inspection on individual water supply and sewage disposal systems shall be governed by paragraphs (b), (c), (d), and (e) of this section.

(b)(1) Upon request, any person is entitled to obtain copies of certificates of reasonable value, appraisal reports, property inspection reports, or reports of inspection on individual water supply and sewage disposal systems provided that the individual identifiers of the veteran-purchaser(s) or dependents are deleted prior to release of such documents. However, individual identifiers may be disclosed in accordance with paragraph (b)(2) of this section. The address of the property being appraised or inspected shall not be considered an individual identifier.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5701(a), (c))

(2) Individual identifiers of veteran purchasers or dependents may be disclosed when disclosure is made to the following:

(i) The individual purchasing the property;

(ii) The current owner of the property;

(iii) The individual that requested the appraisal or report;

(iv) A person or entity which is considering making a loan to an individual with respect to the property concerned; or

(v) An attorney, real estate broker, or any other agent representing any of these persons.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5701(c), (h)(2)(D))

(c)(1) The Secretary may release the name, address, or both, and may release other information relating to the identity of an applicant for or recipient of a Department of Veterans Affairs-guaranteed, insured, or direct loan, specially adapted housing grant, loan to finance acquisition of Department of Veterans Affairs-owned property, release of liability, or substitution of entitlement to credit reporting agencies, companies or individuals extending credit, depository institutions, insurance companies, investors, lenders, employers, landlords, utility companies and governmental agencies for any of the purposes specified in paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(2) A release may be made under paragraph (c)(1) of this section:

(i) To enable such parties to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs with data which assists in determining the creditworthiness, credit capacity, income or financial resources of the applicant for or recipient of loan guaranty administered benefits, or verifying whether any such data previously received is accurate; or
(ii) To enable the Secretary to offer for sale or other disposition any loan or installment sale contract.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5701(h)(2)(A), (B), (C))

(d) Upon request, the Secretary may release information relating to the individual’s loan transaction to credit reporting agencies, companies or individuals extending credit, depository institutions, insurance companies, investors, lenders, employers, landlords, utility companies and governmental agencies where necessary in connection with a transfer of information on the status of a Department of Veterans Affairs loan account to persons or organizations proposing to extend credit or render services or other benefits to the borrower in order that the person or organization may determine whether to extend credit or render services or other benefits to the borrower. Such releases shall be made only if the person or organization seeking the information furnishes the individual’s name, address or other information necessary to identify the individual.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5701(e), (h)(2)(A) and (D))

(e) The Secretary shall maintain information in the loan guaranty file consisting of the date, notice and purpose of each disclosure, and the name and address of the person to whom the disclosure is made from the loan guaranty files.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5701(h)(2)(D), 5 U.S.C. 552a(c))

[47 FR 11279, Mar. 16, 1982]

§ 1.513 Disclosure of information contained in Armed Forces service and related medical records in Department of Veterans Affairs custody.

(a) Service records. Information received by the Department of Veterans Affairs from the Departments of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Department of Transportation relative to the military or naval service of a claimant is furnished solely for the official use of the Department of Veterans Affairs but such information may be disclosed under the limitations contained in §§1.501 through 1.526.

(b) Medical records. Information contained in the medical records (including clinical records and social data) may be released under the following conditions:

(1) Complete transcript of résumé or medical records on request to:

(i) The Department of the Army.

(ii) The Department of the Navy (including naval aviation and United States Marine Corps).

(iii) The Department of the Air Force.

(iv) The Department of Transportation (Coast Guard).

(v) Selective Service (in case of registrants only).

(vi) Federal or State hospitals or penal institutions when the veteran is a patient or inmate therein.

(vii) United States Public Health Service, or other governmental or contract agency in connection with research authorized by, or conducted for, the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(viii) Registered civilian physicians, on the request of the individual or his or her legal representative, when required in connection with the treatment of the veteran. (The transcript or resume should be accompanied by the statement “it is expected that the information contained herein will be treated as confidential, as is customary in civilian professional medical practice.”)

(ix) The veteran on request, except information contained in the medical record which would prove injurious to his or her physical or mental health.

(x) The next of kin on request of the individual, or legal representative, when the information may not be disclosed to the veteran because it will prove injurious to his or her physical or mental health, and it will not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the next of kin or cause repugnance or resentment toward the veteran; and directly to the next of kin, or legal representative, when the veteran has been declared to be insane or is dead.

(xi) Health and social agencies, on the authority of the veteran or his or her duly authorized representative.

(2) In addition to the authorizations in paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the Department of Justice, the Department
of the Treasury, and the U.S. Postal Service may, on request, be given pertinent information from medical records for use in connection with investigations conducted by these departments. Each such request shall be considered on its merits, and the information released should be the minimum necessary in connection with the investigation conducted by these departments.

(3) Compliance with court orders calling for the production of medical records in connection with litigation or criminal prosecutions will be effected in accordance with §1.511.


§1.514 Disclosure to private physicians and hospitals other than Department of Veterans Affairs.

(a) When a beneficiary elects to obtain medical attention as a private patient from a private practitioner or in a medical center other than a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, there may be disclosed to such private practitioner or head of such medical center (Federal, State, municipal, or private), such information as to the medical history, diagnosis, findings, or treatment as is requested, including the loan of original X-ray films, whether Department of Veterans Affairs clinical X-rays or service department entrance and separation X-rays, provided there is also submitted a written authorization from the beneficiary or his or her duly authorized representative. The information will be supplied without charge directly to the private physician or medical center head and not through the beneficiary or representative. In forwarding this information, it will be accompanied by the stipulations that it is released with consent of or on behalf of the patient and that the information will be treated as confidential, as is customary in civilian professional medical practice.

(b) Such information may be released without charge and without consent of the patient or his or her duly authorized representative when a request for such information is received from:

(1) The superintendent of a State hospital for psychotic patients, a commissioner or head of a State department of mental hygiene, or head of a State, county, or city health department; or

(2) Any fee basis physician or institution in connection with authorized treatment of the veteran as a Department of Veterans Affairs beneficiary; or

(3) Any physician or medical installation treating the veteran under emergency conditions.

[34 FR 13368, Aug. 19, 1969, as amended at 54 FR 34980, Aug. 23, 1989]

§1.514a Disclosure to private psychologists.

When a beneficiary elects to obtain therapy or analysis as a private patient from a private psychologist, such information in the medical record as may be pertinent may be released. Generally, only information developed and documented by Department of Veterans Affairs psychologists will be considered pertinent, although other information from the medical record may be released if it is determined to be pertinent and will serve a useful purpose to the private psychologist in rendering his or her services. Information will be released under this section upon receipt of the written authorization of the beneficiary or his or her duly authorized representative. Information will be forwarded to private psychologists directly, not through the beneficiary or representative, without charge and with the stipulation that it is released with consent of or on behalf of the patient and must be treated as confidential as is customary in regular professional practice.

[34 FR 13368, Aug. 19, 1969]

§1.514b Disclosures to procurement organizations.

A VHA health care facility may disclose the name and home address of an “individual” as defined in §1.460 to an authorized representative of a “procurement organization” as also defined in §1.460 for the purpose of facilitating a determination by the procurement organization of whether the individual is a suitable potential organ, eye, or tissue donor if:

(a) The individual is currently an inpatient in a VHA health care facility;
§ 1.515

(b) The individual is, in the clinical judgment of the individual’s primary health care provider, near death or is deceased as defined in §1.460;

(c) The VHA health care facility has a signed agreement with the procurement organization in accordance with the applicable requirements of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); and

(d) The VHA health care facility has confirmed with HHS that it has certified or recertified the organ procurement organization as provided in the applicable HHS regulations. VA medical centers must verify annually in January of each calendar year with FDA that an eye bank or tissue bank has complied with the FDA registration requirements of 21 CFR part 1271 and that the registration status is active before permitting an eye bank or tissue bank to receive protected health information.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5701(k), 7332(b)(2)(E))


§ 1.516 Disclosure of information to undertaker concerning burial of a deceased veteran.

When an undertaker requests information believed to be necessary in connection with the burial of a deceased veteran, such as the name and address of the beneficiary of the veteran’s Government insurance policy, name and address of the next of kin, rank or grade of veteran and organization in which he or she served, character of the veteran’s discharge, or date and place of birth of the veteran, and it appears that the undertaker is holding the body awaiting receipt of the information requested, the undertaker, in such instances, may be considered the duly authorized representative of the deceased veteran for the purpose of obtaining said information. In ordinary cases, however, the undertaker will be advised that information concerning the beneficiary of a Government insurance policy is confidential and cannot be disclosed; the beneficiary will be advised immediately of the inquiry, and the furnishing of the desired information will be discretionary with the beneficiary. In no case will the undertaker be informed of the net amount due under the policy or furnished information not specifically mentioned in this paragraph.


§ 1.517 Disclosure of vocational rehabilitation and education information to educational institutions cooperating with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Requests from educational institutions and agencies cooperating with the Department of Veterans Affairs in the vocational rehabilitation and education of veterans for the use of vocational rehabilitation and education records for research studies will be forwarded to central office with the facility head’s recommendation for review by the Under Secretary for Benefits. Where the request to conduct a research study is approved by the Under Secretary for Benefits, the facility head is authorized by this section to request therefor from the commanding officer of a State soldiers’ home.

[30 FR 6435, May 8, 1965]
§ 1.519  Lists of names and addresses.

(a) Any organization wanting a list of names and addresses of present or former personnel of the armed services and their dependents from the Department of Veterans Affairs must make written application to the Department of Veterans Affairs Controller, except lists of educationally disadvantaged veterans should be requested from the Director of the nearest regional office. The application must:

(1) Clearly identify the type or category of names and addresses sought;
§ 1.520 Confidentiality of social data.

Persons having access to social data will be conscious of the fact that the family, acquaintances, and even the veteran have been willing to reveal these data only on the promise that they will be held in complete confidence. There will be avoided direct, ill-considered references which may jeopardize the personal safety of these individuals and the relationship existing among them, the patient, and the social worker, or may destroy their mutual confidence and influence, rendering it impossible to secure further cooperation from these individuals and agencies. Physicians in talking with beneficiaries will not quote these data directly but will regard them as indicating possible directions toward which they may wish to guide the patient's

(2) Furnish proof satisfactory to the Department of Veterans Affairs that the organization seeking the list is a “nonprofit organization.” Normally, evidence establishing that the organization is exempt from taxation in accordance with the provisions of 26 U.S.C. 501 or is a governmental body or institution will be accepted as satisfying this criteria;

(3) Contain a statement clearly setting forth the purpose for which the list is sought, the programs and the resources the organization proposes to devote to this purpose, and establish how such purpose is “directly connected with the conduct of programs and the utilization of benefits” under title 38, U.S.C.; and

(4) Contain a certification that the organization, and all members thereof who will have access to the list, are aware of the penalty provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5701(f) and will not use the list for any purpose other than that stated in the application.

(b) If the Director of the regional office concerned finds that the organization requesting the list of names and addresses of educationally disadvantaged veterans is a nonprofit organization and operates an approved program of special secondary, remedial, preparatory or other educational or supplementary assistance to veterans as provided under subchapter V, title 38 U.S.C., then he or she may authorize the release of such names and addresses to the organization requesting them.

(c) The Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Resources Management, with the concurrence of the General Counsel, is authorized to release lists of names and addresses of educationally disadvantaged veterans is a nonprofit organization and operates an approved program of special secondary, remedial, preparatory or other educational or supplementary assistance to veterans as provided under subchapter V, title 38 U.S.C., then he or she may authorize the release of such names and addresses to the organization requesting them.

(4) If the list requested is one that the Department of Veterans Affairs has previously compiled or created, in the same format, to carry out one or more of its basic program responsibilities and it is determined that it can be released, the list may be furnished without charge. For other types of lists, a charge will be made in accordance with the provisions of §1.526.

(e) Upon denial of a request, the Department of Veterans Affairs Controller or Regional Office Director will inform the requester in writing of the denial and the reasons therefor and advise the organization that it may appeal the denial to the General Counsel. In each instance of a denial of a request, the denial and the reasons therefor will be made a matter of record.

(5) Section 5701(f), title 38 U.S.C., provides that any organization, or member thereof, which uses the names and addresses furnished it for any purpose other than one directly connected with the conduct of programs and the utilization of benefits under title 38 U.S.C., shall be fined not more than $500 in the case of the first offense and not more than $5,000 in the case of the subsequent offenses. Any instance in which there is evidence of a violation of these penal provisions will be reported in accordance with §14.560.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900–0438)


§ 1.520 Confidentiality of social data.

Persons having access to social data will be conscious of the fact that the family, acquaintances, and even the veteran have been willing to reveal these data only on the promise that they will be held in complete confidence. There will be avoided direct, ill-considered references which may jeopardize the personal safety of these individuals and the relationship existing among them, the patient, and the social worker, or may destroy their mutual confidence and influence, rendering it impossible to secure further cooperation from these individuals and agencies. Physicians in talking with beneficiaries will not quote these data directly but will regard them as indicating possible directions toward which they may wish to guide the patient’s
self-revelations without reproaching the patient for his or her behavior or arousing natural curiosity or suspicion regarding any informant’s statement. The representatives of service organizations and duly authorized representatives of veterans will be especially cautioned as to their grave responsibility in this connection.


§ 1.521 Special restrictions concerning social security records.

Information received from the Social Security Administration may be filed in the veteran’s claims folder without special provisions. Such information will be deemed privileged and may not be released by the Department of Veterans Affairs except that information concerning the amount of social security benefits paid to a claimant or the amount of social security tax contributions made by the claimant may be disclosed to the claimant or his or her duly authorized representative. Any request from outside the Department of Veterans Affairs for other social security information will be referred to the Social Security Administration for such action as they deem proper.

[27 FR 9599, Sept. 28, 1962]

§ 1.522 Determination of the question as to whether disclosure will be prejudicial to the mental or physical health of claimant.

Determination of the question when disclosure of information from the files, records, and reports will be prejudicial to the mental or physical health of the claimant, beneficiary, or other person in whose behalf information is sought, will be made by the Chief Medical Director; Chief of Staff of a hospital; or the Director of an outpatient clinic.

[33 FR 19009, Dec. 20, 1968]

§ 1.523 [Reserved]

§ 1.524 Persons authorized to represent claimants.

A duly authorized representative will be:

(a) Any person authorized in writing by the claimant to act for him or her,

(b) An attorney who has filed the declaration required by §14.629(b)(1) of this chapter, or

(c) His or her legally constituted fiduciary, if the claimant is incompetent. Where for proper reasons no legally constituted fiduciary has been or will be appointed, his or her spouse, his or her children, or, if the claimant is unmarried, either of his or her parents shall be recognized as the fiduciary of the claimant.

[33 FR 6536, Apr. 30, 1968]

§ 1.525 Inspection of records by or disclosure of information to recognized representatives of organizations and recognized attorneys.

(a)(1) The accredited representatives of recognized organizations (§14.627 of this chapter) holding appropriate power of attorney and recognized attorneys (§14.629(b) of this chapter) with the written authorization of the claimant may, subject to the restrictions imposed by paragraph (a)(2) of this section, inspect the claims, insurance and allied folders of any claimant upon the condition that only such information contained therein as may be properly disclosed under §§1.500 through 1.526 will be disclosed by him or her to the claimant or, if the claimant is incompetent, to his or her legally constituted fiduciary. Under the same restrictions, it is permissible to release information from and permit inspection of loan guaranty folders in which a request for a waiver of the debt of a veteran or his or her spouse has been received, or where there has been a denial of basic eligibility for loan guaranty benefits. All other information in the files shall be treated as confidential and will be used only in determining the status of the cases inspected or in connection with the presentation to officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs of the claim of the claimant. The heads of field facilities and the directors of the services concerned in Central Office will each designate a responsible officer to whom requests for all files must be made, except that managers of centers with insurance activities will designate two responsible officials, recommended by the division chiefs concerned, one responsible for claims and
§ 1.525 38 CFR Ch. 1 (7–1–11 Edition)

allied folders and the other for insurance files. The term claimant as used in this paragraph includes insureds.

(2) In the case of a living veteran a representative acting under a power of attorney from any person not acting on behalf of the veteran will not be permitted to review the records of the veteran or be furnished any information therefrom to which the person is not entitled, i.e., information not relating to such person alone. Powers of attorney submitted by the other person will be considered “Limited” and will be so noted when associated with the veteran’s records. The provisions of this subparagraph are also applicable to recognized attorneys and the requisite declarations filed by them.

(3) When power of attorney does not obtain, the accredited representative will explain to the designated officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs the reason for requesting information from the file, and the information will be made available only when in the opinion of the designated officer it is justified; in no circumstances will such representatives be allowed to inspect the file; in such cases a contact report will be made out and attached to the case, outlining the reasons which justify the verbal or written release of the information to the accredited representative.

(4) In any case where there is an unrevoked power of attorney or declaration of representation, no persons or organizations other than the one named in such document shall be afforded information from the file except under the conditions set forth in §14.629(b)(2) of this chapter. When any claimant has filed notice with the Department of Veterans Affairs that he or she does not want his or her file inspected, such file will not be made available for inspection.

(b)(1) Inspection of folders by accredited representatives or recognized attorneys holding a written authorization where such cases are being processed shall be in space assigned for such inspection. Otherwise station heads may permit inspection of folders at the desks of the accredited representatives in the office(s) which they regularly occupy.

(2) An insured or after maturity of the insurance by death of the insured, the beneficiary, may authorize the release to a third person of such insurance information as the insured or the beneficiary would be entitled to receive, provided there is submitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs, a specific authorization in writing for this purpose.

(3) Unless otherwise authorized by the insured or the beneficiary, as the case may be, such authorized representative, recognized attorney or accredited representative shall not release information as to the designated beneficiary to anyone other than the insured or to the beneficiary after death of the insured. Otherwise, information in the insurance file shall be subject to the provisions of §§1.500 through 1.526.

(4) Clinical records and medical files, including files for outpatient treatment, may be inspected by accredited representatives or recognized attorneys holding a written authorization only to the extent such records or parts thereof are incorporated in the claims folder, or are made available to Department of Veterans Affairs personnel in the adjudication of the claim. Records or data in clinical or medical files which are not incorporated in the claims folder or which are not made available to Department of Veterans Affairs personnel for adjudication purposes will not be inspected by anyone other than those employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs whose duties require same for the purpose of clinical diagnosis or medical treatment.

(5) Under no circumstances shall any paper be removed from a file, except by a Department of Veterans Affairs employee, for purpose of having an authorized copy made. Copying of material in a file shall not be permitted except in connection with the performance of authorized functions under the power of attorney or requisite declaration of a recognized attorney.

(6) In any case involving litigation against the Government, whether contemplated or initiated, inspection, subject to the foregoing, shall be within the discretion of the General Counsel.
or Regional Counsel, except that in insurance suits under 38 U.S.C. 1975, 1984, inspection shall be within the discretion of the official having jurisdiction of the claim. Files in such cases may be released to the Department of Justice, but close liaison will be maintained to insure their return intact upon termination of the litigation.

(c) Facility heads and the directors of the services concerned in central office will be responsible for the administrative compliance with and accomplishment of the foregoing within their jurisdiction, and any violations of the prescribed conditions for inspection of files or release of information therefrom will be brought to the immediate attention of the Secretary.

(d) Any person holding power of attorney, a recognized attorney who has filed the requisite declaration, or the accredited representative of a recognized organization holding power of attorney shall be supplied with a copy of each notice to the claimant respecting the adjudication of the claim. If a claimant dies before action on the claim is completed, the person or organization holding power of attorney or the attorney who has filed the requisite declaration may continue to act until the action is completed except where the power of attorney or requisite declaration was filed on behalf of a dependent.

(e) When in developing a claim the accredited representative of a recognized organization finds it necessary to call upon a local representative to assemble information or evidence, he or she may make such disclosures to the local representative as the circumstances of the case may warrant, provided the power of attorney and the recognized organization contains an authorization permitting such disclosure.

§ 1.526 Copies of records and papers.

(a) Any person desiring a copy of any record or document in the custody of the Department of Veterans Affairs installation having custody of the subject matter desired, stating specifically: (1) The particular record or document the copy of which is desired and whether certified and validated, or uncertified, (2) the purpose for which such copy is desired to be used.

(b) The types of services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for which fees will be charged are identified in paragraph (i) of this section.

(c) This section applies to the services furnished in paragraph (b) of this section when rendered to members of the public by the Department of Veterans Affairs. It does not apply to such services when rendered to or for other agencies or branches of the Federal Government, or State and local governments when furnishing the service will help to accomplish an objective of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or when performed in connection with a special research study or compilation when the party requesting such services is charged an amount for the whole job.

(d) When copies of a record or document are furnished under §§1.506, 1.507, 1.510, and 1.514, such copies shall be supplied without charge. Moreover, free service may be provided, to the extent of one copy, to persons who have been required to furnish original documents for retention by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(e) The following are circumstances under which services may be provided free at the discretion of facility heads or responsible Central Office officials:

(1) When requested by a court, when the copy will serve as a substitute for personal court appearance of a Government witness.

(2) When furnishing the service free saves costs or yields income equal to the direct costs of the agency providing the service. This includes cases where the fee for the service would be included in a billing against the Government (for example, in cost-type contracts, or in the case of private physicians who are treating Government beneficiaries at Government expense).

(3) When a service is occasional and incidental, not of a type that is requested often, and if it is administratively determined that a fee would be
§ 1.527 Administrative review.

(a) Any person may, in the event of a denial of his or her request to inspect or obtain information from or copies of records within the purview of §§ 1.501 except under court subpoena, until the full amount of the lawful charge is deposited. Any excess deposit of $1 or more over the lawful charge will be returned to the applicant. Excess deposits of less than $1 will be returned upon request. When a deposit is received with an application, such a deposit will be returned to the applicant should the application be denied.

(h) Copies of reports or records received from other Government departments or agencies will not be furnished except as provided in § 1.513.

(i) Fees to be charged—(1) Schedule of fees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Duplication of document by any type of reproduction process to produce plain one-sided paper copies of a standard size (8½” × 11”; 8½” × 14”; 11” × 14”).</td>
<td>$0.15 per page after first 100 one-sided pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Duplication of non-paper records, such as microforms, audiovisual materials (motion pictures, slides, laser optical disks, video tapes, audiotapes, etc.) computer tapes and disks, diskettes for personal computers, and any other automated media output.</td>
<td>Actual direct cost to the Agency as defined in § 1.555(a)(2) of this part to the extent that it pertains to the cost of duplication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Duplication of documents by any type of reproduction process not covered by paragraphs (i)(1) (i) and (ii) of this section to produce a copy in a form reasonably usable by a requester.</td>
<td>Actual direct cost to the Agency as defined in § 1.555(a)(2) of this part to the extent that it pertains to the cost of duplication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Providing special information, statistics, reports, specifications, lists of names and addresses (either in paper or machine readable form), computer or other machine readable output.</td>
<td>Actual cost to the Agency including computer and manual search costs, copying costs, labor, and material and overhead expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) Attestation under the seal of the Agency.</td>
<td>$3.00 per document so certified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) Providing abstracts or copies of medical and dental records to insurance companies for other than litigation purposes.</td>
<td>$10.00 per request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) Providing files under court subpoena.</td>
<td>Actual direct cost to the Agency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Benefit records. When VA benefit records are requested by a VA beneficiary or applicant for VA benefits, the duplication fee for one complete set of such records will be waived.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5702(b))

(j) If the copy is to be transmitted by certified or registered mail, airmail, or special delivery mail, the postal fees therefor shall be added to the other fees provided in paragraph (i) of this section (or the order must include postage stamps or stamped return envelopes for the purpose).

(k) Those Department of Veterans Affairs installations not having copying equipment are authorized to arrange with the nearest Department of Veterans Affairs installation having such equipment to make the necessary authorized copies of records or documents.

(1) Administration, staff office, and field facility heads are authorized to designate employees to certify copies of records and papers furnished under the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section.

through 1.526, appeal such denial. Such appeal, stating the circumstances of the denial, should be addressed, as appropriate, to the field facility, administration, or staff office head.

(b) A denial action not reversed by a field facility, administration, or staff office head on appeal, will be referred through normal channels to the General Counsel.

(c) The final agency decision in such appeals will be made by the General Counsel or the Deputy General Counsel.


RELEASE OF INFORMATION FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RECORDS OTHER THAN CLAIMANT RECORDS

NOTE: Sections 1.550 through 1.559 concern the availability and release of information from files, records, reports, and other papers and documents in Department of Veterans Affairs custody other than those pertaining to claims under any of the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. As to the release of information from Department of Veterans Affairs claimant records, see §§ 1.500 through 1.527. Section 1.550 series implement the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552.

[40 FR 12656, Mar. 20, 1975]


§ 1.550 General.

The Department of Veterans Affairs policy is one of disclosure of information from agency records to the extent permitted by law. This includes the release of information which the Department of Veterans Affairs is authorized to withhold under 5 U.S.C. 552(b) (see §1.554) if it is determined: (a) By the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Deputy Secretary that disclosure of such information will serve a useful purpose or (b) by an administration, staff office, or field facility head or designee under §1.556(a) that disclosure will not adversely affect the proper conduct of official business or constitute an invasion of personal privacy.

[40 FR 12656, Mar. 20, 1975]

§ 1.551 [Reserved]

§ 1.552 Public access to information that affects the public when not published in the Federal Register as constructive notice.

(a) Those statements of policy and interpretations adopted by the Department of Veterans Affairs but not published in the Federal Register, and administrative manuals and staff instructions that affect any member of the public, unless promptly published and copies offered for sale, will be kept currently indexed by the office of primary program responsibility or the Manager, Administrative Services, as determined by the Secretary or designee. Such index or indexes or supplements thereto will be promptly published, quarterly or more frequently, and distributed (by sale or otherwise) unless the Department of Veterans Affairs determines by order published in the Federal Register that publication would be unnecessary and impracticable, in which case the Department of Veterans Affairs will nonetheless provide copies of such index or indexes or supplements thereto on request at a cost not to exceed the direct cost of duplication. Both the index and the materials indexed as required by this paragraph will be made available to the public, for inspection and copying. Public reading facilities for this purpose will be maintained in Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office and Department of Veterans Affairs field facilities, open to the public during the normal duty hours of the office in which located. Orders made in the adjudication of individual claims under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs are confidential and privileged by statute (38 U.S.C. 5701) and so are exempt from this requirement.

(b) When publishing or making available to the public any opinion, order, statement of policy, interpretation, staff manual or instruction to staff, identifying details will be deleted, and the deletion justified in writing, to the extent required to prevent a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

(c) No final order, opinion, statement of policy, interpretation, staff manual or instruction which is issued, adopted,
or promulgated after July 4, 1967, that affects any member of the public may be relied upon, used, or cited as precedent against any private party unless it has been indexed and either made available or published as provided in this section or unless that private party shall have actual and timely notice of the terms thereof.


§ 1.553 Public access to other reasonably described records.

(a) Except for requests for records which are processed under §§ 1.551 and 1.552 of this part, unless otherwise provided for in title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, all requests for records shall be processed under paragraph (b) of this section, as well as under any other VA law or regulation governing access to or confidentiality of records or information. Records or information customarily furnished to the public in the regular course of the performance of official duties may be furnished to the public without reference to paragraph (b) of this section. To the extent permitted by other laws and regulations, VA will also consider making available records which it is permitted to withhold under the FOIA if it determines that such disclosure could be in the public interest.

(b) Reasonably described records in VA custody, or copies thereof, other than records made available to the public under provisions of §§ 1.551 and 1.552 of this part, or unless otherwise provided for in title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, requested in accordance with published rules stating the time, place, fees (if any), and procedures to be followed, will be made promptly available, except as provided in § 1.554 of this part, to any person upon request. Such request must be in writing, over the signature of the requester and must contain a reasonable description of the record desired so that it may be located with relative ease. The request should be made to the office concerned (having jurisdiction of the record desired) or, if not known, to the Director or Veterans Service Center Manager in the nearest VA regional office; the Director, or Chief, Medical Administra-

tion Service, or other responsible official of VA medical facility where most recently treated; or to the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420. Personal contacts should normally be made during the regular duty hours of the office concerned, which are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday for VA Central Office and most field facilities.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(3))

[53 FR 10377, Mar. 31, 1988, as amended at 71 FR 28586, May 17, 2006]

§ 1.553a Time limits for Department of Veterans Affairs response to requests for records.

(a) When a request for records made under § 1.551, § 1.552 or § 1.553 is received it will be promptly referred for action to the proper employee designated in accordance with § 1.556 to take initial action on granting or denying requests to inspect or obtain information from or copies of the records described.

(b) Any such request will then be promptly evaluated and a determination made within 10 days (excepting Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after the receipt of the request whether the Department of Veterans Affairs will comply with the request. Upon determination to comply or deny the request the person making the request will be notified immediately of the determination and the reasons therefor, and of the right of the person to appeal to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs any adverse determination. Records to be furnished will be supplied promptly.

(c) Upon receipt of such an appeal from an adverse determination it will be evaluated and a further determination made within 20 days (excepting Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after receipt of the appeal. If on appeal the denial is in whole or in part upheld the Department of Veterans Affairs will notify the requester of the provisions for judicial review of this determination. (See §§ 1.557 and 1.558.)

(d) In unusual circumstances, specifically as follows, the time limits in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section may be extended by written notice to the requester setting forth the reasons...
for such extension and the date on which a determination is expected to be dispatched. The date specified will not result in an extension for more than 10 working days. *Unusual circumstances* will be interpreted to mean, but only to the extent reasonably necessary to the proper processing of the particular request, as follows:

(1) The need to search for and collect the requested records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the office processing the request;

(2) The need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are demanded in a single request; or

(3) The need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of the Department of Veterans Affairs having substantial subject-matter interest therein.

(e) Pursuant to section 552(a)(6), title 5 U.S.C., any person making a request to the Department of Veterans Affairs for records under section 552(a) (1), (2) or (3) (see §§1.551, 1.552 and 1.553) will be deemed to have exhausted his or her administrative remedies with respect to such request if the Department of Veterans Affairs fails to comply with the applicable time limit provisions of this section. If, however, the Government can show exceptional circumstances exist and that the Department of Veterans Affairs is exercising due diligence in responding to the request, the statute also permits the court to retain jurisdiction and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs additional time to complete its review of the records.

(f) Requests for the release of information from files, records, reports, and other papers and documents in Department of Veterans Affairs custody pertaining to claims under any of the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (covered by §§1.500 through 1.527) may also be initiated under 5 U.S.C. 552. Such requests will also be evaluated, a determination made within 10 days (excepting Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after the receipt of the request whether the Department of Veterans Affairs will comply with the request, and the requester notified immediately of the determination and the reasons therefor, and of the right of the person to appeal to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs any adverse determination. Records to be furnished will be supplied promptly.

[40 FR 12657, Mar. 20, 1975]

§ 1.554 Exemptions from public access to agency records.

(a) The exemptions in this paragraph constitute authority to withhold from disclosure certain categories of information in Department of Veterans Affairs records except that any reasonably segregable portion of a record shall be provided to any person requesting such record after deletion of the portions which are exempt under this paragraph.

(1) Specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of the national defense or foreign policy, and are in fact properly classified pursuant to such Executive order.

(2) Related solely to internal Department of Veterans Affairs personnel rules and practices.

(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute other than 5 U.S.C. 552b, provided that such statute:

(i) Requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on the issue, or

(ii) Establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld.

(4) Trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from any person and privileged or confidential.

(5) Interagency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a private party in litigation with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(6) Personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

(7) Records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of
§ 1.554a Predisclosure notification procedures for confidential commercial information.

(a) General. During the conduct of its business the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may acquire records which contain confidential commercial information, as defined in paragraph (b) of this section. Such records will not be released in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, except under the provisions of this section. This section establishes uniform VA procedures for giving submitters predisclosure notice of requests for their records which contain confidential commercial information that may be exempt from disclosure under 38 CFR 1.554(a)(4). These procedures are required by Executive Order 12600, Predisclosure Notification Procedures for Confidential Commercial Information, dated June 23, 1987.

(b) Definitions—

(1) Confidential commercial information means records provided to the government by a submitter that arguably contain material described in paragraph (a)(7)(I) of this section and

(i) The investigation or proceeding involves a possible violation of criminal law, and

(ii) There is reason to believe that

(A) The subject of the investigation or proceeding is not aware of its pendency, and

(B) Disclosure of the existence of the records could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, the Agency may, during only such time as that circumstance continues, treat the records as not subject to the requirements of this section.

(2) Whenever informant records maintained by a criminal law enforcement agency under an informant’s name or personal identifier are requested by a third party according to the informant’s name or personal identifier, the Department may treat the records as not subject to the requirements of this section unless the informant’s status as an informant has been officially confirmed.

exempt from release under Exemption 4 of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4), as implemented by §1.554 of this part, because disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm.

(2) Submitter means any person or entity who provides confidential commercial information to the government. The term “submitter” includes, but is not limited to corporations, State governments, and foreign governments.

(c) Notification to submitters of confidential commercial information. When a request is received, for a submitter’s record(s), or information which contains confidential commercial information, and the request is being processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552, the submitter will be promptly notified in writing of the request when required by paragraph (d) of this section. The notification will advise the submitter that a request for its record(s) has been received and is being processed under the FOIA. The notice will describe the exact nature of the record(s) requested or will provide to the submitter copies of the record(s) or portions thereof containing the requested confidential commercial information. It will also inform the submitter of the opportunity to object to the disclosure in writing within 10 working days, and of the requirements for such a written objection, as described in paragraph (f) of this section. The notification will be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.

(d) When notification is required. (1) For confidential commercial information submitted to VA prior to January 1, 1988, notification to submitters is required whenever:

(i) The records are less than 10 years old and the requested information has been designated by the submitter as confidential commercial information; or

(ii) VA facility, administration, or staff office which has custody of the requested records has reason to believe that disclosure of the requested information could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm.

(2) For confidential commercial information submitted to VA on or after January 1, 1988, notification is required whenever:

(i) The submitter has in good faith designated the requested records as confidential information in accordance with paragraph (e) of this section; or

(ii) VA facility, administration, or staff office which has custody of the requested records has reason to believe that disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm.

(e) Designation by submitters of information as confidential commercial information. (1) When business records are provided to VA, the submitter may appropriately designate any records or portions thereof which contain confidential commercial information, the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm. This designation may be made at the time the information or record is given to VA or within a reasonable period of time thereafter, but not later than 60 days after receipt of the information by VA. Information so designated will be clearly identified by marking it with the words “confidential commercial information” or by an accompanying detailed written description of the specific kinds of information that is designated. If a complete document or record is designated, the cover page of the document or record will be clearly marked “This entire (document, record, etc.) consists of confidential commercial information.” If only portions of documents are designated, only those specific designated portions will be conspicuously annotated as “confidential commercial information.”

(2) A designation described in paragraph (e)(1) of this section will remain in effect for a period of not more than 10 years after submission to VA, unless the submitter provides acceptable justification for a longer specific period. If a shorter designation period is adequate, the submitter’s designation should include the earlier expiration date. Whenever possible, the submitter’s designation should be supported by a statement or certification by an officer or authorized representative of the submitter that the records are in fact confidential commercial information and have not been published or made available to the public.
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(f) Opportunity to object to disclosure. (1) When notification to a submitter is made pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section, the submitter or designee may object to the disclosure of any specified portion of the record(s). Such objection will be in writing, will be addressed to the VA official who provided notice, will identify the specific record(s) or portion(s) of records that should not be disclosed, will specify all grounds upon which disclosure is opposed, and will explain in detail why the information is considered to be a trade secret or confidential commercial information, i.e., why disclosure of the specified records could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm. Information provided by a submitter pursuant to this paragraph may itself be subject to disclosure under the FOIA.

(2) Any objection to disclosure must be submitted within 10 working days after receipt by the submitter of notification as provided for in paragraph (c) of this section.

(3) If an objection to disclosure is received within the 10 working day time period, careful consideration will be given to all specified grounds for non-disclosure prior to making an administrative determination whether to disclose the record. When it is determined to disclose the requested record(s) or portions of records which are the subject of an objection, the submitter will be provided a written statement of the VA decision, the reason(s) that the submitter’s objections to disclosure were overruled, a description or copy of the exact information or record(s) to be disclosed which were the subject of an objection, and the specified date of disclosure. The date of disclosure will not be less than 10 working days from the date this notice is placed into mail delivery channels.

(g) Notices to requester. (1) When a request is received for records that may contain confidential commercial information protected by FOIA exemption (b)(4), 5 U.S.C. 552(B)(4), the requester will be notified that the request is being processed under the provisions of this regulation and, as a consequence, there may be a delay in receiving a response.

(2) Whenever a submitter is notified, pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section, that VA has received a request for records which had been provided by such submitter, and that such request was being processed under the FOIA, the requester will be notified that the submitter is being provided an opportunity to comment on the request. The notice to the requester should not include any of the specific information contained in the records being requested.

(3) Whenever VA notifies a submitter of a final decision, the requester will also be notified by separate correspondence. This notification to the requester may be contained in VA’s FOIA decision.

(h) Notices of lawsuit. Whenever a FOIA requester brings suit seeking to compel disclosure of confidential commercial information, the submitter of the information will be promptly notified.

(i) Exceptions to the notification requirements. The predisclosure notification requirements in paragraph (c) of this section need not be followed if:

(1) It is determined that the record(s) or information should not be disclosed;

(2) The record(s) requested have been published or have been officially made available to the public;

(3) Disclosure of the record(s) or information is required by law (other than the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552);

(4) Disclosure is required by an Agency rule that:

(i) Was adopted pursuant to notice and public comment;

(ii) Specifies narrow classes of records submitted to VA that are to be released under the FOIA; and

(iii) Provides in exceptional circumstances for notice when the submitter provides written justification, at the time the information is submitted or a reasonable time thereafter, that disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm;

(5) The record(s) requested are not designated by the submitter as exempt from disclosure in accordance with paragraph (e) of this section, and the submitter had an opportunity to do so at the time of submission of the
§ 1.555 Fees.

(a) Definitions of terms. For the purpose of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) **Commercial use request** means a request from or on behalf of one who seeks information for a use or purpose that furthers the commercial, trade or profit interests of the requester or the person on whose behalf the request is made. To determine whether a request properly belongs in this category, consideration must be given to the use to which a requester will put the documents requested. Where the use of the records sought is not clear in the request or where there is reasonable cause to doubt the use to which a requester will put the records sought, additional information may be sought from the requester before assigning the request to a specific category.

(2) **Direct costs** means those expenditures which VA actually incurs in searching for and duplicating (and in the case of commercial use requests, reviewing) documents to respond to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Direct costs include, for example, the salary of the employee performing work, i.e., the basic rate of pay for the employee, plus 16 percent of that rate to cover benefits, and the cost of operating duplicating machinery. Not included in direct costs are overhead expenses such as costs of space, and heating or lighting of the facility in which the records are stored.

(3) **Duplication** means the process of making a copy of a document necessary to respond to a FOIA request. Such copies can take the form of paper copy, microform, audiovisual materials or machine readable documentation (e.g., magnetic tape or disk), among others. The copy provided must be in a form that is reasonably usable by requesters.

(4) **Educational institution** means a preschool, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of graduate higher education, an institution of undergraduate higher education, an institution of professional education, and an institution of vocational education, which operates a program or programs of scholarly research. To determine whether a request properly belongs in this category, the request must be evaluated to ensure that it is apparent from the nature of the request that it serves a scholarly research goal of the institution, rather than an individual goal of the requester or a commercial goal of the institution.

(5) **Non-commercial scientific institution** means an institution that is not operated on a commercial basis (as that term is referenced under Commercial use request of this paragraph) and which is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research, the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

(6) **Representative of the news media** means any person actively gathering news for an entity that is organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public. The term news means information that is about current events or that would be of current interest to the public. Examples of news media entities include television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large, and publishers of periodicals (but only in those instances when they can qualify as disseminators of news) who make their products available for purchase or subscription by the general public. These examples are not intended to be all inclusive. As traditional methods of news delivery evolve (e.g., electronic dissemination of newspapers through telecommunications services), such alternative media will be included in this category.
Freelance journalists may be regarded as working for a news organization if they can demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through that organization, even though not actually employed by it. A publication contract would be the clearest proof, but the requester’s past publication history can be considered also. In any case, freelancers who do not qualify for inclusion in the representative of the news media category may seek a reduction or waiver of fees under paragraph (f) of this section.

(7) Review means the process of examining documents located in response to a commercial use request (see definition of commercial use request in this section) to determine whether any portion of any document located is permitted to be withheld. It also includes processing any documents for disclosure in response to a commercial use request, e.g., doing all that is necessary to excuse them and otherwise prepare them for release. The term review does not include time spent resolving general legal or policy issues regarding the application of exemptions.

(8) Search means all the time spent looking for material that is responsive to a request, including page-by-page or line-by-line identification of material within documents. Searches may be done manually or by computer using existing programs. The most efficient and least expensive manner of searching for material will be used to comply with requests for documents made under the FOIA.

(b) Fees to be charged. (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (c), (d), (f) and (g) of this section, the Department of Veterans Affairs will charge fees that recoup the full allowable direct costs for responding to each request from the public. Such fees will be charged in accordance with the schedule of fees in paragraph (e) of this section, and other requirements or restrictions in this regulation. The most efficient and least costly methods will be used to comply with requests for documents made under the FOIA.

(2) If it is estimated that charges for duplication determined by using the fee schedule in §1.555(e) of this part are likely to exceed $25, the requester will be notified of the estimated amount of fees, unless the requester has indicated in advance his or her willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. Such notice will offer the requester the opportunity to confer with Department personnel with the object of reformulating the request to meet his or her needs at a lower cost.

(3) Each administration and staff office upon approval of the Secretary is authorized to contract with private sector services to locate, reproduce, and disseminate records in response to FOIA requests when that is the most efficient and least costly method. If a contractor is used, the ultimate cost to the requester can be no greater than it would if the administration, staff office, or field facility performed the task, itself. In no case may an administration, staff office, or field facility contract out responsibilities which the FOIA provides that they alone may discharge, such as determining the applicability of an exemption, or determining whether to waive or reduce fees.

(4) When documents that would be responsive to a request are maintained for distribution by agencies operating statutory-based fee schedule programs, in which the agency is required to set the level of fees for particular types of records, such as the National Technical Information Service or the Government Printing Office, the requester of such documents will be informed of the steps necessary to obtain records from those sources, rather than from VA.

(c) Restrictions on assessing fees. With the exception of commercial use requests no charges will be assessed for the first 100 pages of duplication and the first two hours of search time. Moreover, no fees are to be charged any requester, including commercial use requesters, if the cost of collecting the fee is equal to or greater than the fee itself. These provisions work together
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so that, except for commercial use requests, fees will not be assessed until the free search and duplication have been provided. For example, if a request takes two hours and ten minutes of search time and results in 105 reproduced pages of documents, fees can be charged for only 10 minutes of search time and for only five pages of reproduction. If this cost were equal to or less than the cost to VA of billing the requester and processing the fee collected, no charges would be assessed.

(NOTE: The cost of collecting fees are VA’s administrative costs of receiving and recording a requester’s remittance, and processing the fee for deposit in the Treasury Department’s special account. The cost is determined to be negligible. The per-transaction costs to the Treasury to handle such remittances is negligible and will not be considered in the Department’s determination.)

(1) For purposes of the restriction on assessing fees, the word pages refers to one-sided paper copies of the standard sizes 8½" × 11" or 8½" × 14" or 11" × 14". Accordingly, requesters will not be entitled to 100 microfiche or 100 computer disks free. One microfiche containing the equivalent of 100 pages or 100 pages of computer printout might meet the terms of the restriction.

(2) The term search time in this context is based on manual searches. To calculate the computer search time for the purpose of applying the two-hour search restriction, the hourly cost of operating the computer’s central processing unit will be combined with the operator’s hourly salary, plus 16 percent of the salary. When the cost of the search (including the operator time and the cost of the computer to process a request) equals the equivalent dollar amount of two hours of the salary of the person performing the search, i.e., the operator, charges will begin to be assessed for a computer search.

(d) Categories of requesters and fees to be charged each category. There are four categories of FOIA requesters: Commercial use requesters; educational and non-commercial scientific institutional requesters; requesters who are representatives of news media; and all other requesters. Specific levels of fees will be charged for each of these categories as follows:

1. Commercial use requesters. When a request for documents for commercial use is received, the full direct costs of searching for, reviewing for release, and duplicating the records sought will be charged to the requester. Commercial use requesters are not entitled to two hours of free search time nor 100 free pages of reproduced documents. Moreover, the commercial use requester will be charged the cost of searching for and reviewing records even if there is ultimately no disclosure of records. The requester must reasonably describe the records sought.

2. Educational and non-commercial scientific institution requesters. These requesters will be charged only for the cost of reproduction, excluding charges for the first 100 pages. In order to be considered a member of this category, a requester must show that the request is being made as authorized by and under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are not sought for a commercial use. If the request is from an educational institution, the requester must show that the records sought are in furtherance of scholarly research. If the request is from a non-commercial scientific institution, the requester has to show that the records are sought in furtherance of scientific research. Information necessary to support a claim of being categorized as an educational or non-commercial scientific institution requester will be provided by the requester, and the requester must reasonably describe the records sought.

3. Representatives of news media. These requesters will be charged for the cost of reproduction, only, excluding charges for the first 100 pages. To be included in this category, a requester must fall within the definition of a representative of the news media specified in paragraph (a)(vi) of this section, and the request must not be made for commercial use. A request for records supporting the news dissemination function of the requester will not be considered to be a request that is for commercial use. Requesters must reasonably describe the records sought.
§ 1.555 38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)

(4) All other requesters. Any requester that does not fit into any of the categories in this section will be charged fees which recover the full reasonable direct cost of searching for and reproducing records that are responsive to the request, except that the first 100 pages of reproduction and the first two hours of search time will be furnished without charge. In addition, under certain circumstances specified in paragraph (f) of this section, fees will be waived or reduced at the discretion of field facility heads, their designee, or responsible Central Office officials. Requests from VA beneficiaries, applicants for VA benefits, or other individuals for records retrievable by their name or other personal identifier will initially be processed under 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 5 U.S.C. 552a and will be assessed fees in accordance with the applicable fee provisions of §1.526(i) or §1.577(f) of this part. To the extent that records are not disclosable under these provisions, the disclosure of such records will be evaluated under §§1.550 through 1.559 of this part, and fees will be assessed under paragraph (e) of this section. Requesters must reasonably describe the records sought.

(e) Schedule of fees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Duplication of documents by any type of reproduction process to produce plain one-sided paper copies of a standard size (8½” × 11”; 8½” × 14”; 11” × 14”).</td>
<td>$0.15 per page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Duplication of non-paper records, such as microforms, audioservices, materials (motion pictures, slides, laser optical disks, video tapes, audiotapes, etc.) computer tapes and disks, diskettes for personal computers, and any other automated media output.</td>
<td>Actual direct cost to the Agency. (See paragraph (a)(2) of this section and, if costs are likely to exceed $25.00, paragraph (b)(2) of this section.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Duplication of documents by any type of reproduction process not covered by paragraphs (e)(1) and (2) of this section to produce a copy in a form reasonably usable by the requester.</td>
<td>Actual direct cost to the Agency. (See paragraph (a)(2) of this section and, if costs are likely to exceed $25.00, paragraph (b)(2) of this section.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Document search by manual (non-automated) methods</td>
<td>Basic hourly salary rate of the employee(s) performing the search, plus 16 percent. (If costs are likely to exceed $25.00, see paragraph (g)(2) of this section.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Document search using automated methods, such as by computer</td>
<td>Actual direct cost to perform search. (See paragraph (c)(2) of this section and, if costs are likely to exceed $25.00, see paragraph (g)(2) of this section.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Document review (use only for commercial use requesters)</td>
<td>Basic hourly salary rate of employee(s) performing initial review to determine whether to release document(s) or portions of records, plus 16 percent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Other charges: Certifying that records are true copies; Sending records by special methods such as express mail.</td>
<td>Where applicable, assess under provisions of §§1.526(i) and (j) of this part, otherwise actual direct cost of service performed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(f) Waiving or reducing fees. (1) Fees for records and services provided in response to a FOIA request will be waived or reduced when it is determined by responsible Central Office officials or field station heads or their...
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designee that furnishing the document(s) is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(2) The following factors will be considered in sequence in determining whether disclosure of information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government:

(i) The subject of the request: Whether the subject of the requested records concerns the operations or activities of the government;

(ii) The informative value of the information to be disclosed: Whether the disclosure is likely to contribute to an understanding of government operations or activities;

(iii) The contribution to an understanding by the public likely to result from disclosure: Whether disclosure of the requested information will contribute to public understanding; and

(iv) The significance of the contribution to public understanding: Whether the disclosure is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of government operations or activities.

(3) The following factors will be considered in sequence in determining whether disclosure of information is primarily in the commercial interest of the requester:

(i) The existence and magnitude of a commercial interest: Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure; and, if so

(ii) The primary interest in disclosure: Whether the magnitude of the identified commercial interest of the requester is sufficiently large, in comparison with the public interest in disclosure, that disclosure is primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(4) An appeal from an adverse fee waiver or reduction determination will be processed in the same manner as described in §1.557 of this part.

(g) Other administrative considerations to improve assessment and collection of fees—(1) Charging interest—notice and rate. The Department of Veterans Affairs may charge interest to those requesters who fail to timely pay fees assessed in accordance with these regulations. Determination to charge interest will be made by the responsible Central Office official or field facility head or designee. Interest will be assessed on the unpaid bill beginning on the 31st day following the day on which the original building was sent. Interest will be at the rate prescribed in section 3717 of title 31 U.S.C., and will accrue from the date of the billing. Accounting procedures ensure that a requester who has remitted the full amount within the time period is properly credited with the payment. The fact that the fee has been received by VA, even if not processed, will suffice to stay the accrual of interest.

(2) Charges for unsuccessful search. When it is determined by the responsible Central Office official or field facility head or designee, charges for searching may be assessed, even if records are not located to satisfy a request or if records located are determined to be exempt from disclosure. If it is determined that search charges are likely to exceed $25, the requester will be notified of the estimated amount of fees, unless the requester has indicated in advance a willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. Such notice will offer the requester the opportunity to confer with agency personnel with the object of reformulating the request to meet his or her needs at a lower cost.

(3) Aggregating requests. When the responsible Central Office official or field facility head or designee reasonably believes that a requester or, on rare occasions, a group of requesters acting in concert, is attempting to break a request down into a series of requests for the purpose of evading the assessment of fees, the responsible Central Office official, or field facility head or designee may aggregate (combine) any such requests and charge accordingly. One element to consider in determining whether a belief would be reasonable is the time period in which the requests occurred. For example, it is reasonable to presume that multiple requests within a 30-day time period
§ 1.556 Requests for other reasonably described records.

Each administration, staff office, and field facility head will designate an employee(s) who will be responsible for initial action on (granting or denying) requests to inspect or obtain information from or copies of records under their jurisdiction and within the purview of §1.553. This responsibility includes maintaining a uniform listing of such requests. Data logged will consist of: Name and address of requester; date of receipt of request; brief description of request; action taken on request, granted or denied; citation of the specific section when request is denied; and date of reply to the requester. In the field a denial of any such request may be made only by the Director or the designated employee and in Central Office only by the administration or staff office head or designee. The letter notifying the requester of the denial will be signed by the official making the denial decision. Any legal question arising in a field station concerning the release of information will be referred to the appropriate Regional Counsel for disposition as contemplated by §13.401* of this chapter. In Central Office such legal questions will be referred to the General Counsel. Any administrative question will be referred through administrative channels to the appropriate administration or staff office head. All denials or proposed denials at the Central Office level will be coordinated with the Director, Information Service as well as the General Counsel.

§ 1.557 Administrative review.

(a) Upon denial of a request, the responsible Department of Veterans Affairs official or designated employee will inform the requester in writing of

*EDITORIAL NOTE: At 42 FR 41410, Aug. 17, 1977, §13.401 was removed.
the denial, cite the specific exemption in §1.554 upon which the denial is based, set forth the names and titles or positions of each person responsible for the denial of such request, and advise that the denial may be appealed to the General Counsel.

(b) The final agency decision in such appeals will be made by the General Counsel or the Deputy General Counsel.

[40 FR 12658, Mar. 20, 1975, as amended at 55 FR 21546, May 25, 1990]

§§ 1.558–1.559 [Reserved]

SAFEGUARDING PERSONAL INFORMATION IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RECORDS

NOTE: Sections 1.575 through 1.584 concern the safeguarding of individual privacy from the misuse of information from files, records, reports, and other papers and documents in Department of Veterans Affairs custody. As to the release of information from Department of Veterans Affairs claimant records see §1.500 series. As to the release of information from Department of Veterans Affairs records other than claimant records see §1.550 series. Section 1.575 series implement the provisions of Pub. L. 93–579, December 31, 1974, adding a section 552a to title 5 U.S.C. providing that individuals be granted access to records concerning them which are maintained by Federal agencies, and for other purposes.

SOURCE: 40 FR 33944, Aug. 12, 1975, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1.575 Social security numbers in veterans' benefits matters.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no one will be denied any right, benefit, or privilege provided by law because of refusal to disclose to the Department of Veterans Affairs a social security number.

(b) VA shall require mandatory disclosure of a claimant’s or beneficiary’s social security number (including the social security number of a dependent of a claimant or beneficiary) on necessary forms as prescribed by the Secretary as a condition precedent to receipt or continuation of receipt of compensation or pension payable under the provisions of chapters 11, 13 and 15 of title 38, United States Code, provided, however, that a claimant shall not be required to furnish VA with a social security number for any person to whom a social security number has not been assigned. VA may also require mandatory disclosure of an applicant’s social security number as a condition for receiving loan guaranty benefits and a social security number or other taxpayer identification number from existing direct and vendee loan borrowers and as a condition precedent to receipt of a VA-guaranteed loan, direct loan or vendee loan, under chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code. (Pub. L. 97–365, sec. 4)

(c) A person requested by VA to disclose a social security number shall be told, as prescribed by §1.578(c), whether disclosure is voluntary or mandatory. The person shall also be told that VA is requesting the social security number under the authority of title 38 U.S.C., or in the case of existing direct or vendee loan borrowers, under the authority of 26 U.S.C. 6109(a) in conjunction with sections 145 and 148 of Pub. L. 98–369, or in the case of loan applicants, under the authority of section 4 of Pub. L. 97–365. The person shall also be told that it will be used in the administration of veterans' benefits in the identification of veterans or persons claiming or receiving VA benefits and their records, that it may be used in making reports to the Internal Revenue Service where required by law, and to determine whether a loan guaranty applicant has been identified as a delinquent taxpayer by the Internal Revenue Service, and that such taxpayers may have their loan applications rejected, and that it may be used to verify social security benefit entitlement (including amounts payable) with the Social Security Administration and, for other purposes where authorized by both title 38 U.S.C., and the Privacy Act of 1974, (Pub. L. 93–579), or, where required by another statute. (Pub. L. 97–365, sec. 4)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5101)


§ 1.576 General policies, conditions of disclosure, accounting of certain disclosures, and definitions.

(a) The Department of Veterans Affairs will safeguard an individual
against an invasion of personal privacy. Except as otherwise provided by law or regulation its officials and employees will:

(1) Permit an individual to determine what records pertaining to him or her will be collected, maintained, used, or disseminated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) Permit an individual to prevent records pertaining to him or her, obtained by the Department of Veterans Affairs for a particular purpose, from being used or made available for another purpose without his or her consent.

(3) Permit an individual to gain access to information pertaining to him or her in Department of Veterans Affairs records, to have a copy made of all or any portion thereof, and to correct or amend such records.

(4) Collect, maintain, use, or disseminate any record of identifiable personal information in a manner that assures that such action is for a necessary and lawful purpose, that the information is correct and accurate for its intended use, and that adequate safeguards are provided to prevent misuse of such information.

(5) Permit exemptions from records requirements provided in 5 U.S.C. 552a only where an important public policy need for such exemption has been determined pursuant to specific statutory authority.

(b) The Department of Veterans Affairs will not disclose any record contained in a system of records by any means of communication to any person or any other agency except by written request of or prior written consent of the individual to whom the record pertains unless such disclosure is:

(1) To those officers and employees of the agency which maintains the record and who have a need for the record in the performance of their duties;

(2) Required under 5 U.S.C. 552;

(3) For a routine use of the record compatible with the purpose for which it was collected;

(4) To the Bureau of the Census for purposes of planning or carrying out a census or survey or related activity pursuant to title 13 U.S.C.;

(5) To a recipient who has provided the Department of Veterans Affairs with advance adequate written assurance that the record will be used solely as a statistical research or reporting record, and the record is to be transferred in a form that is not individually identifiable;

(6) To the National Archives of the United States as a record which has sufficient historical or other value to warrant its continued preservation by the U.S. Government, or for evaluation by the Administrator of General Services or designee to determine whether the record has such value;

(7) To another agency or to an instrumentality of any governmental jurisdiction within or under the control of the United States for a civil or criminal law enforcement activity if the activity is authorized by law, and if the head of the agency or instrumentality has made a written request to the Department of Veterans Affairs specifying the particular portion desired and the law enforcement activity for which the record is sought;

(8) To a person pursuant to a showing of compelling circumstances affecting the health or safety of an individual if upon such disclosure notification is transmitted to the last known address of such individual;

(9) To either House of Congress, or, to the extent of matter within its jurisdiction, any committee or subcommittee thereof, any joint committee of Congress or subcommittee of any such joint committee;

(10) To the Comptroller General, or any authorized representatives, in the course of the performance of the duties of the General Accounting Office; or

(11) Pursuant to the order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(c) With respect to each system of records (i.e., a group of records from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual) under Department of Veterans Affairs control, the Department of Veterans Affairs will (except for disclosures made under paragraph (b)(1) or (2) of this section) keep an accurate accounting as follows:

(1) For each disclosure of a record to any person or to another agency made under paragraph (b) of this section,
Department of Veterans Affairs § 1.576

maintain information consisting of the date, nature, and purpose of each disclosure, and the name and address of the person or agency to whom the disclosure is made;

(2) Retain the accounting made under paragraph (c)(1) of this section for at least 5 years or the life of the record, whichever is longer, after the disclosure for which the accounting is made;

(3) Except for disclosures made under paragraph (b)(7) of this section, make the accounting under paragraph (c)(1) of this section available to the individual named in the record at his or her request; and

(4) Inform any person or other agency about any correction or notation of dispute made by the agency in accordance with §1.579 of any record that has been disclosed to the person or agency if an accounting of the disclosure was made.

(d) For the purposes of §§1.575 through 1.584, the parent of any minor, or the legal guardian of any individual who has been declared incompetent due to physical or mental incapacity or age by a court of competent jurisdiction, may act on behalf of the individual.

(e) Section 552a(i), title 5 U.S.C., provides that:

(1) Any officer or employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs, who by virtue of his or her employment or official position, has possession of, or access to, Department of Veterans Affairs records which contain individually identifiable information the disclosure of which is prohibited by 5 U.S.C. 552a or by §1.575 series established thereunder, and who knowing that disclosure of the specific material is so prohibited, willfully discloses the material in any manner to any person or agency not entitled to receive it, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than $5,000.

(2) Any officer or employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who willfully maintains a system of records without meeting the notice requirements of 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(4) (see §1.578(d)) shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than $5,000.

(3) Any person who knowingly and willfully requests or obtains any record concerning an individual from the Department of Veterans Affairs under false pretenses shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than $5,000.

(f) For purposes of §1.575 series the following definitions apply:

(1) The term agency includes any executive department, military department, Government corporation, Government controlled corporation, or other establishment in the executive branch of the government (including the Executive Office of the President), or any independent regulatory agency.

(2) The term individual means a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

(3) The term maintain includes maintain, collect, use, or disseminate.

(4) The term record means any item, collection, or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by an agency, including, but not limited to, his or her education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and that contains his or her name, or the identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a finger or voice print or a photograph.

(5) The term system of records means a group of any records under the control of any agency from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual.

(6) The term statistical record means a record in a system of records maintained for statistical research or reporting purposes only and not used in whole or in part in making any determination about an identifiable individual except as provided by section 8 of title 13 U.S.C.

(7) The term routine use means, with respect to the disclosure of a record, the use of such record for a purpose which is compatible with the purpose for which it was collected.

(g) When the Department of Veterans Affairs provides by contract for the operation by or on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs of a system of records to accomplish a Department of Veterans Affairs function, the Department of Veterans Affairs will,
§ 1.577 Access to records.

(a) Except as otherwise provided by law or regulation any individual upon request may gain access to his or her record or to any information pertaining to him or her which is contained in any system of records maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The individual will be permitted, and upon his or her request, a person of his or her own choosing permitted to accompany him or her, to review the record and have a copy made of all or any portion thereof in a form comprehensible to him or her. The Department of Veterans Affairs will require, however, a written statement from the individual authorizing discussion of that individual’s record in the accompanying person’s presence.

(b) Any individual will be notified, upon request, if any Department of Veterans Affairs system of records named contains a record pertaining to him or her. Such request must be in writing, over the signature of the requester. The request must contain a reasonable description of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as described at least annually by notice published in the Federal Register describing the existence and character of the Department of Veterans Affairs system or systems of records involved, as des
through Friday for Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office and most field facilities. Identification of the individual requesting the information will be required and will consist of the requester’s name, signature, address, and claim, insurance or other identifying file number, if any, as a minimum. Additional identifying data or documents may be required in specified categories as determined by operating requirements and established and publicized by the promulgation of Department of Veterans Affairs regulations. (5 U.S.C. 552a(f)(1))

(c) The department or staff office having jurisdiction over the records involved will establish appropriate disclosure procedures and will notify the individual requesting disclosure of his or her record or information pertaining to him or her of the time, place and conditions under which the Department of Veterans Affairs will comply to the extent permitted by law and Department of Veterans Affairs regulations. (5 U.S.C. 552a(f)(2))

(d) Access to sensitive material in records, including medical and psychological records, is subject to the following special procedures. When an individual requests access to his or her records, the Department of Veterans Affairs official responsible for administering those records will review them and identify the presence of any sensitive records. Sensitive records are those that contain information which may have a serious adverse effect on the individual’s mental or physical health if they are disclosed to him or her. If, on review of the records, the Department of Veterans Affairs official concludes that there are sensitive records involved, the official will refer the records to a Department of Veterans Affairs physician, other than a rating board physician, for further review. If the physician who reviews the records believes that disclosure of the information directly to the individual could have an adverse effect on the physical or mental health of the individual, the responsible Department of Veterans Affairs official will then advise the requesting individual: (1) That the Department of Veterans Affairs will disclose the sensitive records to a physician or other professional person selected by the requesting individual for such redisclosure as the professional person may believe is indicated, and (2) in indicated cases, that the Department of Veterans Affairs will arrange for the individual to report to a Department of Veterans Affairs facility for a discussion of his or her records with a designated Department of Veterans Affairs physician and for an explanation of what is included in the records. Following such discussion, the records should be disclosed to the individual; however, in those extraordinary cases where a careful and conscientious explanation of the information considered harmful in the record has been made by a Department of Veterans Affairs physician and where it is still the physician’s professional medical opinion that physical access to the information could be physically or mentally harmful to the patient, physical access may be denied. Such a denial situation should be an unusual, very infrequent occurrence. When denial of a request for direct physical access is made, the responsible Department of Veterans Affairs official will: (1) Promptly advise the individual making the request of the denial; (2) state the reasons for the denial of the request (e.g., 5 U.S.C. 552a(f)(3), 38 U.S.C. 5701(b)(1)); and (3) advise the requester that the denial may be appealed to the General Counsel and of the procedure for such an appeal. (Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552a(f)(3))

(e) Nothing in 5 U.S.C. 552a, however, allows an individual access to any information compiled in reasonable anticipation of civil action or proceeding. (5 U.S.C. 552a(d)(5))

(f) Fees to be charged, if any, to any individual for making copies of his or her record shall not include the cost of any search for and review of the record, and will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Fees</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Duplication of documents by any type of reproduction process to produce plain one-sided paper copies of a standard size (8 1/2″ × 11″; 8 1/2″ × 14″; 11″ × 14″).</td>
<td>$0.15 per page after first 100 one-sided pages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Fees</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Duplication of non-paper records, such as microforms, audiovisual materials (motion pictures, slides, laser optical disks, video tapes, audio tapes, etc.), computer tapes and disks, diskettes for personal computers, and any other automated media output.</td>
<td>Actual direct cost to the Agency as defined in § 1.555(a)(2) of this part to the extent that it pertains to the cost of duplication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Duplication of document by any type of reproduction process not covered by paragraphs (f)(1) or (2) of this section to produce a copy in a form reasonably usable by the requester.</td>
<td>Actual direct cost to the Agency as defined in § 1.555(a)(2) of this part to the extent that it pertains to the cost of duplication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Fees for any activities other than duplication by any type of reproducing process will be assessed under the provisions of § 1.526(i) or (j) of this part or any other applicable law.

(g) When VA benefit records, which are retrievable by name or individual identifier of a VA beneficiary or applicant for VA benefits, are requested by the individual to whom the record pertains, the duplication fee for one complete set of such records will be waived.


§ 1.579 Amendment of records.

(a) Any individual may request amendment of any Department of Veterans Affairs record pertaining to him or her. Not later than 10 days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after the date or receipt of such request, the Department of Veterans Affairs will acknowledge in writing such receipt. The Department of Veterans Affairs will complete the review to amend or correct a record as soon as reasonably possible, normally within 30 days from the receipt of the request (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) unless unusual circumstances preclude completing action within that time. The Department of Veterans Affairs will promptly either:

(1) Correct any part thereof which the individual believes is not accurate, relevant, timely or complete; or

(2) Inform the individual of the Department of Veterans Affairs refusal to amend the record in accordance with his or her request, the reason for the refusal, the procedures by which the individual may request a review of that refusal by the Secretary or designee, and the name and address of such official.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552a(d)(2))

(b) The administration or staff office having jurisdiction over the records involved will establish procedures for reviewing a request from an individual concerning the amendment of any record or information pertaining to the individual, for making a determination on the request, for an appeal within the Department of Veterans Affairs of an initial adverse Department of Veterans Affairs determination, and for whatever additional means may be necessary for each individual to be able to exercise fully, his or her right under 5 U.S.C. 552a.

(1) Headquarters officials designated as responsible for the amendment of records or information located in Central Office and under their jurisdiction include, but are not limited to: Secretary; Deputy Secretary, as well as other appropriate individuals responsible for the conduct of business within the various Department of Veterans Affairs administrations and staff offices. These officials will determine and advise the requester of the identifying information required to relate the request to the appropriate record, evaluate and grant or deny requests to amend, review initial adverse determinations or learn further of the provisions for judicial review.

(2) The following field officials are designated as responsible for the amendment of records or information located in facilities under their jurisdiction, as appropriate: The Director of
Department of Veterans Affairs § 1.582

each Center, Domiciliary, Medical Center, Outpatient Clinic, Regional Office, Supply Depot, and Regional Counsels. These officials will function in the same manner at field facilities as that specified in the preceding subparagraph for headquarters officials in Central Office.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552a(f)(4))

(c) Any individual who disagrees with the Department of Veterans Affairs refusal to amend his or her record may request a review of such refusal. The Department of Veterans Affairs will complete such review not later than 30 days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) from the date on which the individual request such review and make a final determination unless, for good cause shown, the Secretary extends such 30-day period. If, after review, the Secretary or designee also refuses to amend the record in accordance with the request the individual will be advised of the right to file with the Department of Veterans Affairs a concise statement setting forth the reasons for his or her disagreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs refusal and advise of the provisions for judicial review of the reviewing official’s determination. (5 U.S.C. 552a(g)(1)(A))

(d) In any disclosure, containing information about which the individual has filed a statement of disagreement, occurring after the filing of the statement under paragraph (c) of this section, the Department of Veterans Affairs will clearly note any part of the record which is disputed and provide copies of the statement (and, if the Department of Veterans Affairs deems it appropriate, copies of a concise statement of the Department of Veterans Affairs reasons for not making the amendments requested) to persons or other agencies to whom the disputed record has been disclosed. (5 U.S.C. 552a(d)(4)) (38 U.S.C. 501)

[47 FR 16324, Apr. 16, 1982]

§ 1.580 Administrative review.

(a) Upon denial or a request under 38 CFR 1.577 or 1.579, the responsible Department of Veterans Affairs official or designated employee will inform the requester in writing of the denial, cite the reason or reasons and the Department of Veterans Affairs regulations upon which the denial is based, and advise that the denial may be appealed to the General Counsel.

(b) The final agency decision in such appeals will be made by the General counsel or the Deputy General Counsel.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[40 FR 33944, Aug. 12, 1975, as amended at 47 FR 16324, Apr. 16, 1982; 55 FR 21546, May 25, 1990]

§ 1.581 [Reserved]

§ 1.582 Exemptions.

(a) Certain systems of records maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs are exempted from provisions of the Privacy Act in accordance with exemptions (j) and (k) of 5 U.S.C. 552a.

(b) Exemption of Inspector General Systems of Records. The Department of Veterans Affairs provides limited access to Inspector General Systems of Records as indicated.

(1) The following systems of records are exempted pursuant to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2) from subsections (c)(3) and (4), (d), (e)(1), (2) and (3), (e)(4)(G), (H) and (I), (e)(5) and (8), (f) and (g) of 5 U.S.C. 552a; in addition, the following systems of records are exempted pursuant to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(2) from subsections (c)(3), (d), (e)(1), (e)(4)(G), (H), and (I), and (f) of 5 U.S.C. 552a:

(i) Investigation Reports of Persons Allegedly Involved in Irregularities Concerning VA and Federal Laws, Regulations, Programs, etc.—VA (11 VA51); and

(ii) Inspector General Complaint Center Records—VA (86VA53).

(2) These exemptions apply to the extent that information in those systems is subject to exemptions pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2) and (k)(2).

(3) For the reasons set forth, the systems of records listed under paragraph (b)(1) of this section are exempted under sections 552a(j)(2) and (k)(2) from the following provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552a:

(i) 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(3) requires that upon request, an agency must give an individual named in a record an accounting which reflects the disclosure
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of the record to other persons or agencies. This accounting must state the date, nature and purpose of each disclosure of the record and the name and address of the recipient. The application of this provision would alert subjects to the existence of the investigation and identify that such persons are subject of that investigation. Since release of such information to subjects would provide them with significant information concerning the nature of the investigation, it could result in the altering or destruction of derivative evidence which is obtained from third parties, improper influencing of witnesses, and other activities that could impede or compromise the investigation.

(ii) 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(4), (d), (e)(4) (G) and (H), (i) and (g) relate to an individual’s right to be notified of the existence of records pertaining to such individual; requirements for identifying an individual who requests access to records; the agency procedures relating to access to records and the amendment of information contained in such records; and the civil remedies available to the individual in the event of adverse determinations by an agency concerning access to or amendment of information contained in record systems. This system is exempt from the foregoing provisions for the following reasons: To notify an individual at the individual’s request of the existence of records in an investigative file pertaining to such individual or to grant access to an investigative file could interfere with investigative and enforcement proceedings, threaten the safety of individuals who have cooperated with authorities, constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy of others, disclose the identity of confidential sources, reveal confidential information supplied by these sources, and disclose investigative techniques and procedures.

(iii) 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(4)(I) requires the publication of the categories of sources of records in each system of records. The application of this provision could disclose investigative techniques and procedures and cause sources to refrain from giving such information because of fear of reprisal, or fear of breach of promises of anonymity and confidentiality. This could compromise the ability to conduct investigations and to identify, detect and apprehend violators. Even though the agency has claimed an exemption from this particular requirement, it still plans to generally identify the categories of records and the sources for these records in this system. However, for the reasons stated in paragraph (b)(3)(ii) of this section, this exemption is still being cited in the event an individual wants to know a specific source of information.

(iv) 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(1) requires each agency to maintain in its records only such information about an individual that is relevant and necessary to accomplish a purpose of the agency required by statute or Executive order. These systems of records are exempt from the foregoing provisions because:

(A) It is not possible to detect the relevance or necessity of specific information in the early stages of a criminal or other investigation.

(B) Relevance and necessity are questions of judgment and timing. What appears relevant and necessary may ultimately be determined to be unnecessary. It is only after the information is evaluated that the relevance and necessity of such information can be established.

(C) In any investigation the Inspector General may obtain information concerning the violations of laws other than those within the scope of his/her jurisdiction. In the interest of effective law enforcement, the Inspector General should retain this information as it may aid in establishing patterns of criminal activity and provide leads for those law enforcement agencies charged with enforcing other segments of civil or criminal law.

(v) 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(2) requires an agency to collect information to the greatest extent practicable directly from the subject individual when the information may result in adverse determinations about an individual’s rights, benefits, and privileges under Federal programs. The application of this provision would impair investigations of illegal acts, violations of the rules of conduct, merit system and any other misconduct for the following reasons:
(A) In order to successfully verify a complaint, most information about a complainant or an individual under investigation must be obtained from third parties such as witnesses and informers. It is not feasible to rely upon the subject of the investigation as a source for information regarding his/her activities because of the subject’s rights against self-incrimination and because of the inherent unreliability of the suspect’s statements. Similarly, it is not always feasible to rely upon the complainant as a source of information regarding his/her involvement in an investigation.

(B) The subject of an investigation will be alerted to the existence of an investigation if an attempt is made to obtain information from the subject. This would afford the individual the opportunity to conceal any criminal activities to avoid apprehension.

(vi) 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(3) requires that an agency must inform the subject of an investigation who is asked to supply information of:

(A) The authority under which the information is sought and whether disclosure of the information is mandatory or voluntary;
(B) The purposes for which the information is intended to be used;
(C) The routine uses which may be made of the information; and
(D) The effects on the subject, if any, of not providing the requested information. The reasons for exempting this system of records from the foregoing provision are as follows:

(1) The disclosure to the subject of the purposes of the investigation as stated in paragraph (b)(3)(vi)(B) of this paragraph would provide the subject with substantial information relating to the nature of the investigation and could impede or compromise the investigation.

(2) If the complainant or the subject were informed of the information required by this provision, it could seriously interfere with undercover activities requiring disclosure of the authority under which the information is being requested. This could conceivably jeopardize undercover agents’ identities and impair their safety, as well as impair the successful conclusion of the investigation.

(3) Individuals may be contacted during preliminary information gathering in investigations before any individual is identified as the subject of an investigation. Informing the individual of the matters required by this provision would hinder or adversely affect any present or subsequent investigations.

(vii) 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(5) requires that records be maintained with such accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and completeness as is reasonably necessary to assure fairness to the individual in making any determination about an individual. Since the law defines maintain to include the collection of information, complying with this provision would prevent the collection of any data not shown to be accurate, relevant, timely, and complete at the moment of its collection. In gathering information during the course of an investigation it is not always possible to determine this prior to collection of the information. Facts are first gathered and then placed into a logical order which objectively proves or disproves criminal behavior on the part of the suspect. Material which may seem unrelated, irrelevant, incomplete, untimely, etc., may take on added meaning as an investigation progresses. The restrictions in this provision could interfere with the preparation of a complete investigative report.

(viii) 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(8) requires an agency to make reasonable efforts to serve notice on an individual when any record on such individual is made available to any person under compulsory legal process when such process becomes a matter of public record. The notice requirement of this provision could prematurely reveal an ongoing criminal investigation to the subject of the investigation.

(c) Exemption of Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, Systems of Records. The Department of Veterans Affairs provides limited access to Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, systems of records as indicated:

(1) The following systems of records are exempted pursuant to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(2) from subsections (c)(3), (d), (e)(1) and (e)(4) (G), (H) and (I) and (f):
(i) Loan Guaranty Fee Personnel and Program Participant Records—VA (17VA26); and
(ii) Loan Guaranty Home Condominium and Mobile Home Loan Applicant Records and Paraplegic Grant Application Records—VA (55VA26).

(2) These exemptions apply to the extent that information in these systems is subject to exemption pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(2).

(3) For the reasons set forth, the systems of records listed under paragraph (c)(1) of this section are exempted under 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(2) from the following provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552a:

(i) 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(3) requires that an agency make accountings of disclosures of records available to individuals named in the records at their request. These accountings must state the date, nature and purpose of each disclosure of the record and the name and address of the recipient. The application of this provision would alert subjects of an investigation to the existence of the investigation and that such persons are subjects of that investigation. Since release of such information to subjects of an investigation would provide the subjects with significant information concerning the nature of the investigation, it could result in the altering or destruction of documentary evidence, improper influencing of witnesses and other activities that could impede or compromise the investigation.

(ii) 5 U.S.C. 552a(d), (e)(4)(G) and (H) and (f) relate to an individual’s right to be notified of the existence of records pertaining to such individual; requirements for identifying an individual who requests access to records; and the agency procedures relating to access to records and the contest of information contained in such records. This system is exempt from the foregoing provisions for the following reasons: To notify an individual at the individual’s request of the existence of records in an investigative file pertaining to such individual or to grant access to an investigative file could interfere with investigative and enforcement proceedings; constitute an unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of others; disclose the identity of confidential sources and reveal confidential information supplied by these sources and disclose investigative techniques and procedures.

(iii) 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(4)(I) requires the publication of the categories of sources of records in each system of records. The application of this provision could disclose investigative techniques and procedures and cause sources to refrain from giving such information because of fear of reprisal, or fear of breach of promises of anonymity and confidentiality. This would compromise the ability to conduct investigations. Even though the agency has claimed an exemption from this particular requirement, it still plans to generally identify the categories of records and the sources for these records in this system. However, for the reasons stated above, this exemption is still being cited in the event an individual wanted to know a specific source of information.

(iv) 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(1) requires each agency to maintain in its records only such information about an individual that is relevant and necessary to accomplish a purpose of the agency required by statute or Executive order. This system of records is exempt from the foregoing provision because:

(A) It is not possible to detect relevance or necessity of specific information in the early stages of an investigation.

(B) Relevance and necessity are questions of judgment and timing. What appears relevant and necessary when collected may ultimately be determined to be unnecessary. It is only after the information is evaluated that the relevance and necessity of such information can be established.

(C) In interviewing persons or obtaining other forms of evidence during an investigation, information may be supplied to the investigator which relates to matters incidental to the main purpose of the investigation but which is appropriate in a thorough investigation. Oftentimes, such information cannot readily be segregated.

(4) The following system of records is exempt pursuant to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(6) from subsections (c)(3), (d), (e)(1), (e)(4)(G), (H) and (I) and (f): Loan Guaranty Fee Personnel
and Program Participant Records—VA (17 VA 26).

(5) This exemption applies to the extent that information in this system is subject to exemption pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(5).

(6) For the reasons set forth, the system of records listed in paragraph (c)(4) of this section is exempt under 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(5) from the following provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552a:

(i) 5 U.S.C. 552a(c)(3) requires that an agency make accountings of disclosures of records available to individuals named in the records at their request. These accountings must state the date, nature and purpose of each disclosure of the record and the name and address of the recipient. The application of this provision would alert subjects of background suitability investigations to the existence of the investigation and reveal that such persons are subjects of that investigation. Since release of such information to subjects of an investigation would provide the subjects with significant information concerning the nature of the investigation, it could result in revealing the identity of a confidential source.

(ii) 5 U.S.C. 552a(d), (e)(4)(G) and (H) and (f) relate to an individual’s right to be notified of the existence of records pertaining to such individual; requirements for identifying an individual who requests access to records; and the agency procedures relating to access to records and the contest of information contained in such records. This system is exempt from the foregoing provisions for the following reasons: To notify an individual at the individual’s request of the existence of records in an investigative file pertaining to such an individual or to grant access to an investigative file would disclose the identity of confidential sources and reveal confidential information supplied by these sources. The application of this provision could disclose sufficient information to disclose the identity of a confidential source and cause sources to refrain from giving such information because of fear of reprisal, or fear of breach of promises of anonymity and confidentiality. This would compromise the ability to conduct background suitability investigations.

(iv) 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(1) requires each agency to maintain in its records only such information about an individual that is relevant and necessary to accomplish a purpose of the agency required by statute or Executive order. This system of records is exempt from the foregoing provision because:

(A) It is not possible to detect relevance and necessity of specific information from a confidential source in the early stages of an investigation.

(B) Relevance and necessity are questions of judgment and timing. What appears relevant and necessary when collected may ultimately be determined to be unnecessary. It is only after the information is evaluated that the relevance and necessity of such information can be established regarding suitability for VA approval as a fee appraiser or compliance inspector.

(C) In interviewing persons or obtaining other forms of evidence during an investigation for suitability for VA approval, information may be supplied to the investigator which relates to matters incidental to the main purpose of the investigation but which is appropriate in a thorough investigation. Oftentimes, such information cannot readily be segregated and disclosure might jeopardize the identity of a confidential source.

(d) Exemption of Police and Security Records. VA provides limited access to one Security and Law Enforcement System of Records, Police and Security Records—VA (103VA07B).

(1) The investigations records and reports contained in this System of Records are exempted pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(j)(2) of the Privacy Act of 1974] from Privacy Act subsections (c)(3) and (c)(4); (d); (e)(1) through (e)(3), (e)(4)(G) through (e)(4)(I), (e)(5), and (e)(8); (f); and (g); in addition, they are exempted pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(k)(2) of the Privacy Act of 1974] from Privacy Act subsections (c)(3); (d); (e)(1), (e)(4)(G) through (e)(4)(I); and (f).

(2) These records contained in the Police and Security Records—VA
(103VA076B) are exempted for the following reasons:

(i) The application of Privacy Act subsection (c)(3) would alert subjects to the existence of the investigation and reveal that they are subjects of that investigation. Providing subjects with information concerning the nature of the investigation could result in alteration or destruction of evidence which is obtained from third parties, improper influencing of witnesses, and other activities that could impede or compromise the investigation.

(ii) The application of Privacy Act subsections (c)(4); (d); (e)(4)(G) and (e)(4)(H); (f); and (g) could interfere with investigative and enforcement proceedings, threaten the safety of individuals who have cooperated with authorities, constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy of others, disclose the identity of confidential sources, reveal confidential information supplied by these sources, and disclose investigative techniques and procedures.

(iii) The application of Privacy Act subsection (e)(4)(I) could disclose investigative techniques and procedures and cause sources to refrain from giving such information because of fear of retribution, or fear of breach of promises of anonymity and confidentiality. This could compromise the ability to conduct investigations and to identify, detect and apprehend violators. Even though the agency has claimed an exemption from this particular requirement, it still plans to generally identify the categories of records and the sources of these records in this system. However, for the reason stated in paragraph (d)(2)(ii) of this section, this exemption is still being cited in the event an individual wants to know a specific source of information.

(iv) These records contained in the Police and Security Records—VA (103VA076B) are exempt from Privacy Act subsection (e)(3) because it is not possible to detect the relevance or necessity of specific information in the early stages of a criminal or other investigation. Relevance and necessity are questions of judgment and timing. What appears relevant and necessary may ultimately be determined to be unnecessary. It is only after the information is evaluated that the relevance and necessity of such information can be established. In any investigation, the Office of Security and Law Enforcement may obtain information concerning violations of laws other than those within the scope of its jurisdiction. In the interest of effective law enforcement, the Office of Security and Law Enforcement should retain this information as it may aid in establishing patterns of criminal activity and provide leads for those law enforcement agencies charged with enforcing other segments of civil or criminal law.

(v) The application of Privacy Act subsection (e)(2) would impair investigations of illegal acts, violations of the rules of conduct, merit system and any other misconduct for the following reasons:

(A) In order to successfully verify a complaint, most information about a complainant or an individual under investigation must be obtained from third parties such as witnesses and informers. It is not feasible to rely upon the subject of the investigation as a source for information regarding his/her activities because of the subject’s rights against self-incrimination and because of the inherent unreliability of the suspect’s statements. Similarly, it is not always feasible to rely upon the complainant as a source of information regarding his/her involvement in an investigation.

(B) The subject of an investigation will be alerted to the existence of an investigation if an attempt is made to obtain information from the subject. This would afford the individual the opportunity to conceal any criminal activities to avoid apprehension.

(vi) The reasons for exempting these records in the Police and Security Records—VA (103VA076B) from Privacy Act subsection (e)(3) are as follows:

(A) The disclosure to the subject of the purposes of the investigation would provide the subject with substantial information relating to the nature of the investigation and could impede or compromise the investigation.

(B) Informing the complainant or the subject of the information required by this provision could seriously interfere with undercover activities, jeopardize the identities of undercover agents and
impair their safety, and impair the successful conclusion of the investigation.
(C) Individuals may be contacted during preliminary information gathering in investigations before any individual is identified as the subject of an investigation. Informing the individual of the matters required by this provision would hinder or adversely affect any present or subsequent investigations.
(vii) Since the Privacy Act defines “maintain” to include the collection of information, complying with subsection (e)(5) would prevent the collection of any data not shown to be accurate, relevant, timely, and complete at the moment of its collection. In gathering information during the course of an investigation, it is not always possible to make this determination prior to collecting the information. Facts are first gathered and then placed into a logical order which objectively proves or disproves criminal behavior on the part of the suspect. Material that may seem unrelated, irrelevant, incomplete, untimely, etc., may take on added meaning as an investigation progresses. The restrictions in this provision could interfere with the preparation of a complete investigative report.
(viii) The notice requirement of Privacy Act subsection (e)(8) could prematurely reveal an ongoing criminal investigation to the subject of the investigation.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552a (j) and (k); 38 U.S.C. 501)

§§ 1.583–1.584 [Reserved]

INVENTIONS BY EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS


EXPANDED REMOTE ACCESS TO COMPUTERIZED VETERANS CLAIMS RECORDS BY ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVES

§ 1.600 Purpose.

(a) Sections 1.600 through 1.603 establish policy, assign responsibilities and prescribe procedures with respect to:
(1) When, and under what circumstances, VA will grant authorized claimants’ representatives read-only access to the automated Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) claims records of those claimants whom they represent;
(2) The exercise of authorized access by claimants’ representatives; and
(3) The bases and procedures for disqualification of a representative for violating any of the requirements for access.

(b) VBA will grant access to its automated claimants’ claims records from locations outside Regional Offices under the following conditions. Access will be provided:
(1) Only to individuals and organizations granted access to automated claimants’ records under §§1.600 through 1.603;
(2) Only to the claims records of VA claimants whom the organization or individual represents as reflected in the claims file;
(3) Solely for the purpose of the representative assisting the individual claimant whose records are accessed in a claim for benefits administered by VA; and
(4) On a read-only basis. Individuals authorized access to VBA automated claims records under §§1.600 through 1.603 will not be permitted to modify the data.

(c)(1) Access will be authorized only to the inquiry commands of the Benefits Delivery Network which provide access to the following categories of data:
(i) Beneficiary identification data such as name, social security number, sex, date of birth, service number and related service data; and
(ii) Claims history and processing data such as folder location, claim status, claim establishment date, claim processing history, award data, rating data, including service-connected medical conditions, income data, dependency data, deduction data, payment data, educational facility and program data (except chapter 32 benefits), and education program contribution and delimiting data (except chapter 32 benefits).
§ 1.601 Qualifications for access.

(a) An applicant for read-only access to VBA automated claims records from a location other than a VA Regional Office must be:

(1) An organization, representative, attorney or agent approved or accredited by VA under §§14.626 through 14.635; or

(2) An attorney of record for a claimant in proceedings before the Court of Veterans Appeals or subsequent proceedings who requests access to the claimant’s automated claims records as part of the representation of the claimant.

(b) The hardware, modem and software utilized to obtain access, as well as their location, must be approved in advance by VBA.

(c) Each individual and organization approved for access must sign and return a notice provided by the Regional Office Director (or the Regional Office Director’s designee) of the Regional Office of jurisdiction for the claim. The notice will specify the applicable operational and security requirements for access and an acknowledgment that the breach of any of these requirements is grounds for disqualification from access.


§ 1.602 Utilization of access.

(a) Once an individual or organization has been issued the necessary passwords to obtain read-only access to the automated claims records of individuals represented, access will be exercised in accordance with the following requirements:

(1) The individual or organization will obtain access only from equipment and software approved in advance by the Regional Office from the location where the individual or organization primarily conducts its representation activities which also has been approved in advance;

(2) The individual will use only his or her assigned password to obtain access;

(3) The individual will not reveal his or her password to anyone else, or allow anyone else to use his or her password;

(4) The individual will access only the VBA automated claims records of VA claimants who are represented by the person obtaining access or by the organization employing the person obtaining access;

(5) The individual will access a claimant’s automated claims record solely for the purpose of representing that claimant in a claim for benefits administered by VA;

(6) Upon receipt of the password, the individual will destroy the hard copy; no written or printed record containing the password will be retained; and

(7) The individual and organization will comply with all security requirements VBA deems necessary to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the data and VBA’s automated computer systems.

(b) An organization granted access shall ensure that all employees provided access in accordance with these regulations will receive regular, adequate training on proper security, including the items listed in §1.603(a). Where an individual such as an attorney or registered agent is granted access, he or she will regularly review the security requirements for the system as set forth in these regulations and in
any additional materials provided by VBA.

(c) VBA may, at any time without notice:

(1) Inspect the computer hardware and software utilized to obtain access and their location;

(2) Review the security practices and training of any individual or organization granted access under these regulations; and

(3) Monitor an individual’s or organization’s access activities. By applying for, and exercising, the access privileges under §§1.600 through 1.603, the applicant expressly consents to VBA monitoring the access activities of the applicant at any time.


§ 1.603 Disqualification.

(a) The Regional Office Director or the Regional Office Director’s designee may revoke an individual’s or an organization’s access privileges to a particular claimant’s records because the individual or organization no longer represents the claimant, and, therefore, the beneficiary’s consent is no longer in effect. The individual or organization is no longer entitled to access as a matter of law under the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 7332. Under these circumstances, the individual or organization is not entitled to any hearing or to present any evidence in opposition to the revocation.

(b) The Regional Office Director or the Regional Office Director’s designee may revoke an individual’s or an organization’s access privileges either to an individual claimant’s records or to all claimants’ records in the VBA automated claims benefits systems if the individual or organization:

(1) Violates any of the provisions of §§1.600 through 1.603;

(2) Accesses or attempts to access data for a purpose other than representation of an individual veteran;

(3) Accesses or attempts to access data other than the data specified in these regulations;

(4) Accesses or attempts to access data on a VA beneficiary who is not represented either by the individual who obtains access or by the organization employing the individual who obtains access;

(5) Utilizes unapproved computer hardware or software to obtain or attempt to obtain access to VBA computer systems;

(6) Modifies or attempts to modify data in the VBA computer systems.

(c) If VBA is considering revoking an individual’s access under §1.603(b), and that individual works for an organization, the Regional Office of jurisdiction will notify the organization of the pendency of the action.

(d) After an individual’s access privileges are revoked, if the conduct which resulted in revocation was such that it merits reporting to an appropriate governmental licensing organization such as a State bar, the VBA Regional Office of jurisdiction will immediately inform the licensing organization in writing of the fact that the individual’s access privileges were revoked and the reasons why.

(e) The VBA Regional Office of jurisdiction may temporarily suspend access privileges prior to any determination on the merits of the proposed revocation where the Regional Office Director or the Director’s designee determines that such immediate suspension is necessary in order to protect the integrity of the system or confidentiality of the data in the system from a reasonably foreseeable compromise. However, in such case, the Regional Office shall offer the individual or organization an opportunity to respond to the charges immediately after the temporary suspension.


INVENTIONS BY EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS


§ 1.650 Purpose.

The purpose of these regulations is to prescribe the procedure to be followed in determining and protecting the respective rights of the United States
§ 1.651 Definitions.

The terms as used in the regulations concerning inventions by employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs are defined as follows:

(a) The term invention includes any art, machine, manufacture, design, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, or any variety of plant, which is or may be patentable under the patent laws of the United States.

(b) The term employee or Government employee means any officer or employee, civilian or military, of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Part-time, without compensation (WOC) employees and part-time consultants are included.

(c) The term Secretary of Commerce means the Under Secretary of Commerce for Technology.

§ 1.654 Patenting of inventions.

Any invention owned by the Government under the criteria as set forth in 37 CFR 501.6 should be protected by an application for a domestic patent and other necessary documents executed by the employee inventor prepared by or through the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel or Assistant General Counsel for Professional Staff Group IV, in accordance with 37 CFR part 500.

§ 1.655 Government license in invention of employee.

If an invention is made by an employee and it is determined that the employee inventor is entitled to full ownership under 37 CFR 501.6, subject to a nonexclusive, irrevocable, royalty-free license in the Government with power to grant sublicenses for all Governmental purposes, it shall be the duty of the employee inventor to notify the Office of General Counsel of the status of the patent application, including the patent application number, so that the Department may protect the interests reserved to the Government under 37 CFR 501.6.
§ 1.656 Information to be submitted by inventor.

(a) In the case of an invention or believed invention, the inventor will prepare a statement for submission to his or her immediate superior. It will be submitted regardless of where the ownership is believed to exist. The statement will consist of two parts:

(1) One part of the statement will be a disclosure of the invention sufficient to permit the preparation of a patent applicant. It shall consist of a description, including where applicable, of the parts or components of the invention as shown on the drawings or blueprints, accompanied further by a description of the construction and operation of the invention. Photographs of the invention may be included. The inventor should state pertinent prior art known to him or her, and set forth in detail as clearly as possible the respects which his or her invention differs.

(2) The other part of the statement will set forth the circumstances attending the making of the invention. It will include the full name and address of the inventor; the grade and title of his or her position; whether full time or part time; his or her duties at the time the invention was made; the facts pertinent to a determination whether the invention bore a direct relation to or was made in consequence of such official duties; whether there was, and if so, the terms of any special agreement or understanding with respect to use or manufacture of his or her invention; date of the invention; when and where it was conceived, constructed and tested; whether it was made entirely during working hours; whether, and to what extent there was a contribution by the Government of any of the following: Facilities; equipment; materials or supplies; funds; information; time or services of other Government employees on duty. When the invention is disclosed through publication, or in consultation with a manufacturer or attorney, simultaneous notification of the publication shall be given to the Office of General Counsel. A copy of the article will accompany the notification.

(b) The inventor’s immediate superior shall promptly review the statement of the employee inventor for completeness and accuracy, and shall certify that the employee’s statement of circumstances attending the invention is or is not correct, giving reasons if pertinent. The file should then be submitted through the facility head (or administration heads or top staff officials in the case of Central Office employees) to the General Counsel together with any comments or recommendations.

[61 FR 29658, June 12, 1996]

§ 1.657 Determination of rights.

The General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel or Assistant General Counsel for Professional Staff Group IV will make a determination of rights subject to review where required by the Secretary of Commerce. The determination will be in accordance with 37 CFR 501.7.


§ 1.658 Right of appeal.

In accordance with 37 CFR 501.8, the employee has a right of appeal to the Secretary of Commerce within 30 days of receipt of the Department’s determination of ownership rights. The decision reached by the Secretary of Commerce will be communicated to the employee.

[61 FR 29658, June 12, 1996]

§ 1.659 Relationship to incentive awards program.

Procedures set out in the regulations concerning inventions by employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs are not affected by the submission or proposed submission of an employee suggestion or idea on an item which may be patentable. Consideration of an item for a determination of ownership rights and also for an incentive award will proceed simultaneously, usually on separate correspondence. An employee suggestion or copies and extracts of the file may be forwarded to the General Counsel by the reviewing or awarding authority, or by the facility head, for an ownership determination where the employee idea or suggestion involves
§ 1.660 Expeditious handling.

No patent may be granted where the invention has been in public use or publicly disclosed for more than one year before filing of a patent application. Hence, submissions involving inventions should be made as promptly as possible in order to avoid delay which might jeopardize title to the invention or impair the rights of the inventor or the Government.

[61 FR 29659, June 12, 1996]

§ 1.661 Information to be kept confidential.

All information pertaining to inventions and pending patent applications is confidential, and employees having access to such information are forbidden to disclose or reveal the same except as required in the performance of their official duties.


§ 1.662 Provisions of regulations made a condition of employment.

The provisions of the regulations concerning inventions by employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be a condition of employment of all employees.


§ 1.663 Licensing of Government-owned inventions.

(a) The licensing of Government-owned inventions under VA control and custody will be conducted pursuant to the regulations on the licensing of Government-owned inventions contained in 37 CFR part 404, and 15 U.S.C. 3710a, as appropriate.

(b) Any person whose application for a license in an invention under VA control and custody has been denied; whose license in such an invention has been modified or terminated, in whole or in part; or who timely filed a written objection in response to a proposal to grant an exclusive or partially exclusive license in an invention under VA control or custody, may, if damaged, appeal any decision or determination concerning the grant, denial, interpretation, modification, or termination of a license to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Such appeal shall be in writing; shall set forth with specificity the basis of the appeal; and shall be postmarked not later than 60 days after the action being appealed. Upon request of the appellant, such appeal may be considered by one to three persons appointed on a case-by-case basis by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Such a request will be granted only if it accompanies the written appeal. Appellant may appear and be represented by counsel before such a panel, which will sit in Washington, DC. If the appeal challenges a decision to grant an exclusive or partially exclusive license in an invention under VA control or custody, the licensee shall be furnished a copy of the appeal, shall be given the opportunity to respond in writing; may appear and be represented by counsel at any hearing requested by appellant, and may request a hearing if appellant has not, under the same terms and conditions, at which the appellant may also appear and be represented by counsel.

[61 FR 29659, June 12, 1996]

§§ 1.664–1.666 [Reserved]

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF FUNDS

SOURCE: 48 FR 30622, July 5, 1983, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1.670 Purpose.

The following regulations establish a system of administrative controls for all appropriations and funds available to the Department of Veterans Affairs to accomplish the following purposes:

(a) Establish an administrative subdivision of controls to restrict obligations and expenditures against each appropriation or fund to the amount of the apportionment or the reapportionment; and

(b) Fix responsibility for the control of appropriations or funds to high level officials who bear the responsibility for
§ 1.671 Definitions.
For the purpose of §§1.670 through 1.673, the following definitions apply:
(a) **Administrative subdivision of funds.** An administrative subdivision of funds is any administrative subdivision of an appropriation or fund which makes funds available in a specified amount for the purpose of controlling apportionments or reapportionments.
(b) **Allotment.** An allotment is an authorization by the Director, Office of Budget and Finance, to department and staff office heads (allottees) to incur obligations within specified amounts, during a specified period, pursuant to an Office of Management and Budget apportionment or reapportionment action. The creation of an obligation in excess of an allotment is a violation of the administrative subdivision of funds.
(c) **Allowance.** An allowance is a subdivision below the allotment level, and is a guideline which may be issued by department or staff office heads (allottees) to facility directors and other officials, showing the expenditure pattern or operating budget they will be expected to follow in light of the program activities contemplated by the overall VA budget or plan of expenditure. The creation of an obligation in excess of an allowance is not a violation of the administrative subdivision of funds.

§ 1.672 Responsibilities.
(a) The issuance of an allotment to the administration and staff office heads (allottees) is required and is the responsibility of the Director, Office of Budget and Finance. The sum of such allotments shall not be in excess of the amount indicated in the apportionment or reapportionment document.
(b) The issuance of an allowance is discretionary with department or staff office heads (allottees), as an allowance is merely a management device which allottees may utilize in carrying out their responsibilities. Allottees are responsible for keeping obligations within the amounts of their allotments, whether allowances are issued or not.

(c) The Director, Office of Budget and Finance, is responsible for requesting apportionments and reapportionments from the Office of Management and Budget. Administration and staff heads shall promptly request that an appropriation or fund be reapportioned if feasible whenever it appears that obligations may exceed the level of the apportionment.

§ 1.673 Responsibility for violations of the administrative subdivision of funds.
(a) In the event an allotment or an apportionment is exceeded except in the circumstances described in paragraph (b) of this section, the following factors will be considered in determining which official, or officials, are responsible for the violation:
1. Knowledge of circumstances which could lead to an allotment or apportionment being exceeded;
2. Whether the official had received explicit instructions to continue or cease incurring obligations;
3. Whether any action was taken in contravention of or with disregard for, instructions to monitor obligations incurred;
4. Whether the official had the authority to curtail obligations by directing a change in the manner of operations of the department or staff office; or
5. Any other facts which tend to fix the responsibility for the obligations which resulted in the allotment or apportionment being exceeded.
(b) In the event that the sum of the allotments made in a particular fiscal year exceeds the amount apportioned by the Office of Management and Budget, and the apportionment is subsequently exceeded because of this action, the official who made the excess allotments will be the official responsible for the violation.

Authority: 31 U.S.C. 1514

USE OF OFFICIAL MAIL IN THE LOCATION AND RECOVERY OF MISSING CHILDREN

SOURCE: 52 FR 10889, Apr. 6, 1987, unless otherwise noted.
§ 1.700 Purpose.

Sections 1.700 through 1.705 of this title provide a Missing Children Official Mail Program in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Authority: 39 U.S.C. 3220(a)(2); 5 U.S.C. 301)

[60 FR 48387, Sept. 19, 1995]

§ 1.701 Contact person for missing children official mail program.


(Authority: 39 U.S.C. 3220(a)(2); 5 U.S.C. 301)

[60 FR 48388, Sept. 19, 1995]

§ 1.702 Policy.

(a) The Department of Veterans Affairs will supplement and expand the national effort to assist in the location and recovery of missing children by maximizing the economical use of missing children information in domestic official mail and publications directed to members of the public and Department of Veterans Affairs employees.

(b) The Department of Veterans Affairs will insert pictures and biographical information related to missing children in a variety of official mail originating at the Department of Veterans Affairs automation centers. In addition, pictures and biographical information are printed in self-mailers and other Department of Veterans Affairs publications (newsletters, bulletins, etc.).

(c) The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (National Center) is the sole source from which the Department of Veterans Affairs will acquire the camera-ready and other photographic and biographical materials to be disseminated for use by Department of Veterans Affairs organizational units. The information is ordered and disseminated by Information Management Service.

(d) The Department of Veterans Affairs will remove all printed inserts and other materials from circulation or other use within a three-month period from the date the National Center notifies the Department of Veterans Affairs that a child whose picture and biographical information have been made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs has been recovered or that permission of the parent(s) or guardian to use the child’s photograph and biographical information has been withdrawn. The National Center is responsible for immediately notifying the Department of Veterans Affairs contact person, in writing, of the need to withdraw from circulation official mail and other materials related to a particular child. Photographs which were reasonably current as of the time of the child’s disappearance shall be the only acceptable form of visual medium or pictorial likeness used in official mail.

(e) The Department of Veterans Affairs will give priority to official mail that is addressed to:

(1) Members of the public that will be received in the United States, its territories and possessions; and

(2) Inter- and intra-agency publications and other media that will also be widely disseminated to Department of Veterans Affairs employees.

(f) The Department of Veterans Affairs will avoid repetitive mailings of material to the same individuals.

(g) All Department of Veterans Affairs employee suggestions and/or recommendations for additional cost-effective opportunities to use photographs and biographical data on missing children will be provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs contact person.

(h) These shall be the sole regulations for the Department of Veterans Affairs and its component organizational units.


[52 FR 10889, Apr. 6, 1987, as amended at 60 FR 48388, Sept. 19, 1995]

§ 1.703 Percentage estimate.

It is the Department of Veterans Affairs objective that 20 percent of its first class official mail addressed to the
§ 1.704 [Reserved]

§ 1.705 Restrictions on use of missing children information.

Missing children pictures and biographical data shall not be:

(a) Printed on official envelopes and other materials ordered and stocked in quantities that represent more than a 90-day supply.

(b) Printed on blank pages or covers of publications that may be included in the Superintendent of Documents Sales Program or be distributed to depository libraries.

(c) Inserted in any envelope or publication the contents of which may be construed to be inappropriate for association with the missing children program.

(d) Inserted in any envelope where the insertion would increase the postage cost for the item being mailed.

(e) Placed on letter-size envelopes on the official indicia, the area designated for optical character readers (OCRs), bar code read area, and return address area in accordance with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention guidelines and U.S. Postal Service standards.


[52 FR 10889, Apr. 6, 1987, as amended at 60 FR 48388, Sept. 19, 1995]

HOMELESS CLAIMANTS

§ 1.710 Homeless claimants: Delivery of benefit payments and correspondence.

(a) All correspondence and all checks for benefits payable to claimants under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be directed to the address specified by the claimant. The Department of Veterans Affairs will honor for this purpose any address of the claimant in care of another person or organization or in care of general delivery at a United States post office. In no event will a claim or payment of benefits be denied because the claimant provides no mailing address.

(b) To ensure prompt delivery of benefit payments and correspondence, claimants who seek personal assistance from Veterans Benefits Counselors when filing their claims shall be counseled as to the importance of providing his or her current mailing address and, if no address is provided, the procedures for delivery described in paragraph (d) of this section.

(c) The Department of Veterans Affairs shall prepare and distribute to organizations specially serving the needs of veterans and the homeless, including but not limited to shelters, kitchens and private outreach facilities, information encouraging such organizations to counsel individuals on the importance of providing mailing addresses to the Department of Veterans Affairs and advising them of this regulation.

(d) If a claimant fails or refuses to provide a current mailing address to the Department of Veterans Affairs, all correspondence and any checks for benefits to which the claimant is entitled will be delivered to the Agent Cashier of the regional office which adjudicated or is adjudicating the claim in the case of compensation, pension or survivors' benefits, to the Agent Cashier of the Department of Veterans Affairs facility closest to the educational institution or training establishment attended by a claimant in the case of education benefits, or to the Agent Cashier of any other Department of Veterans Affairs facility deemed by the Agency to be appropriate under the circumstances of the particular case. The claimant, within 30 days after issuance, may obtain delivery of any check or correspondence held by an Agent Cashier upon presentation of proper identification. Checks unclaimed after 30 days will be returned to the Department of the Treasury and the correspondence to the regional office or facility of jurisdiction. Thereafter, the claimant must request the reissuance of any
§§ 1.780–1.783
such check or item of correspondence by written notice to the Department of Veterans Affairs.
(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103; 5120)
[53 FR 22654, June 17, 1988]
§§ 1.780–1.783 [Reserved]
PART-TIME CAREER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

SOURCE: 44 FR 55172, Sept. 25, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1.891 Purpose of program.
Many individuals in society possess great productive potential which goes unrealized because they cannot meet the requirements of a standard workweek. Permanent part-time employment also provides benefits to other individuals in a variety of ways, such as providing older individuals with a gradual transition into retirement, providing employment opportunities to handicapped individuals or others who requires a reduced workweek, providing parents opportunities to balance family responsibilities with the need for additional income, and assisting students who must finance their own education or vocational training. In view of this, the Department of Veterans Affairs will operate a part-time career employment program, consistent with the needs of its beneficiaries and its responsibilities.
(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 3401 note)

§ 1.892 Review of positions.
Positions becoming vacant, unless excepted as provided by §1.897, will be reviewed to determine the feasibility of converting them to part-time. Among the criteria which may be used when conducting this review are:
(a) Mission requirements.
(b) Workload.
(c) Employment ceilings and budgetary considerations.
(d) Availability of qualified applicants willing to work part time.
(e) Other criteria based on local needs and circumstances.
(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 3402)

§ 1.893 Establishing and converting part-time positions.
Position management and other internal reviews may indicate that positions may be either converted from full-time or initially established as part-time positions. Criteria listed in §1.892 may be used during these reviews. If a decision is made to convert to or to establish a part-time position, regular position management and classification procedures will be followed.
(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 3402)

§ 1.894 Annual goals and timetables.
An departmentwide plan for promoting part-time employment opportunities will be developed annually. This plan will establish annual goals and set interim and final deadlines for achieving these goals. This plan will be applicable throughout the agency, but may be supplemented by field facilities.
(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 3402)

§ 1.895 Review and evaluation.
The part-time career employment program will be reviewed through regular employment reports to determine levels of part-time employment. This program will also be designated an item of special interest to be reviewed during personnel management reviews.
(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 3402)
[61 FR 38571, July 25, 1996]

§ 1.896 Publicizing vacancies.
When applicants from outside the Federal service are desired, part-time vacancies may be publicized through various recruiting means, such as:
(a) Federal Job Information Centers.
(b) State Employment offices.
(c) VA Recruiting Bulletins.
(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 3402)

§ 1.897 Exceptions.
The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or designees, may except positions from inclusion in this program as necessary to carry out the mission of the Department.
(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 3402)
Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 1.900 Prescription of standards.

(a) The standards contained in §§ 1.900 through 1.953 are issued pursuant to the Federal Claims Collection Standards, issued by the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) in parts 900 through 904 of 31 CFR, as well as other debt collection authority issued by Treasury in part 285 of 31 CFR, and apply to the collection, compromise, termination, and suspension of debts owed to VA, and the referral of such debts to Treasury (or other Federal agencies designated by Treasury) for offset and collection action and to DOJ for litigation, unless otherwise stated in this part or in other statutory or regulatory authority, or by contract.

(b) Standards and policies regarding the classification of debt for accounting purposes (for example, write-off of uncollectible debt) are contained in the Office of Management and Budget's Circular A–129 (Revised), “Policies for Federal Credit Programs and Non-Tax Receivables.”


§ 1.901 No private rights created.

Sections 1.900 through 1.953 do not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any other person, nor shall the failure of VA to comply with any of the provisions of §§ 1.900 through 1.953 be available to any debtor as a defense.


§ 1.902 Antitrust, fraud, and tax and interagency claims.

(a) The standards in §§ 1.900 through 1.953 relating to compromise, suspension, and termination of collection activity do not apply to any debt based in whole or in part on conduct in violation of the antitrust laws or to any debt involving fraud, the presentation of a false claim, or misrepresentation on the part of the debtor or any party having an interest in the claim. Only the Department of Justice (DOJ) has the authority to compromise, suspend, or terminate collection activity on such claims. The standards in §§ 1.900 through 1.953 relating to the administrative collection of claims do apply, but only to the extent authorized by DOJ in a particular case. Upon identification of a claim based in whole or in part on conduct in violation of the antitrust laws or any claim involving fraud, the presentation of a false claim, or misrepresentation on the part of the debtor or any party having an interest in the claim, VA shall promptly refer the case to DOJ. At its discretion, DOJ may return the claim to VA for further handling in accordance with the standards in §§ 1.900 through 1.953.

(b) Sections 1.900 through 1.953 do not apply to tax debts.

(c) Sections 1.900 through 1.953 do not apply to claims between Federal agencies.

(d) Federal agencies should attempt to resolve interagency claims by negotiation in accordance with Executive Order 12146 (3 CFR, 1980 Comp., pp. 409–412).


§ 1.903 Settlement, waiver, or compromise under other statutory or regulatory authority.

Nothing in §§ 1.900 through 1.953 precludes VA settlement, waiver, compromise, or other disposition of any claim under statutes and implementing regulations other than subchapter II of chapter 37 of Title 31 of the United States Code (Claims of the United States Government) and the standards in Title 31 CFR parts 900 through 904.

See, for example, the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et
§ 1.904 Form of payment.
Claims may be paid in the form of money or, when a contractual basis exists, VA may demand the return of specific property or the performance of specific services.
[69 FR 62192, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.905 Subdivision of claims not authorized.
Debts may not be subdivided to avoid the monetary ceiling established by 31 U.S.C. 3711(a)(2). A debtor’s liability arising from a particular transaction or contract shall be considered as a single debt in determining whether the debt is one of less than $100,000 (excluding interest, penalties, and administrative costs) or such higher amount as the Attorney General shall from time to time prescribe for purposes of compromise, suspension, or termination of collection activity.
[69 FR 62192, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.906 Required administrative proceedings.
(a) In applying §§ 1.900 through 1.953, VA is not required to omit, foreclose, or duplicate administrative proceedings required by contract or other laws or regulations.
(b) Nothing contained in §§ 1.900 through 1.953 is intended to foreclose the right of any debtor to an administrative proceeding, including appeals, waivers, and hearings provided by statute, contract, or VA regulation (see 38 U.S.C. 3720(a)(4) and 5302 and 42 U.S.C. 2651–2653).
[69 FR 62192, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.907 Definitions.
(a) The definitions and construction found in the Federal Claims Collection Standards in 31 CFR 900.2(a) through (d), and the definitions in the provisions on administrative wage garnishment in 31 CFR 285.11(c) shall apply to §§ 1.900 through 1.953, except as otherwise stated.
(b) As used in §§ 1.900 through 1.953, referral for litigation means referral to the Department of Justice for appropriate legal actions, except in those specified instances where a case is referred to a VA Regional Counsel for legal action.
(c) As used in §§ 1.900 through 1.953, VA benefit program means medical care, home loan, and benefits payment programs administered by VA under Title 38 of the United States Code, except as otherwise stated.
(d) As used in §§ 1.900 through 1.953, Treasury means the United States Department of the Treasury.
[69 FR 62192, Oct. 25, 2004]
(3) Has been referred to a private collection contractor for a period of time acceptable to the Secretary of the Treasury;

(4) Is at a debt collection center for a period of time acceptable to the Secretary of the Treasury;

(5) Will be collected under internal offset procedures within 3 years after the debt first became delinquent; or

(6) Is exempt from this requirement based on a determination by the Secretary of the Treasury that exemption for a certain class of debt is in the best interest of the United States. VA may request that the Secretary of the Treasury exempt specific classes of debts.

(c) In accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3716(c)(6) and the procedures set forth in 31 CFR part 285, VA shall notify Treasury of all past due, legally enforceable non-tax debt that is over 180 days delinquent for purposes of administrative offset, including tax refund offset and federal salary offset. (Procedures for referral to Treasury for tax refund offset are found at 31 CFR 285.2 and procedures for referral to Treasury for federal salary offset are found at 38 CFR 1.995 and 31 CFR 285.7.)


(69 FR 62192, Oct. 25, 2004)

§1.911 Collection of debts owed by reason of participation in a benefits program.

(a) Scope. This section applies to the collection of debts resulting from an individual’s participation in a VA benefit or home loan program. It does not apply to VA’s other debt collection activities. Standards for the demand for payment of all other debts owed to VA are set forth in §1.911a. School liability debts are governed by §21.4009 of this title.

(b) Written demands. When VA has determined that a debt exists by reason of an administrative decision or by operation of law, VA shall promptly demand, in writing, payment of the debt. VA shall notify the debtor of his or her rights and remedies and the consequences of failure to cooperate with collection efforts. Generally, one demand letter is sufficient, but subsequent demand letters may be issued as needed.

(c) Rights and remedies. Subject to limitations referred to in this paragraph, the debtor has the right to informally dispute the existence or amount of the debt, to request waiver of collection of the debt, to a hearing on the waiver request, and to appeal the Department of Veterans Affairs decision underlying the debt. These rights can be exercised separately or simultaneously. Except as provided in §1.912a (collection by offset), the exercise of any of these rights will not stay any collection proceeding.

(1) Informal dispute. This means that the debtor writes to the Department of Veterans Affairs and questions whether he or she owes the debt or whether the amount is accurate. The Department of Veterans Affairs will, as expeditiously as possible, review the accuracy of the debt determination. If the resolution is adverse to the debtor, he or she may also request waiver of collection as indicated in paragraphs (c)(2) and (3) of this section.

(2) Request for waiver; hearing on request. The debtor has the right to request waiver of collection, in accordance with §1.963 or §1.964, and the right to a hearing on the request. Requests for waivers must be filed in writing. A waiver request must be filed within the time limit set forth in 38 U.S.C. 5302. If waiver is granted, in whole or in part, the debtor has a right to refund of amounts already collected up to the amount waived.

(3) Appeal. In accordance with parts 19 and 20 of this title, the debtor may appeal the decision underlying the debt.

(d) Notification. The Department of Veterans Affairs shall notify the debtor in writing of the following:

(1) The exact amount of the debt;

(2) The specific reasons for the debt, in simple and concise language;

(3) The rights and remedies described in paragraph (c) of this section, including a brief explanation of the concept of, and requirements for, waiver;

(4) That collection may be made by offset from current or future VA benefit payments (see §1.912a). In addition, the debtor shall be advised of any policies with respect to the use of credit.
§ 1.911a Collection of non-benefit debts.

(a) This section is written in accordance with 31 CFR 901.2 and applies to the demand for payment of all debts, except those debts arising out of participation in a VA benefit or home loan program. Procedures for the demand for payment of VA benefit or home loan program debts are set forth in §1.911.

(b) Written demand as described in paragraph (c) of this section shall be made promptly upon a debtor of VA in terms that inform the debtor of the consequences of failing to cooperate with VA to resolve the debt. Generally, one demand letter is sufficient, but subsequent letters may be issued. In determining the timing of the demand letter, VA should give due regard to the need to refer debts promptly to the Department of Justice for litigation, in accordance with §§1.950 through 1.953. When necessary to protect VA’s interest (for example, to prevent the running of a statute of limitations), written demand may be preceded by other appropriate actions under 38 CFR 1.900 through 1.953, including immediate referral for litigation.

(c) The written demand letter shall inform the debtor of:

(1) The basis for the indebtedness and any rights the debtor may have to seek review within VA, including the right to request waiver;

(2) The applicable standards for imposing any interest or other late payment charges;

(3) The date by which payment should be made to avoid interest and other late payment charges and enforced collection, which generally should not be more than 30 days from the date that the demand letter is mailed;

(4) The name, address, and phone number of a contact person or office within the agency;

(5) The opportunity to inspect and copy VA records related to the debt; and

(6) The opportunity to make a written agreement to repay the debt.

(d) In addition to the items listed in paragraph (c) of this section, VA should include in the demand letter VA’s willingness to discuss alternative methods of payment and its policies with respect to the use of credit bureaus, debt collection centers, and collection agencies. The letter should also indicate the agency’s remedies to enforce payment of the debt (including assessment of interest, administrative costs and penalties, administrative garnishment, Federal salary offset, tax refund offset, administrative offset, and litigation) and the requirement that any debt delinquent for more than 180 days be transferred to Treasury for collection.

(e) VA should respond promptly to communications from debtors and
§ 1.912 Collection by offset.

(a) Authority and scope. In accordance with the procedures set forth in 31 CFR 901.3, as well as 31 CFR part 285, VA shall collect debts by administrative offset from payments made by VA to a debtor indebted to VA. Also in accordance with 31 CFR 901.3(b), as well as 31 CFR part 285, VA shall refer past due, legally enforceable non-tax debts which are over 180 days delinquent to Treasury for collection by centralized administrative offset (further procedures are set forth in paragraph (g) of this section). This section does not pertain to offset from either VA benefit payments made under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 5314 or from current salary, but does apply to offset from all other VA payments, including an employee’s final salary check and lump-sum leave payment. Procedures for offset from benefit payments are found in §1.912a. Procedures for offset from current Federal salary are found in §§1.980 through 1.995. NOTE: VA cannot offset, or refer for the purpose of offset, any VA home loan program debt described in 38 U.S.C. 3726 unless the requirements set forth in that section have been met.

(b) Notification. Prior to initiation of administrative offset, if not provided in the initial notice of indebtedness, VA is required to provide the debtor with written notice of:

1. The nature and amount of the debt;
2. VA’s intention to pursue collection by offset procedures from the specified VA payment, the date of commencement of offset, and the exact amount to be offset;
3. The opportunity to inspect and copy VA records pertaining to the debt;
4. The right to contest either the existence or amount of the debt or the proposed offset schedule, or if applicable, to request a waiver of collection of the debt, or to request a hearing on any of these matters;
5. That commencement of offset will begin, unless the debtor makes a written request for the administrative relief discussed in paragraph (b)(4) of this section within 30 days of the date of this notice; and

should advise debtors who dispute debts, or request waiver, to furnish available evidence to support their contentions.

(f) Prior to referring a debt for litigation, VA should advise each debtor determined to be liable for the debt that, unless the debt can be collected administratively, litigation may be initiated. This notification may be given as part of a demand letter under paragraph (c) of this section or in a separate letter.

(g) When VA learns that a bankruptcy petition has been filed with respect to a debtor, before proceeding with further collection action, VA should immediately seek legal advice from either VA’s General Counsel or Regional Counsel concerning the impact of the Bankruptcy Code on any pending or contemplated collection activities. Unless VA determines that the automatic stay imposed at the time of filing pursuant to 11 U.S.C. 362 has been lifted or is no longer in effect, in most cases collection activity against the debtor should stop immediately.

(1) After VA seeks legal advice, a proof of claim should be filed in most cases with the bankruptcy court or the Trustee. VA should refer to the provisions of 11 U.S.C. 106 relating to the consequences on sovereign immunity of filing a proof of claim.

(2) If VA is a secured creditor, it may seek relief from the automatic stay regarding its security, subject to the provisions and requirements of 11 U.S.C. 362.

(3) Offset is prohibited in most cases by the automatic stay. However, VA should seek legal advice from VA’s General Counsel or Regional Counsel to determine whether payments to the debtor and payments of other agencies available for offset may be frozen by VA until relief from the automatic stay can be obtained from the bankruptcy court. VA also should seek legal advice from VA’s General Counsel or Regional Counsel to determine whether recoupment is available.

[69 FR 62193, Oct. 25, 2004]
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(6) The opportunity to enter into a written agreement with VA to repay the debt in lieu of offset.

(c) Deferral of offset. (1) If the debtor, within 30 days of the date of the notification required by paragraph (b) of this section, disputes in writing the existence or amount of the debt or the amount of the scheduled offset, offset shall not commence until the dispute is reviewed and a decision is rendered by VA adverse to the debtor.

(2) If the debtor, within 30 days of the date of the required notification by VA, requests in writing the waiver of collection of the debt in accordance with § 1.963, § 1.963a, or § 1.964, offset shall not commence until VA has made an initial decision to deny the waiver request.

(3) If the debtor, within 30 days of the required notification by VA, requests in writing a hearing on the issues found in paragraphs (c)(1) and (2) of this section, offset shall not commence until a decision is rendered by VA on the issue which is the basis of the hearing.

(d) Exceptions. (1) Offset may commence prior to either resolution of a dispute or decision on a waiver request as discussed in paragraph (c) of this section, if collection of the debt would be jeopardized by deferral of offset (for example, if VA first learns of the debt when there is insufficient time before a final payment would be made to the debtor to allow for prior notice and opportunity for review or waiver consideration). In such a case, notification pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section shall be made at the time offset begins or as soon thereafter as possible. VA shall promptly refund any money that has been collected that is ultimately found not to have been owed to the Government.

(2) If the United States has obtained a judgment against the debtor, offset may commence without the notification required by paragraph (b) of this section. However, a waiver request filed in accordance with the time limits and other requirements of § 1.963, § 1.963a, or § 1.964 will be considered, even if filed after a judgment has been obtained against the debtor. If waiver is granted, in whole or in part, refund of amounts already collected will be made in accordance with § 1.967.

(3) The procedures set forth in paragraph (b) of this section may be omitted when the debt arises under a contract that provides for notice and other procedural protections.

(4) Offset may commence without the notification required by paragraph (b) of this section when the offset is in the nature of a recoupment. As defined in 31 CFR 900.2(d), recoupment is a special method for adjusting debts arising under the same transaction or occurrence.

(e) Hearing. (1) After a debtor requests a hearing, VA shall notify the debtor of the form of the hearing to be provided; i.e., whether the hearing will either be oral or paper. If an oral hearing is determined to be proper by the hearing official, the notice shall set forth the date, time, and location of the hearing. If the hearing is to be a paper review, the debtor shall be notified that he or she should submit his or her position and arguments in writing to the hearing official by a specified date, after which the record shall be closed. This date shall give the debtor reasonable time to submit this information.

(2) Unless otherwise required by law, an oral hearing under this paragraph is not required to be a formal evidentiary type of hearing.

(3) A debtor who requests a hearing shall be provided an oral hearing if VA determines that the matter cannot be resolved by review of documentary evidence. Whenever an issue of credibility or veracity is involved, an oral hearing will always be provided the debtor. For example, the credibility or veracity of a debtor is always an issue whenever the debtor requests a waiver of collection of the debt. Thus, a hearing held in conjunction with a waiver request will always be an oral hearing. If a determination is made to provide an oral hearing, the hearing official may offer the debtor the opportunity for a hearing by telephone conference call. If this offer is rejected or if the hearing official declines to offer a telephone conference call, the debtor shall be provided an oral hearing permitting the personal appearance of the debtor, his
or her personal representative, and witnesses. Witnesses shall testify under oath or affirmation.

(4) In all other cases where a debtor requests a hearing, a paper hearing shall be provided. The debtor shall be provided an opportunity to submit material for the record. A paper hearing shall consist of a review of the written evidence of record by the designated hearing official.

(f) Statutes of limitation; multiple debts. When collecting multiple debts by administrative offset, VA shall apply the recovered amounts to those debts in accordance with the best interests of the United States, as determined by the facts and circumstances of the particular case, paying special attention to applicable statutes of limitation. In accordance with 31 CFR 901.3(a)(4), VA may not initiate offset to collect a debt more than 10 years after VA’s right to collect the debt first accrued (with certain exceptions as specified in 31 CFR 901.3(a)(4)).

(g) Centralized administrative offset. (1) When VA refers delinquent debts to Treasury for centralized administrative offset in accordance with 31 CFR part 285, VA must certify that:

(i) The debts are past due and legally enforceable; and

(ii) VA has complied with all due process requirements under 31 U.S.C. 3716(a) and paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.

(2) Payments that are prohibited by law from being offset are exempt from centralized administrative offset.

(h) Computer Matching and Privacy Act waiver. In accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3716(f), the Secretary of the Treasury may waive the provisions of the Computer Matching and Privacy Protection Act of 1988 concerning matching agreements and post-match notification and verification (5 U.S.C. 552a(o) and (p)) for centralized administrative offset upon receipt of a certification from a creditor agency that the due process requirements enumerated in 31 U.S.C. 3716(a) and paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section have been met. The certification of a debt in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section will satisfy this requirement. If such a waiver is granted, only the Data Integrity Board of the Department of the Treasury is required to oversee any matching activities, in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3716(g).

(i) Requests by creditor agencies for offset. Unless the offset would not be in VA’s best interest, or would otherwise be contrary to law, VA will comply with requests by creditor agencies to offset VA payments (except for current salary or benefit payments) made to a person indebted to the creditor agency. However, before VA may initiate offset, the creditor agency must certify in writing to VA that the debtor has been provided:

(1) Written notice of the type and amount of the debt and the intent of the creditor agency to use administrative offset to collect the debt;

(2) The opportunity to inspect and copy agency records related to the debt;

(3) The opportunity for review within the agency of the determination of the indebtedness; and

(4) The opportunity to make a written agreement to repay the debt.


§1.912a Collection by offset—from VA benefit payments.

(a) Authority and scope. VA shall collect debts governed by §1.911 of this part by offset against any current or future VA benefit payments to the debtor. Unless paragraphs (c) or (d) of this section apply, offset shall commence promptly after notification to the debtor as provided in paragraph (b) of this section. Certain military service debts shall be collected by offset against current or future compensation or pension benefit payments to the debtor under authority of 38 U.S.C. 5301(c), as provided in paragraph (e) of this section.

(b) Notification. Unless paragraph (d) of this section applies, offset shall not commence until the debtor has been notified in writing of the matters described in §1.911(c) and (d) and paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) Deferral of offset. (1) If the debtor, within thirty days of the date of the notification required by paragraph (b) of this section, disputes, in writing, the
§ 1.913  Liquidation of collateral.

(a) VA should liquidate security or collateral through the exercise of a power of sale in the security instrument or a nonjudicial foreclosure, and apply the proceeds to the applicable debt, if the debtor fails to pay the debt within 180 days after demand and if such action is in the best interest of the United States. Collection from other sources, including liquidation of security or collateral, is not a prerequisite to requiring payment by a surety, insurer, or guarantor, unless such action is expressly required by statute or contract.

(b) When VA learns that a bankruptcy petition has been filed with respect to a debtor, VA should seek legal advice from VA’s General Counsel or Regional Counsel concerning the impact of the Bankruptcy Code, including, but not limited to, 11 U.S.C. 362, to determine the applicability of the automatic stay and the procedures for obtaining relief from such stay prior to proceeding under paragraph (a) of this section.


[69 FR 62195, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.914  Collection in installments.

(a) Whenever feasible, VA shall collect the total amount of a debt in one
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lump sum. If a debtor is financially unable to pay a debt in one lump sum, VA may accept payment in regular installments. VA should obtain financial statements from debtors who represent that they are unable to pay in one lump sum and independently verify such representations whenever possible. If VA agrees to accept payments in regular installments, VA should obtain a legally enforceable written agreement from the debtor that specifies all of the terms of the arrangement and contains a provision accelerating the debt in the event of default.

(b) The size and frequency of installment payments should bear a reasonable relation to the size of the debt and the debtor’s ability to pay. If possible, the installment payments should be sufficient in size and frequency to liquidate the debt in 3 years or less.

(c) Security for deferred payments should be obtained in appropriate cases. However, VA may accept installment payments if the debtor refuses to execute a written agreement or to give security.


§ 1.915 Interest, administrative costs, and penalties.

(a) Except as otherwise provided by statute, contract, or other regulation to the contrary, and subject to 38 U.S.C. 3485(e) and 5302, VA shall assess:

1) Interest on all indebtedness to the United States arising out of participation in a VA benefit, medical care, or home loan program under authority of Title 38, U.S. Code.

2) Interest and administrative costs of collection on such debts described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section where repayment has become delinquent (as defined in 31 CFR 900.2(b)), and

3) Interest, administrative costs, and penalties in accordance with 31 CFR 901.9 on all debts other than those described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(b) Every party entering into an agreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs for repayment of indebtedness in installments shall be advised of the interest charges to be added to the debt. All debtors being provided notice of indebtedness, including those entering into repayment agreements, shall be advised that upon the debt becoming delinquent, or in the case of repayment of already delinquent debts, interest and the administrative costs of collection will be added to the principal amount of the debt.

(c) The rate of interest charged by VA shall be based on the rate established annually by the Secretary of the Treasury in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3717 and shall be adjusted annually by VA on the first day of the calendar year. Once the rate of interest has been determined for a particular debt, the rate shall remain in effect throughout the duration of repayment of that debt. When a debtor defaults on a repayment agreement and seeks to enter into a new agreement, VA may require payment of interest at a new rate that reflects the current value of funds to the Treasury at the time the new agreement is executed. Interest shall not be compounded, that is, interest shall not be charged on accrued interest and administrative costs required by this section. If, however, a debtor defaults on a previous repayment agreement, interest and administrative costs that accrued but were not collected under the defaulted agreement shall be added to the principal under the new agreement.

(d) Interest on amounts covered by this section shall accrue from the date the initial notice of the debt is mailed to the debtor. Notification shall be considered sufficient when effected by ordinary mail, addressed to the last known address, and such notice is not returned as undeliverable by postal authorities.

(e) Interest under this section shall not be charged if the debt is paid in full within 30 days of mailing of the initial notice described in paragraph (b) of this section. Once interest begins to accrue, and after expiration of the time period for payment of the debt in full to avoid assessment of interest and administrative costs, any amount received toward the payment of such debt shall be first applied to payment of outstanding administrative cost charges and then to accrued interest or costs, and then to principal, unless a different rule is prescribed by statute, contract, or other regulation.
(f) All or any part of the interest and administrative costs assessed under this section are subject to consideration for waiver under section 5302 of title 38 U.S.C., and appropriate administrative procedures.

(1) In general, interest and administrative costs may be waived only when the principal of the debt on which they are assessed is waived by a Committee on Waivers and Compromises. However, VA may forbear collection of interest and administrative costs, exclusive of collection of the principal of the debt on which they are assessed, as well as terminate further assessment of interest and administrative costs when the collection of such interest and costs are determined to be not in the government’s best interest. Collection of interest and administrative costs shall not be considered to be in the best interest of the government when the amount of assessed interest and administrative cost is so large that there is a reasonable certainty that the original debt will never be repaid. The determination to forbear collection of interest and administrative cost, exclusive of collection of the principal of the debt, shall be made by the Chief of the Fiscal activity at the station responsible for the collection of the debt. Such a determination is not within the jurisdiction of a Committee on Waivers and Compromises.

(g) Administrative costs assessed under this section shall be the average costs of collection of similar debts, or actual collection costs as may be accurately determined in the particular case. No administrative costs of collection will be assessed under this section in any cases where the indebtedness is paid in full prior to the 30-day period specified in paragraph (e) of this section, or in any case where a repayment plan is proposed by the debtor and accepted by VA within that 30-day period, unless such repayment agreement becomes delinquent (as defined in 31 CFR 906.2(b)).

making any disclosure under this section, VA will provide consumer reporting agencies with sufficient information to identify the individual, including the individual’s name, address, if known, date of birth, VA file number, and Social Security number.

(d)(1) Prior to releasing information under paragraph (c) of this section, the Department of Veterans Affairs will send a notice to the individual. This notice will inform the individual that—

(i) The Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that he or she is indebted to the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(ii) The debt is presently delinquent; and

(iii) The fact of delinquency may be reported to consumer reporting agencies after 30 days have elapsed from the date of the notice.

(2)(i) In accordance with §1.911 and §1.911a, VA shall notify each individual of the right to dispute the existence and amount of the debt and to request a waiver of the debt, if applicable.

(ii) If the Department of Veterans Affairs has not previously notified the individual of the rights described in paragraph (d)(2)(i) of this section, the Department of Veterans Affairs will include this information in the notice described in paragraph (d)(1) of this section. The individual shall be afforded a minimum of 30 days from the date of the notice to respond to it before information is reported to consumer reporting agencies.

(3) The Department of Veterans Affairs will defer reporting information to a consumer reporting agency if the individual disputes the existence or amount of any debt or requests waiver of the debt within the time limits set forth in paragraph (d)(2)(ii) of this section. The Department of Veterans Affairs will review any dispute and notify the individual of its findings. If the original decision is determined to be correct, or if the individual’s request for waiver is denied, the Department of Veterans Affairs may report the fact of delinquency to a consumer reporting agency. However, the individual shall be afforded 30 days from date of the notice of the agency’s determination to repay the debt.

(4) Nothing in this section affects an individual’s right to appeal an agency decision to the Board of Veterans Appeals. However, information concerning the debt may be disclosed while an appeal is pending before the Board of Veterans Appeals.

(5) Upon request, the Department of Veterans Affairs will notify an individual—

(i) Whether information concerning a debt has been reported to consumer reporting agencies;

(ii) Of the name and address of each consumer reporting agency to which information has been released; and

(iii) Of the specific information released.

A notice of the right to request this information will be sent with the notice described in paragraph (d)(1) of this section.

(e) Subsequent to disclosure of information to consumer reporting agencies as described in paragraph (c) of this section, the Department of Veterans Affairs shall:

(1) Notify on a monthly basis each consumer reporting agency concerned of any substantial change in the status or amount of indebtedness.

(2) Promptly verify any and all information disclosed if so requested by the consumer reporting agency concerned.

(f) In the absence of a different rule prescribed by statute, contract, or other regulation, an indebtedness is considered delinquent if not paid by the individual by the date due specified in the notice of indebtedness, unless satisfactory arrangements are made by such date.

(g) Notification shall be considered sufficient when effected by ordinary mail, addressed to the last known address, and such notice is not returned as undeliverable by postal authorities.

(h) The Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) does not apply to any contract between the Department of Veterans Affairs and a consumer reporting agency, nor does it apply to a consumer reporting agency and its employees. See 38 U.S.C. 5701(i). This paragraph does not relieve the Department of Veterans Affairs of its obligation to comply with the Privacy Act.

(i) The term “consumer reporting agency” means any person or agency
which, for monetary fees, dues, or on a cooperative nonprofit basis, regularly engages in whole or in part in the practice of assembling or evaluating consumer credit information or other information on consumers for the purpose of furnishing consumer reports to third parties or to other consumer reporting agencies. The term “consumer reporting agency” shall also mean any person or agency which serves as a marketing agent under arrangements enabling third parties to obtain such information from consumer reporting agencies, or which obtain such information for the purpose of furnishing it to consumer reporting agencies.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711(e); 38 U.S.C. 501, 5701(g) and (i))

§ 1.917 Contracting for collection services.

(a) VA has authority to contract for collection services to recover delinquent debts, provided that:

(1) The authority to resolve disputes, compromise claims, suspend or terminate collection and refer the matter for litigation shall be retained by VA;

(2) The contractor shall be subject to 38 U.S.C. 5701, and to the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, to the extent specified in 5 U.S.C. 552a(m), and to applicable Federal and State laws and regulations pertaining to debt collection practices, such as the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. 1692 et seq.

(3) The contractor shall be required to strictly account for all amounts collected;

(4) Upon returning an account to VA for subsequent referral to the Department of Justice for litigation, the contractor must agree to provide any data contained in its files relating to § 1.951.

(b) In accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3718(d), or as otherwise permitted by law, collection service contracts may be funded in the following manner:

(1) VA may fund a collection service contract on a fixed-fee basis (i.e., payment of a fixed fee determined without regard to the amount actually collected under the contract). Payment of the fee under this type of contract must be charged to available appropriations;

(2) VA may also fund a collection service contract on a contingent-fee basis (i.e., by including a provision in the contract permitting the contractor to deduct its fee from amounts collected under the contract). The fee should be based upon a percentage of the amount collected, consistent with prevailing commercial practice;

(3) VA may enter into a contract under paragraph (b)(1) of this section only if and to the extent that funding for the contract is provided for in advance by an appropriation act or other legislation, except that this requirement does not apply to the use of a revolving fund authorized by statute;

(4) Except as authorized under paragraphs (b)(2) and (b)(5) of this section, or unless otherwise specifically provided by law, VA shall deposit all amounts recovered under collection service contracts for Loan Guaranty debts into the Loan Guaranty Revolving Fund, and for all other debts in the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3302.

(5) For benefit overpayments recovered under collection service contract, VA, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3302, shall deposit:

(i) Amounts equal to the original overpayments in the appropriations account from which the overpayments were made, and

(ii) Amount of interest or administrative costs in the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts.

(c) VA shall use government-wide debt collection contracts to obtain debt collection services provided by private collection contractors. However, VA may refer debts to private collection contractors pursuant to a contract between VA and a private collection contractor only if such debts are not subject to the requirement to transfer debts to Treasury for debt collection. See 31 U.S.C. 3711(g), 31 CFR 265.12(e), and 38 CFR 1.910.

(d) VA may enter into contracts for locating and recovering assets of the United States, such as unclaimed assets.

(e) VA may enter into contracts for debtor asset and income search reports. In accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3718(d),
such contracts may provide that the fee a contractor charges the agency for such services may be payable from the amounts recovered, unless otherwise prohibited by statute.


§ 1.918 Use and disclosure of mailing addresses.

(a) When attempting to locate a debtor in order to compromise or collect a debt in accordance with §§ 1.900 through 1.953, VA may send a request to the Secretary of the Treasury, or his/her designee, in order to obtain the debtor’s most current mailing address from the records of the Internal Revenue Service.

(b) VA is authorized to use mailing addresses obtained under paragraph (a) of this section to enforce collection of a delinquent debt and may disclose such mailing addresses to other agencies and to collection agencies for collection purposes.


§ 1.919 Administrative offset against amounts payable from Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund, Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), final salary check, and lump sum leave payments.

(a) Unless otherwise prohibited by law or regulation, and in accordance with 31 CFR 901.3(d), VA may request that money which is due and payable to a debtor from either the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund or FERS be administratively offset in reasonable amounts in order to collect, in one full payment or a minimal number of payments, debts that are owed to VA by the debtor. Such requests shall be made to the appropriate officials at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in accordance with such regulations prescribed by the Director of OPM. (See 5 CFR 831.1801 through 831.1808). In addition, VA may also offset against a Federal employee’s final salary check and lump sum leave payment. See §1.912 for procedures for offset against a final salary check and lump sum leave payment.

(b) When making a request to the Office of Personnel Management for administrative offset under paragraph (a) of this section, VA shall include a written certification that:

(1) The debtor owes VA a debt, including the amount of the debt;

(2) VA has complied with the applicable statutes, regulations, and procedures of the Office of Personnel Management; and

(3) VA has complied with §§1.911, 1.911a, 1.912, 1.912a, and 31 CFR 901.3, to the extent applicable, including any required hearing or review.

(c) Once VA decides to request administrative offset from the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) under paragraph (a) of this section, it shall make the request as soon as possible after completion of the applicable procedures in order that the Office of Personnel Management may identify the debtor’s account in anticipation of the time when the debtor requests or becomes eligible to receive payments from the Fund or FERS. This will satisfy any requirement that offset be initiated prior to expiration of the applicable statutes of limitations. At such time as the debtor makes a claim for payments from the Fund or FERS, if at least a year has elapsed since the offset request was originally made, the debtor should be permitted to offer a satisfactory repayment plan in lieu of offset upon establishing that such offset will create financial hardship.

(d) If VA collects all or part of the debt by other means before deductions are made or completed in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section, VA shall promptly act to modify or terminate its request for offset under paragraph (a) of this section.

(e) The Office of Personnel Management is neither required nor authorized by this section to review the merits of VA’s determination with respect to the amount and validity of the debt waiver under 5 U.S.C. 5541 or 38 U.S.C. 5302, or
§ 1.920 Referral of VA debts.

(a) When authorized, VA may refer an uncollectible debt to another Federal or State agency for the purpose of collection action. Collection action may include the offsetting of the debt from any current or future payment, except salary (see paragraph (e) of this section), made by such Federal or State agency to the person indebted to VA.

(b) VA must certify in writing that the individual owes the debt, the amount and basis of the debt, the date on which payment became due, and the date VA’s right to collect the debt first accrued.

(c) This certification will also state that VA provided the debtor with written notice of:

1. The nature and amount of the debt;
2. VA’s intention to pursue collection by offset procedures;
3. The opportunity to inspect and copy VA records pertaining to the debt;
4. The right to contest both the existence and amount of the debt and to request a waiver of collection of the debt (if applicable), as well as the right to a hearing on both matters;
5. The opportunity to enter into a written agreement with VA for the repayment of the debt; and
6. Other applicable notices required by §§1.911, 1.911a, 1.912, and 1.912a.

(d) The written certification required by paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section will also contain (for all debts) a listing of all actions taken by both VA and the debtor subsequent to the notice, as well as the dates of such actions.

(e) The referral by VA of a VA debt to another agency for the purpose of salary offset shall be done in accordance with 38 CFR 1.980 through 1.995 and regulations prescribed by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in 5 CFR part 550, subpart K.

§ 1.921 Analysis of costs.

VA collection procedures should provide for periodic comparison of costs incurred and amounts collected. Data on costs and corresponding recovery rates for debts of different types and in various dollar ranges should be used to compare the cost effectiveness of alternative collection techniques, establish guidelines with respect to points at which costs of further collection efforts are likely to exceed recoveries, assist in evaluating offers in compromise, and establish minimum debt amounts below which collection efforts need not be taken.

§ 1.922 Exemptions.

(a) Sections 1.900 through 1.953, to the extent they reflect remedies or procedures prescribed by the Debt Collection Act of 1982 and the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, such as administrative offset, use of credit bureaus, contracting for collection agencies, and interest and related charges, do not apply to debts arising under, or payments made under, the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (26 U.S.C. 1 et seq.); the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 301 et seq.), except to the extent provided under 42 U.S.C. 404 and 31 U.S.C. 3716(c); or the tariff laws of the United States. These remedies and procedures, however, may be authorized with respect to debts that are exempt from the Debt Collection Act of 1982 and the DCIA of 1996, to the extent that they are authorized under some other statute or the common law.

(b) This section should not be construed as prohibiting the use of §§1.900 through 1.953 when collecting debts owed by persons employed by agencies administering the laws cited in paragraph (a) of this section unless the debt arose under those laws.
§ 1.923 Administrative wage garnishment.

(a) In accordance with the procedures set forth in 31 U.S.C. 3720D and 31 CFR 285.11, VA or Treasury may request that a non-Federal employer garnish the disposable pay of an individual to collect delinquent non-tax debt owed to VA. VA may pursue wage garnishment independently in accordance with this section or VA or Treasury may pursue garnishment after VA refers a debt to Treasury in accordance with § 1.910 of this part and 31 CFR 285.12. For the purposes of this section, any reference to Treasury also includes any private collection agency under contract to Treasury.

(b) At least 30 days prior to the initiation of garnishment proceedings, VA or Treasury shall send a written notice, as described in 31 CFR 285.11(e), by first class mail to the debtor’s last known address. This notice shall inform the debtor of:

(1) The nature and amount of the debt;
(2) The intention of VA or Treasury to initiate proceedings to collect the debt through deductions from the debtor’s pay until the debt and all accumulated interest, and other late payment charges, are paid in full, and;
(3) An explanation of the debtor’s rights, including the opportunity:
   (i) To inspect and copy VA records pertaining to the debt;
   (ii) To enter into a written repayment agreement with VA or Treasury under terms agreeable to VA or Treasury, and;
   (iii) To a hearing in accordance with 31 CFR 285.11(f) and paragraph (c) of this section concerning the existence or amount of the debt or the terms of the proposed repayment schedule under the garnishment order. However, the debtor is not entitled to a hearing concerning the terms of the proposed repayment schedule if these terms have been established by written agreement under paragraph (b)(3)(i) of this section.

(c) Any hearing conducted as part of the administrative wage garnishment process shall be conducted by the designated hearing official. This hearing official may also conduct administrative wage garnishment hearings for other Federal agencies.

(1) The hearing may be oral or written as determined by the designated hearing official. The hearing official shall provide the debtor with a reasonable opportunity for an oral hearing when the hearing official determines that the issue in dispute cannot be resolved by review of documentary evidence, for example, when the validity of the claim turns on the issue of credibility or veracity. The hearing official shall establish the time and place of any oral hearing. At the debtor’s option, an oral hearing may be conducted either in person or by telephone conference call. A hearing is not required to be a formal, evidentiary-type hearing, but witnesses who testify in oral hearings must do so under oath or affirmation. While it is not necessary to produce a transcript of the hearing, the hearing official must maintain a summary record of the proceedings. All travel expenses incurred by the debtor in connection with an in-person hearing shall be borne by the debtor. VA or Treasury shall be responsible for all telephone expenses. In the absence of good cause shown, a debtor who fails to appear at a hearing will be deemed as not having timely filed a request for a hearing.

(2) If the hearing official determines that an oral hearing is not necessary, then he/she shall afford the debtor a “paper hearing.” In a “paper hearing,” the hearing official will decide the issues in dispute based upon a review of the written record.

(3) If the debtor’s written request for a hearing is received by either VA or Treasury within 15 business days following the mailing of the notice described in paragraph (b) of this section, then VA or Treasury shall not issue a withholding order as described in paragraph (d) of this section until the debtor is afforded the requested hearing and a decision rendered. If the debtor’s written request for a hearing is not received within 15 business days following the mailing of the notice described in paragraph (b) of this section, then the hearing official shall provide a hearing to the debtor, but will not
§ 1.924 Suspension or revocation of eligibility for federal loans, loan insurance, loan guarantees, licenses, permits, or privileges.

(a) In accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3720B and the procedures set forth in 31 CFR 285.13 and §901.6, a person owing an outstanding non-tax debt that is in delinquent status shall not be eligible for Federal financial assistance unless exempted under paragraph (d) of this section or waived under paragraph (e) of this section.

(b) Federal financial assistance or financial assistance means any Federal loan (other than a disaster loan), loan insurance, or loan guarantee.

(c) For the purposes of this section only, a debt is in a delinquent status if
the debt has not been paid within 90 days of the payment due date or by the end of any grace period provided by statute, regulation, contract, or agreement. The payment due date is the date specified in the initial written demand for payment. Further guidance concerning the delinquent status of a debt may be found at 31 CFR 285.13(d).

(d) Upon the written request and recommendation of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of the Treasury may grant exemptions from the provisions of this section. The standards for exemptions granted for classes of debts are set forth in 31 CFR 285.13(f).

(e)(1) VA’s Chief Financial Officer or Deputy Chief Financial Officer may waive the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section only on a person-by-person basis.

(2) The Chief Financial Officer or Deputy Chief Financial Officer should balance the following factors when deciding whether to grant a waiver:

(i) Whether the denial of the financial assistance to the person would tend to interfere substantially with or defeat the purposes of the financial assistance program or otherwise would not be in the best interests of the Federal government; and

(ii) Whether the granting of the financial assistance to the person is contrary to the government’s goal of reducing losses by requiring proper screening of potential borrowers.

(3) When balancing the factors described in paragraph (e)(2)(i) and (e)(2)(ii) of this section, the Chief Financial Officer or Deputy Chief Financial Officer should consider:

(i) The age, amount, and cause(s) of the delinquency and the likelihood that the person will resolve the delinquent debt; and

(ii) The amount of the total debt, delinquent or otherwise, owed by the person and the person’s credit history with respect to repayment of debt.

(4) A centralized record shall be retained of the number and type of waivers granted under this section.

(f) In non-bankruptcy cases, in seeking the collection of statutory penalties, forfeitures, or other similar types of claims, VA may suspend or revoke any license, permit, or other privilege granted a debtor when the debtor inexcusably or willfully fails to pay such a debt. The debtor should be advised in VA’s written demand for payment of VA’s ability to suspend or revoke licenses, permits, or privileges. VA may suspend or disqualify any lender, contractor, or broker who is engaged in making, guaranteeing, insuring, acquiring, or participating in loans from doing further business with VA or engaging in programs sponsored by VA if such lender, contractor, or broker fails to pay its debts to the Government within a reasonable time, or if such lender, contractor, or broker has been suspended, debarred, or disqualified from participation in a program or activity by another Federal agency. The failure of any surety to honor its obligations in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 9305 should be reported to Treasury.

(g) In bankruptcy cases, before advising the debtor of the intention to suspend or revoke licenses, permits, or privileges, VA should seek legal advice from VA’s General Counsel or Regional Counsel concerning the impact of the Bankruptcy Code, particularly 11 U.S.C. 362 and 525, which may restrict such action.


[69 FR 62197, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.929 Reduction of debt through performance of work-study services.

(a) Scope. (1) Subject to the provisions of this section VA may allow an individual to reduce an indebtedness to the United States through offset of benefits to which the individual becomes entitled by performance of work-study services under 38 U.S.C. 3485 and 3537 when the debt arose by virtue of the individual’s participation in a benefits program provided under any of the following:

(i) 38 U.S.C. chapter 30;

(ii) 38 U.S.C. chapter 31;

(iii) 38 U.S.C. chapter 32;

(iv) 38 U.S.C. chapter 34;

(v) 38 U.S.C. chapter 35;

(vi) 38 U.S.C. chapter 36 (other than an education loan provided under subpart F, part 21 of this title); or

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(vii) 10 U.S.C. chapter 1606 (other than an indebtedness arising from a refund penalty imposed under 10 U.S.C. 16135).

(2) This section shall not apply in any case in which the individual has a pending request for waiver of the debt under §§1.950 through 1.970.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3485(e); Pub. L. 102–16)

(b) Selection criteria. (1) If there are more candidates for a work-study allowance than there are work-study positions available in the area in which the services are to be performed, VA will give priority to the candidates who are pursuing a program of education or rehabilitation.

(2) Only after all candidates in the area described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section either have been given work-study contracts or have withdrawn their request for contracts will VA offer contracts to those who are not pursuing a program of education or rehabilitation and who wish to reduce their indebtedness through performance of work-study services.

(3) VA shall not offer a contract to an individual who is receiving compensation from another source for the work-study services the individual wishes to perform.

(4) VA shall not offer a contract to an individual if VA determines that the debt can be collected through other means such as collection in a lump sum, collection in installments as provided in §1.917 or compromise as provided in §1.918.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3485(e); Pub. L. 102–16)

(c) Utilization. The work-study services to be performed under a debt-liquidation contract will be limited as follows:

(1) If the individual is concurrently receiving educational assistance in a program administered by VA, work-study services are limited to those allowed in the educational program under which the individual is receiving benefits.

(2) If the individual is not concurrently receiving educational assistance in a program administered by VA, the individual may perform only those work-study services and activities which are or were open to those students receiving a work-study allowance while pursuing a program of education pursuant to the chapter under which the debt was incurred.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3485(e); Pub. L. 102–16)

(d) Contract to perform services. (1) The work-study services performed to reduce indebtedness shall be performed pursuant to a contract between the individual and VA.

(2) The individual shall perform the work-study services required by the contract at the place or places designated by VA.

(3) The number of hours of services to be performed under the contract must be sufficient to enable the individual to become entitled to a sum large enough to liquidate the debt by offset.

(4) The number of weeks in the contract will not exceed the lesser of—

(i) The number of weeks of services the individual needs to perform to liquidate his or her debt; or

(ii) 52.

(5) In determining the number of hours per week and the number of weeks under paragraphs (d)(3) and (d)(4) of this section necessary to liquidate the debt, VA will use the amount of the account receivable, including all accrued interest, administrative costs and marshall fees outstanding on the date the contract is offered to the individual and all accrued interest, administrative costs and marshall fees VA estimates will have become outstanding on the debt on the date the debt is to be liquidated.

(6) The contract will automatically terminate after the total amount of the individual’s indebtedness described in paragraph (d)(5) of this section has been recouped, waived, or otherwise liquidated. An individual performing work-study services under a contract to liquidate a debt is released from the contract if the debt is liquidated by other means.

(7) The contract to perform work-study services for the purpose of liquidating indebtedness will be terminated if:

(i) The individual is liquidating his or her debt under this section while receiving either an educational assistance allowance for further pursuit of a
program of education or a subsistence allowance for further pursuit of a program of rehabilitation;

(ii) The individual terminates or reduces the rate of pursuit of his or her program of education or rehabilitation; and

(iii) The termination or reduction causes an account receivable as a debt owed by the individual.

(8) VA may terminate the contract at any time the individual fails to perform the services required by the contract in a satisfactory manner.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3485(e); Pub. L. 102-16)

(e) Reduction of indebtedness. (1) In return for the individual’s agreement to perform hours of services totaling not more than 40 times the number of weeks in the contract, VA will reduce the eligible person’s outstanding indebtedness by an amount equal to the higher of—

(i) The hourly minimum wage in effect under section 6(a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 times the number of hours the individual works; or

(ii) The hourly minimum wage under comparable law of the State in which the services are performed times the number of hours the individual works.

(2) VA will reduce the individual’s debt by the amount of the money earned for the performance of work-study services after the completion of each 50 hours of services (or in the case of any remaining hours required by the contract, the amount for those hours).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3485(e); Pub. L. 102-16)

(f) Suspension of collections by offset. Notwithstanding the provisions of §1.912a, during the period covered by the work-study debt-liquidation contract with the individual, VA will ordinarily suspend the collection by offset of a debt described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section. However, the individual may voluntarily permit VA to collect part of the debt through offset against other benefits payable while the individual is performing work-study services. If the contract is terminated before its scheduled completion date, and the debt has not been liquidated, collection through offset against other benefits payable will resume on the date the contract terminates.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3485(e); Pub. L. 102-16)

(g) Payment for additional hours. (1) If an individual, without fault on his or her part, performs work-study services for which payment may not be authorized, including services performed after termination of the contract, VA will pay the individual at the applicable hourly minimum wage for such services as the Director of the VA field station of jurisdiction determines were satisfactorily performed.

(2) The Director of the VA field station of jurisdiction shall determine whether the individual was without fault. In making this decision he or she shall consider all evidence of record and any additional evidence which the individual wishes to submit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3485(e); Pub. L. 102-16)


STANDARDS FOR COMPROMISE OF CLAIMS

AUTHORITY: Sections 1.900 through 1.953 are issued under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 3711 through 3720E; 38 U.S.C. 501, and as noted in specific sections.

SOURCE: 32 FR 2614, Feb. 8, 1967, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1.930 Scope and application.

(a) The standards set forth in §§1.930 through 1.936 of this part apply to the compromise of debts pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3711. VA may exercise such compromise authority when the amount of the debt due, exclusive of interest, penalties, and administrative costs, does not exceed $100,000 or any higher amount authorized by the Attorney General.

(b) Unless otherwise provided by law, when the principal balance of a debt, exclusive of interest, penalties, and administrative costs, exceeds $100,000 or any higher amount authorized by the Attorney General, the authority to accept the compromise rests with the Department of Justice (DOJ). If VA receives an offer to compromise any debt in excess of $100,000, VA should evaluate the compromise offer using the same factors as set forth in §1.931 of this part. If VA believes the offer has
§ 1.931 Bases for compromise.

(a) VA may compromise a debt if it cannot collect the full amount because:

(1) The debtor is unable to pay the full amount in a reasonable time, as verified through credit reports or other financial information;

(2) VA is unable to collect the debt in full within a reasonable time by enforced collection proceedings;

(3) The cost of collecting the debt does not justify the enforced collection of the full amount; or

(4) There is significant doubt concerning VA’s ability to prove its case in court.

(b) In determining the debtor’s inability to pay, VA will consider relevant factors such as the following:

(1) Age and health of the debtor;

(2) Present and potential income;

(3) Inheritance prospects;

(4) The possibility that assets have been concealed or improperly transferred by the debtor; and

(5) The availability of assets or income that may be realized by enforced collection proceedings.

(c) VA will verify the debtor’s claim of inability to pay by using a credit report and other financial information as provided in paragraph (g) of this section. VA should consider the applicable exemptions available to the debtor under State and Federal law in determining the ability to enforce collection. VA also may consider uncertainty as to the price that collateral or other property will bring at a forced sale in determining the ability to enforce collection. A compromise effected under this section should be for an amount that bears a reasonable relation to the amount that can be recovered by enforced collection procedures, with regard to the exemptions available to the debtor and the time that collection will take.

(d) If there is significant doubt concerning VA’s ability to prove its case in court for the full amount claimed, either because of the legal issues involved or because of a bona fide dispute as to the facts, then the amount accepted in compromise of such cases should fairly reflect the probabilities of successful prosecution to judgment, with due regard given to the availability of witnesses and other evidentiary support for VA’s claim. In determining the risks involved in litigation, VA will consider the probable amount of court costs and attorney fees pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act, 28 U.S.C. 2412, that may be imposed against the Government if it is unsuccessful in litigation.

(e) VA may compromise a debt if the cost of collecting the debt does not justify the enforced collection of the full amount. The amount accepted in compromise in such cases may reflect an appropriate discount for the administrative and litigative costs of collection, with consideration given to the time it will take to effect collection. Collection costs may be a substantial factor in the settlement of small debts. In determining whether the cost of collecting justifies enforced collection of the full amount, VA will consider whether continued collection of the debt, regardless of cost, is necessary to further an enforcement principle.

(f) VA generally will not accept compromises payable in installments. If, however, payment of a compromise in installments is necessary, VA will obtain a legally enforceable written agreement providing that, in the event of default, the full original principal balance of the debt prior to compromise, less sums paid thereon, is reinstated. Whenever possible, VA will also obtain security for repayment.
§ 1.936 Mutual releases of the debtor and VA.

In all appropriate instances, a compromise that is accepted by VA shall be implemented by means of a mutual release, in which the debtor is released from further non-tax liability on the compromised debt in consideration of payment in full of the compromise amount, and VA and its officials, past and present, are released and discharged from any and all claims and causes of action that the debtor may have arising from the same transaction. In the event a mutual release is not executed when a debt is compromised, unless prohibited by law, the debtor is still deemed to have waived any and all claims and causes of action against VA and its officials related to the transaction giving rise to the compromised debt.

[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.935 Consideration of tax consequences to the Government.

In negotiating a compromise, VA will consider the tax consequences to the Government. In particular, VA will consider requiring a waiver of tax-loss-carry-forward and tax-loss-carry-back rights of the debtor.

[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.934 Further review of compromise offers.

If VA is uncertain whether to accept a firm, written, substantive compromise offer on a debt that is within its delegated compromise authority, it may refer the offer to VA General Counsel or Regional Counsel or to the Civil Division or other appropriate division in the Department of Justice (DOJ), using a Claims Collection Litigation Report (CCLR) accompanied by supporting data and particulars concerning the debt. DOJ may act upon such an offer or return it to the agency with instructions or advice.

[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.933 Joint and several liability.

(a) When two or more debtors are jointly and severally liable, VA will pursue collection activity against all debtors, as appropriate. VA will not attempt to allocate the burden of payment between the debtors but should proceed to liquidate the indebtedness as quickly as possible.

(b) VA will ensure that a compromise agreement with one debtor does not release VA’s claim against the remaining debtors. The amount of a compromise with one debtor shall not be considered a precedent or binding in determining the amount that will be required from other debtors jointly and severally liable on the claim.

[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.932 Enforcement policy.

VA may compromise statutory penalties, forfeitures, or claims established as an aid to enforcement and to compel compliance, if VA’s enforcement policy in terms of deterrence and securing compliance, present and future, will be adequately served by VA’s acceptance of the sum to be agreed upon.

[69 FR 62198, Oct. 25, 2004]
§ 1.940 Scope and application.

Except as otherwise provided in § 1.945:

(a) The standards set forth in §§ 1.940 through 1.944 apply to the suspension or termination of collection activity pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3711 on debts that do not exceed $100,000, or such other amount as the Attorney General may direct, exclusive of interest, penalties, and administrative costs, after deducting the amount of partial payments or collections, if any. Prior to referring a debt to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for litigation, VA may suspend or terminate collection under this part with respect to the debt.

(b) If, after deducting the amount of any partial payments or collections, the principal amount of a debt exceeds $100,000, or such other amount as the Attorney General may direct, exclusive of interest, penalties, and administrative costs, the authority to suspend or terminate rests solely with DOJ. If VA believes that suspension or termination of any debt in excess of $100,000 may be appropriate, it shall refer the debt to the Civil Division or other appropriate division in DOJ, using the Claims Collection Litigation Report (CCLR). The referral should specify the reasons for VA’s recommendation. If, prior to referral to DOJ, VA determines that a debt is plainly erroneous or clearly without legal merit, VA may terminate collection activity regardless of the amount involved without obtaining DOJ concurrence.


§ 1.941 Suspension of collection activity.

(a) VA may suspend collection activity on a debt when:

(1) It cannot locate the debtor;

(2) The debtor’s financial condition is expected to improve; or

(3) The debtor has requested a waiver or review of the debt.

(b) Based on the current financial condition of the debtor, VA may suspend collection activity on a debt when the debtor’s future prospects justify retention of the debt for periodic review and collection activity and:

(1) The applicable statute of limitations has not expired; or

(2) Future collection can be effected by administrative offset, notwithstanding the expiration of the applicable statute of limitations for litigation of claims, and with due regard to the 10-year limitation for administrative offset prescribed by 31 U.S.C. 3716(e)(1); or

(3) The debtor agrees to pay interest on the amount of the debt on which collection will be suspended, and such suspension is likely to enhance the debtor’s ability to pay the full amount of the principal of the debt with interest at a later date.

(c) Collection action may also be suspended, in accordance with §§ 1.911, 1.911a, 1.912, and 1.912a, pending VA action on requests for administrative review of the existence or amount of the debt or a request for waiver of collection of the debt. However, collection action will be resumed once VA issues an initial decision on the administrative review or waiver request.

(d) When VA learns that a bankruptcy petition has been filed with respect to a debtor, in most cases the collection activity on a debt must be suspended, pursuant to the provisions of 11 U.S.C. 362, 1201, and 1301, unless VA can clearly establish that the automatic stay does not apply, has been lifted, or is no longer in effect. VA shall seek legal advice immediately from either the VA General Counsel or Regional Counsel and, if legally permitted, take the necessary steps to ensure that no funds or money are paid by VA to the debtor until relief from the automatic stay is obtained.

[69 FR 62199, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.942 Termination of collection activity.

Termination of collection activity involves a final determination. Collection activity may be terminated on cases previously suspended. The Department of Veterans Affairs may terminate collection activity and consider closing the agency file on a claim which meets any one of the following standards:
(a) **Inability to collect any substantial amount.** Collection action may be terminated on a claim when it becomes clear that VA cannot collect or enforce collection of any significant amount from the debtor, having due regard for the judicial remedies available to the agency, the debtor’s future financial prospects, and the exemptions available to the debtor under State and Federal law. In determining the debtor’s inability to pay, the following factors, among others, shall be considered: Age and health of the debtor, present and potential income, inheritance prospects, the possibility that assets have been concealed or improperly transferred by the debtor, the availability of assets or income which may be realized by means of enforced collection proceedings.

(b) **Inability to locate debtor.** The debtor cannot be located, no security remains to be liquidated, the applicable statute of limitations has run, and the prospects of collecting by offset are too remote.

(c) **Death of debtor.** The debtor is determined to be deceased and the Government has no prospect of collection from his/her estate.

(d) **Cost will exceed recovery.** The cost of further collection effort is likely to exceed the amount recoverable.

(e) **Claim legally without merit.** Collection action should be terminated on a claim whenever it is determined that the claim is legally without merit.

(f) **Claim cannot be substantiated by evidence.** VA will terminate collection action on once asserted claims because of lack of evidence or unavailability of witnesses only in cases where efforts to induce voluntary payment are unsuccessful.

(g) **Discharge in bankruptcy.** Generally, VA shall terminate collection activity on a debt that has been discharged in bankruptcy, regardless of the amount. VA may continue collection activity, subject to the provisions of the Bankruptcy Code, for any payments provided under a plan of reorganization. Offset and recoulement rights may survive the discharge of the debtor in bankruptcy and, under some circumstances, claims also may survive the discharge.

(h) Before terminating collection activity, VA should have pursued all appropriate means of collection and determined, based upon the results of the collection activity, that the debt is uncollectible. Termination of collection activity ceases active collection of the debt. The termination of collection activity does not preclude VA from retaining a record of the account for purposes of:

1. Selling the debt, if the Secretary of the Treasury determines that such sale is in the best interests of the United States;
2. Pursuing collection at a subsequent date in the event there is a change in the debtor’s status or a new collection tool becomes available;
3. Offsetting against future income or assets not available at the time of termination of collection activity; or
4. Screening future applicants for prior indebtedness.


§ 1.943 Exception to termination.

When a significant enforcement policy is involved, or recovery of a judgment is a prerequisite to the imposition of administrative sanctions, VA may refer debts for litigation even though termination of collection activity may otherwise be appropriate.


§ 1.944 Discharge of indebtedness; reporting requirements.

(a) Before discharging a delinquent debt (also referred to as a close out of the debt), VA shall take all appropriate steps to collect the debt in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3711(g), including, as applicable, administrative offset, tax refund offset, Federal salary offset, referral to Treasury or Treasury-designated debt collection centers or private collection contractors, credit bureau reporting, wage garnishment, litigation, and foreclosure. Discharge of indebtedness is distinct from termination or suspension of collection activity under §§1.940 through 1.943 and is governed by the Internal Revenue Code (see 26 U.S.C. 6050P). When collection action
on a debt is suspended or terminated, the debt remains delinquent and further collection action may be pursued at a later date in accordance with the standards set forth in §§1.900 through 1.953. When VA discharges a debt in full or in part, further collection action is prohibited. Therefore, VA should make the determination that collection action is no longer warranted before discharging a debt. Before discharging a debt, VA must terminate debt collection action.

(b) Upon discharge of an indebtedness, VA must report the discharge to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in accordance with the requirements of 26 U.S.C. 6050P and 26 CFR 1.6050P–1. VA may request Treasury or Treasury-designated debt collection centers to file such a discharge report to the IRS on VA’s behalf.

(c) When discharging a debt, VA must request that any liens of record securing the debt be released.

(d) 31 U.S.C. 3711(i)(2) requires agencies to sell a delinquent nontax debt upon termination of collection action if the Secretary of the Treasury determines such a sale is in the best interests of the United States. Since the discharge of a debt precludes any further collection action (including the sale of a delinquent debt), VA may not discharge a debt until the requirements of §3711(i)(2) have been met.


§ 1.945 Authority to suspend or terminate collection action on certain benefit indebtedness; authority for refunds.

(a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Secretary) may suspend or terminate collection action on all or any part of an indebtedness owed to VA by a member of the Armed Forces who dies while on active duty, if the Secretary determines that such suspension or termination of collection is appropriate and in the best interest of the United States.

(b) The Secretary may terminate collection action on all or any part of an amount owed to the United States for an indebtedness resulting from an individual’s participation in a benefits program administered by the Secretary, other than a program as described in paragraph (b) of this section, if the Secretary determines that such termination of collection is in the best interest of the United States. For purposes of this paragraph, an individual is any member of the Armed Forces or veteran who dies as a result of an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while serving in a theater of combat operations in a war or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities on or after September 11, 2001.

(c) For purposes of this section:

(1) Theater of combat operations means the geographic area of operations where the Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of Defense determines that combat occurred.

(2) Period of hostilities means an armed conflict in which members of the United States Armed Forces are subjected to danger comparable to danger to which members of the Armed Forces have been subjected in combat with enemy armed forces during a period of war, as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of Defense.

(d) The Secretary may refund amounts collected after the death of a member of the Armed Forces or veteran in accordance with this paragraph and paragraph (e) of this section.

(1) In any case where all or any part of a debt of a member of the Armed Forces, as described under paragraph (a) of this section, was collected, the Secretary may refund the amount collected if, in the Secretary’s determination, the indebtedness would have been suspended or terminated under authority of 31 U.S.C. 3711(f). The member of the Armed Services must have been serving on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. In any case where all or any part of a debt of a covered member of the Armed Forces was collected, the Secretary may refund the amount collected, but only if the Secretary determines that, under the circumstances applicable with respect to the deceased member of the Armed Forces, it is appropriate to do so.

(2) In any case where all or any part of a debt of a covered member of the Armed Forces or veteran, as described under paragraph (b) of this section, was
collected on or after September 11, 2001, the Secretary may refund the amount collected if, in the Secretary’s determination, the indebtedness would have been terminated under authority of 38 U.S.C. 5302A. In addition, the Secretary may refund the amount only if he or she determines that the deceased individual is equitably entitled to the refund.

(e) Refunds under paragraph (d) of this section will be made to the estate of the decedent or, in its absence, to the decedent’s next-of-kin in the order listed below.

(1) The decedent’s spouse.
(2) The decedent’s children (in equal shares).
(3) The decedent’s parents (in equal shares).

(f) The authority exercised by the Secretary to suspend or terminate collection action and/or refund amounts collected on certain indebtedness is reserved to the Secretary and will not be delegated.

(g) Requests for a determination to suspend or terminate collection action and/or refund amounts previously collected as described in this section will be submitted to the Office of the Secretary through the Office of the General Counsel. Such requests for suspension or termination and/or refund may be initiated by the head of the VA administration having responsibility for the program that gave rise to the indebtedness, or any concerned staff office, or by the Chairman of the Board of Veterans’ Appeals. When a recommendation for refund under this section is initiated by the head of a staff office, or by the Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, the views of the head of the administration that administers the program that gave rise to the indebtedness will be obtained and transmitted with the recommendation of the initiating office.

(h) The provisions of this section concerning suspension or termination of collection actions and the refunding of moneys previously collected do not apply to any amounts owed the United States under any program carried out under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 5302A; 31 U.S.C. 3711(f)).

§ 1.950 Prompt referral.

(a) VA shall promptly refer debts to Department of Justice (DOJ) for litigation where aggressive collection activity has been taken in accordance with §§1.900 through 1.953, and such debts cannot be compromised, or on which collection activity cannot be suspended or terminated, in accordance with §§1.930 through 1.936 and §§1.940 through 1.944. Debts for which the principal amount is over $1,000,000, or such other amount as the Attorney General may direct, exclusive of interest and other late payment charges, shall be referred to the Civil Division or other division responsible for litigating such debts at DOJ. Debts for which the principal amount is $1,000,000, or less, or such other amount as the Attorney General may direct, exclusive of interest or penalties, shall be referred to DOJ’s Nationwide Central Intake Facility as required by the Claims Collection Litigation Report (CCLR) instructions. Debts should be referred as early as possible, consistent with aggressive agency collection activity and the observance of the standards contained in §§1.900 through 1.953, and, in any event, well within the period for initiating timely lawsuits against the debtors. VA shall make every effort to refer delinquent debts to DOJ for litigation within 1 year of the date such debts last became delinquent. In the case of guaranteed or insured loans, VA should make every effort to refer these delinquent debts to DOJ for litigation within 1 year from the date the loan was presented to VA for payment or reimbursement.

(b) DOJ has exclusive jurisdiction over the debts referred to it pursuant to this section. VA shall immediately terminate the use of any administrative collection activities to collect a debt at the time of the referral of that debt to DOJ. VA should advise DOJ of
the collection activities that have been utilized to date, and their result. VA shall refrain from having any contact with the debtor and shall direct all debtor inquiries concerning the debt to DOJ. VA shall immediately notify DOJ of any payments credited to the debtor’s account after referral of a debt under this section. DOJ shall notify VA, in a timely manner, of any payments it receives from the debtor.


§ 1.951 Claims Collection Litigation Report (CCLR).

(a) Unless excepted by the Department of Justice (DOJ), VA shall complete the CCLR, accompanied by a signed Certificate of Indebtedness, to refer all administratively uncollectible claims to DOJ for litigation. VA shall complete all of the sections of the CCLR appropriate to each claim as required by the CCLR instructions and furnish such other information as may be required in specific cases.

(b) VA shall indicate clearly on the CCLR the actions it wishes DOJ to take with respect to the referred claim.

(c) VA shall also use the CCLR to refer claims to DOJ to obtain approval of any proposals to compromise the claims or to suspend or terminate agency collection activity.


§ 1.952 Preservation of evidence.

VA must take care to preserve all files and records that may be needed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to prove its claims in court. VA ordinarily should include certified copies of the documents that form the basis for the claim when referring such claims to DOJ for litigation. VA shall provide originals of such documents immediately upon request by DOJ.


§ 1.953 Minimum amount of referrals to the Department of Justice.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, VA shall not refer for litigation claims of less than $2,500, exclusive of interest, penalties, and administrative costs, or such other minimum amount as the Attorney General shall from time to time prescribe. The Department of Justice (DOJ) shall promptly notify referring agencies if the Attorney General changes this minimum amount.

(b) VA shall not refer claims of less than the minimum amount prescribed by the Attorney General unless:

1. Litigation to collect such smaller claims is important to ensure compliance with VA’s policies or programs;

2. The claim is being referred solely for the purpose of securing a judgment against the debtor, which will be filed as a lien against the debtor’s property pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 3201 and returned to VA for enforcement; or

3. The debtor has the clear ability to pay the claim and the Government effectively can enforce payment, with due regard for the exemptions available to the debtor under State and Federal law and the judicial remedies available to the Government.

(c) VA should consult with the Financial Litigation Staff of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, in DOJ, prior to referring claims valued at less than the minimum amount.


§ 1.955 Regional office Committees on Waivers and Compromises.

(a) Delegation of authority and establishment. (1) Sections 1.955 et seq. are issued to implement the authority for waiver consideration found in 38 U.S.C. 5302 and 5 U.S.C. 5584 and the compromise authority found 38 U.S.C. 3720(a) and 31 U.S.C. 3711. The duties, delegations of authority, and all actions required of the Committees on Waivers and Compromises are to be accomplished under the direction of, and authority vested in, the Director of the regional office. Delegations of authority and limitations for waiver actions under 5 U.S.C. 5584 are set forth in §1.963a of this part.

(2) There is established in each regional office, a Committee on Waivers and Compromises to perform the duties
and assume the responsibilities delegated by §§1.956 and 1.957. The term regional office, as used in §1.955 et seq., includes VA Medical and Regional Office Centers and VA Centers where such are established.

(b) Selection. The Director shall designate the employees to serve as Chairperson, members, and alternates. Except upon specific authorization of the Under Secretary for Benefits, when workload warrants a full-time committee, such designation will be part-time additional duty upon call of the Chairperson.

(c) Control and staff. The administrative control of each Committee on Waivers and Compromises is the responsibility of the station's Fiscal Officer. However, the station Director has the authority to reassign the administrative control function to another station activity, rather than the Fiscal Officer, whenever the Director determines that such reassignment is appropriate. The quality control of the professional and clerical staff of the Committee is the responsibility of the Chairperson.

(d) Overall control. The Assistant Secretary for Management is delegated complete management authority, including planning, policy formulation, control, coordination, supervision, and evaluation of Committee operations.

(e) Committee composition. (1) The Committee shall consist of a Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson and as many Committee members and alternates as the Director may appoint. Members and alternates shall be selected so that in each of the debt claim areas (i.e., compensation, pension, education, insurance, loan guaranty, etc.) there are members and alternates with special competence and familiarity with the program area.

(2) When a claim is properly referred to the Committee for either waiver consideration or the consideration of a compromise offer, the Chairperson shall designate a panel from the available Committee members to consider the waiver request or compromise offer. If the debt for which the waiver request or compromise offer is made is $20,000 or less (exclusive of interest and administrative costs), the Chairperson will assign one Committee member as the panel. This one Committee member should have experience in the program area where the debt is located. The single panel member's decision shall stand as the decision of the Committee. If the debt for which the waiver request or compromise offer is made is more than $20,000 (exclusive of interest and administrative costs), the Chairperson shall assign two Committee members. One of the two members should be knowledgeable in the program area where the debt arose. If the two member panel cannot reach a unanimous decision, the Chairperson shall assign a third member of the Committee to the panel, or assign the case to three new members, and the majority vote shall determine the Committee decision.

(3) The assignment of a one or two member panel as described in paragraph (e)(2) of this section is applicable if the debtor files a Notice of Disagreement with a Committee decision to deny waiver. That is, if the Notice of Disagreement is filed with a decision by a one member panel to deny waiver of collection of a debt of $20,000 or less, then the Notice of Disagreement should also be assigned to one panel member. Likewise, a Notice of Disagreement filed with a decision by a two or three member panel to deny waiver of collection of a debt of more than $20,000 should also be assigned to a Committee panel of two members (three if these two members cannot agree). However, a Chairperson must assign the Notice of Disagreement to a different one, two, or three member panel than the panel that made the original Committee decision that is now the subject of the Notice of Disagreement.


§1.956 Jurisdiction.

(a) The regional office Committees are authorized, except as to determinations under §2.6(e)(4)(i) of this chapter where applicable, to consider and determine as limited in §§1.955 et seq., settlement, compromise and/or waiver
concerning the following debts and overpayments:

(1) Arising out of operations of the Veterans Benefits Administration:
   (i) Overpayment or erroneous payments of pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, burial allowances, plot allowance, subsistence allowance, education (includes debts from work study and education loan defaults as well as from other overpayments of educational assistance benefits) or insurance benefits, clothing allowance and automobile or other conveyance and adaptive equipment allowances.
   (ii) Debts arising out of the loan program under 38 U.S.C. ch. 37 after liquidation of security, if any.
   (iii) Such other debts as may be specifically designated by the Under Secretary for Benefits.

(2) Arising out of operations of the Veterans Health Services and Research Administration:
   (i) Debts resulting from services furnished in error (§ 17.101(a) of this chapter).
   (ii) Debts resulting from services furnished in a medical emergency (§ 17.101(b) of this chapter).
   (iii) Other claims arising in connection with transactions of the Veterans Health Administration (§ 17.103(c) of this chapter).
   (iv) Fiscal officers at VA medical facilities are authorized to waive veterans’ debts arising from medical care copayments (§ 17.105(c) of this chapter).
   (v) Claims for erroneous payments of pay and allowances, and erroneous payments of travel, transportation, and relocation expenses and allowances, made to or on behalf of employees (5 U.S.C. 5584).

(b) The Under Secretary for Benefits may, at his or her discretion, assume original jurisdiction and establish an ad hoc Board to determine a particular issue arising within this section.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 1.957 Committee authority.

(a) Regional office committee. On matters covered in §1.956, the regional office Committee is authorized to determine the following issues:

   (1) Waivers. A decision may be rendered to grant or deny waiver of collection of a debt in the following debt categories:
       (i) Loan guaranty program (38 U.S.C. 5302(b)). Committees may consider waiver of the indebtedness of a veteran or spouse resulting from: (A) The payment of a claim under the guaranty or insurance of loans, (B) the liquidation of direct loans, (C) the liquidation of loans acquired under §36.4318, and (D) the liquidation of vendee accounts. The phrase veteran or spouse includes a veteran-borrower, veteran-transferee, a veteran-purchaser on a vendee account, a former spouse or surviving spouse of a veteran.
   (ii) Other than loan guaranty program. (38 U.S.C. 5302(a))
   (iii) Services erroneously furnished (§17.101(a)).

(2) Compromises—(i) Loan program debts (38 U.S.C. 3720(a)). Accept or reject a compromise offer irrespective of the amount of the debt (loan program matters under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37 are unlimited as to amount).
   (ii) Other than loan program debts (31 U.S.C. 3711).
       (A) Accept or reject a compromise offer on a debt which exceeds $1,000 but which is not over $100,000 (both amounts exclusive of interest and other late payment charges).
       (B) Accept or reject a compromise offer on a debt which exceeds $1,000 but which is not disposed of by the Chief, Fiscal activity, pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section.
       (C) Reject a compromise offer on a debt which exceeds $100,000, exclusive of interest and other late payment charges.
       (D) Recommend approval of a compromise offer on a debt which exceeds $100,000, exclusive of interest and other late payment charges.

(B) Accept or reject a compromise offer on a debt which exceeds $100,000, exclusive of interest and other late payment charges. The authority to accept a compromise offer on such a debt rests solely within the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice. The Committee should evaluate a compromise offer on a debt in excess of $100,000, using the factors set forth in §§1.930 through 1.938. If the Committee believes that the compromise offer is
advantageous to the government, then the Committee members shall so state this conclusion in a written memorandum of recommendation of approval to the Chairperson. This recommendation, along with a Claims Collection Litigation Report (CCLR) completed in accordance with §1.951, will be referred to VA Central Office, Office of Financial Management (047G7), for submission to the Department of Justice for final approval.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711)

(b) Chief of Fiscal activity. The Chief of the Fiscal activity at both VBA and VHA offices has the authority, as to debts within his/her jurisdiction, to:

(1) On other than loan program debts under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, accept compromise offers of 50% or more of a total debt not in excess of $1,000, exclusive of interest and other late payment charges, regardless of whether or not there has been a prior denial of waiver.

(2) On other than loan program debts under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, reject any offer of compromise of a total debt not in excess of $1,000, exclusive of interest and other late payment charges, regardless of whether or not there has been a prior denial of waiver.

(3) On other than loan guaranty program debts under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, reject any offer of compromise of a total debt not in excess of $1,000, exclusive of interest, regardless of whether or not there has been a prior denial of waiver.


§ 1.958 Finality of decisions.

A decision by the regional office Committee, operating within the scope of its authority, denying waiver of all or part of a debt arising out of participation in a VA benefit or home loan program, is subject to appeal in accordance with 38 CFR parts 19 and 20. A denial of waiver of an erroneous payment of pay and allowances is subject to appeal in accordance with §1.963a(a).

There is no right of appeal from a decision rejecting a compromise offer.


[69 FR 62201, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.959 Records and certificates.

The Chairperson of the Committee shall execute or certify any documents pertaining to its proceedings. He/she will be responsible for maintaining needed records of the transactions of the Committee and preparation of any administrative or other reports which may be required.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[44 FR 59906, Oct. 17, 1979]

§ 1.960 Legal and technical assistance.

Legal questions involving a determination under §2.6(e)(4) of this chapter will be referred to the Regional Counsel for action in accordance with delegations of the General Counsel, unless there is an existence a General Counsel’s opinion or an approved Regional Counsel’s opinion dispositive of the controlling legal principle. As to matters not controlled by §2.6(e)(4) of this chapter, the Chairperson of the regional office Committee or at his/her instance, a member, may seek and obtain advice from the Regional Counsel on legal matters within his/her jurisdiction and from other division chiefs in their areas of responsibility, on any matter properly before the Committee. Guidance may also be requested from the Central Office staff.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[44 FR 59906, Oct. 17, 1979]

§ 1.961 Releases.

On matters within its jurisdiction, the Committee may authorize the release of any right, title, claim, lien or demand, however acquired, against any person obligated on a loan guaranteed, insured, or made by the Department of Veterans Affairs under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. ch. 37, or on an acquired loan, or on a vendee account.

[39 FR 26400, July 19, 1974]

§ 1.962 Waiver of overpayments.

There shall be no collection of an overpayment, or any interest thereon,
which results from participation in a benefit program administered under any law by VA when it is determined by a regional office Committee on Waivers and Compromises that collection would be against equity and good conscience. For the purpose of this regulation, the term overpayment refers only to those benefit payments made to a designated living payee or beneficiary in excess of the amount due or to which such payee or beneficiary is entitled. The death of an indebted payee, either prior to a request for waiver of the indebtedness or during Committee consideration of the waiver request, shall not preclude waiver consideration. There shall be no waiver consideration of an indebtedness that results from the receipt of a benefit payment by a non-payee who has no claim or entitlement to such payment.

(a) Waiver consideration is applicable in an indebtedness resulting from work study and education loan default, as well as indebtedness of a veteran-borrower, veteran transferee, or indebted spouse of either, arising out of participation in the loan program administered under 38 U.S.C. ch. 37. Also subject to waiver consideration is an indebtedness which is the result of VA hospitalization, domiciliary care, or treatment of a veteran, either furnished in error or on the basis of tentative eligibility.

(b) In any case where there is an indication of fraud or misrepresentation of a material fact on the part of the debtor or any other party having an interest in obtaining the waiver and recovery of the indebtedness from the payee who received such benefits would be against equity and good conscience.

(b) Application. A request for waiver of an indebtedness under this section shall only be considered:

1. If made within 2 years following the date of a notice of indebtedness issued on or before March 31, 1983, by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the debtor, or
2. Except as otherwise provided herein, if made within 180 days following the date of a notice of indebtedness issued on or after April 1, 1983, by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the debtor. The 180 day period may be extended if the individual requesting waiver demonstrated to the Chairperson of the Committee on Waivers and Compromises that, as a result of an error by either the Department of Veterans Affairs or the postal authorities, or due to other circumstances beyond the debtor’s control, there was a delay in such individual’s receipt of the notification of indebtedness beyond the time customarily required for mailing (including forwarding). If the requester does substantiate that there was such a delay in the receipt of the notice of indebtedness, the Chairperson shall direct that the 180 day period be computed from the date of the requester’s actual receipt of the notice of indebtedness.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5302 (a) & (c))

§ 1.963 Waiver; other than loan guaranty.

(a) General. Recovery of overpayments of any benefits made under laws administered by the VA shall be waived if there is no indication of fraud, misrepresentation, or bad faith on the part of the person or persons having an interest in obtaining the waiver and recovery of the indebtedness from the payee who received such benefits would be against equity and good conscience.

(b) Application. A request for waiver of an indebtedness under this section shall only be considered:

1. If made within 2 years following the date of a notice of indebtedness issued on or before March 31, 1983, by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the debtor, or
2. Except as otherwise provided herein, if made within 180 days following the date of a notice of indebtedness issued on or after April 1, 1983, by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the debtor. The 180 day period may be extended if the individual requesting waiver demonstrated to the Chairperson of the Committee on Waivers and Compromises that, as a result of an error by either the Department of Veterans Affairs or the postal authorities, or due to other circumstances beyond the debtor’s control, there was a delay in such individual’s receipt of the notification of indebtedness beyond the time customarily required for mailing (including forwarding). If the requester does substantiate that there was such a delay in the receipt of the notice of indebtedness, the Chairperson shall direct that the 180 day period be computed from the date of the requester’s actual receipt of the notice of indebtedness.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5302 (a) & (c))
§ 1.963a Waiver; erroneous payments of pay and allowances.

(a) The provisions applicable to VA (including refunds) concerning waiver actions relating to erroneous payments to VA employees of pay and allowances, and travel, transportation, and relocation expenses and allowances, are set forth in 5 U.S.C. 5584. The members of Committees on Waivers and Compromises assigned to waiver actions under §1.955 of this part are delegated all authority granted the Secretary under 5 U.S.C. 5584 to deny waiver or to grant waiver in whole or in part of any debt regardless of the amount of the indebtedness. Committee members also have exclusive authority to consider and render a decision on the appeal of a waiver denial or the granting of a partial waiver. However, the Chairperson of the Committee must assign the appeal to a different Committee member or members than the member or members who made the original decision that is now the subject of the appeal. The following are the only provisions of §§1.955 through 1.970 of this part applicable to waiver actions concerning erroneous payments of pay and allowances, and travel, transportation, and relocation expenses and allowances, under 5 U.S.C. 5584: §§1.955(a) through (e)(2), 1.956(a)(introductory text) and (a)(3), 1.959, 1.960, 1.963a, and 1.967(c).

(b) Waiver may be granted under this section and 5 U.S.C. 5584 when collection would be against equity and good conscience and not in the best interest of the United States. Generally, these criteria will be met by a finding that the erroneous payment occurred through administrative error and that there is no indication of fraud, misrepresentation, fault, or lack of good faith on the part of the employee or other person having an interest in obtaining the waiver. However, the waiver of the indebtedness of the veteran’s spouse shall not inure to the benefit of the veteran unless specifically provided for in the waiver decision.

(c) Application. A request for waiver of an indebtedness under this section shall be made within one year after the date on which the debtor receives, by Certified Mail-Return Receipt Requested, written notice from VA of the indebtedness. If written notice of indebtedness is sent by means other than
§ 1.965 Application of standard.

(a) The standard “Equity and Good Conscience”, will be applied when the facts and circumstances in a particular case indicate a need for reasonableness and moderation in the exercise of the Government’s rights. The decision reached should not be unduly favorable or adverse to either side. The phrase equity and good conscience means arriving at a fair decision between the obligor and the Government. In making this determination, consideration will be given to the following elements, which are not intended to be all inclusive:

(1) Fault of debtor. Where actions of the debtor contribute to creation of the debt.

(2) Balancing of faults. Weighing fault of debtor against Department of Veterans Affairs fault.

(3) Undue hardship. Whether collection would deprive debtor or family of basic necessities.

(4) Defeat the purpose. Whether withholding of benefits or recovery would nullify the objective for which benefits were intended.

(5) Unjust enrichment. Failure to make restitution would result in unfair gain to the debtor.

(6) Changing position to one’s detriment. Reliance on Department of Veterans Affairs benefits results in relinquishment of a valuable right or incurrence of a legal obligation.

(b) In applying this single standard for all areas of indebtedness, the following elements will be considered, any indication of which, if found, will preclude the granting of waiver:

(1) Fraud or misrepresentation of a material fact (see §1.962(b)).

(2) Bad faith. This term generally describes unfair or deceptive dealing by one who seeks to gain thereby at another’s expense. Thus, a debtor’s conduct in connection with a debt arising from participation in a VA benefits/services program exhibits bad faith if such conduct, although not undertaken with actual fraudulent intent, is undertaken with intent to seek an unfair advantage, with knowledge of the likely consequences, and results in a loss to the government.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5302(b))

§ 1.966 Scope of waiver decisions.

(a) Decisions will be based on the evidence of record. A hearing may be held at the request of the claimant or his/her representative. No expenses incurred by a claimant, his representative, or any witness incident to a hearing will be paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) A regional office Committee may:

(1) Waive recovery as to certain persons and decline to waive as to other persons whose claims are based on the same veteran’s service.

(2) Waive or decline to waive recovery from specific benefits or sources, except that:

(i) There shall be no waiver of recovery out of insurance of an indebtedness secured thereby; i.e., an insurance overpayment to an insured. However, recovery may be waived of any or all of such indebtedness out of benefits other than insurance then or thereafter payable to the insured.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 5302)

§ 1.967 Refunds.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, any portion of an indebtedness resulting from participation in benefits programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs which has been recovered by the U.S. Government from the debtor may be
considered for waiver, provided the debtor requests waiver in accordance with the time limits of §1.963(b). If collection of an indebtedness is waived as to the debtor, such portions of the indebtedness previously collected by the Department of Veterans Affairs will be refunded. In the event that waiver of collection is granted for either an education, loan guaranty, or direct loan debt, there will be a reduction in the debtor’s entitlement to future benefits in the program in which the debt originated.

(b) The Department of Veterans Affairs may not waive collection of the indebtedness of an educational institution found liable under 38 U.S.C. 3685. Waiver of collection of educational benefit overpayments from all or a portion of the eligible persons attending an educational institution which has been found liable under 38 U.S.C. 3685 shall not relieve the institution of its assessed liability. (See 38 CFR 21.4009(f)).

(c) The regulatory provisions concerning refunds of indebtedness collected by the Department of Veterans Affairs arising from erroneous payments of pay and allowances and travel, transportation, and relocation expenses and allowances are set forth in 4 CFR Parts 91 and 92.

(d) Refund of the entire amount collected may not be made when only a part of the debt is waived or when collection of the balance of a loan guaranty indebtedness by the Department of Veterans Affairs from obligors, other than a husband or wife of the person requesting waiver, will be adversely affected. Only where the amount collected exceeds the balance of the indebtedness still in existence will a refund be made in the amount of the difference between the two. Otherwise, refunds will be made in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section.


§ 1.968 [Reserved]

§ 1.969 Revision of waiver decisions.

(a) Jurisdiction. A decision involving waiver may be reversed or modified on the basis of new and material evidence, fraud, a change in law or interpretation of law specifically stated in a Department of Veterans Affairs issue, or clear and unmistakable error shown by the evidence in file at the time the prior decision was rendered by the same or any other regional office Committee.

(b) Finality of decisions. Except as provided in paragraph (a) of this section, a decision involving waiver rendered by the Committee having jurisdiction is final, subject to the provisions of:

(1) Sections 3.104(a), 19.153 and 19.154 of this chapter as to finality of decisions;
(2) Section 3.105 (a) and (b) of this chapter as to revision of decisions, except that the Central Office staff may postaudit or make an administrative review of any decision of a regional office Committee;
(3) Sections 3.103, 19.113 and 19.114 of this chapter as to notice of disagreement and the right of appeal;
(4) Section 19.124 of this chapter as to the filing of administrative appeals and the time limits for filing such appeals.

(c) Difference of opinion. Where reversal or amendment of a decision involving waiver is authorized under §3.105(b) of this chapter because of a difference of opinion, the effective date of waiver will be governed by the principle contained in §3.400(h) of this chapter.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)
[44 FR 59907, Oct. 17, 1979]

§ 1.970 Standards for compromise.

Decisions of the Committee respecting acceptance or rejection of a compromise offer shall be in conformity with the standards in §§1.930 through 1.936. In loan guaranty cases the offer of a veteran or other obligor to effect a compromise must relate to an indebtedness established after the liquidation of the security, if any, and shall be reviewed by the Committee. An offer to effect a compromise may be accepted if it is deemed advantageous to the Government. A decision on an offer of compromise may be revised or modified on the basis of any information which
would warrant a change in the original decision.


SALARY OFFSET PROVISIONS

SOURCE: 52 FR 1905, Jan. 16, 1987, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1.980 Scope.

(a) In accordance with 5 CFR part 550, subpart K, the provisions set forth in §1.980 through 1.995 implement VA’s authority for the use of salary offset to satisfy certain debts owed to VA.

(b) These regulations apply to offsets from the salaries of current employees of VA, or any other agency, who owe debts to VA. Offsets by VA from salaries of current VA employees who owe debts to other agencies shall be processed in accordance with procedures set forth in 5 CFR part 550, subpart K.

(c) These regulations do not apply to debts or claims arising under the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, the Social Security Act, the tariff laws of the United States, or to any case where collection of a debt by salary offset is explicitly provided for (e.g., travel advances in 5 U.S.C. 5705 and employee training expenses in 5 U.S.C. 4108) or prohibited by another statute.

(d) These regulations do not preclude an employee from requesting waiver of an overpayment under 38 U.S.C. 5302, 5 U.S.C. 5384, or any other similar provision of law, or in any way questioning the amount or validity of a debt not involving benefits under the laws administered by VA by submitting a subsequent claim to the General Accounting Office in accordance with procedures prescribed by that office.

(e) These regulations do not apply to any adjustment to pay arising out of an employee’s election of coverage or a change in coverage under a Federal benefits program requiring periodic deduction from pay if the amount to be recovered was accumulated over four pay periods or less.

(f) These regulations do not apply to a routine intra-agency adjustment of pay that is made to correct an overpayment of pay attributable to clerical or administrative errors or delays in processing pay documents, if the overpayment occurred within the four pay periods preceding the adjustment and, at the time of such adjustment, or as soon thereafter as practicable, the individual is provided written notice of the nature and amount of the adjustment and a point of contact for contesting such adjustment.

(g) These regulations do not apply to any adjustment to collect a debt amounting to $50 or less, if at the time of such adjustment, or as soon thereafter as practicable, the individual is provided with written notice of the nature and amount of the adjustment and a point of contact for contesting such adjustment.

(h) These regulations do not preclude the compromise, suspension, or termination of collection action under the Federal Claims Collection Standards (FCCS) (31 CFR parts 900–904) and VA regulations 38 CFR 1.930 through 1.944.

(i) The procedures and requirements of these regulations do not apply to salary offset used to recoup a Federal employee’s debt where a judgment has been obtained against the employee for the debt.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)


§ 1.981 Definitions.

(a) Agency means:

(1) An executive agency as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105, including the U.S. Postal Service, and the U.S. Postal Rate Commission, and

(2) A military department as defined in 5 U.S.C. 102.

(3) An agency or court of the judicial branch, including a court as defined in 28 U.S.C. 610, the District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation;

(4) An agency of the legislative branch, including the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives; and

(5) Other independent establishments that are entities of the Federal Government.

(b) Debt means an amount owed to the United States from sources which include loans insured or guaranteed by the United States and all other
§ 1.982 Salary offsets of debts involving benefits under the laws administered by VA.

(a) VA will not collect a debt involving benefits under the laws administered by VA by salary offset unless the Secretary or appropriate designee first provides the employee with a minimum of 30 calendar days written notice.

(b) If the employee has not previously appealed the amount or existence of the debt under 38 CFR parts 19 and 20 and the time for pursuing such an appeal has not expired (§20.302), the Secretary or appropriate designee will provide the employee with written notice of the debt. The written notice will state that the employee may appeal the amount and existence of the debt in accordance with the procedures set forth in 38 CFR parts 19 and 20 and will contain the determination and information required by §1.983(b)(1) through (5), (7), (9), (10), and (12) through (14). The notice will also state that the employee may request a hearing on the offset schedule under the procedures set forth in §1.984 and such a request will stay the commencement of salary offset.

(c) If the employee previously appealed the amount or existence of the debt and the Board of Veterans Appeals decided the appeal on the merits or if the employee failed to pursue an appeal within the time provided by regulations, the Secretary or designee shall provide the employee with written notice prior to collecting the debt by salary offset. The notice will state:

1. The determinations and information required by §1.983(b)(1)–(5), (7), and (12)–(14);
2. That the employee’s appeal of the existence or amount of the debt was determined on the merits or that the employee failed to pursue an appeal within the time provided, and VA’s decision is final except as otherwise provided in agency regulations;
3. That the employee may request a waiver of the debt pursuant to 38 CFR 1.911(c)(2) subject to the time limits of 38 U.S.C. 5302.
4. That the employee may request an oral or paper hearing on the offset schedule and receive a decision within 60 days of such request under the procedures and time limit set forth in §1.984 and that such a request will stay the commencement of salary offset.

(d) If the employee has appealed the existence or amount of the debt and the Board of Veterans Appeals has not decided the appeal on the merits, collection of the debt by salary offset will be suspended until the appeal is decided or the employee ceases to pursue the appeal.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)

§ 1.983 Notice requirements before salary offsets of debts not involving benefits under the laws administered by VA.

(a) For a debt not involving benefits under the laws administered by VA, the Secretary or designee will review the records relating to the debt to assure that it is owed prior to providing the employee with a notice of the debt.

(b) Except as provided in §1.980(e), salary offset of debts not involving benefits under the laws administered by VA will not be made unless the Secretary or designee first provides the employee with a minimum of 30 calendar days written notice. This notice will state:

(1) The Secretary or designee’s determination that a debt is owed;

(2) The amount of the debt owed and the facts giving rise to the debt;

(3) The Secretary or designee’s intention to collect the debt by means of deduction from the employee’s current disposable pay account until the debt and all accumulated interest and associated costs are paid in full;

(4) The amount, frequency, approximate beginning date, and duration of the intended deductions;

(5) An explanation of VA’s requirements concerning interest, administrative costs, and penalties;

(6) The employee’s right to inspect and copy VA records relating to the debt or, if the employee or his or her representative cannot personally inspect the records, to request and receive a copy of such records;

(7) The employee’s right to enter into a written agreement with the Secretary or designee for a repayment schedule differing from that proposed by the Secretary or designee, so long as the terms of the repayment schedule proposed by the employee are agreeable to the Secretary or designee;

(8) The VA employee’s right to request an oral or paper hearing on the Secretary or appropriate designee’s determination of the existence or amount of the debt, or the percentage of disposable pay to be deducted each pay period, so long as a request is filed by the employee as prescribed by the Secretary. The hearing official for the hearing requested by a VA employee must be either a VA administrative law judge or a hearing official from an agency other than VA. Any VA hearing official may conduct an oral or paper hearing at the request of a non-VA employee on the determination by an appropriately designated official of the employing agency of the existence or amount of the debt, or the percentage of disposable pay to be deducted each pay period, so long as a hearing request is filed by the non-VA employee as prescribed by the employing agency.

(9) The method and time period for requesting a hearing;

(10) That the timely filing of a request for a hearing (oral or paper) will stay the commencement of salary offset;

(11) That a final decision after the hearing will be issued at the earliest practical date, but no later than 60 calendar days after the filing of the request for the hearing, unless the employee requests and the hearing officer grants a delay in the proceedings;

(12) That any knowingly false or frivolous statements, representations, or evidence may subject the employee to:

(i) Disciplinary procedures appropriate under 5 U.S.C. ch. 75, 5 CFR part 752, or any other applicable statutes or regulations;

(ii) Penalties under the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. 3729–3731, or any other applicable statutory authority; or

(iii) Criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. 286, 287, 1001, and 1002 or any other applicable statutory authority.

(13) The employee’s right, if applicable, to request waiver under 5 U.S.C. 5584 and 38 CFR 1.963a and any other rights and remedies available to the employee under statutes or regulations governing the program for which the collection is being made; and

(14) Unless there are applicable contractual or statutory provisions to the contrary, that amounts paid on or deducted for the debt which are later waived or found not owed to the United States will be promptly refunded to the employee.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)

§ 1.984 Request for a hearing.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section and in §1.982, an employee wishing a hearing on the existence or amount of the debt or on the proposed offset schedule must send such a request to the office which sent the notice of the debt. The employee must also specify whether an oral or paper hearing is requested. If an oral hearing is requested, the request should explain why the matter cannot be resolved by review of the documentary evidence. The request must be received by the office which sent the notice of the debt not later than 30 calendar days from the date of the notice.

(b) If the employee files a request for a hearing after the expiration of the 30 day period provided for in paragraph (a) of this section, VA may accept the request if the employee shows that the delay was because of circumstances beyond his or her control or because of failure to receive the written notice of the filing deadline (unless the employee has actual notice of the filing deadline).

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)


§ 1.985 Form, notice of, and conduct of hearing.

(a) After an employee requests a hearing, the hearing official or administrative law judge shall notify the employee of the form of the hearing to be provided. If the hearing will be oral, the notice shall set forth the date, time, and location for the hearing. If the hearing will be paper, the employee shall be notified that he or she should submit his or her position and arguments in writing to the hearing official or administrative law judge by a specified date after which the record shall be closed. This date shall give the employee reasonable time to submit this information.

(b) An employee who requests an oral hearing shall be provided an oral hearing if the hearing official or administrative law judge determines that the matter cannot be resolved by review of documentary evidence, for example, when an issue of credibility or veracity is involved. If a determination is made to provide an oral hearing, the hearing official or administrative law judge may offer the employee the opportunity for a hearing by telephone conference call. If this offer is rejected or if the hearing official or administrative law judge declines to offer a telephone conference call hearing, the employee shall be provided an oral hearing permitting the personal appearance of the employee, his or her personal representative, and witnesses. A record or transcript of every oral hearing shall be made. Witnesses shall testify under oath or affirmation. VA shall not be responsible for the payment of any expenses incident to attendance at the hearing which are incurred by either the employee, his or her personal representative or Counsel, or witnesses.

(c) In all other cases where an employee requests a hearing, a paper hearing shall be provided. A paper hearing shall consist of a review of the written evidence of record by the administrative law judge or hearing official.

(d) In any hearing under this section, the administrative law judge or hearing official may exclude from consideration evidence or testimony which is irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)

§ 1.986 Result if employee fails to meet deadlines.

An employee waives the right to a hearing, and will have his or her disposable pay offset in accordance with the offset schedule, if the employee:

(a) Fails to file a request for a hearing as prescribed in §1.982, §1.984, or §§19.1 through 19.200, whichever is applicable, unless such failure is excused as provided in §1.984(b); or

(b) Fails to appear at an oral hearing of which he or she had been notified unless the administrative law judge or hearing official determines that failure to appear was due to circumstances beyond the employee’s control.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)
§ 1.987 Review by the hearing official or administrative law judge.

(a) The hearing official or administrative law judge shall uphold VA’s determination of the existence and amount of the debt unless determined to be erroneous by a preponderance of the evidence.

(b) The hearing official or administrative law judge shall uphold VA’s offset schedule unless the schedule would result in extreme hardship to the employee.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)

[52 FR 1905, Jan. 16, 1987; 52 FR 23824, June 25, 1987]

§ 1.988 Written decision following a hearing requested under § 1.984.

(a) The hearing official or administrative law judge must issue a written decision not later than 60 days after the employee files a request for the hearing.

(b) Written decisions provided after a hearing requested under § 1.984 will include:

(1) A statement of the facts presented to support the nature and origin of the alleged debt;

(2) The hearing official or administrative law judge’s analysis, findings and conclusions concerning as applicable:

(i) The employee’s or VA’s grounds;

(ii) The amount and validity of the alleged debt; and

(iii) The repayment schedule.

(c) The decision in a case where a paper hearing was provided shall be based upon a review of the written record. The decision in a case where an oral hearing was provided shall be based upon the hearing and the written record.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)

§ 1.989 Review of VA records related to the debt.

(a) Notification by employee. An employee who intends to inspect or copy VA records related to the debt as permitted by a notice provided under § 1.983 must send a letter to the office which sent the notice of the debt stating his or her intention. The letter must be received by that office within 30 calendar days of the date of the notice.

(b) VA response. In response to timely notice submitted by the debtor as described in paragraph (a) of this section, VA will notify the employee of the location and time when the employee may inspect and copy records related to the debt.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)


§ 1.990 Written agreement to repay debt as alternative to salary offset.

(a) Notification by employee. The employee may propose, in response to a notice under § 1.983, a written agreement to repay the debt as an alternative to salary offset. Any employee who wishes to do this must submit a proposed written agreement to repay the debt which is received by the office which sent the notice of the debt within 30 calendar days of the date of the notice.

(b) VA response. In response to timely notice by the debtor as described in paragraph (a) of this section, VA will notify the employee whether the employee’s proposed written agreement for repayment is acceptable. It is within VA’s discretion to accept a repayment agreement instead of proceeding by offset. In making this determination, VA will balance its interest in collecting the debt against the hardship to the employee. VA will accept a repayment agreement instead of offset only if the employee is able to establish that offset would result in extreme hardship.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)


§ 1.991 Procedures for salary offset: when deductions may begin.

(a) Deductions to liquidate an employee’s debt will be by the method and in the amount stated in the notice to collect from the employee’s current pay as modified by a written decision issued under § 1.962 or § 1.988, or parts 19 and 20 or by written agreement between the employee and the VA under § 1.990.
(b) If the employee filed a request for a hearing as provided by §1.984 before the expiration of the period provided for in that section, deductions will not begin until after the hearing official or administrative law judge has provided the employee with a hearing, and has rendered a final written decision.

(c) If the employee failed to file a timely request for a hearing, deductions will begin on the date specified in the notice of intention to offset, unless a hearing is granted pursuant to §1.984(b).

(d) If an employee retires, resigns, or his or her employment ends before collection of the amount of the indebtedness is completed, the remaining indebtedness will be collected according to procedures for administrative offset (see 5 CFR 831.1801 through 831.1808, 31 CFR 901.3, and 38 CFR 1.912).


§ 1.993 Non-waiver of rights.

So long as there are not statutory or contractual provisions to the contrary, an employee’s involuntary payment (of all or a portion of a debt) under these regulations will not be interpreted as a waiver of any rights that the employee may have under 5 U.S.C. 5514.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5514)

§ 1.995 Requesting recovery through centralized administrative offset.

(a) Under 31 U.S.C. 3716, VA and other creditor agencies must notify Treasury of all debts over 180 days delinquent so that recovery of such debts may be made by centralized administrative offset. This includes those debts that VA and other agencies seek from the pay account of an employee of another Federal agency via salary offset. Treasury and other disbursing officials will match payments, including Federal salary payments, against these debts. Where a match occurs, and all the requirements for offset have been met, the payment will be offset to satisfy the debt in whole or part.
§ 1.1000 Garnishment of payments after disbursement.

(a) Payments of benefits due under any law administered by the Secretary that are protected by 38 U.S.C. 5301(a) and made by direct deposit to a financial institution are subject to 31 CFR part 212, Garnishment of Accounts Containing Federal Benefit Payments.

(b) This section may be amended only by a rulemaking issued jointly by the Department of the Treasury and the agencies defined as a “benefit agency” in 31 CFR 212.3.

[76 FR 9961, Feb. 23, 2011]
Under Secretary for Health (for income matching programs), Director, Income Verification Match Center (for income matching programs), and the Associate Director for Operations, Income Verification Match Center (for income matching programs).

(c) **Means of service.** Subpoenas issued pursuant to this section may be served by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the witness only. Personal service by any VA employee or other authorized person may be made where authorized in writing by the issuing official.

(d) **Fees and mileage; district courts of the United States.** Any person required by such subpoena to attend as a witness shall be allowed and paid the same fees and mileage as are paid witnesses in the district courts of the United States. In case of disobedience to any such subpoena, the aid of any district court of the United States may be invoked in requiring attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of documentary evidence, and such court within the jurisdiction in which the inquiry is carried on may, in the case of contumacy or refusal to obey a subpoena issued to any officer, agent, or employee of any corporation or to any other person, issue an order requiring such corporation or other person to appear or to give evidence touching the matter in question, and any failure to obey such order of the court may be punished by such court as a contempt thereof.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C.A. 501, 5711)


§ 2.4 Delegation of authority to order paid advertising for use in recruitment.

Paid advertisements may be used in recruitment for VA competitive and excepted service positions. Authority to order such advertisements is hereby delegated to Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials (the General Counsel; the Inspector General; the Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals; and the Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization), Deputy Assistant Secretaries, to the deputies of such officials, to the Deputy Assistant Secretary and Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management, and to field facility Directors.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 302(b)(2); 44 U.S.C. 3702)

[61 FR 20134, May 6, 1996, as amended at 72 FR 65462, Nov. 21, 2007]
§ 2.5 Delegation of authority to certify copies of documents, records, or papers in Department of Veterans Affairs files.

(a) Persons occupying or acting for the following positions in the Office of the General Counsel are authorized to certify copies of public documents, records, or papers belonging to or in the files of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of 38 U.S.C. 302:
- General Counsel,
- Deputy General Counsel,
- Assistant General Counsel,
- Deputy Assistant General Counsel, and
- Regional Counsel for Puerto Rico.

(b) The person occupying or acting in the position of Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals, is authorized to certify copies of decisions, orders, subpoenas, and other documents, records, or papers issued by, belonging to, or in the files of the Board for the purposes of 38 U.S.C. 302.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 302, 501, 512)


§ 2.6 Secretary’s delegations of authority to certain officials (38 U.S.C. 512).

Employees occupying or acting in the positions designated below are delegated authority as indicated:

(a) Veterans Health Administration. The Under Secretary for Health is delegated authority:

(1) To act on all matters assigned to the Veterans Health Administration by statute (38 U.S.C. Ch. 73) and by regulation, except such matters as require the personal attention or action of the Secretary.

(2) To revise, exceed, delete, increase, or decrease fees contained in Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Services and Research Administration Manual M–1, chapter 6, and any amendments thereto, and to add additional fees when found to be necessary, provided: such fees are not in excess of those customarily charged the general public, in the community concerned, for the same service.

(3) To designate the Deputy Under Secretary for Health, or other physician of the Veterans Health Administration, and authority is hereby delegated such designee to perform the functions prescribed in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(4) To revise, exceed, delete, increase or decrease dental fees established in Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Services and Research Administration Manual M–4, chapter 6, and any amendments thereto, and to add additional fees when found to be necessary, provided: such fees are not in excess of those customarily charged the general public, in the community concerned, for the same service.

(5) To designate the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Dentistry, and authority is hereby delegated such designee, to perform the functions prescribed in paragraph (a)(4) of this section.

(6) To supervise programs for grants to the Republic of the Philippines and medical care for Commonwealth Army veterans and Philippine Scouts in Veterans Memorial Medical Center, Manila, pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. ch. 17, subch. IV.

(7) To designate the Deputy Under Secretary for Health of the Veterans Health Administration and authority is hereby delegated such designee to designate a Department of Veterans Affairs full-time physician or nonmedical Director to serve as an ex officio member on advisory bodies to State Comprehensive Health Planning agencies and to individual Regional Medical Programs in those areas in which there is located one or more Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals or other health facilities, who shall serve on such advisory group as the representative of the Department of Veterans Affairs health facilities located in that area.

(8) To authorize Directors of Department of Veterans Affairs property and facilities under the charge and control of the Department of Veterans Affairs to appoint police officers with the power to enforce Federal laws and Department of Veterans Affairs regulations, to investigate violations of those...
laws and to arrest for crimes committed on Department of Veterans Affairs property to the full extent provided by Department policies and procedures.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501 and 512)

(9) To develop and establish minimum safety and quality standards for adaptive equipment provided under chapter 39 of title 38, United States Code, or to appoint a designee to perform these functions.

(b) Veterans Benefits Administration—
(1) General. The Under Secretary for Benefits is delegated authority to act on all matters assigned to the Veterans Benefits Administration except as provided in §1.771 of this chapter and to authorize supervisory or adjudicative personnel within his/her jurisdiction to perform such functions as may be assigned.

(2) Philippines. The Director, Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office, Manila, Philippines, is delegated authority to exercise such authorities as are delegated to directors of regional offices in the United States, which are appropriate to the administration in the Republic of the Philippines of the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) Office of Management. (1) The Assistant Secretary for Management (Chief Financial Officer) is delegated authority to act on all matters assigned to his/her office, and to authorize supervisory personnel within his/her jurisdiction to perform such functions as may be assigned. Appropriate written notification will be furnished other Federal agencies concerning such authorizations.

(2) The Assistant Secretary for Management (Chief Financial Officer) is delegated authority under 31 U.S.C. 1553(c)(1), to approve, in a fixed appropriation account to which the period of availability for obligation has expired, obligational increases related to contract changes when such transaction will cause cumulative obligational increase for contract changes during a fiscal year to exceed $4 million but not more than $25 million; for this responsibility the Assistant Secretary for Management (Chief Financial Officer) shall act as a member of the Office of the Secretary and shall report to and consult with the Secretary on these matters.

(d) Assistant Secretary for Management (Chief Financial Officer); administration heads and staff office directors. The Assistant Secretary for Management (Chief Financial Officer) is delegated authority to take appropriate action (other than provided for in paragraphs (e)(3) and (e)(4) of this section) in connection with the collection of civil claims by VA for money or property, as authorized in §1.900, et seq. The Assistant Secretary for Management (Chief Financial Officer) may redelegate such authority as he/she deems appropriate to administration heads and staff office directors.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 512)

(e) General Counsel. (1) The General Counsel is delegated authority to serve as the Regulatory Policy Officer for the Department in accordance with Executive Order 12866. The General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, and Director for Regulation Policy and Management are delegated authority to manage, direct, and coordinate the Department’s rulemaking activities, including the revision and reorganization of regulations, and to perform all functions necessary or appropriate under Executive Order 12866 and other rulemaking requirements.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 512)

(2) Under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 515(b), the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel and Regional Counsel, or those authorized to act for them, are authorized to consider, ascertain, adjust, determine, and settle tort claims cognizable thereunder and to execute an appropriate voucher and other necessary instruments in connection with the final disposition of such claims.

(3) Under the provisions of "The Federal Medical Care Recovery Act," 42 U.S.C. 2651, et seq. (as implemented by part 43, title 28, Code of Federal Regulations), authority is delegated to the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group 1), Deputy Assistant General Counsel of said staff group,
and Regional Counsels or those authorized to act for them, to collect in full, compromise, settle, or waive any claim and execute the release thereof; however, claims in excess of $100,000 may be compromised, settled, or waived only with the prior approval of the Department of Justice.

(4) Under the Federal Claims Collection Act of 1966, 31 U.S.C. 3711, et seq., authority is delegated to the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel, Deputy Assistant General Counsel and Regional Counsel, or those authorized to act for them, to:

(i) Make appropriate determinations with respect to the litigative probabilities of a claim (§1.932 of this chapter), the legal merits of a claim (§1.942(e) of this chapter), and any other legal considerations of a claim.

(ii) Collect in full a claim involving damage to or loss of government property under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs resulting from negligence or other legal wrong of a person (other than an employee of the Government while acting within the scope of his or her employment) and to compromise, suspend, or terminate any such claim not exceeding $100,000.

(iii) Collect a claim in full from an individual or legal entity who is liable for the cost of hospital, medical, surgical, or dental care and treatment of a person, and to compromise, suspend, or terminate any such claim not exceeding $100,000.

(iv) The delegations of authority set forth in paragraphs (e)(4)(i) and (iii) of this section do not apply to the handling of any claim as to which there is an indication of fraud, the presentation of a false claim or misrepresentation on the part of the debtor or any other party having an interest in the claim, or to any claim based in whole or in part on conduct in violation of the antitrust laws. Such cases will be considered by the General Counsel, who will make the determination in all instances as to whether the case warrants referral to the Department of Justice. The delegations of authority are applicable to those claims where the Department of Justice determines that action based upon the alleged fraud, false claim, or misrepresentation is not warranted.

(5) Pursuant to the provisions of the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claim Act of 1964, 31 U.S.C. 3721, as amended, the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group III), Deputy Assistant General Counsel of said staff group, and Regional Counsel or those authorized to act for them, are authorized to settle and pay a claim for not more than $40,000 made by a civilian officer or employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs for damage to, or loss of, personal property incident to his or her service. (Pub. L. 97–226)

(6) Under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 7316(e), authority is delegated to the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, and the Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group I) to hold harmless or provide liability insurance for any person to whom the immunity provisions of section 7316 apply, for damage for personal injury or death, or for property damage, negligently caused by such person while furnishing medical care or treatment in the exercise of his or her duties in or for the Veterans Health Administration, if such person is assigned to a foreign country, detailed to State or political division thereof, or is acting under any other circumstances which would preclude the remedies of an injured third person against the United States, provided by sections 1346(b) and 2672 of title 28, United States Code, for such damage or injury.

7 The General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, and those authorized to act for them, are authorized to conduct investigations, examine witnesses, take affidavits, administer oaths and affirmations, and certify copies of public or private documents on all matters within the jurisdiction of the General Counsel. Pursuant to the provisions of §2.2(c), the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, and those authorized to act for them, are authorized to countersign VA Form 4505.

8 The General Counsel, or the Deputy General Counsel acting as or for
the General Counsel, is authorized to designate, in accordance with established standards, those legal opinions of the General Counsel which will be considered precedent opinions involving veterans’ benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 512)

(9) Under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1729(c)(1), authority is delegated to the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group I), Deputy Assistant General Counsel of said staff group, and Regional Counsel, or those authorized to act for them, to collect in full, compromise, settle, or waive any claim and execute the release thereof; however, claims in excess of $100,000 may only be compromised, settled, or waived with the prior approval of the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group I), or Deputy Assistant General Counsel of said staff group, or those authorized to act for them.


(10) The General Counsel and the Deputy General Counsel are authorized to make final Departmental decisions on appeals under the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 5705.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 512)

(11) All authority delegated in this paragraph to Regional Counsels will be exercised by them under the supervision of and in accordance with instructions issued by the General Counsel.

(f) National Cemetery Administration. Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs is delegated authority:

(1) To act on all matters assigned to the National Cemetery Administration by statute (38 U.S.C. chapter 24) and by regulation except where specifically requiring the personal attention or action of the Secretary and to authorize supervisory personnel within the jurisdiction of the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, to perform such functions as may be assigned.

(2) To designate, as deemed necessary, Superintendents of National Cemeteries as special investigators under 38 U.S.C. 901, however, such law enforcement authority is limited to enforcement of rules and regulations governing conduct on property under the charge and control of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as those rules and regulations apply to the cemetery over which the individual Superintendent exercises control and jurisdiction. Such designation will not authorize the carrying of firearms by any Superintendent.

(3) To accept donations, except offers of land, made in any manner, for the beautification or benefit of national cemeteries.

(4) To name features in national cemeteries, such as, roads, walks, and special structures.

(5) To establish policies and specifications for inscriptions on Government headstones, markers, and private monuments.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 512, 2404)

(g) Inspector General. (1) The Secretary delegates to the Inspector General, the authority, as head of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to make written requests under the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(7), for the transfer of records or copies of records maintained by other agencies which are necessary to carry out an authorized law enforcement activity of the Office of Inspector General. This delegation is made pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 512. The Inspector General may redelegate the foregoing authority within the Office of Inspector General, but the delegation may only be to an official of sufficient rank to ensure that the request for the records has been the subject of a high level evaluation of the need for the information.

(2) The Inspector General delegates the authority under the Inspector General Act of 1978, and redelegates the authority under paragraph (a) of this section, to request Privacy Act-protected records from Federal agencies pursuant to subsection (b)(7) of the Privacy Act to each of the following Office of Inspector General officials: (i) Deputy Inspector General, (ii) Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, (iii)
Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, (iv) Chief of Operations, and (v) Special Agents in Charge of Field Offices of Investigations. These officials may not redelegate this authority.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552a)

(b) Delegations to Office Resolution Management Officials (ORM). (1) The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management is delegated authority to supervise and control the operation of the administrative EEO Discrimination Complaint Processing System within the Department.

(2) The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, the Chief Operating Officer, and all Regional EEO Officers/Field Managers are delegated authority to make procedural agency decisions to either accept or dismiss, in whole or in part, EEO discrimination complaints based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or reprisal filed by employees, former employees, or applicants for employment.

(3) The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Chief, Policy and Compliance are delegated authority to make agency decisions on all breach of settlement claims raised by employees, former employees, and applicants for employment.

(4) The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Chief, Policy and Compliance are delegated authority to consider and resolve all claims raised by employees, former employees, and applicants for employment that allege dissatisfaction with the processing of a previously filed EEO discrimination complaint.

(5) The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Chief, Policy and Compliance are delegated authority to monitor compliance by Department organizational components with orders and decisions of the OEDCA and the EEOC.

(i) Delegations to officials of the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA). (1) The Director and Associate Director, OEDCA, are delegated authority to make procedural decisions to dismiss, in whole or in part, any EEO discrimination complaint filed by any employee, former employee, or applicant for employment that may be pending before OEDCA, where administrative complaint processing efficiency may be best served by doing so.

(2) The Director and Associate Director, OEDCA, are delegated authority to dismiss, in whole or in part any EEO discrimination complaint based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or reprisal filed by any ORM employee, former employee, or applicant for employment.

(3) The Director and Associate Director, OEDCA, are delegated authority to make the agency decision on all breach of settlement claims raised by ORM employees, former employees, and applicants for employment.

(4) The Director and Associate Director, OEDCA, are delegated authority to make procedural agency decisions to dismiss, in whole or in part any EEO discrimination complaint based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or reprisal filed by ORM employees, former employees, and applicants for employment.

(5) The Director and Associate Director, OEDCA, are delegated authority to make procedural agency decisions to either accept or dismiss, in whole or in part, EEO discrimination complaints filed by employees, former employees, or applicants for employment where the ORM must recuse itself from a case due to an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest.

(j) Delegation to the Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals. In cases where OEDCA has recused itself from a case due to an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest, the Chairman, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, is delegated authority to make procedural agency decisions to dismiss, in whole or in part, EEO discrimination complaints filed by agency employees, former employees, and applicants for employment; to make substantive final agency decisions where complainants do not request an EEOC hearing; to take final agency action following a decision by an EEOC Administrative Judge; and to make final agency decisions ordering appropriate remedies.
and relief where there is a finding of discrimination.

(k) Processing complaints involving certain officials. A complaint alleging that the Secretary or the Deputy Secretary personally made a decision directly related to matters in dispute, or are otherwise personally involved in such matters, will be referred for procedural acceptability review, investigation, and substantive decisionmaking to another Federal agency (e.g., The Department of Justice) pursuant to a cost reimbursement agreement. Referral will not be made when the action complained of relates merely to ministerial involvement in such matters (e.g., ministerial approval of selection recommendations submitted to the Secretary by the Under Secretary for Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, assistant secretaries, or staff office heads).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 512)

[25 FR 11095, Nov. 23, 1960]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For Federal Register citations affecting §2.6, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.fdsys.gov.

§ 2.7 Delegation of authority to provide relief on account of administrative error.

(a) Section 503(a) of title 38 U.S.C., provides that if the Secretary determines that benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs have not been provided by reason of administrative error on the part of the Federal Government or any of its employees, the Secretary is authorized to provide such relief on account of such error as the Secretary determines equitable, including the payment of moneys to any person whom he determines equitably entitled thereto. The Secretary is also required to submit an annual report to the Congress, containing a brief summary of each recommendation for relief and its disposition. Preparation of the report shall be the responsibility of the General Counsel.

(c) The authority to grant the equitable relief, referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, has not been delegated and is reserved to the Secretary. Recommendation for the correction of administrative error and for appropriate equitable relief therefrom will be submitted to the Secretary, through the General Counsel. Such recommendation may be initiated by the head of the administration having responsibility for the benefit, or of any concerned staff office, or by the Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals. When a recommendation for relief under paragraph (a) or (b) of this section is initiated by the head of a staff office, or the Chairman, Board of Veterans Appeals, the views of the head of the administration having responsibility for the benefit will be obtained and transmitted with the recommendation of the initiating office.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 503, 512)


§ 2.8 Delegation of authority to authorize allowances for Department of Veterans Affairs employees who are notaries public.

(a) Employees occupying or acting in the positions designated in paragraph (b) of this section are authorized to designate those employees who are required to serve as notaries public in connection with the performance of official business and to pay an allowance for the costs therefor not to exceed the expense required to be incurred by them in order to obtain their commission.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 5945)

(b) Designated positions: Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary for Benefits, Director, Office of Data Management
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PART 3—ADJUDICATION

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(b) **Reserve component** means the Army, Naval, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard Reserves and the National and Air National Guard of the United States.

(c) **Reserves** means members of a Reserve component of one of the Armed Forces.

(d) **Veteran** means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

(1) For compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation the term veteran includes a person who died in active service and whose death was not due to willful misconduct.

(2) For death pension the term veteran includes a person who died in active service under conditions which preclude payment of service-connected death benefits, provided such person had completed at least 2 years honorable military, naval or air service, as certified by the Secretary concerned. (See §§ 3.3(b)(3)(i) and 3.3(b)(4)(i))

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(e) **Veteran of any war** means any veteran who served in the active military, naval or air service during a period of war as set forth in §3.2.

(f) **Period of war** means the periods described in §3.2.

(g) **Secretary concerned** means:

(1) The Secretary of the Army, with respect to matters concerning the Army;

(2) The Secretary of the Navy, with respect to matters concerning the Navy or the Marine Corps;

(3) The Secretary of the Air Force, with respect to matters concerning the Air Force;

(4) The Secretary of Homeland Security, with respect to matters concerning the Coast Guard;

(5) The Secretary of Health and Human Services, with respect to matters concerning the Public Health Service; and

(6) The Secretary of Commerce, with respect to matters concerning the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Environmental Science Services Administration, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(h) **Discharge or release** includes retirement from the active military, naval, or air service.

(i) **State** means each of the several States, Territories and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(j) **Marriage** means a marriage valid under the law of the place where the parties resided at the time of marriage,
or the law of the place where the parties resided when the right to benefits accrued.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(c))

(k) Service-connected means, with respect to disability or death, that such disability was incurred or aggravated, or that the death resulted from a disability incurred or aggravated, in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.

(1) Nonservice-connected means, with respect to disability or death, that such disability was not incurred or aggravated, or that the death did not result from a disability incurred or aggravated, in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.

(m) In line of duty means an injury or disease incurred or aggravated during a period of active military, naval, or air service unless such injury or disease was the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct or, for claims filed after October 31, 1990, was a result of his or her abuse of alcohol or drugs. A service department finding that injury, disease or death occurred in line of duty will be binding on the Department of Veterans Affairs unless it is patently inconsistent with the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(1) Avoiding duty by desertion, or was absent without leave which materially interfered with the performance of military duty.

(2) Confined under a sentence of court-martial involving an unremitted dishonorable discharge.

(3) Confined under sentence of a civil court for a felony as determined under the laws of the jurisdiction where the person was convicted by such court.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 105)

NOTE: See §3.1(y)(2)(iii) for applicability of in line of duty in determining former prisoner of war status.

(n) Willful misconduct means an act involving conscious wrongdoing or known prohibited action. A service department finding that injury, disease or death was not due to misconduct will be binding on the Department of Veterans Affairs unless it is patently inconsistent with the facts and the requirements of laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(1) It involves deliberate or intentional wrongdoing with knowledge of or wanton and reckless disregard of its probable consequences.

(2) Mere technical violation of police regulations or ordinances will not per se constitute willful misconduct.

(3) Willful misconduct will not be determinative unless it is the proximate cause of injury, disease or death. (See §§3.301, 3.302.)

(o) Political subdivision of the United States includes the jurisdiction defined as a State in paragraph (i) of this section, and the counties, cities or municipalities of each.

(p) Claim—Application means a formal or informal communication in writing requesting a determination of entitlement or evidencing a belief in entitlement, to a benefit.

(q) Notice means written notice sent to a claimant or payee at his or her latest address of record.

(r) Date of receipt means the date on which a claim, information or evidence was received in the Department of Veterans Affairs except as to specific provisions for claims or evidence received in the State Department (§3.108), or in the Social Security Administration (§§3.153, 3.201), or Department of Defense as to initial claims filed at or prior to separation. However, the Under Secretary for Benefits may establish, by notice published in the Federal Register, exceptions to this rule, using factors such as postmark or the date the claimant signed the correspondence, when he or she determines that a natural or man-made interference with the normal channels through which the Veterans Benefits Administration ordinarily receives correspondence has resulted in one or more Veterans Benefits Administration offices experiencing extended delays in receipt of claims, information, or evidence from claimants served by the affected office or offices to an extent that, if not addressed, would adversely
affect such claimants through no fault of their own.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 512(a), 5110)

(s) On the borders thereof means, with regard to service during the Mexican border period, the States of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas, and the nations of Guatemala and British Honduras.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(30))

(t) In the waters adjacent thereto means, with regard to service during the Mexican border period, the waters (including the islands therein) which are within 750 nautical miles (863 statute miles) of the coast of the mainland of Mexico.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(30))

(u) Section 306 pension means those disability and death pension programs in effect on December 31, 1978, which arose out of Pub. L. 86–211; 73 Stat. 432.

(v) Old-Law pension means the disability and death pension programs that were in effect on June 30, 1960. Also known as protected pension, i.e., protected under section 9(b) of the Veteran’s Pension Act of 1959 (Pub. L. 86–211; 73 Stat. 432).

(w) Improved pension means the disability and death pension programs becoming effective January 1, 1979, under authority of Pub. L. 95–588; 92 Stat. 2497.

(x) Service pension is the name given to Spanish-American War pension. It is referred to as a service pension because entitlement is based solely on service without regard to nonservice-connected disability, income and net worth.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1512, 1536)

(y) Former prisoner of war. The term former prisoner of war means a person who, while serving in the active military, naval or air service, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an enemy or foreign government, the agents of either, or a hostile force.

(1) Decisions based on service department findings. The Department of Veterans Affairs shall accept the findings of the appropriate service department that a person was a prisoner of war during a period of war unless a reasonable basis exists for questioning it. Such findings shall be accepted only when detention or internment is by an enemy government or its agents.

(2) Other decisions. In all other situations, including those in which the Department of Veterans Affairs cannot accept the service department findings, the following factors shall be used to determine prisoner of war status:

(i) Circumstances of detention or internment. To be considered a former prisoner of war, a serviceperson must have been forcibly detained or interned under circumstances comparable to those under which persons generally have been forcibly detained or interned by enemy governments during periods of war. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, physical hardships or abuse, psychological hardships or abuse, malnutrition, and unsanitary conditions. Each individual member of a particular group of detainees or internees shall, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, be considered to have experienced the same circumstances as those experienced by the group.

(ii) Reason for detention or internment. The reason for which a serviceperson was detained or interned is immaterial in determining POW status, except that a serviceperson who is detained or interned by a foreign government for an alleged violation of its laws is not entitled to be considered a former POW on the basis of that period of detention or internment, unless the charges are a sham intended to legitimize the period of detention or internment.

(3) Central Office approval. The Director of the Compensation and Pension Service, VA Central Office, shall approve all VA regional office determinations establishing or denying POW status, with the exception of those service department determinations accepted under paragraph (y)(1) of this section.

(4) In line of duty. The Department of Veterans Affairs shall consider that a serviceperson was forcibly detained or interned in line of duty unless the evidence of record discloses that forcible detention or internment was the proximate result of the serviceperson’s own willful misconduct.
(5) **Hostile force.** The term *hostile force* means any entity other than an enemy or foreign government or the agents of either whose actions are taken to further or enhance anti-American military, political or economic objectives or views, or to attempt to embarrass the United States.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(32))

(2) **Nursing home** means

1. Any extended care facility which is licensed by a State to provide skilled or intermediate-level nursing care,

2. A nursing home care unit in a State veterans’ home which is approved for payment under 38 U.S.C. 1742, or

3. A Department of Veterans Affairs Nursing Home Care Unit.

(aa) **Fraud:**

1. As used in 38 U.S.C. 103 and implementing regulations, fraud means an intentional misrepresentation of fact, or the intentional failure to disclose pertinent facts, for the purpose of obtaining, or assisting an individual to obtain an annulment or divorce, with knowledge that the misrepresentation or failure to disclose may result in the erroneous granting of an annulment or divorce; and

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

2. As used in 38 U.S.C. 110 and 1159 and implementing regulations, fraud means an intentional misrepresentation of fact, or the intentional failure to disclose pertinent facts, for the purpose of obtaining or retaining, or assisting an individual to obtain or retain, eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, with knowledge that the misrepresentation or failure to disclose may result in the erroneous award or retention of such benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

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§ 3.2 **Periods of war.**

This section sets forth the beginning and ending dates of each war period beginning with the Indian wars. Note that the term *period of war* in reference to pension entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541 and 1542 means all of the war periods listed in this section except the Indian wars and the Spanish-American War. See §3.3(a)(3) and (b)(4)(i).

(a) **Indian wars.** January 1, 1817, through December 31, 1898, inclusive. Service must have been rendered with the United States military forces against Indian tribes or nations.

(b) **Spanish-American War.** April 21, 1898, through July 4, 1902, inclusive. If the veteran served with the United States military forces engaged in hostilities in the Moro Province, the ending date is July 15, 1903. The Philippine Insurrection and the Boxer Rebellion are included.

(c) **World War I.** April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918, inclusive. If the veteran served with the United States military forces in Russia, the ending date is April 1, 1920. Service after November 11, 1918 and before July 2, 1921 is considered World War I service if the veteran served in the active military, naval, or air service after April 5, 1917 and before November 12, 1918.

(d) **World War II.** December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946, inclusive. If the veteran was in service on December 31, 1946, continuous service before July 26, 1947, is considered World War II service.

(e) **Korean conflict.** June 27, 1950, through January 31, 1955, inclusive.

(f) **Vietnam era.** The period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975, inclusive, in the case of a veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period. The period beginning on August 5, 1964, and ending on May 7, 1975, inclusive, in all other cases.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(29))

(g) **Future dates.** The period beginning on the date of any future declaration of war by the Congress and ending on a date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or concurrent resolution of the Congress.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101)
§ 3.3 Pension.

(a) Pension for veterans—(1) Service pension; Spanish-American War. A benefit payable monthly by the Department of Veterans Affairs because of service in the Spanish-American War. Basic entitlement exists if a veteran:

(i) Had 70 (or 90) days or more active service during the Spanish-American War; or

(ii) Was discharged or released from such service for a disability adjudged service connected without benefit of presumptive provisions of law, or at the time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability.

(b) Mexican border period. May 9, 1916, through April 5, 1917, in the case of a veteran who during such period served in Mexico, on the borders thereof, or in the waters adjacent thereto.

(iii) Was discharged or released from such wartime service, before having served 90 days, for a disability adjudged service connected without the benefit of presumptive provisions of law, or at the time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability; and

(iv) Is permanently and totally disabled (a) from nonservice-connected disability not due to the veteran’s own willful misconduct or vicious habits, or (b) by reason of having attained the age of 65 years or by reason of having become unemployable after age 65; and

(v) (a) Is in receipt of section 306 pension or (b) has an application for pension pending on December 31, 1978, or (c) meets the age or disability requirements for such pension on December 31, 1978, and files a claim within 1 year of that date and also within 1 year after meeting the age or disability requirements.

(vi) Meets the income and net worth requirements of 38 U.S.C. 1521 and 1522 as in effect on December 31, 1978, and all other provisions of title 38, United States Code, in effect on December 31, 1978, applicable to section 306 pension.

Note: The pension provisions of title 38 U.S.C., as in effect on December 31, 1978, are available in any VA regional office.

(3) Improved pension; Pub. L. 95–588 (92 Stat. 2497). A benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans of a period or periods of war because of nonservice-connected disability or age. The qualifying periods of war for this benefit are the Mexican border period, World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam era and the Persian Gulf War. Payments are made monthly unless the amount of the annual benefit is less than 4 percent of the maximum annual rate payable to a veteran under 38 U.S.C. 1521(b), in which case payments may be made less frequently than...
monthly. Basic entitlement exists if a veteran:

(i) Served in the active military, naval or air service for 90 days or more during a period of war (38 U.S.C. 1521(j)); or

(ii) Served in the active military, naval or air service during a period of war and was discharged or released from such service for a disability adjudged service-connected without presumptive provisions of law, or at time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability (38 U.S.C. 1521(j)); or

(iii) Served in the active military, naval or air service for a period of 90 consecutive days or more and such period began or ended during a period of war (38 U.S.C. 1521(j)); or

(iv) Served in the active military, naval or air service for an aggregate of 90 days or more in two or more separate periods of service during more than one period of war (38 U.S.C. 1521(j)); and

(v) Meets the net worth requirements under §3.274 and does not have an annual income in excess of the applicable maximum annual pension rate specified in §3.23; and

(vi)(A) Is age 65 or older; or

(B) Is permanently and totally disabled from nonservice-connected disability not due to the veteran’s own willful misconduct. For purposes of this paragraph, a veteran is considered permanently and totally disabled if the veteran is any of the following:

(1) A patient in a nursing home for long-term care because of disability; or

(2) Disabled, as determined by the Commissioner of Social Security for purposes of any benefits administered by the Commissioner; or

(3) Unemployable as a result of disability reasonably certain to continue throughout the life of the person; or

(4) Suffering from:

(i) Any disability which is sufficient to render it impossible for the average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation, but only if it is reasonably certain that such disability will continue throughout the life of the person; or

(ii) Any disease or disorder determined by VA to be of such a nature or extent as to justify a determination that persons suffering from that disease or disorder are permanently and totally disabled.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(a), 1513, 1521, 1522)

(b) Pension for survivors—(1) Indian war death pension. A monthly benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the surviving spouse or child of a deceased veteran of an Indian war. Basic entitlement exists if a veteran had qualifying service as specified in 38 U.S.C. 1511. Indian war death pension rates are set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1534 and 1535.

(2) Spanish-American War death pension. A monthly benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the surviving spouse or child of a deceased veteran of the Spanish-American War, if the veteran:

(i) Had 90 days or more active service during the Spanish-American War; or

(ii) Was discharged or released from such service for a disability service-connected without benefit of presumptive provisions of law, or at time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, as shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1536, 1537)

(3) Section 306 death pension. A monthly benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to a surviving spouse or child because of a veteran’s nonservice-connected death. Basic entitlement exists if:

(i) The veteran (as defined in §3.1(d) and (d)(2)) had qualifying service as specified in paragraph (a)(2)(i), (ii), or (iii) of this section; or

(ii) The veteran was, at time of death, receiving or entitled to receive compensation or retired pay for service-connected disability based on wartime service; and

(iii) The surviving spouse or child (A) was in receipt of section 306 pension on December 31, 1978, or (B) had a claim for pension after that date, or (C) filed a claim for pension after that date, or within 1 year after the veteran’s
death, if the veteran died before January 1, 1979; and

(iv) The surviving spouse or child meets the income and net worth requirements of 38 U.S.C. 1541, 1542 or 1543 as in effect on December 31, 1978, and all other provisions of title 38, United States Code in effect on December 31, 1978, applicable to section 306 pension.

NOTE: The pension provisions of title 38, United States Code, as in effect on December 31, 1978, are available in any VA regional office.

(4) Improved death pension, Public Law 95–588. A benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to a veteran’s surviving spouse or child because of the veteran’s nonservice-connected death. Payments are made monthly unless the amount of the annual benefit is less than 4 percent of the maximum annual rate payable to a veteran under 38 U.S.C. 1521(b), in which case payments may be made less frequently than monthly. Basic entitlement exists if:

(i) The veteran (as defined in §3.1(d) and (d)(2)) had qualifying service as specified in paragraph (a)(3)(i), (ii), (iii), or (iv) of this section (38 U.S.C. 1541(a)); or

(ii) The veteran was, at time of death, receiving or entitled to receive compensation or retired pay for a service-connected disability based on service during a period of war. (The qualifying periods of war are specified in paragraph (a)(3) of this section.) (38 U.S.C. 1541(a)); and

(iii) The surviving spouse or child meets the net worth requirements of §3.274 and has an annual income not in excess of the applicable maximum annual pension rate specified in §§3.23 and 3.24.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541 and 1542)


§ 3.6 Duty periods.

(a) Active military, naval, and air service. This includes active duty, any period of active duty for training during which the individual concerned was disabled or died from a disease or injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty, and any period of inactive duty training during which the individual concerned was disabled or died from an injury incurred or aggravated in line of duty or from an acute myocardial infarction, a cardiac arrest, or a cerebrovascular accident which occurred during such training.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(24))

(b) Active duty. This means:

(1) Full-time duty in the Armed Forces, other than active duty for training;

(2) Full-time duty (other than for training purposes) as a commissioned
§3.6 officer of the Regular or Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service:
(i) On or after July 29, 1945, or
(ii) Before that date under circumstances affording entitlement to full military benefits, or
(iii) At any time, for the purposes of dependency and indemnity compensation.
(3) Full-time duty as a commissioned officer of the Coast and Geodetic Survey or of its successor agencies, the Environmental Science Services Administration and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:
(i) On or after July 29, 1945, or
(ii) Before that date:
(a) While on transfer to one of the Armed Forces, or
(b) While, in time of war or national emergency declared by the President, assigned to duty on a project for one of the Armed Forces in an area determined by the Secretary of Defense to be of immediate military hazard, or
(c) In the Philippine Islands on December 7, 1941, and continuously in such islands thereafter, or
(iii) At any time, for the purposes of dependency and indemnity compensation.
(4) Service at any time as a cadet at the United States Military, Air Force, or Coast Guard Academy, or as a midshipman at the United States Naval Academy;
(5) Attendance at the preparatory schools of the United States Air Force Academy, the United States Military Academy, or the United States Naval Academy for enlisted active-duty members who are reassigned to a preparatory school without a release from active duty, and for other individuals who have a commitment to active duty in the Armed Forces that would be binding upon disenrollment from the preparatory school;
(6) Authorized travel to or from such duty or service; and
(7) A person discharged or released from a period of active duty, shall be deemed to have continued on active duty during the period of time immediately following the date of such discharge or release from such duty determined by the Secretary concerned to have been required for him or her to proceed to his or her home by the most direct route, and, in all instances, until midnight of the date of such discharge or release.
(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 106(c))
(c) Active duty for training.
(1) Full-time duty in the Armed Forces performed by Reserves for training purposes;
(2) Full-time duty for training purposes performed as a commissioned officer of the Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service:
(i) On or after July 29, 1945, or
(ii) Before that date under circumstances affording entitlement to full military benefits, or
(iii) At any time, for the purposes of dependency and indemnity compensation:
(3) Full-time duty performed by members of the National Guard of any State, under 32 U.S.C. 316, 502, 503, 504, or 505, or the prior corresponding provisions of law or full-time duty by such members while participating in the reenactment of the Battle of First Manassas in July 1961;
(4) Duty performed by a member of a Senior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps program when ordered to such duty for the purpose of training or a practice cruise under chapter 103 of title 10 U.S.C.
(i) The requirements of this paragraph are effective—
(A) On or after October 1, 1982, with respect to deaths and disabilities resulting from diseases or injuries incurred or aggravated after September 30, 1982, and
(B) October 1, 1983, with respect to deaths and disabilities resulting from diseases or injuries incurred or aggravated before October 1, 1982.
(ii) Effective on or after October 1, 1988, such duty must be prerequisite to the member being commissioned and must be for a period of at least four continuous weeks.
(5) Attendance at the preparatory schools of the United States Air Force Academy, the United States Military Academy, or the United States Naval Academy by an individual who enters the preparatory school directly from
the Reserves, National Guard or civilian life, unless the individual has a commitment to service on active duty which would be binding upon disenrollment from the preparatory school.

(6) Authorized travel to or from such duty.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(22))

The term does not include duty performed as a temporary member of the Coast Guard Reserve.

(d) Inactive duty training. This means:

(1) Duty (other than full-time duty) prescribed for Reserves (including commissioned officers of the Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service) by the Secretary concerned under 37 U.S.C. 206 or any other provision of law;

(2) Special additional duties authorized for Reserves (including commissioned officers of the Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service) by an authority designated by the Secretary concerned and performed by them on a voluntary basis in connection with the prescribed training or maintenance activities of the units to which they are assigned; and

(3) Training (other than full-time duty) prescribed for Reserves (including commissioned officers of the Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service) under chapter 103 of title 10 U.S.C.

(4) Duty (other than full-time duty) performed by a member of the National Guard of any State, under 32 U.S.C. 316, 502, 503, 504, or 505, or the prior corresponding provisions of law. The term inactive duty training does not include:

(i) Work or study performed in connection with correspondence courses,

(ii) Attendance at an educational institution in an inactive status, or

(iii) Duty performed as a temporary member of the Coast Guard Reserve.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 106(d))

(3) For purposes of this section, the term covered disease means any of the following:

(i) An acute myocardial infarction,

(ii) A cardiac arrest,

(iii) A cerebrovascular accident.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(23))

§ 3.7 Individuals and groups considered to have performed active military, naval, or air service.

The following individuals and groups are considered to have performed active military, naval, or air service:

(a) Aerial transportation of mail (Pub. L. 140, 73d Congress). Persons who were injured or died while serving under conditions set forth in Pub. L. 140, 73d Congress.

(b) Aliens. Effective July 28, 1959, a veteran discharged for alienage during a period of hostilities unless evidence
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affirmatively shows he or she was discharged at his or her own request. A veteran who was discharged for alienage after a period of hostilities and whose service was honest and faithful is not barred from benefits if he or she is otherwise entitled. A discharge changed prior to January 7, 1957, to honorable by a board established under authority of section 301, Pub. L. 346, 78th Congress, as amended, or section 207, Pub. L. 601, 79th Congress, as amended (now 10 U.S.C. 1552 and 1553), will be considered as evidence that the discharge was not at the alien’s request. (See §3.12.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5303(c))

(c) Army field clerks. Included as enlisted men.

(d) Army Nurse Corps, Navy Nurse Corps, and female dietetic and physical therapy personnel. (1) Army and Navy nurses (female) on active service under order of the service department.

(2) Dietetic and physical therapy (female) personnel, excluding students and apprentices, appointed with relative rank on or after December 22, 1942, or commissioned on or after June 22, 1944.

(e) Aviation camps. Students who were enlisted men during World War I.

(f) Cadets and midshipmen. See §3.6(b)(4).

(g) Coast and Geodetic Survey, and its successor agencies, the Environmental Science Services Administration and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. See §3.6(b)(3).

(h) Coast Guard. Active service in Coast Guard on or after January 29, 1915, while under jurisdiction of the Treasury Department, Navy Department, or the Department of Transportation. (See §3.6 (c) and (d) as to temporary members of the Coast Guard Reserves.)

(i) Contract surgeons. For compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation, if the disability or death was the result of disease or injury contracted in line of duty during a war period while actually performing the duties of assistant surgeon or acting assistant surgeon with any military force in the field, or in transit or in hospital.

(j) Field clerks, Quartermaster Corps. Included as enlisted men.

(k) Lighthouse service personnel. Transferred to the service and jurisdiction of War or Navy Departments by Executive order under the Act of August 29, 1916. Effective July 1, 1939, service was consolidated with the Coast Guard.

(1) Male nurses. Persons who were enlisted men of Medical Corps.

(m) National Guard. Members of the National Guard of the United States and Air National Guard of the United States are included as Reserves. See §3.6 (c) and (d) as to training duty performed by members of a State National Guard and paragraph (o) of this section as to disability suffered after being called into Federal service and before enrollment.

(n) Persons heretofore having a pensionable or compensable status.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1152, 1504)

(o) Persons ordered to service. (1) Any person who has:

(i) Applied for enlistment or enrollment in the active military, naval, or air service and who is provisionally accepted and directed, or ordered, to report to a place for final acceptance into the service, or

(ii) Been selected or drafted for such service, and has reported according to a call from the person’s local draft board and before final rejection, or

(iii) Been called into Federal service as a member of the National Guard, but has not been enrolled for Federal service, and

(iv) Suffered injury or disease in line of duty while going to, or coming from, or at such place for final acceptance or entry upon active duty, is considered to have been on active duty and therefore to have incurred such disability in active service.

(2) The injury or disease must be due to some factor relating to compliance with proper orders. Draftees and selectees are included when reporting for preinduction examination or for final induction on active duty. Such persons are not included for injury or disease suffered during the period of inactive duty, or period of waiting, after a final physical examination and prior to beginning the trip to report for induction. Members of the National Guard
are included when reporting to a designated rendezvous.

(p) Philippine Scouts and others. See §3.40.

(q) Public Health Service. See §3.40 (a) and (b).

(r) Reserves. See §3.6 (a), (b), and (c).

(s) Revenue Cutter Service. While serving under direction of Secretary of the Navy in cooperation with the Navy.

(t) Training camps. Members of training camps authorized by section 54 of the National Defense Act, except members of Student Army Training Corps Camps at the Presidio of San Francisco, Plattsburg, New York, Fort Sheridan, Illinois, Howard University, Washington, D.C., Camp Perry, Ohio, and Camp Hancock, Georgia, from July 18, 1918, to September 16, 1918.

(u) Women’s Army Corps (WAC). Service on or after July 1, 1943.

(v) Women’s Reserve of Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Same benefits as members of the Officers Reserve Corps or enlisted men of the United States Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard.

(w) Russian Railway Service Corps. Service during World War I as certified by the Secretary of the Army.

(x) Active military service certified as such under section 401 of Pub. L. 95–202. Such service if certified by the Secretary of Defense as active military service and if a discharge under honorable conditions is issued by the Secretary. The effective dates for an award based upon such service shall be as provided by §3.40(z) and 38 U.S.C. 5110, except that in no event shall such an award be made effective earlier than November 23, 1977. Service in the following groups has been certified as active military service.

(1) Women’s Air Forces Service Pilots (WASP).

(2) Signal Corps Female Telephone Operators Unit of World War I.

(3) Engineer Field Clerks (WWI).

(4) Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC).

(5) Quartermaster Corps Female Clerical Employees serving with the AEF (American Expeditionary Forces) in World War I.

(6) Civilian Employees of Pacific Naval Air Bases Who Actively Partici-

pated in Defense of Wake Island During World War II.

(7) Reconstruction Aides and Dietitians in World War I.

(8) Male Civilian Ferry Pilots.

(9) Wake Island Defenders from Guam.

(10) Civilian Personnel Assigned to the Secret Intelligence Element of the OSS.

(11) Guam Combat Patrol.

(12) Quartermaster Corps Keswick Crew on Corregidor (WWII).

(13) U.S. Civilian Volunteers Who Actively Participated in the Defense of Bataan.


(15) American Merchant Marine in Oceangoing Service during the Period of Armed Conflict, December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945.

(16) Civilian Navy IFF Technicians Who Served in the Combat Areas of the Pacific during World War II (December 7, 1941 to August 15, 1945). As used in the official name of this group, the acronym IFF stands for Identification Friend or Foe.

(17) U.S. Civilians of the American Field Service (AFS) Who Served Overseas Operationally in World War I during the Period August 31, 1917 to January 1, 1918.


(20) Civilian Crewmen of United States Coast and Geodetic Survey (USCGS) Vessels Who Performed Their Service in Areas of Immediate Military Hazard While Conducting Cooperative Operations with and for the United States Armed Forces Within a Time Frame of December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945 on a qualifying USCGS vessel. Qualifying USCGS vessels are the Derickson, Explorer, Gilbert, Hilgard,
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(21) Honorably Discharged Members of the American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers) Who Served During the Period December 7, 1941 to July 18, 1942.

(22) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of United Air Lines (UAL), Who Served Overseas as a Result of UAL’s Contract With the Air Transport Command During the Period December 14, 1941, through August 14, 1945.

(23) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Transcontinental and Western Air (TWA), Inc., Who Served Overseas as a Result of TWA’s Contract with the Air Transport Command During the Period December 14, 1941, through August 14, 1945. The “Flight Crew” includes pursers.

(24) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Consolidated Vultree Aircraft Corporation (Consairway Division) Who Served Overseas as a Result of a Contract With the Air Transport Command During the Period December 14, 1941, through August 14, 1945.


(26) Honorably Discharged Members of the American Volunteer Guard, Erri- trea Service Command During the Period June 21, 1942 to March 31, 1943.

(27) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Northwest Airlines, Who Served Overseas as a Result of Northwest Airline’s Contract with the Air Transport Command during the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945.

(28) U.S. Civilian Female Employees of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps While Serving in the Defense of Bataan and Corregidor During the Period January 2, 1942 to February 3, 1945.


(30) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Braniff Airways, Who Served Overseas in the North Atlantic or Under the Jurisdiction of the North Atlantic Wing, Air Transport Command (ATC), as a Result of a Contract With the ATC During the Period February 26, 1942, Through August 14, 1945.

(31) The approximately 50 Chamorro and Carolinian former native police men who received military training in the Donnal area of central Saipan and were placed under the command of Lt. Casino of the 6th Provisional Military Police Battalion to accompany United States Marines on active, combat-patrol activity from August 19, 1945, to September 2, 1945.

(32) Three scouts/guides, Miguel Tenorio, Penedicto Taisacan, and Cristino Dela Cruz, who assisted the United States Marines in the offensive operations against the Japanese on the Northern Mariana Islands from June 19, 1944, through September 2, 1945.

(33) The Operational Analysis Group of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, Office of Emergency Management, which served overseas with the U.S. Army Air Corps from December 7, 1941, through August 15, 1945.

(Approved: Sec. 401, Pub. L. 95–202, 91 Stat. 1449)

(a) Alaska Territorial Guard: Members of the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II who were honorably discharged from such service as determined by the Secretary of Defense.

Authority: 38 U.S.C 106(f).

Cross Reference: Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs. See §3.708.

[26 FR 1565, Feb. 24, 1961]

Editorial Note: For Federal Register citations affecting §3.7, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.fdsys.gov.
§ 3.10 Dependency and indemnity compensation rate for a surviving spouse.

(a) General determination of rate. When VA grants a surviving spouse entitlement to DIC, VA will determine the rate of the benefit it will award. The rate of the benefit will be the total of the basic monthly rate specified in paragraph (b) or (d) of this section and any applicable increases specified in paragraph (c) or (e) of this section.

(b) Basic monthly rate. Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, the basic monthly rate of DIC for a surviving spouse will be the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1).

(c) Section 1311(a)(2) increase. The basic monthly rate under paragraph (b) of this section shall be increased by the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1311(a)(2) if the veteran, at the time of death, was receiving, or was entitled to receive, compensation for service-connected disability that was rated by VA as totally disabling for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. Determinations of entitlement to this increase shall be made in accordance with paragraph (f) of this section.

(d) Alternative basic monthly rate for death occurring prior to January 1, 1993. The basic monthly rate of DIC for a surviving spouse when the death of the veteran occurred prior to January 1, 1993, will be the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1311(a)(3) corresponding to the veteran’s pay grade in service, but only if such rate is greater than the total of the basic monthly rate and the section 1311(a)(2) increase (if applicable) the surviving spouse is entitled to receive under paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section. The Secretary of the concerned service department will certify the veteran's pay grade and the certification will be binding on VA. DIC paid pursuant to this paragraph may not be increased by the section 1311(a)(2) increase under paragraph (c) of this section.

(e) Additional increases. One or more of the following increases may be paid in addition to the basic monthly rate and the section 1311(a)(2) increase.

(1) Increase for children. If the surviving spouse has one or more children under the age of 18 of the deceased veteran (including a child not in the surviving spouse’s actual or constructive custody, or a child who is in active military service), the monthly DIC rate will be increased by the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(b) for each child.

(2) Increase for regular aid and attendance. If the surviving spouse is determined to be in need of regular aid and attendance under the criteria in §3.352 or is a patient in a nursing home, the monthly DIC rate will be increased by the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(c).

(3) Increase for housebound status. If the surviving spouse does not qualify for the regular aid and attendance allowance but is housebound under the criteria in §3.351(f), the monthly DIC rate will be increased by the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(d).

(4) For a two-year period beginning on the date entitlement to dependency and indemnity compensation commenced, the dependency and indemnity compensation paid monthly to a surviving spouse with one or more children below the age of 18 shall be increased by the amount set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1311(e), regardless of the number of such children. The dependency and indemnity compensation payable under this paragraph is in addition to any other dependency and indemnity compensation payable. The increase in dependency and indemnity compensation of a surviving spouse under this paragraph shall cease beginning with the first month commencing after the month in which all children of the surviving spouse have attained the age of 18.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(e))

(f) Criteria governing section 1311(a)(2) increase. In determining whether a surviving spouse qualifies for the section 1311(a)(2) increase under paragraph (c) of this section, the following standards shall apply.

(1) Marriage requirement. The surviving spouse must have been married to the veteran for the entire eight-year period referenced in paragraph (c) of this section in order to qualify for the section 1311(a)(2) increase.

(2) Determination of total disability. As used in paragraph (c) of this section,
the phrase “rated by VA as totally disabling” includes total disability ratings based on unemployability (§4.16 of this chapter).

(3) Definition of “entitled to receive”. As used in paragraph (c) of this section, the phrase “entitled to receive” means that the veteran filed a claim for disability compensation during his or her lifetime and one of the following circumstances is satisfied:

(i) The veteran would have received total disability compensation for the period specified in paragraph (c) of this section but for clear and unmistakable error committed by VA in a decision on a claim filed during the veteran’s lifetime; or

(ii) Additional evidence submitted to VA before or after the veteran’s death, consisting solely of service department records that existed at the time of a prior VA decision but were not previously considered by VA, provides a basis for reopening a claim finally decided during the veteran’s lifetime and for awarding a total service-connected disability rating retroactively in accordance with §§3.156(c) and 3.400(q)(2) of this part for the period specified in paragraph (c) of this section; or

(iii) At the time of death, the veteran had a service-connected disability that was continuously rated totally disabling by VA for the period specified in paragraph (c) of this section, but was not receiving compensation because:

(A) VA was paying the compensation to the veteran’s dependents;

(B) VA was withholding the compensation under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 5314 to offset an indebtedness of the veteran;

(C) The veteran had not waived retired or retirement pay in order to receive compensation;

(D) VA was withholding payments under the provisions of 10 U.S.C. 1174(h)(2);

(E) VA was withholding payments because the veteran’s whereabouts were unknown, but the veteran was otherwise entitled to continued payments based on a total service-connected disability rating; or

(F) VA was withholding payments under 38 U.S.C. 5308 but determines that benefits were payable under 38 U.S.C. 5309.

[Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1311, 1314, and 1321]


§ 3.11 Homicide.

Any person who has intentionally and wrongfully caused the death of another person is not entitled to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation or increased pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation by reason of such death. For the purpose of this section the term dependency and indemnity compensation includes benefits at dependency and indemnity compensation rates paid under 38 U.S.C. 1318.

[44 FR 22718, Apr. 17, 1979, as amended at 54 FR 31829, Aug. 2, 1989]

§ 3.12 Character of discharge.

(a) If the former service member did not die in service, pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation is not payable unless the period of service on which the claim is based was terminated by discharge or release under conditions other than dishonorable. (38 U.S.C. 101(2)). A discharge under honorable conditions is binding on the Department of Veterans Affairs as to character of discharge.

(b) A discharge or release from service under one of the conditions specified in this section is a bar to the payment of benefits unless it is found that the person was insane at the time of committing the offense causing such discharge or release or unless otherwise specifically provided (38 U.S.C. 5303(b)).

(c) Benefits are not payable where the former service member was discharged or released under one of the following conditions:

(1) As a conscientious objector who refused to perform military duty, wear the uniform, or comply with lawful order of competent military authorities.

(2) By reason of the sentence of a general court-martial.

(3) Resignation by an officer for the good of the service.

(4) As a deserter.
(5) As an alien during a period of hostilities, where it is affirmatively shown that the former service member requested his or her release. See §3.7(b).

(6) By reason of a discharge under other than honorable conditions issued as a result of an absence without official leave (AWOL) for a continuous period of at least 180 days. This bar to benefit entitlement does not apply if there are compelling circumstances to warrant the prolonged unauthorized absence. This bar applies to any person awarded an honorable or general discharge prior to October 8, 1977, under one of the programs listed in paragraph (h) of this section, and to any person who prior to October 8, 1977, had not otherwise established basic eligibility to receive Department of Veterans Affairs benefits. The term established basic eligibility to receive Department of Veterans Affairs benefits means either a Department of Veterans Affairs determination that an other than honorable discharge was issued under conditions other than dishonorable, or an upgraded honorable or general discharge issued prior to October 8, 1977, under criteria other than those prescribed by one of the programs listed in paragraph (h) of this section. However, if a person was discharged or released by reason of the sentence of a general court-martial, only a finding of insanity (paragraph (b) of this section) or a decision of a board of correction of records established under 10 U.S.C. 1552 can establish basic eligibility to receive Department of Veterans Affairs benefits. The following factors will be considered in determining whether there are compelling circumstances to warrant the prolonged unauthorized absence.

(i) Length and character of service exclusive of the period of prolonged AWOL. Service exclusive of the period of prolonged AWOL should generally be of such quality and length that it can be characterized as honest, faithful and meritorious and of benefit to the Nation.

(ii) Reasons for going AWOL. Reasons which are entitled to be given consideration when offered by the claimant include family emergencies or obligations, or similar types of obligations or duties owed to third parties. The reasons for going AWOL should be evaluated in terms of the person’s age, cultural background, educational level and judgmental maturity. Consideration should be given to how the situation appeared to the person himself or herself, and not how the adjudicator might have reacted. Hardship or suffering incurred during overseas service, or as a result of combat wounds of other service-incurred or aggravated disability, is to be carefully and sympathetically considered in evaluating the person’s state of mind at the time the prolonged AWOL period began.

(iii) A valid legal defense exists for the absence which would have precluded a conviction for AWOL. Compelling circumstances could occur as a matter of law if the absence could not validly be charged as, or lead to a conviction of, an offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. For purposes of this paragraph the defense must go directly to the substantive issue of absence rather than to procedures, technicalities or formalities.

(d) A discharge or release because of one of the offenses specified in this paragraph is considered to have been issued under dishonorable conditions.

(1) Acceptance of an undesirable discharge to escape trial by general court-martial.

(2) Mutiny or spying.

(3) An offense involving moral turpitude. This includes, generally, conviction of a felony.

(4) Willful and persistent misconduct. This includes a discharge under other than honorable conditions, if it is determined that it was issued because of willful and persistent misconduct. A discharge because of a minor offense will not, however, be considered willful and persistent misconduct if service was otherwise honest, faithful and meritorious.

(5) Homosexual acts involving aggravating circumstances or other factors affecting the performance of duty. Examples of homosexual acts involving aggravating circumstances or other factors affecting the performance of duty include child molestation, homosexual prostitution, homosexual acts or conduct accompanied by assault or coercion, and homosexual acts or conduct taking place between service members of disparate rank, grade,
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status when a service member has taken advantage of his or her superior rank, grade, or status.

(e) An honorable discharge or discharge under honorable conditions issued through a board for correction of records established under authority of 10 U.S.C. 1552 is final and conclusive on the Department of Veterans Affairs. The action of the board sets aside any prior bar to benefits imposed under paragraph (c) or (d) of this section.

(f) An honorable or general discharge issued prior to October 8, 1977, under authority other than that listed in paragraphs (h) (1), (2) and (3) of this section by a discharge review board established under 10 U.S.C. 1553 set aside any bar to benefits imposed under paragraph (c) or (d) of this section except the bar contained in paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(g) An honorable or general discharge issued on or after October 8, 1977, by a discharge review board established under 10 U.S.C. 1553, sets aside a bar to benefits imposed under paragraph (d), but not paragraph (c), of this section provided that:

(1) The discharge is upgraded as a result of an individual case review;

(2) The discharge is upgraded under uniform published standards and procedures that generally apply to all persons administratively discharged or released from active military, naval or air service under conditions other than honorable; and

(3) Such standards are consistent with historical standards for determining honorable service and do not contain any provision for automatically granting or denying an upgraded discharge.

(h) Unless a discharge review board established under 10 U.S.C. 1553 determines on an individual case basis that the discharge would be upgraded under uniform standards meeting the requirements set forth in paragraph (g) of this section, an honorable or general discharge awarded under one of the following programs does not remove any bar to benefits imposed under this section:

(1) The President’s directive of January 19, 1977, implementing Presidential Proclamation 4313 of September 16, 1974; or

(2) The Department of Defense’s special discharge review program effective April 5, 1977; or

(3) Any discharge review program implemented after April 5, 1977, that does not apply to all persons administratively discharged or released from active military service under other than honorable conditions.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5303 (e))

(i) No overpayments shall be created as a result of payments made after October 8, 1977, based on an upgraded honorable or general discharge issued under one of the programs listed in paragraph (h) of this section which would not be awarded under the standards set forth in paragraph (g) of this section. Accounts in payment status on or after October 8, 1977, shall be terminated the end of the month in which it is determined that the original other than honorable discharge was not issued under conditions other than dishonorable following notice from the appropriate discharge review board that the discharge would not have been upgraded under the standards set forth in paragraph (g) of this section, or April 7, 1978, whichever is the earliest. Accounts in suspense (either before or after October 8, 1977) shall be terminated on the date of last payment or April 7, 1978, whichever is the earliest.

(j) No overpayment shall be created as a result of payments made after October 8, 1977, in cases in which the bar contained in paragraph (c)(6) of this section is for application. Accounts in payment status on or after October 8, 1977, shall be terminated at the end of the month in which it is determined that compelling circumstances do not exist, or April 7, 1978, whichever is the earliest. Accounts in suspense (either before or after October 8, 1977) shall be terminated on the date of last payment, or April 7, 1978, whichever is the earliest.

(k) Uncharacterized separations. Where enlisted personnel are administratively separated from service on the basis of proceedings initiated on or after October 1, 1982, the separation may be classified as one of the three categories of administrative separation that do not require characterization of service by the military department concerned. In
such cases conditions of discharge will be determined by the VA as follows:

(1) **Entry level separation.** Uncharacterized administrative separations of this type shall be considered under conditions other than dishonorable.

(2) **Void enlistment or induction.** Uncharacterized administrative separations of this type shall be reviewed based on facts and circumstances surrounding separation, with reference to the provisions of §3.14 of this part, to determine whether separation was under conditions other than dishonorable.

(3) **Dropped from the rolls.** Uncharacterized administrative separations of this type shall be reviewed based on facts and circumstances surrounding separation to determine whether separation was under conditions other than dishonorable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

**CROSS REFERENCES:** Validity of enlistments. See §3.14. Revision of decisions. See §3.15. Effective dates. See §3.400(g). Minimum active-duty service requirement. See §3.12a.

§ 3.12a Minimum active-duty service requirement.

(a) Definitions. (1) The term *minimum period of active duty* means, for the purposes of this section, the shorter of the following periods:

(i) Twenty-four months of continuous active duty. Non-duty periods that are excludable in determining the Department of Veterans Affairs benefit entitlement (e.g., see §3.15) are not considered as a break in service for continuity purposes but are to be subtracted from total time served.

(ii) The full period for which a person was called or ordered to active duty.

(2) The term *benefit* includes a right or privilege but does not include a refund of a participant’s contributions under 38 U.S.C. Ch. 32.

(b) Effect on Department of Veterans Affairs benefits. Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, a person listed in paragraph (c) of this section who does not complete a minimum period of active duty is not eligible for any benefit under title 38, United States Code or under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs based on that period of active service.

(c) Persons included. Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section apply to the following persons:

(1) A person who originally enlists (enlisted person only) in a regular component of the Armed Forces after September 7, 1980 (a person who signed a delayed-entry contract with one of the service branches prior to September 8, 1980, and under that contract was assigned to a reserve component until entering on active duty after September 7, 1980, shall be considered to have enlisted on the date the person entered on active duty); and

(2) Any other person (officer as well as enlisted) who enters on active duty after October 16, 1981 and who has not previously completed a continuous period of active duty of at least 24 months or been discharged or released from active duty under 10 U.S.C. 1171 (early out).

(d) Exclusions. The provisions of paragraph (b) of this section are not applicable to the following cases:

(1) To a person who is discharged or released under 10 U.S.C. 1171 or 1173 (early out or hardship discharge).

(2) To a person who is discharged or released from active duty for a disability adjudged service connected without presumptive provisions of law, or who at time of discharge had such a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have justified a discharge for disability.

(3) To a person with a compensable service-connected disability.

(4) To the provision of a benefit for or in connection with a service-connected disability, condition, or death.

(5) To benefits under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code.

(e) Dependent or survivor benefits—(1) General. If a person is, by reason of this section, barred from receiving any benefits under title 38, United States Code (or under any other law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs based on a period of active duty, the
§ 3.13 Discharge to change status.

(a) A discharge to accept appointment as a commissioned or warrant officer, or to change from a Reserve or Regular commission to accept a commission in the other component, or to reenlist is a conditional discharge if it was issued during one of the following periods:

(1) World War I; prior to November 11, 1918. As to reenlistments, this subparagraph applies only to Army and National Guard. No involuntary extension or other restrictions existed on Navy enlistments.

(2) World War II, the Korean conflict or the Vietnam era; prior to the date the person was eligible for discharge under the point or length of service system, or under any other criteria in effect.

(3) Peacetime service; prior to the date the person was eligible for an unconditional discharge.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, the entire period of service under the circumstances stated in paragraph (a) of this section constitutes one period of service and entitlement will be determined by the character of the final termination of such period of active service except that, for death pension purposes, §3.3(b)(3) and (4) is controlling as to basic entitlement when the conditions prescribed therein are met.

(c) Despite the fact that no unconditional discharge may have been issued, a person shall be considered to have been unconditionally discharged or released from active military, naval or air service when the following conditions are met:

(1) The person served in the active military, naval or air service for the period of time the person was obligated to serve at the time of entry into service;

(2) The person was not discharged or released from such service at the time of completing that period of obligation due to an intervening enlistment or reenlistment; and

(3) The person would have been eligible for a discharge or release under conditions other than dishonorable at that time except for the intervening enlistment or reenlistment.


§ 3.14 Validity of enlistments.

Service is valid unless the enlistment is voided by the service department.

(a) Enlistment not prohibited by statute. Where an enlistment is voided by the service department for reasons other than those stated in paragraph (b) of this section, service is valid from the date of entry upon active duty to the date of voidance by the service department. Benefits may not be paid, however, unless the discharge is held to have been under conditions other than dishonorable. Generally discharge for concealment of a physical or mental defect except incompetency or insanity which would have prevented enlistment will be held to be under dishonorable conditions.

(b) Statutory prohibition. Where an enlistment is voided by the service department because the person did not have legal capacity to contract for a reason other than minority (as in the case of an insane person) or because the enlistment was prohibited by statute (a deserter or person convicted of a felony), benefits may not be paid based on that service even though a disability was incurred during such service. An undesirable discharge by reason of the fraudulent enlistment voids the enlistment from the beginning.

(c) Misrepresentation of age. Active service which was terminated because of concealment of minority or misrepresentation of age is honorable if the veteran was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable. Service is valid from the date of entry upon active duty to the date of discharge.

(d) Honorable discharges. Determinations as to honorable service will be
made by the service departments and
the finding shall be binding on the De-
partment of Veterans Affairs, but, in
the case of an alien, the effect of the
discharge will be governed by § 3.7(b).

(26 FR 1567, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27
FR 4024, Apr. 27, 1962)

§ 3.15 Computation of service.

For nonservice-connected or service-
connected benefits, active service is
countable exclusive of time spent on an
industrial, agricultural, or indefinite
furlough, time lost on absence without
leave (without pay), under arrest (with-
out acquittal), in desertion, while un-
dergoing sentence of court-martial or a
period following release from active
duty under the circumstances outlined
in § 3.41. In claims based on Spanish-
American War service, leave author-
ized under General Order No. 130, War
Department, is included.

CROSS REFERENCE: Duty periods. See
§ 3.6(b)(6).

(40 FR 16064, Apr. 9, 1975)

§ 3.16 Service pension.

In computing the 70 or 90 days re-
quired under § 3.3(a) active service
which began before or extended beyond
the war period will be included if such
service was continuous. Broken periods
of service during a war period may be
added together to meet the require-
ment for length of service.

(41 FR 18299, May 3, 1976, as amended at 44
FR 45932, Aug. 6, 1979)

§ 3.17 Disability and death pension;
Mexican border period and later
war periods.

In computing the 90 days’ service re-
quired for pension entitlement (see
§ 3.3), there will be included active serv-
ice which began before and extended
into the Mexican border period or
ended during World War I, or began or
ended during World War II, the Korean
conflict, the Vietnam era or the Per-
sian Gulf War, if such service was con-
tinuous. Service during different war
periods may be combined with service
during any other war period to meet
the 90 days’ service requirement.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521)

(37 FR 6676, Apr. 1, 1972, as amended at 44 FR
45932, Aug. 6, 1979; 56 FR 57896, Nov. 15, 1991)

§§ 3.18–3.19 [Reserved]

§ 3.20 Surviving spouse’s benefit for
month of veteran’s death.

(a) Where the veteran died on or after
December 1, 1962, and before October 1,
1982, the rate of death pension or de-
pendency and indemnity compensation
otherwise payable for the surviving
spouse for the month in which the
death occurred shall be not less than
the amount of pension or compensation
which would have been payable to or
for the veteran for that month but for
his or her death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5310)

(b) Where the veteran dies on or after
October 1, 1982, the surviving spouse
may be paid death pension or depend-
cy and indemnity compensation for
the month in which the veteran died at
a rate equal to the amount of com-
pensation or pension which would have
been payable to the veteran for that
month had death not occurred, but
only if such rate is equal to or greater
than the monthly rate of death pension
or dependency and indemnity com-
pensation to which the surviving
spouse is entitled. Otherwise, no pay-
ment of death pension or dependency
and indemnity compensation may be
made for the month in which the vet-
eran died.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5111(c))

(c)(1) Where a veteran receiving com-
pensation or pension dies after Decem-
ber 31, 1996, the surviving spouse, if not
entitled to death compensation, de-
pendency and indemnity compensation,
or death pension for the month of
death, shall be entitled to a benefit for
that month in an amount equal to the
amount of compensation or pension the
veteran would have received for that
month but for his or her death.

(2) A payment issued to a deceased
veteran as compensation or pension for
the month in which death occurred
§ 3.21 Monetary rates.

The rates of compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children, and section 306 and old-law disability and death pension, are published in tabular form in appendix B of the Veterans Benefits Administration Manual M21–1 and are to be given the same force and effect as if published in the regulations (title 38, Code of Federal Regulations). The maximum annual rates of improved pension payable under Pub. L. 95–588 (92 Stat. 2497) are set forth in §§3.23 and 3.24. The monthly rates and annual income limitations applicable to parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation are set forth in §3.25.

Cross References: Section 306 pension. See §3.1(u). Old-law pension. See §3.1(v). Improved pension. See §3.1(w).

§ 3.22 DIC benefits for survivors of certain veterans rated totally disabled at time of death.

(a) Even though a veteran died of non-service-connected causes, VA will pay death benefits to the surviving spouse or children in the same manner as if the veteran’s death were service-connected, if:

(1) The veteran’s death was not the result of his or her own willful misconduct, and

(2) At the time of death, the veteran was receiving, or was entitled to receive, compensation for service-connected disability that was:

(i) Rated by VA as totally disabling for a continuous period of at least 10 years immediately preceding death;

(ii) Rated by VA as totally disabling continuously since the veteran’s release from active duty and for at least 5 years immediately preceding death; or

(iii) Rated by VA as totally disabling for a continuous period of not less than one year immediately preceding death, if the veteran was a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1990.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1318(b))

(b) For purposes of this section, “entitled to receive” means that the veteran filed a claim for disability compensation during his or her lifetime and one of the following circumstances is satisfied:

(1) The veteran would have received total disability compensation at the time of death for a service-connected disability rated totally disabling for the period specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section but for clear and unmistakable error committed by VA in a decision on a claim filed during the veteran’s lifetime;

(2) Additional evidence submitted to VA before or after the veteran’s death, consisting solely of service department records that existed at the time of a prior VA decision but were not previously considered by VA, provides a basis for reopening a claim finally decided during the veteran’s lifetime and for awarding a total service-connected disability rating retroactively in accordance with §§3.156(c) and 3.400(q)(2) of this part for the relevant period specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section; or

(3) At the time of death, the veteran had a service-connected disability that was continuously rated totally disabling by VA for the period specified in paragraph (a)(2), but was not receiving compensation because:

(i) VA was paying the compensation to the veteran’s dependents;

(ii) VA was withholding the compensation under authority of 38 U.S.C. 5314 to offset an indebtedness of the veteran;
(iii) The veteran had not waived retired or retirement pay in order to receive compensation;
(iv) VA was withholding payments under the provisions of 10 U.S.C. 1174(h)(2);
(v) VA was withholding payments because the veteran’s whereabouts were unknown, but the veteran was otherwise entitled to continued payments based on a total service-connected disability rating; or
(vi) VA was withholding payments under 38 U.S.C. 5308 but determines that benefits were payable under 38 U.S.C. 5309.

(c) For purposes of this section, “rated by VA as totally disabling” includes total disability ratings based on unemployability (§ 4.16 of this chapter).

(d) To be entitled to benefits under this section, a surviving spouse must have been married to the veteran—
(1) For at least 1 year immediately preceding the date of the veteran’s death; or
(2) For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1318)

(e) Effect of judgment or settlement. If a surviving spouse or child eligible for benefits under paragraph (a) of this section receives any money or property pursuant to a judicial proceeding based upon, or a settlement or compromise of, any cause of action or other right of recovery for damages for the death of the veteran, benefits payable under paragraph (a) of this section shall not be paid for any month following the month in which such money or property is received until the amount of benefits that would otherwise have been payable under paragraph (a) of this section equals the total of the amount of money received and the fair market value of property received. Expenses incident to recovery, such as attorney’s fees, may not be deducted from the amount to be reported.

(h) Relationship to survivor benefit plan. For the purpose of 10 U.S.C. 1448(d) and 1450(c) eligibility for benefits under paragraph (a) of this section shall be deemed eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1318)

§ 3.23 Improved pension rates—Veterans and surviving spouses.

(a) Maximum annual rates of improved pension. The maximum annual rates of improved pension for the following categories of beneficiaries shall be the amounts specified in 38 U.S.C. 1521 and 1542, as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312. Each time there is an increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the actual rates will be published in the “Notices” section of the FEDERAL REGISTER. (1) Veterans who are permanently and totally disabled.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(b) or (c))

(2) Veterans in need of aid and attendance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(d))
(3) Veterans who are housebound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(e))

(4) Two veterans married to one another; combined rates.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(f))

(5) Surviving spouse alone or with a child or children of the deceased veteran in custody of the surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(b) or (c))

(6) Surviving spouses in need of aid and attendance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(d))

(7) Surviving spouses who are housebound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(e))

(b) Reduction for income. The maximum rates of improved pension in paragraph (a) of this section shall be reduced by the amount of the countable annual income of the veteran or surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541)

(c) Mexican border period and World War I veterans. The applicable maximum annual rate payable to a Mexican border period or World War I veteran under this section shall be increased by the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1521(g), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312. Each time there is an increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the actual rate will be published in the “Notices” section of the Federal Register.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541)

(d) Definitions of terms used in this section—(1) Dependent. A veteran’s spouse or child. A veteran’s spouse who resides apart from the veteran and is estranged from the veteran may not be considered the veteran’s dependent unless the spouse receives reasonable support contributions from the veteran. (Note that under §3.60 a veteran and spouse who reside apart are considered to be living together unless they are estranged.) A child of a veteran not in custody of the veteran and to whose support the veteran is not reasonably contributing, may not be considered the veteran’s dependent.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(b))

(2) In need of aid and attendance. As defined in §3.351(b).

(3) Housebound. As defined in §3.351(d)(2), (f). This term also includes a veteran who has a disability or disabilities evaluated as 60 percent or more disabling in addition to a permanent and totally disabling condition. See §3.351(d)(1).

(4) Veteran’s annual income. This term includes the veteran’s annual income, the annual income of the veteran’s dependent spouse, and the annual income of each child of the veteran (other than a child for whom increased pension is not payable under 38 U.S.C. 1522(b)) in the veteran’s custody or to whose support the veteran is reasonably contributing (to the extent such child’s income is reasonably available to or for the veteran, unless in the judgment of the Department of Veterans Affairs to do so would work a hardship on the veteran.) There is a rebuttable presumption that all of such a child’s income is reasonably available to or for the veteran.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521 (c), (h))

(5) Surviving spouse’s annual income. This term includes the surviving spouse’s annual income and the annual income of each child of the veteran (other than a child for whom increased pension is not payable under 38 U.S.C. 1543(a)(2)) in the custody of the surviving spouse to the extent that such child’s income is reasonably available to or for the surviving spouse, unless in the judgment of the Department of Veterans Affairs to do so would work a hardship on the surviving spouse. There is a rebuttable presumption that all of such a child’s income is available to or for the surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(c), (g))

(6) Reasonable availability and hardship. For the purposes of paragraphs (d)(4) and (d)(5) of this section, a child’s income shall be considered “reasonably available” when it can be readily applied to meet the veteran’s or surviving
spouse’s expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance, and “hardship” shall be held to exist when annual expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance exceed the sum of countable annual income plus VA pension entitlement. Expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance include expenses for basic necessities (such as food, clothing, shelter, etc.) and other expenses, determined on a case-by-case basis, which are necessary to support a reasonable quality of life.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

Cross References: Improved pension. See §3.1(w). Child. See §3.57(d). Definition of living with. See §3.60. Exclusions from income. See §3.272.


§ 3.24 Improved pension rates—Surviving children.

(a) General. The provisions of this section apply to children of a deceased veteran not in the custody of a surviving spouse who has basic eligibility to receive improved pension. Children in custody of a surviving spouse who has basic eligibility to receive improved pension do not have separate entitlement. Basic eligibility to receive improved pension means that the surviving spouse is in receipt of improved pension or could become entitled to receive improved pension except for the amount of the surviving spouse’s countable annual income or the size of the surviving spouse’s estate (See §3.274(c)). Under §3.23(d)(5) the countable annual income of a surviving spouse includes the countable annual income of each child of the veteran in custody of the surviving spouse to the extent the child’s income is reasonably available to or for the surviving spouse, unless in the judgment of the Department of Veterans Affairs to do so would work a hardship on the surviving spouse.

(b) Child with no personal custodian or in the custody of an institution. In cases in which there is no personal custodian, i.e., there is no person who has the legal right to exercise parental control and responsibility for the child’s welfare (See §3.57(d)), or the child is in the custody of an institution, pension shall be paid to the child at the annual rate specified in 38 U.S.C. 1542, as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, reduced by the amount of the child’s countable annual income. Each time there is an increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the actual rate will be published in the “Notices” section of the Federal Register.

(c) Child in the custody of person legally responsible for support—(1) Single child. Pension shall be paid to a child in the custody of a person legally responsible for the child’s support at an annual rate equal to the difference between the rate for a surviving spouse and one child under §3.23(a)(5), and the sum of the annual income of such child and the annual income of such person or, the maximum annual pension rate under paragraph (b) of this section, whichever is less.

(2) More than one child. Pension shall be paid to children in custody of a person legally responsible for the children’s support at an annual rate equal to the difference between the rate for a surviving spouse and an equivalent number of children (but not including any child who has countable annual income equal to or greater than the maximum annual pension rate under paragraph (b) of this section) and the sum of the countable annual income of the person legally responsible for support and the combined countable annual income of the children (but not including the income of any child whose countable annual income is equal to or greater than the maximum annual pension rate under paragraph (b) of this section, or the maximum annual pension rate under paragraph (b) of this section times the number of eligible children, whichever is less).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1542)

Cross References: Child. See §3.57(d). Exclusions from income. See §3.272.


§ 3.25 Parent’s dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC)—Method of payment computation.

Monthly payments of parents’ DIC shall be computed in accordance with the following formulas:
§ 3.26 38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)

(a) One parent. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, if there is only one parent, the monthly rate specified in 38 U.S.C 1315(b)(1), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, reduced by $.08 for each dollar of such parent’s countable annual income in excess of $800. No payments of DIC may be made under this paragraph, however, if such parent’s countable annual income exceeds the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(b)(3), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, and no payment of DIC to a parent under this paragraph may be less than $5 a month.

(b) One parent who has remarried. If there is only one parent and the parent has remarried and is living with the parent’s spouse, DIC shall be paid under paragraph (a) or paragraph (d) of this section, whichever shall result in the greater benefit being paid to the veteran’s parent. In the case of remarriage, the total combined annual income of the parent and the parent’s spouse shall be counted in determining the monthly rate of DIC.

(c) Two parents not living together. The rate computation method in this paragraph applies to:

(1) Two parents who are not living together, or
(2) An unremarried parent when both parents are living and the other parent has remarried.

The monthly rate of DIC paid to such parent shall be the rate specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(c)(1), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, reduced by an amount no greater than $.08 for each dollar of such parent’s countable annual income in excess of $800, except that no payments of DIC may be made under this paragraph if such parent’s countable annual income exceeds the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(c)(3), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, and no payment of DIC to a parent under this paragraph may be less than $5 monthly. Each time there is a rate increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the amount of the reduction under this paragraph shall be recomputed to provide, as nearly as possible, for an equitable distribution of the rate increase. The results of this computation method shall be published in schedular format in the “Notices” section of the FEDERAL REGISTER as provided in paragraph (f) of this section.

(d) Two parents living together or remarried parents living with spouse. The rate computation method in this paragraph applies to each parent living with another parent and to each remarried parent when both parents are alive. The monthly rate of DIC paid to such parents shall be the rate specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(d)(1), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, reduced to an amount no greater than $.08 for each dollar of such parent’s and spouse’s combined countable annual income in excess of $1,000 except that no payments of DIC to a parent under this paragraph may be less than $5 monthly. Each time there is a rate increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the amount of the reduction under this paragraph shall be recomputed to provide, as nearly as possible, for an equitable distribution of the rate increase. The results of this computation method shall be published in schedular format in the “Notices” section of the FEDERAL REGISTER as provided in paragraph (f) of this section.

(e) Aid and attendance. The monthly rate of DIC payable to a parent under this section shall be increased by the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1315(g), as increased from time to time under 38 U.S.C. 5312, if such parent is:

(1) A patient in a nursing home, or
(2) Helpless or blind, or so nearly helpless or blind as to need or require the regular aid and attendance of another person.

(f) Rate publication. Each time there is an increase under 38 U.S.C. 5312, the actual rates will be published in the “Notices” section of the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)


§ 3.26 Section 306 and old-law pension annual income limitations.

(a) The annual income limitations for section 306 pension shall be the amounts specified in section 306(a)(2)(A) of Pub. L. 95–588, as increased from time to time under section 306(a)(3) of Pub. L. 95–588.
(b) If a beneficiary under section 306 pension is in need of aid and attendance, the annual income limitation under paragraph (a) of this section shall be increased in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 1521(d), as in effect on December 31, 1976.

(c) The annual income limitations for old-law pension shall be the amounts specified in section 306(b)(3) of Pub. L. 95–588, as increased from time to time under section 306(b)(4) of Pub. L. 95–588.

(d) Each time there is an increase under section 306(a)(3) or (b)(4) of Pub. L. 95–588, the actual income limitations will be published in the “Notices” section of the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[52 FR 34908, Sept. 14, 1987]

§ 3.27 Automatic adjustment of benefit rates.

(a) Improved pension. Whenever there is a cost-of-living increase in benefit amounts payable under section 215(i) of title II of the Social Security Act, VA shall, effective on the dates such increases become effective, increase by the same percentage each maximum annual rate of pension.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5312(a))

(b) Parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation—maximum annual income limitation and maximum monthly rates. Whenever there is a cost-of-living increase in benefit amounts payable under section 215(i) of title II of the Social Security Act, VA shall, effective on the dates such increases become effective, increase by the same percentage each maximum annual income limitation and the maximum monthly rates of dependency indemnity compensation for parents.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5312(b)(1))

(c) Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of veterans with covered service in Korea. Whenever there is a cost-of-living increase in benefit amounts payable under section 215(i) of title II of the Social Security Act, VA shall, effective on the dates such increases become effective, increase by the same percentage the monthly allowance rates under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805(b)(3), 1815(d), 1821, 5312)

(d) Medal of Honor pension. Beginning in the year 2004, VA shall, effective December 1 of each year, increase the monthly Medal of Honor pension by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under section 215(i) of Title II of the Social Security Act are increased effective December 1 of such year.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1562(e))

(e) Publishing requirements. Increases in pension rates, parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation rates and income limitation, the monthly allowance rates under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 and the Medal of Honor pension made under this section shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805(b)(3), 1815(d), 5312(c)(1))


§ 3.28 Automatic adjustment of section 306 and old-law pension income limitations.

Whenever the maximum annual rates of improved pension are increased by reason of the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5312, the following will be increased by the same percentage effective the same date:

(a) The maximum annual income limitations applicable to continued receipt of section 306 and old-law pension; and

(b) The dollar amount of a veteran’s spouse’s income that is excludable in determining the income of a veteran for section 306 pension purposes. (See §3.262(b)(2))

These increases shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER at the same time that increases under §3.27 are published.


[52 FR 34908, Sept. 14, 1987]
§ 3.29 Rounding.

(a) Annual rates. Where the computation of an increase in improved pension rates under §§3.23 and 3.24 would otherwise result in a figure which includes a fraction of a dollar, the benefit rate will be adjusted to the next higher dollar amount. This method of computation will also apply to increases in old-law and section 306 pension annual income limitations under §3.26, including the income of a spouse which is excluded from a veteran’s countable income, and parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation benefit rates and annual income limitations under §3.25.

(b) Monthly or other periodic pension rates. After determining the monthly or other periodic rate of improved pension under §§3.273 and 3.30 or the rate payable under section 306(a) of Pub. L. 95-588 (92 Stat. 2508), the resulting rate, if not a multiple of one dollar, will be rounded down to the nearest whole dollar amount. The provisions of this paragraph apply with respect to amounts of pension payable for periods beginning on or after June 1, 1983, under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541 or 1542, or under section 306(a) of Pub. L. 95-588.

(c) Monthly rates under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18. When increasing the monthly monetary allowance rates under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea, VA will round any resulting rate that is not an even dollar amount to the next higher dollar.

§ 3.30 Frequency of payment of improved pension and parents' dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC).

Payment shall be made as shown in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) of this section; however, beneficiaries receiving payment less frequently than monthly may elect to receive payment monthly in cases in which other Federal benefits would otherwise be denied.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(a) Improved pension—Monthly. Payment shall be made monthly if the annual rate payable is $228 or more.

(b) Improved pension—Quarterly. Payment shall be made every 3 months on or about March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1, if the annual rate payable is at least $144 but less than $228.

(c) Improved pension—Semiannually. Payment shall be made every 6 months on or about June 1, and December 1, if the annual rate payable is at least $72 but less than $144.

(d) Improved pension—Annually. Payment shall be made annually on or about June 1, if the annual rate payable is less than $72.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1508)

(e) Parents’ DIC—Semiannually. Benefits shall be paid every 6 months on or about June 1, and December 1, if the amount of the annual benefit is less than 4 percent of the maximum annual rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1315.

(f) Payment of less than one dollar. Payments of less than $1 shall not be made.

§ 3.31 Commencement of the period of payment.

Regardless of VA regulations concerning effective dates of awards, and except as provided in paragraph (c) of
this section, payment of monetary benefits based on original, reopened, or increased awards of compensation, pension, dependency and indemnity compensation, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual who is a child of a Vietnam veteran or a child of a veteran with covered service in Korea may not be made for any period prior to the first day of the calendar month following the month in which the award became effective. However, beneficiaries will be deemed to be in receipt of monetary benefits during the period between the effective date of the award and the date payment commences for the purpose of all laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs except that nothing in this section will be construed as preventing the receipt of retired or retirement pay prior to the effective date of waiver of such pay in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5305.

(a) Increased award defined. For the purposes of this section the term increased award means an award which is increased because of an added dependent, increase in disability or disability rating, or reduction in income. The term also includes elections of improved pension under section 306 of Pub. L. 95–588 and awards pursuant to paragraphs 29 and 30 of the Schedule for Rating Disabilities except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) General rule of applicability. The provisions of this section apply to all original, reopened, or increased awards unless such awards provide only for continuity of entitlement with no increase in rate of payment.

(c) Specific exclusions. The provisions of this section do not apply to the following types of awards.

(1) Surviving spouse’s rate for the month of a veteran’s death (for exception see §3.20(b))

(2) In cases where military retired or retirement pay is greater than the amount of compensation payable, compensation will be paid as of the effective date of waiver of such pay. However, in cases where the amount of compensation payable is greater than military retired or retirement pay, payment of the available difference for any period prior to the effective date of total waiver of such pay is subject to the general provisions of this section.

(3) Adjustments of awards—such as in the case of original or increased appointments or the termination of any withholding, reduction, or suspension by reason of:

   (i) Recoupment,
   (ii) An offset to collect indebtedness,
   (iii) Institutionalization (hospitalization),
   (iv) Incompetency,
   (v) Incarceration,
   (vi) An estate that exceeds the limitation for certain hospitalized incompetent veterans, or
   (vii) Discontinuance of appointments.

(4) Increases resulting solely from the enactment of legislation—such as

   (i) Cost-of-living increases in compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation,
   (ii) Increases in Improved Pension, parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 pursuant to §3.27, or
   (iii) Changes in the criteria for statutory award designations.

(5) Temporary total ratings pursuant to paragraph 29 of the Schedule for Rating Disabilities when the entire period of hospitalization or treatment, including any period of post-hospitalization convalescence, commences and terminates within the same calendar month. In such cases the period of payment shall commence on the first day of the month in which the hospitalization or treatment began.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805, 1815, 1821, 1832, 5111)

§ 3.32 Exchange rates for foreign currencies.

When determining the rates of pension or parents’ DIC or the amounts of burial, plot or headstone allowances or accrued benefits to which a claimant or beneficiary may be entitled, income received or expenses paid in a foreign currency shall be converted into U.S. dollar equivalents employing quarterly
exchange rates established by the Department of the Treasury.

(a) Pension and parents' DIC. (1) Because exchange rates for foreign currencies cannot be determined in advance, rates of pension and parents' DIC shall be projected using the most recent quarterly exchange rate and shall be adjusted retroactively based upon actual exchange rates when an annual eligibility verification report is filed.

(2) Retroactive adjustments due to fluctuations in exchange rates shall be calculated using the average of the four most recent quarterly exchange rates. If the claimant reports income and expenses for a prior reporting period, the retroactive adjustment shall be calculated using the average of the four quarterly rates which were the most recent available on the closing date of the twelve-month period for which income and expenses are reported.

(b) Burial, plot or headstone allowances and accrued benefits. Payment amounts for burial, plot or headstone allowances and claims for accrued benefits as reimbursement from the person who bore the expenses of a deceased beneficiary's last illness or burial shall be determined using the quarterly exchange rate for the quarter in which the expenses forming the basis of the claim were paid. If the claim is filed by an unpaid creditor, however, the quarterly rate for the quarter in which the veteran died shall apply. When entitlement originates during a quarter for which the Department of the Treasury has not yet published a quarterly rate, amounts due shall be calculated using the most recent quarterly exchange rate.

CROSS-REFERENCES: Accrued benefits. See §3.1000. Accrued benefits payable to foreign beneficiaries. See §3.1008.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)


GENERAL

§3.40 Philippine and Insular Forces.

(a) Regular Philippine Scouts. Service in the Philippine Scouts (except that described in paragraph (b) of this section), the Insular Force of the Navy, Samoan Native Guard, and Samoan Native Band of the Navy is included for pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, and burial allowance. Benefits are payable in dollars at the full-dollar rate.

(b) Other Philippine Scouts. Service of persons enlisted under section 14, Pub. L. 190, 79th Congress (Act of October 6, 1945), is included for compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation. Except as provided in §§3.42 and 3.43, benefits based on service described in this paragraph are payable at a rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law. All enlistments and re-enlistments of Philippine Scouts in the Regular Army between October 6, 1945, and June 30, 1947, inclusive, were made under the provisions of Pub. L. 190 as it constituted the sole authority for such enlistments during that period. This paragraph does not apply to officers who were commissioned in connection with the administration of Pub. L. 190.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107)

(c) Commonwealth Army of the Philippines. (1) Service is included, for compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, and burial allowance, from and after the dates and hours, respectively, when they were called into service of the Armed Forces of the United States by orders issued from time to time by the General Officer, U.S. Army, pursuant to the Military Order of the President of the United States dated July 26, 1941. Service as a guerrilla under the circumstances outlined in paragraph (d) of this section is also included. Except as provided in §§3.42 and 3.43, benefits based on service described in this paragraph are payable at a rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107)

(2) Unless the record shows examination at time of entrance into the Armed Forces of the United States, such persons are not entitled to the presumption of soundness. This also applies upon reentering the Armed Forces after a period of inactive service.
Department of Veterans Affairs § 3.41

(d) Guerrilla service. (1) Persons who served as guerrillas under a commissioned officer of the United States Army, Navy or Marine Corps, or under a commissioned officer of the Commonwealth Army recognized by and cooperating with the United States Forces are included. (See paragraph (c) of this section.) Service as a guerrilla by a member of the Philippine Scouts or the Armed Forces of the United States is considered as service in his or her regular status. (See paragraph (a) of this section.)

(2) The following certifications by the service departments will be accepted as establishing guerrilla service:
   (i) Recognized guerrilla service;
   (ii) Unrecognized guerrilla service under a recognized commissioned officer only if the person was a former member of the United States Armed Forces (including the Philippine Scouts), or the Commonwealth Army. This excludes civilians.

A certification of Anti-Japanese Activity will not be accepted as establishing guerrilla service.

(e) Combined service. Where a veteran who had Commonwealth Army or guerrilla service and also had other service, wartime or peacetime, in the Armed Forces of the United States, has disabilities which are compensable separately on a dollar and a $0.50 for each dollar authorized basis, and the disabilities are combined under the authority contained in 38 U.S.C. 1157, the evaluation for which dollars are payable will be first considered and the difference between this evaluation and the combined evaluation will be the basis for computing the amount payable at the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized.

CROSS REFERENCE: Computation of service. See §3.15.


§ 3.41 Philippine service.

(a) For a Regular Philippine Scout or a member of one of the regular components of the Philippine Commonwealth Army while serving with Armed Forces of the United States, the period of active service will be from the date certified by the Armed Forces as the date of enlistment or date of report for active duty whichever is later to date of release from active duty, discharge, death, or in the case of a member of the Philippine Commonwealth Army June 30, 1946, whichever was earlier. Release from active duty includes:
   (1) Leaving one's organization in anticipation of or due to the capitulation.
   (2) Escape from prisoner-of-war status.
   (3) Parole by the Japanese.

(4) Beginning of missing-in-action status, except where factually shown at that time he was with his or her unit or death is presumed to have occurred while carried in such status: Provided, however, That where there is credible evidence that he was alive after commencement of his or her missing-in-action status, the presumption of death will not apply for Department of Veterans Affairs purposes.

(5) Capitulation on May 6, 1942, except that periods of recognized guerrilla service or unrecognized guerrilla service under a recognized commissioned officer or periods of service in units which continued organized resistance against Japanese prior to formal capitulation will be considered return to active duty for period of such service.

(b) Active service of a Regular Philippine Scout or a member of the Philippine Commonwealth Army serving with the Armed Forces of the United States will include a prisoner-of-war status immediately following a period of active duty, or a period of recognized guerrilla service or unrecognized guerrilla service under a recognized commissioned officer. In those cases where following release from active duty as set forth in paragraph (a) of this section, the veteran is factually found by the Department of Veterans Affairs to have been injured or killed by the Japanese because of anti-Japanese activities or his or her former service in the Armed Forces of the United States, such injury or death may be held to have been incurred in active service for Department of Veterans Affairs purposes. Determination shall be based on all available evidence, including service department reports, and consideration shall be given to the character
§ 3.42 Compensation at the full-dollar rate for certain Filipino veterans residing in the United States.

(a) Definitions. For purposes of this section:

(1) United States (U.S.) means the states, territories and possessions of the United States; the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(2) Residing in the U.S. means that an individual’s principal, actual dwelling place is in the U.S. and that the individual meets the residency requirements of paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

(3) Citizen of the U.S. means any individual who acquires U.S. citizenship through birth in the territorial U.S., birth abroad as provided under title 8, United States Code, or through naturalization, and has not renounced his or her U.S. citizenship, or had such citizenship cancelled, revoked, or otherwise terminated.

(4) Lawfully admitted for permanent residence means that an individual has been lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the U.S. as an immigrant by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under title 8, United States Code, and still has this status.

(b) Eligibility requirements. Compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation is payable at the full-dollar rate, based on service described in § 3.40(b), (c), or (d), to a veteran or a veteran’s survivor who is residing in the U.S. and is either:

(1) A citizen of the U.S., or

(2) An alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S.

(c) Evidence of eligibility. (1) A valid original or copy of one of the following documents is required to prove that the veteran or the veteran’s survivor is a natural born citizen of the U.S.:

(i) A valid U.S. passport;

(ii) A birth certificate showing that he or she was born in the U.S.; or


(2) Only verification by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to VA that a veteran or a veteran’s survivor is a naturalized citizen of the U.S., or a valid U.S. passport, will be sufficient proof of such status.

(3) Only verification by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to VA that a veteran or a veteran’s survivor is an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S. will be sufficient proof of such status.

(4) VA will not pay benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section unless the evidence establishes that the veteran or survivor is lawfully residing in the U.S.

(i) Such evidence should identify the veteran’s or survivor’s name and relevant dates, and may include:

(A) A valid driver’s license issued by the state of residence;

(B) Employment records, which may consist of pay stubs, W-2 forms, and certification of the filing of Federal, State, or local income tax returns;

(C) Residential leases, rent receipts, utility bills and receipts, or other relevant documents showing dates of utility service at a leased residence;

(D) Hospital or medical records showing medical treatment or hospitalization, and showing the name of the medical facility or treating physician;

(E) Property tax bills and receipts; and

(F) School records.

(ii) A Post Office box mailing address in the veteran’s name or the name of the veteran’s survivor does not constitute evidence showing that the veteran or veteran’s survivor is lawfully residing in the United States.

(d) Continued eligibility. (1) In order to continue receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section, a veteran or a veteran’s survivor must be physically present in the U.S. for at
least 183 days of each calendar year in which he or she receives payments at the full-dollar rate, and may not be absent from the U.S. for more than 60 consecutive days at a time unless good cause is shown. However, if a veteran or a veteran's survivor becomes eligible for full-dollar rate benefits for the first time on or after July 1 of any calendar year, the 183-day rule will not apply during that calendar year. VA will not consider a veteran or a veteran's survivor to have been absent from the U.S. if he or she left and returned to the U.S. on the same date.

(2) A veteran or a veteran's survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section must notify VA within 30 days of leaving the U.S., or within 30 days of losing either his or her U.S. citizenship or lawful permanent resident alien status. When a veteran or a veteran's survivor no longer meets the eligibility requirements of paragraph (b) of this section, VA will reduce his or her payment to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the date determined under §3.505. If such veteran or survivor regains his or her U.S. citizenship or lawful permanent resident alien status, VA will restore full-dollar rate benefits, effective the date the veteran or survivor meets the eligibility requirements in paragraph (b) of this section.

(3) When requested to do so by VA, a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section must verify that he or she continues to meet the residency and citizenship or permanent resident alien status requirements of paragraph (b) of this section. VA will advise the veteran or survivor at the time of the request that the verification must be furnished within 60 days and that failure to do so will result in the reduction of benefits. If the veteran or survivor fails to furnish the evidence within 60 days, VA will reduce his or her payment to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized, as provided in §3.652.

(4) A veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section must promptly notify VA of any change in his or her address. If mail from VA to the veteran or survivor is returned to VA by the U.S. Postal Service, VA will make reasonable efforts to determine the correct mailing address. If VA is unable to determine the correct mailing address through reasonable efforts, VA will reduce benefit payments to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under law, effective on the date determined under §3.505.

(e) Effective date for restored eligibility.
In the case of a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate, if VA reduces his or her payment to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, VA will resume payments at the full-dollar rate, if otherwise in order, effective the first day of the month following the date on which he or she again meets the requirements. However, such increased payments will be retroactive no more than one year prior to the date on which VA receives evidence that he or she again meets the requirements.

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0655)


§ 3.43 Burial benefits at the full-dollar rate for certain Filipino veterans residing in the United States on the date of death.

(a) Definitions. For purposes of this section:

(1) United States (U.S.) means the states, territories and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(2) Residing in the U.S. means an individual’s principal, actual dwelling place was in the U.S. When death occurs outside the U.S., VA will consider the deceased individual to have been residing in the U.S. on the date of death if the individual maintained his or her principal actual dwelling place in the U.S. until his or her most recent departure from the U.S., and he or she had been physically absent from the U.S. less than 61 consecutive days when he or she died.

(3) Citizen of the U.S. means any individual who acquires U.S. citizenship through birth in the territorial U.S. birth abroad as provided under title 8.
United States Code, or through naturalization, and has not renounced his or her U.S. citizenship, or had such citizenship cancelled, revoked, or otherwise terminated.

(4) Lawfully admitted for permanent residence means that the individual was lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the U.S. as an immigrant by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under title 8, United States Code, and on the date of death, still had this status.

(b) Eligibility requirements. VA will pay burial benefits under chapter 23 of title 38, United States Code, at the full-dollar rate, based on service described in §3.40(c) or (d), when an individual who performed such service dies after November 1, 2000, or based on service described in §3.40(b) when an individual who performed such service dies after December 15, 2003, and was on the date of death:

(1) Residing in the U.S.; and
(2) Either—
   (i) A citizen of the U.S., or
   (ii) An alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S.; and
(3) Either—
   (i) Receiving compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code; or
   (ii) Would have satisfied the disability, income and net worth requirements of §3.3(a)(3) of this part and would have been eligible for pension if the veteran’s service had been deemed to be active military, naval, or air service.

(c) Evidence of eligibility. (1) In a claim for full-dollar rate burial payments based on the deceased veteran having been a natural born citizen of the U.S., a valid original or copy of one of the following documents is required:
   (i) A valid U.S. passport;
   (ii) A birth certificate showing that he or she was born in the U.S.; or

(2) In a claim based on the deceased veteran having been a naturalized citizen of the U.S., only verification of that status by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to VA, or a valid U.S. passport, will be sufficient proof for purposes of eligibility for full-dollar rate benefits.

(3) In a claim based on the deceased veteran having been an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S., only verification of that status by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to VA will be sufficient proof for purposes of eligibility for full-dollar rate benefits.

(4) VA will not pay benefits at the full-dollar rate under this section unless the evidence establishes that the veteran was lawfully residing in the U.S. on the date of death.

(i) Such evidence should identify the veteran’s name and relevant dates, and may include:
   (A) A valid driver’s license issued by the state of residence;
   (B) Employment records, which may consist of pay stubs, W-2 forms, and certification of the filing of Federal, State, or local income tax returns;
   (C) Residential leases, rent receipts, utility bills and receipts, or other relevant documents showing dates of utility service at a leased residence;
   (D) Hospital or medical records showing medical treatment or hospitalization of the veteran or survivor, and showing the name of the medical facility or treating physician;
   (E) Property tax bills and receipts; and
   (F) School records.

(ii) A Post Office box mailing address in the veteran’s name does not constitute evidence showing that the veteran was lawfully residing in the United States on the date of death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107, 501(a))

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0655)


RELATIONSHIP

§3.50 Spouse and surviving spouse.

(a) Spouse. “Spouse” means a person of the opposite sex whose marriage to the veteran meets the requirements of §3.1(j).

(b) Surviving spouse. Except as provided in §3.52, “surviving spouse” means a person of the opposite sex
whose marriage to the veteran meets the requirements of §3.1(j) and who was the spouse of the veteran at the time of the veteran’s death and:

(1) Who lived with the veteran continuously from the date of marriage to the date of the veteran’s death except where there was a separation which was due to the misconduct of, or procured by, the veteran without the fault of the surviving spouse; and

(2) Except as provided in §3.55, has not remarried or has not since the death of the veteran and after September 19, 1962, lived with another person of the opposite sex and held himself or herself out openly to the public to be the spouse of such other person.

§ 3.52 Marriages deemed valid.

Where an attempted marriage of a claimant to the veteran was invalid by reason of a legal impediment, the marriage will nevertheless be deemed valid if:

(a) The marriage occurred 1 year or more before the veteran died or existed for any period of time if a child was born of the purported marriage or was born to them before such marriage (see §3.54(d)), and

(b) The claimant entered into the marriage without knowledge of the impediment, and

(c) The claimant cohabited with the veteran continuously from the date of marriage to the date of his or her death as outlined in §3.53, and

(d) No claim has been filed by a legal surviving spouse who has been found entitled to gratuitous death benefits other than accrued monthly benefits covering a period prior to the veteran’s death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(a))

Cross Reference: Definition, marriage. See §3.205(c).

§ 3.53 Continuous cohabitation.

(a) General. The requirement that there must be continuous cohabitation from the date of marriage to the date of death of the veteran will be consid-
§ 3.55 Reinstatement of benefits eligibility based upon terminated marital relationships.

(a) Surviving spouse. (1) Remarriage of a surviving spouse shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to such surviving spouse if the marriage:
   (i) Was void, or
   (ii) Has been annulled by a court having basic authority to render annulment decrees, unless it is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs that the annulment was obtained through fraud by either party or by collusion.

(2) On or after January 1, 1971, remarriage of a surviving spouse terminated prior to November 1, 1990, or terminated by legal proceedings commenced prior to November 1, 1990, by an individual who, but for the remarriage, would be considered the surviving spouse, shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to such surviving spouse provided that the marriage:
   (i) Has been terminated by death, or
   (ii) Has been dissolved by a court with basic authority to render divorce decrees unless the Department of Veterans Affairs determines that the divorce was secured through fraud by the surviving spouse or by collusion.

(3) On or after October 1, 1998, remarriage of a surviving spouse terminated by death, divorce, or annulment, will not bar the furnishing of dependency and indemnity compensation, unless

(b) Child born. The term child born of the marriage means a birth on or after the date of the marriage on which the surviving spouse’s entitlement is predicated. The term born to them before the marriage means a birth prior to the date of such marriage. Either term includes a fetus advanced to the point of gestation required to constitute a birth under the law of the jurisdiction in which the fetus was delivered.

(c) Dependency and indemnity compensation. Dependency and indemnity compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1310(a) may be paid to the surviving spouse of a veteran who died on or after January 1, 1957, who was married to the veteran:
   (1) Before the expiration of 15 years after the termination of the period of service in which the injury or disease causing the veteran’s death was incurred or aggravated, or
   (2) One year or more, or
   (3) For any period of time if a child was born of the marriage, or was born to them before the marriage.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1304)

(e) More than one marriage to veteran. For periods commencing on or after January 1, 1958, where a surviving spouse has been married legally to a veteran more than once, the date of the original marriage will be used in determining whether the statutory requirement as to date of marriage has been met.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(b))
the Secretary determines that the divorce or annulment was secured through fraud or collusion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(e))

(4) On or after December 1, 1999, remarriage of a surviving spouse terminated by death, divorce, or annulment, will not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, unless the Secretary determines that the divorce or annulment was secured through fraud or collusion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(d))

(5) On or after January 1, 1971, the fact that a surviving spouse has lived with another person and has held himself or herself out openly to the public as the spouse of such other person will not bar the furnishing of benefits to him or her after he or she terminates the relationship, if the relationship terminated prior to November 1, 1990.

(6) On or after October 1, 1998, the fact that a surviving spouse has lived with another person and has held himself or herself out openly to the public as the spouse of such other person will not bar the furnishing of dependency and indemnity compensation to the surviving spouse if he or she ceases living with such other person and holding himself or herself out openly to the public as such other person’s spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(e))

(7) On or after December 1, 1999, the fact that a surviving spouse has lived with another person and has held himself or herself out openly to the public as the spouse of such other person will not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37 to the surviving spouse if he or she ceases living with such other person and holding himself or herself out openly to the public as such other person’s spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103(d))

(8) On or after January 1, 1971, the fact that benefits to a surviving spouse may previously have been barred because his or her conduct or a relationship into which he or she had entered had raised an inference or presumption that he or she had remarried or had been determined to be open and notorious adulterous cohabitation, or similar conduct, shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to such surviving spouse after he or she terminates the conduct or relationship, if the relationship terminated prior to November 1, 1990.


(10) Benefits for a surviving spouse who remarries after age 57. (i) On or after January 1, 2004, the remarriage of a surviving spouse after the age of 57 shall not bar the furnishing of benefits relating to dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311, medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37, subject to the limitation in paragraph (a)(10)(ii) of this section.

(ii) A surviving spouse who remarried after the age of 57, but before December 16, 2003, may be eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311, medical care for survivors and dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1781, educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, or housing loans under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37 pursuant to paragraph (a)(10)(i) only if the application for such benefits was received by VA before December 16, 2004.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 103.)
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for such benefits was received by VA before December 16, 2004.


(b) Child. (1) Marriage of a child shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to or on account of such child, if the marriage:

(i) Was void, or

(ii) Has been annulled by a court having basic authority to render annulment decrees, unless it is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs that the annulment was obtained through fraud by either party or by collusion.

(2) On or after January 1, 1975, marriage of a child terminated prior to November 1, 1990, shall not bar the furnishing of benefits to or for such child provided that the marriage:

(i) Has been terminated by death, or

(ii) Has been dissolved by a court with basic authority to render divorce decrees unless the Department of Veterans Affairs determines that the divorce was secured through fraud by either party or by collusion.

(3) Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (c) and (e) of this section, the term child also includes a person who became permanently incapable of self-support before reaching the age of 18 years, who was a member of the veteran’s household at the time he or she became 18 years of age, and who was adopted by the veteran, regardless of the age of such person at the time of adoption.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(A)).

(iii) Who, after reaching the age of 18 years and until completion of education or training (but not after reaching the age of 23 years) is pursuing a course of instruction at an educational institution approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs. For the purposes of this section and §3.667, the term “educational institution” means a permanent organization that offers courses of instruction to a group of students who meet its enrollment criteria, including schools, colleges, academies, seminars, technical institutes, and universities. The term also includes home schools that operate in compliance with the compulsory attendance laws of the States in which they are located, whether treated as private schools or home schools under State law. The term “home schools” is limited to courses of instruction for grades kindergarten through 12.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(A), 104(a))

(2) For the purposes of determining entitlement of benefits based on a child’s school attendance, the term child of the veteran also includes the following unmarried persons:

(i) A person who was adopted by the veteran between the ages of 18 and 23 years.

(ii) A person who became a stepchild of the veteran between the ages of 18 and 23 years and who is a member of the veteran’s household or was a member of the veteran’s household at the time of the veteran’s death.

(3) Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (c) and (e) of this section, the term child also includes a person who became permanently incapable of self-support before reaching the age of 18 years, who was a member of the veteran’s household at the time he or she became 18 years of age, and who was adopted by the veteran, regardless of the age of such person at the time of adoption.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(A)).

(b) Stepchild. The term means a legitimate or an illegitimate child of the veteran’s spouse. A child of a surviving spouse whose marriage to the veteran is deemed valid under the provisions of §3.52, and who otherwise meets the requirements of this section is included.
(c) Adopted child. Except as provided in paragraph (e) of this section, the term means a child adopted pursuant to a final decree of adoption, a child adopted pursuant to an unrescinded interlocutory decree of adoption while remaining in the custody of the adopting parent (or parents) during the interlocutory period, and a child who has been placed for adoption under an agreement entered into by the adopting parent (or parents) with any agency authorized under law to so act, unless and until such agreement is terminated, while the child remains in the custody of the adopting parent (or parents) during the period of placement for adoption under such agreement. The term includes, as of the date of death of a veteran, such a child who:

(1) Was living in the veteran’s household at the time of the veteran’s death, and

(2) Was adopted by the veteran’s spouse under a decree issued within 2 years after August 25, 1959, or the veteran’s death whichever is later, and

(3) Was not receiving from an individual other than the veteran or the veteran’s spouse, or from a welfare organization which furnishes services or assistance for children, recurring contributions of sufficient size to constitute the major portion of the child’s support.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4))

(d) Definition of child custody. The provisions of this paragraph are for the purpose of determining entitlement to improved pension under §§3.23 and 3.24.

(1) Custody of a child shall be considered to rest with a veteran, surviving spouse of a veteran or person legally responsible for the child’s support if that person has the legal right to exercise parental control and responsibility for the welfare and care of the child. A child of the veteran residing with the veteran, surviving spouse of the veteran who is the child’s natural or adoptive parent, or person legally responsible for the child’s support if that person has the legal right to exercise parental control and responsibility for the welfare and care of the child. A child of the veteran residing with the veteran, surviving spouse of the veteran who is the child’s natural or adoptive parent, or person legally responsible for the child’s support shall be presumed to be in the custody of that individual. Where the veteran, surviving spouse, or person legally responsible for the child’s support has not been divested of legal custody, the child shall be considered in the custody of the individual for purposes of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.

(2) The term person legally responsible for the child’s support means a person who is under a legally imposed obligation (e.g., by statute or court order) to provide for the child’s support, as well as a natural or adoptive parent who has not been divested of legal custody. If the child’s natural or adoptive parent has remarried, the stepparent may also be considered a person legally responsible for the child’s support. A child shall be considered in the joint custody of his or her stepparent and natural or adoptive parent so long as the natural or adoptive parent and the stepparent are not estranged and residing apart, and the natural or adoptive parent has not been divested of legal custody. When a child is in such joint custody the combined income of the natural or adoptive parent and the stepparent shall be included as income of the person legally responsible for support under §3.24(c).

(3) A person having custody of a child prior to the time the child attains age 18 shall be considered to retain custody of the child for periods on and after the child’s 18th birthday, unless the person is divested of legal custody. This applies without regard to whether the child was entitled to pension prior to age 18, or whether increased pension was payable to a veteran or surviving spouse on behalf of the child prior to the child’s 18th birthday. If the child’s custodian dies after the child has attained age 18, the child shall be considered to be in custody of a successor custodian provided the successor custodian has the right to exercise parental control and responsibility for the welfare and care of the child.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1521(c), 1541(c))

(e) Child adopted under foreign law—

(1) General. The provisions of this paragraph are applicable to a person adopted under the laws of any jurisdiction other than a State. The term State is defined in 38 U.S.C. 101(20) and also includes the Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands. The term veteran includes, for the purposes of this paragraph, a Commonwealth Army veteran or new Philippine Scout as defined in 38 U.S.C. 3566.

(2) Adopted child of living veteran. A person residing outside any of the States shall not be considered to be a legally adopted child of a veteran during the lifetime of the veteran unless all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The person was less than 18 years of age at the time of adoption.

(ii) The person is receiving one-half or more of the person’s support from the veteran.

(iii) The person is not in the custody of the person’s natural parent unless the natural parent is the veteran’s spouse.

(iv) The person is residing with the veteran (or in the case of divorce following adoption, with the divorced spouse who is also a natural or adoptive parent) except for periods during which the person is residing apart from the veteran for purposes of full-time attendance at an educational institution or during which the person or the veteran is confined in a hospital, nursing home, other health-care facility, or other institution.

(3) Adopted child of deceased veteran. A person shall not be considered to have been a legally adopted child of a veteran as of the date of the veteran’s death and thereafter unless one of the following conditions is met:

(i) The veteran was entitled to and was receiving for the person a dependent’s allowance or similar monetary benefit payable under title 38, United States Code at any time within the 1-year period immediately preceding the veteran’s death; or

(ii) The person met the requirements of paragraph (e)(2) of this section for a period of at least 1 year prior to the veteran’s death.

(4) Verification. In the case of an adopted child of a living veteran, the requirements of paragraphs (e)(2)(ii), (iii) and (iv) of this section are for prospective application. That is, in addition to meeting all of the requirements of paragraph (e)(2) of this section at the time of initial adjudication, benefits are not payable thereafter for or to a child adopted under the laws of any jurisdiction other than a State unless the requirements of paragraphs (e)(2)(ii), (iii) and (iv) of this section continue to be met. Consequently, whenever Department of Veterans Affairs benefits are payable to or for a child adopted under the laws of any jurisdiction other than a State, and the veteran who adopted the child is living, the beneficiary shall submit, upon Department of Veterans Affairs request, a report, or other evidence, to determine if the requirements of paragraph (e)(2)(ii), (iii), and (iv) of this section were met for any period for which payment was made for or to the child and whether such requirements will continue to be met for future entitlement periods. Failure to submit the requested report or evidence within a reasonable time from date of request may result in termination of benefits payable for or to the child.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4), 501)


§ 3.58 Child adopted out of family.

A child of a veteran adopted out of the family of the veteran either prior or subsequent to the veteran’s death is nevertheless a child within the meaning of that term as defined by §3.57 and is eligible for benefits payable under all laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

CROSS REFERENCE: Veteran’s benefits not apportionable. See §3.458.

[26 FR 1568, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.59 Parent.

(a) The term parent means a natural mother or father (including the mother of an illegitimate child or the father of an illegitimate child if the usual family relationship existed), mother or father through adoption, or a person who for a period of not less than 1 year

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stood in the relationship of a parent to a veteran at any time before his or her entry into active service.

(b) Foster relationship must have begun prior to the veteran’s 21st birthday. Not more than one father and one mother, as defined, will be recognized in any case. If two persons stood in the relationship of father or mother for 1 year or more, the person who last stood in such relationship before the veteran’s last entry into active service will be recognized as the parent.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(5))

§ 3.60 Definition of “living with”.

For the purposes of determining entitlement to pension under 38 U.S.C. 1521, a person shall be considered as living with his or her spouse even though they reside apart unless they are estranged.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(h)(2))

§ 3.100 Delegations of authority.

(a) Authority is delegated to the Under Secretary for Benefits and to supervisory or adjudicative personnel within the jurisdiction of the Veterans Benefits Administration designated by the Under Secretary to make findings and decisions under the applicable laws, regulations, precedents, and instructions, as to entitlement of claimants to benefits under all laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs governing the payment of monetary benefits to veterans and their dependents, within the jurisdiction of Compensation and Pension Service.

(b) Authority is delegated to the Director, Compensation and Pension Service, and to personnel of that service designated by him to determine whether a claimant or payee has forfeited the right to gratuitious benefits or to remit a prior forfeiture pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 6103 or 6104. See §3.905.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 512(a))

§ 3.102 Reasonable doubt.

It is the defined and consistently applied policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the law under a broad interpretation, consistent, however, with the facts shown in every case. When, after careful consideration of all procurable and assembled data, a reasonable doubt arises regarding service origin, the degree of disability, or any other point, such doubt will be resolved in favor of the claimant. By reasonable doubt is meant one which exists because of an approximate balance of positive and negative evidence which does not satisfactorily prove or disprove the claim. It is a substantial doubt and one within the range of probability as distinguished from pure speculation or remote possibility. It is not a means of reconciling actual conflict or a contradiction in the evidence. Mere suspicion or doubt as to the truth of any statements submitted, as distinguished from impeachment or contradiction by evidence or known facts, is not justifiable basis for denying the application of the reasonable doubt doctrine if the entire, complete record otherwise warrants invoking this doctrine. The reasonable doubt doctrine is also applicable even in the absence of official records, particularly if the basic incident allegedly arose under combat, or similarly strenuous conditions, and is consistent with the probable results of such known hardships.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 3.103 Procedural due process and appellate rights.

(a) Statement of policy. Every claimant has the right to written notice of the decision made on his or her claim, the right to a hearing, and the right of representation. Proceedings before VA
are ex parte in nature, and it is the obligation of VA to assist a claimant in developing the facts pertinent to the claim and to render a decision which grants every benefit that can be supported in law while protecting the interests of the Government. The provisions of this section apply to all claims for benefits and relief, and decisions thereon, within the purview of this part 3.

(b) The right to notice—(1) General. Claimants and their representatives are entitled to notice of any decision made by VA affecting the payment of benefits or the granting of relief. Such notice shall clearly set forth the decision made, any applicable effective date, the reason(s) for the decision, the right to a hearing on any issue involved in the claim, the right of representation and the right, as well as the necessary procedures and time limits, to initiate an appeal of the decision.

(2) Advance notice and opportunity for hearing. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, no award of compensation, pension or dependency and indemnity compensation shall be terminated, reduced or otherwise adversely affected unless the beneficiary has been notified of such adverse action and has been provided a period of 60 days in which to submit evidence for the purpose of showing that the adverse action should not be taken.

(3) Exceptions. In lieu of advance notice and opportunity for a hearing, VA will send a written notice to the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary at the same time it takes an adverse action under the following circumstances:

(i) An adverse action based solely on factual and unambiguous information or statements as to income, net worth, or dependency or marital status that the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary provided to VA in writing or orally (under the procedures set forth in §3.217(b)), with knowledge or notice that such information would be used to calculate benefit amounts.

(ii) An adverse action based upon the beneficiary’s or fiduciary’s failure to return a required eligibility verification report.

(iii) Evidence reasonably indicates that a beneficiary is deceased. However, in the event that VA has received a death certificate, a terminal hospital report verifying the death of a beneficiary or a claim for VA burial benefits, no notice of termination (contemporaneous or otherwise) will be required.

(iv) An adverse action based upon a written and signed statement provided by the beneficiary to VA renouncing VA benefits (see §3.106 on renouncement).

(v) An adverse action based upon a written statement provided to VA by a veteran indicating that he or she has returned to active service, the nature of that service, and the date of reentry into service, with the knowledge or notice that receipt of active service pay precludes concurrent receipt of VA compensation or pension (see §3.654 regarding active service pay).

(vi) An adverse action based upon a garnishment order issued under 42 U.S.C. 659(a).

(4) Restoration of benefits. VA will restore retroactively benefits that were reduced, terminated, or otherwise adversely affected based on oral information or statements if within 30 days of the date on which VA issues the notification of adverse action the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary asserts that the adverse action was based upon information or statements that were inaccurate or upon information that was not provided by the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary. This will not preclude VA from taking subsequent action that adversely affects benefits.

(c) The right to a hearing. (1) Upon request, a claimant is entitled to a hearing at any time on any issue involved in a claim within the purview of part 3 of this chapter, subject to the limitations described in §20.1304 of this chapter with respect to hearings in claims which have been certified to the Board of Veterans Appeals for appellate review. VA will provide the place of hearing in the VA office having original jurisdiction over the claim or at the VA office nearest the claimant’s home having adjudicative functions, or, subject to available resources and solely at the
option of VA, at any other VA facility or federal building at which suitable hearing facilities are available. VA will provide one or more employees who have original determinative authority of such issues to conduct the hearing and be responsible for establishment and preservation of the hearing record. Hearings in connection with proposed adverse actions and appeals shall be held before one or more VA employees having original determinative authority who did not participate in the proposed action or the decision being appealed. All expenses incurred by the claimant in connection with the hearing are the responsibility of the claimant.

(2) The purpose of a hearing is to permit the claimant to introduce into the record, in person, any available evidence which he or she considers material and any arguments or contentions with respect to the facts and applicable law which he or she may consider pertinent. All testimony will be under oath or affirmation. The claimant is entitled to produce witnesses, but the claimant and witnesses are expected to be present. The Veterans Benefits Administration will not normally schedule a hearing for the sole purpose of receiving argument from a representative. It is the responsibility of the VA employee or employees conducting the hearings to explain fully the issues and suggest the submission of evidence which the claimant may have overlooked and which would be of advantage to the claimant’s position. To assure clarity and completeness of the hearing record, questions which are directed to the claimant and to witnesses are to be framed to explore fully the basis for claimed entitlement rather than with an intent to refute evidence or to discredit testimony. In cases in which the nature, origin, or degree of disability is in issue, the claimant may request visual examination by a physician designated by VA and the physician’s observations will be read into the record.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(d) Submission of evidence. Any evidence whether documentary, testimonial, or in other form, offered by the claimant in support of a claim and any issue a claimant may raise and any contention or argument a claimant may offer with respect thereto are to be included in the records.

(e) The right to representation. Subject to the provisions of §§14.626 through 14.637 of this title, claimants are entitled to representation of their choice at every stage in the prosecution of a claim.

(f) Notification of decisions. The claimant or beneficiary and his or her representative will be notified in writing of decisions affecting the payment of benefits or granting relief. All notifications will advise the claimant of the reason for the decision; the date the decision will be effective; the right to a hearing subject to paragraph (c) of this section; the right to initiate an appeal by filing a Notice of Disagreement which will entitle the individual to a Statement of the Case for assistance in perfecting an appeal; and the periods in which an appeal must be initiated and perfected (See part 20 of this chapter, on appeals). Further, any notice that VA has denied a benefit sought will include a summary of the evidence considered.

(Authority:38 U.S.C. 501, 1115, 1506, 5104)

§ 3.104 Finality of decisions.

(a) A decision of a duly constituted rating agency or other agency of original jurisdiction shall be final and binding on all field offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs as to conclusions based on the evidence on file at the time VA issues written notification in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5104. A final and binding agency decision shall not be subject to revision on the same factual basis except by duly constituted appellate authorities or except as provided in §3.105 and §3.2600 of this part.

(b) Current determinations of line of duty, character of discharge, relationship, dependency, domestic relations questions, homicide, and findings of fact of death or presumptions of death
§ 3.105 Revision of decisions.

The provisions of this section apply except where an award was based on an act of commission or omission by the payee, or with his or her knowledge (§3.500(b)); there is a change in law or a Department of Veterans Affairs issue, or a change in interpretation of law or a Department of Veterans Affairs issue (§3.114); or the evidence establishes that service connection was clearly illegal. The provisions with respect to the date of discontinuance of benefits are applicable to running awards. Where the award has been suspended, and it is determined that no additional payments are in order, the award will be discontinued effective date of last payment.

(a) Error. Previous determinations which are final and binding, including decisions of service connection, degree of disability, age, marriage, relationship, service, dependency, line of duty, and other issues, will be accepted as correct in the absence of clear and unmistakable error. Where evidence establishes such error, the prior decision will be reversed or amended. For the purpose of authorizing benefits, the rating or other adjudicative decision which constitutes a reversal of a prior decision on the grounds of clear and unmistakable error has the same effect as if the corrected decision had been made on the date of the reversed decision. Except as provided in paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section, where an award is reduced or discontinued because of administrative error or error in judgment, the provisions of §3.500(b)(2) will apply.

(b) Difference of opinion. Whenever an adjudicative agency is of the opinion that a revision or an amendment of a previous decision is warranted, a difference of opinion being involved rather than a clear and unmistakable error, the proposed revision will be recommended to Central Office. However, a decision may be revised under §3.2600 without being recommended to Central Office.

(c) Character of discharge. A determination as to character of discharge or line of duty which would result in discontinued entitlement is subject to the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section.

(d) Severance of service connection. Subject to the limitations contained in §§3.114 and 3.957, service connection will be severed only where evidence establishes that it is clearly and unmistakably erroneous (the burden of proof being upon the Government). (Where service connection is severed because of a change in or interpretation of a law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue, the provisions of §3.114 are for application.) A change in diagnosis may be accepted as a basis for severance action if the examining physician or physicians or other proper medical authority certifies that, in the light of all accumulated evidence, the diagnosis on which service connection was predicated is clearly erroneous. This certification must be accompanied by a summary of the facts, findings, and reasons supporting the conclusion. When severance of service connection is considered warranted, a rating proposing severance will be prepared setting forth all material facts and reasons. The claimant will be notified at his or her latest address of record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence to show that service connection should be maintained. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if additional evidence is not received within that period, final rating action will be taken and the award will be reduced or discontinued, if in order, effective the last day of the month in which a 60-day period from the date of notice to the beneficiary of the final rating action expires.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(6))

(e) Reduction in evaluation—compensation. Where the reduction in evaluation...
of a service-connected disability or employability status is considered warranted and the lower evaluation would result in a reduction or discontinuance of compensation payments currently being made, a rating proposing the reduction or discontinuance will be prepared setting forth all material facts and reasons. The beneficiary will be notified at his or her latest address of record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor, and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence to show that compensation payments should be continued at their present level. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if additional evidence is not received within that period, final rating action will be taken and the award will be reduced or discontinued effective the last day of the month in which a 60-day period from the date of notice to the beneficiary of the final rating action expires.

(f) Reduction in evaluation—pension. Where a change in disability or employability warrants a reduction or discontinuance of pension payments currently being made, a rating proposing the reduction or discontinuance will be prepared setting forth all material facts and reasons. The beneficiary will be notified at his or her latest address of record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor, and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence to show that pension benefits should be continued at their present level. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if additional evidence is not received within that period, final rating action will be taken and the award will be reduced or discontinued effective the last day of the month in which the final rating action expires.

(g) Reduction in evaluation—monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea. Where a reduction or discontinuance of a monetary allowance currently being paid under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 is considered warranted, VA will notify the beneficiary at his or her latest address of record of the proposed reduction, furnish detailed reasons therefor, and allow the beneficiary 60 days to present additional evidence to show that the monetary allowance should be continued at the present level. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if VA does not receive additional evidence within that period, it will take final rating action and reduce the award effective the last day of the month following 60 days from the date of notice to the beneficiary of the proposed reduction.

(h) Other reductions/discontinuances. Except as otherwise specified at §3.103(b)(3) of this part, where a reduction or discontinuance of benefits is warranted by reason of information received concerning income, net worth, dependency, or marital or other status, a proposal for the reduction or discontinuance will be prepared setting forth all material facts and reasons. The beneficiary will be notified at his or her latest address of record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor, and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence to show that the benefits should be continued at their present level. Unless otherwise provided in paragraph (i) of this section, if additional evidence is not received within that period, final adverse action will be taken and the award will be reduced or discontinued effective as specified under the provisions of §§3.500 through 3.503 of this part.

(i) Predetermination hearings. (1) In the advance written notice concerning proposed actions under paragraphs (d) through (h) of this section, the beneficiary will be informed that he or she will have an opportunity for a predetermination hearing, provided that a request for such a hearing is received by VA within 30 days from the date of the notice. If a timely request is received, VA will notify the beneficiary in writing of the time and place of the
hearing at least 10 days in advance of the scheduled hearing date. The 10 day advance notice may be waived by agreement between VA and the beneficiary or representative. The hearing will be conducted by VA personnel who did not participate in the proposed adverse action and who will bear the decision-making responsibility. If a predetermination hearing is timely requested, benefit payments shall be continued at the previously established level pending a final determination concerning the proposed action.

(2) Following the predetermination procedures specified in this paragraph and paragraph (d), (e), (f), (g) or (h) of this section, whichever is applicable, final action will be taken. If a predetermination hearing was not requested or if the beneficiary failed without good cause to report for a scheduled predetermination hearing, the final action will be based solely upon the evidence of record. Examples of good cause include, but are not limited to, the illness or hospitalization of the claimant or beneficiary, death of an immediate family member, etc. If a predetermination hearing was conducted, the final action will be based on evidence and testimony adduced at the hearing as well as the other evidence of record including any additional evidence obtained following the hearing pursuant to necessary development. Whether or not a predetermination hearing was conducted, a written notice of the final action shall be issued to the beneficiary and his or her representative, setting forth the reasons therefor and the evidence upon which it is based. Where a reduction or discontinuance of benefits is found warranted following consideration of any additional evidence submitted, the effective date of such reduction or discontinuance shall be as follows:

(i) Where reduction or discontinuance was proposed under the provisions of paragraph (d) or (e) of this section, the effective date of final action shall be the last day of the month in which such action is approved.

(ii) Where reduction or discontinuance was proposed under the provisions of paragraph (h) of this section, the effective date of final action shall be as specified under the provisions of §§3.500 through 3.503 of this part.

(3) The renouncement will not preclude the person from filing a new application for pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation under any of the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The renouncement will not preclude the person from filing a new application for pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation under any of the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, payment of such benefits and the right thereto will be terminated, and such person will be denied any and all rights thereto from such filing.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5306(b))

§ 3.106 Renouncement.

(a) Any person entitled to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation under any of the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs may renounce his or her right to that benefit but may not renounce less than all of the component items which together comprise the total amount of the benefit to which the person is entitled nor any fixed monetary amounts less than the full amount of entitlement. The renouncement will be in writing over the person’s signature. Upon receipt of such renouncement in the Department of Veterans Affairs, payment of such benefits and the right thereto will be terminated, and such person will be denied any and all rights thereto from such filing.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5306(a))
§ 3.109 Time limit.

(a) Notice of time limit for filing evidence. (1) If a claimant’s application is incomplete, the claimant will be notified of the evidence necessary to complete the application. If the evidence is not received within 1 year from the date of such notification, pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation may not be paid by reason of that application (38 U.S.C. 5103(a)). Information concerning the whereabouts of a person who has filed claim is not considered evidence.

(2) The provisions of this paragraph are applicable to original applications, formal or informal, and to applications for increased benefits by reason of increased disability, age, or the existence of a dependent and to applications for reopening or resumption of payments. If substantiating evidence is required with respect to the veracity of a witness or the authenticity of documentary evidence timely filed, there will be allowed for the submission of such evidence 1 year from the date of the request therefor. However, any evidence to enlarge the proofs and evidence originally submitted is not so included.

(b) Extension of time limit. Time limits within which claimants or beneficiaries are required to act to perfect a claim or challenge an adverse VA decision may be extended for good cause shown. Where an extension is requested after expiration of a time limit, the action required of the claimant or beneficiary must be taken concurrent with or prior to the filing of a request for extension of the time limit, and good
§ 3.110 Computation of time limit.

(a) In computing the time limit for any action required of a claimant or beneficiary, including the filing of claims or evidence requested by VA, the first day of the specified period will be excluded and the last day included. This rule is applicable in cases in which the time limit expires on a workday. Where the time limit would expire on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the next succeeding workday will be included in the computation.

(b) The first day of the specified period referred to in paragraph (a) of this section shall be the date of mailing of notification to the claimant or beneficiary of the action required and the time limit therefor. The date of the letter of notification shall be considered the date of mailing for purposes of computing time limits. As to appeals, see §§ 20.302 and 20.305 of this chapter.

§ 3.112 Fractions of one cent.

In all cases where the amount to be paid under any award involves a fraction of a cent, the fractional part will be excluded.

§ 3.114 Change of law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue.

(a) Effective date of award. Where pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual who is a child of a Vietnam veteran or child of a veteran with covered service in Korea is awarded or increased pursuant to a liberalizing law, or a liberalizing VA issue approved by the Secretary or by the Secretary’s direction, the effective date of such award or increase shall be fixed in accordance with the facts found, but shall not be earlier than the effective date of the act or administrative issue. Where pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual who is a child of a Vietnam veteran or child of a veteran with covered service in Korea is awarded or increased pursuant to a liberalizing law or VA issue which became effective on or after the date of its enactment or issuance, in order for a claimant to be eligible for a retroactive payment under the provisions of this paragraph the evidence must show that the claimant met all eligibility criteria for the liberalized benefit on the effective date of the liberalizing law or VA issue and that such eligibility existed continuously from that date to the date of claim or administrative determination of entitlement. The provisions of this paragraph are applicable to original and reopened claims as well as claims for increase.

(1) If a claim is reviewed on the initiative of VA within 1 year from the effective date of the law or VA issue, or at the request of a claimant received within 1 year from that date, benefits may be authorized from the effective date of the law or VA issue.

(2) If a claim is reviewed on the initiative of VA more than 1 year after the effective date of the law or VA issue, benefits may be authorized for a period of 1 year prior to the date of entitlement.

(3) If a claim is reviewed at the request of the claimant more than 1 year after the effective date of the law or VA issue, benefits may be authorized for a period of 1 year prior to the date of receipt of such request.

(b) Discontinuance of benefits. Where the reduction or discontinuance of an award is in order because of a change in law or a Department of Veterans Affairs issue, or because of a change in
interpretation of a law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue, the payee will be notified at his or her latest address of record of the contemplated action and furnished detailed reasons therefor, and will be given 60 days for the presentation of additional evidence. If additional evidence is not received within that period, the award will be reduced or discontinued effective the last day of the month in which the 60-day period expired.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(6))

§ 3.115 Access to financial records.

(a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may request from a financial institution the names and addresses of its customers. Each such request, however, shall include a certification that the information is necessary for the proper administration of benefits programs under the laws administered by the Secretary, and cannot be obtained by a reasonable search of records and information of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) Information received pursuant to a request referred to in paragraph (a) of this section shall not be used for any purpose other than the administration of benefits programs under the laws administered by the Secretary if the disclosure of that information would otherwise be prohibited by any provision of the Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978 (12 U.S.C. 3401 through 3422).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5319)

[58 FR 32445, June 10, 1993]

CLAIMS

§ 3.150 Forms to be furnished.

(a) Upon request made in person or in writing by any person applying for benefits under the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the appropriate application form will be furnished.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5102)

(b) Upon receipt of notice of death of a veteran, the appropriate application form will be forwarded for execution by or on behalf of any dependent who has apparent entitlement to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation. If it is not indicated that any person would be entitled to such benefits, but there is payable an accrued benefit not paid during the veteran’s lifetime, the appropriate application form will be forwarded to the preferred dependent. Notice of the time limit will be included in letters forwarding applications for benefits.

(c) When disability or death is due to Department of Veterans Affairs hospital treatment, training, medical or surgical treatment, or examination, a specific application for benefits will not be initiated.

CROSS REFERENCE: Extension of time limit. See §3.109(b).


§ 3.151 Claims for disability benefits.

(a) General. A specific claim in the form prescribed by the Secretary must be filed in order for benefits to be paid to any individual under the laws administered by VA. (38 U.S.C. 5101(a)). A claim by a veteran for compensation may be considered to be a claim for pension; and a claim by a veteran for pension may be considered to be a claim for compensation. The greater benefit will be awarded, unless the claimant specifically elects the lesser benefit.

(b) Retroactive disability pension claims. Where disability pension entitlement is established based on a claim received by VA on or after October 1, 1984, the pension award may not be effective prior to the date of receipt of the pension claim unless the veteran specifically claims entitlement to retroactive benefits. The claim for retroactivity may be filed separately or included in the claim for disability pension, but it must be received by VA within one year from the date on which the veteran became permanently and totally disabled. Additional requirements for entitlement to a retroactive pension award are contained in §3.400(b) of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5101(a))
§ 3.152 Claims for death benefits.

(a) A specific claim in the form prescribed by the Secretary (or jointly with the Commissioner of Social Security, as prescribed by § 3.153) must be filed in order for death benefits to be paid to any individual under the laws administered by VA. (See § 3.400(c) concerning effective dates of awards.)

(B) A claim by a surviving spouse or child for compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation will also be considered to be a claim for death pension and accrued benefits, and a claim by a surviving spouse or child for death pension will be considered to be a claim for death compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation and accrued benefits.

(C) Where a child’s entitlement to dependency and indemnity compensation arises by reason of termination of a surviving spouse’s right to dependency and indemnity compensation or by reason of attaining the age of 18 years, a claim will be required. (38 U.S.C. § 5110(e).) Where the award to the surviving spouse is terminated by reason of her or his death, a claim for the child will be considered a claim for any accrued benefits which may be payable.

(2) A claim filed by a surviving spouse who does not have entitlement will be accepted as a claim for a child or children in her or his custody named in the claim.

(3) Where a claim of a surviving spouse is disallowed for any reason whatsoever and where evidence requested in order to determine entitlement from a child or children named in the surviving spouse’s claim is submitted within 1 year from the date of request, requested either before or after disallowance of the surviving spouse’s claim, an award for the child or children will be made as though the disallowed claim had been filed solely on their behalf. Otherwise, payments may not be made for the child or children for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.

4) Where payments of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation to a surviving spouse have been discontinued because of remarriage or death, or a child becomes eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation by reason of attaining the age of 18 years, and any necessary evidence is submitted within 1 year from date of request, an award for the child or children named in the surviving spouse’s claim will be made on the basis of the surviving spouse’s claim having been converted to a claim on behalf of the child. Otherwise, payments may not be made for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. § 5101)

Cross Reference: State Department as agent of Department of Veterans Affairs. See § 3.108. Change in status of dependents. See § 3.651.

[50 FR 25981, June 24, 1985, as amended at 71 FR 44918, Aug. 8, 2006]

§ 3.153 Claims filed with Social Security.

An application on a form jointly prescribed by the Secretary and the Commissioner of Social Security filed with the Social Security Administration on or after January 1, 1957, will be considered a claim for death benefits, and to have been received in the Department of Veterans Affairs as of the date of receipt in Social Security Administration. The receipt of such an application (or copy thereof) by the Department of Veterans Affairs will not preclude a request for any necessary evidence.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5105)

§ 3.154 Injury due to hospital treatment, etc.

VA may accept as a claim for benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 and § 3.361 any communication in writing indicating an intent to file a claim for disability compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation under the laws governing entitlement to veterans' benefits for disability or death due to VA hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, examination, training and rehabilitation services, or compensated work therapy program, whether such communication is contained in a formal claim for pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation or in any other document.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151)

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates. See § 3.400(i). Disability or death due to hospitalization, etc. See §§ 3.358, 3.361 and 3.800.

[69 FR 46432, Aug. 3, 2004]

§ 3.155 Informal claims.

(a) Any communication or action, indicating an intent to apply for one or more benefits under the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, from a claimant, his or her duly authorized representative, a Member of Congress, or some person acting as next friend of a claimant who is not sui juris may be considered an informal claim. Such informal claim must identify the benefit sought. Upon receipt of an informal claim, if a formal claim has not been filed, an application form will be forwarded to the claimant for execution. If received within 1 year from the date it was sent to the claimant, it will be considered filed as of the date of receipt of the informal claim.

(b) A communication received from a service organization, an attorney, or agent may not be accepted as an informal claim if a power of attorney was not executed at the time the communication was written.

(c) When a claim has been filed which meets the requirements of § 3.151 or § 3.152, an informal request for increase or reopening will be accepted as a claim.

CROSS REFERENCES: State Department as agent of VA. See § 3.108. Report of examination or hospitalization—as claim for increase or to reopen. See § 3.157.

[69 FR 46432, Aug. 3, 2004]

§ 3.156 New and material evidence.

(a) General. A claimant may reopen a finally adjudicated claim by submitting new and material evidence. New evidence means existing evidence not previously submitted to agency decisionmakers. Material evidence means existing evidence that, by itself or when considered with previous evidence of record, relates to an unestablished fact necessary to substantiate the claim. New and material evidence can be neither cumulative nor redundant of the evidence of record at the time of the last prior final denial of the claim sought to be reopened, and must raise a reasonable possibility of substantiating the claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 5103A(f), 5108)

(b) Pending claim. New and material evidence received prior to the expiration of the appeal period, or prior to the appellate decision if a timely appeal has been filed (including evidence received prior to an appellate decision and referred to the agency of original jurisdiction by the Board of Veterans Appeals without consideration in that decision in accordance with the provisions of § 20.1304(b)(1) of this chapter), will be considered as having been filed in connection with the claim which was pending at the beginning of the appeal period.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(c) Service department records. (1) Notwithstanding any other section in this part, at any time after VA issues a decision on a claim, if VA receives or associates with the claims file relevant official service department records that existed and had not been associated with the claims file when VA first decided the claim, VA will reconsider the claim, notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this section. Such records include, but are not limited to:

(1) Service records that are related to a claimed in-service event, injury, or disease, regardless of whether such records mention the veteran by name,
§ 3.157 Report of examination or hospitalization as claim for increase or to reopen.

(a) General. Effective date of pension or compensation benefits, if otherwise in order, will be the date of receipt of a claim or the date when entitlement arose, whichever is the later. A report of examination or hospitalization which meets the requirements of this section will be accepted as an informal claim for benefits under an existing law or for benefits under a liberalizing law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue, if the report relates to a disability which may establish entitlement. Acceptance of a report of examination or treatment as a claim for increase or to reopen is subject to the requirements of §3.114 with respect to action on Department of Veterans Affairs initiative or at the request of the claimant and the payment of retroactive benefits from the date of the report or for a period of 1 year prior to the date of receipt of the report.

(b) Claim. Once a formal claim for pension or compensation has been allowed or a formal claim for compensation disallowed for the reason that the service-connected disability is not compensable in degree, receipt of one of the following will be accepted as an informal claim for increased benefits or an informal claim to reopen. In addition, receipt of one of the following will be accepted as an informal claim in the case of a retired member of a uniformed service whose formal claim for pension or compensation has been disallowed because of receipt of retirement pay. The evidence listed will also be accepted as an informal claim for pension previously denied for the reason the disability was not permanently and totally disabling.

(1) Report of examination or hospitalization by Department of Veterans Affairs or uniformed services. The date of outpatient or hospital examination or date of admission to a VA or uniformed services hospital will be accepted as the date of receipt of a claim. The date of a uniformed service examination which is the basis for granting severance pay to a former member of the Armed Forces on the temporary disability retired list will be accepted as the date of receipt of claim. The date of admission to a non-VA hospital where a veteran was maintained at VA expense will be accepted as the date of

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5101(a))

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receipt of a claim, if VA maintenance was previously authorized; but if VA maintenance was authorized subsequent to admission, the date VA received notice of admission will be accepted. The provisions of this paragraph apply only when such reports relate to examination or treatment of a disability for which service-connection has previously been established or when a claim specifying the benefit sought is received within one year from the date of such examination, treatment or hospital admission.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(2) Evidence from a private physician or layman. The date of receipt of such evidence will be accepted when the evidence furnished by or in behalf of the claimant is within the competence of the physician or lay person and shows the reasonable probability of entitlement to benefits.

(3) State and other institutions. When submitted by or on behalf of the veteran and entitlement is shown, date of receipt by the Department of Veterans Affairs of examination reports, clinical records, and transcripts of records will be accepted as the date of receipt of a claim if received from State, county, municipal, recognized private institutions, or other Government hospitals (except those described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section). These records must be authenticated by an appropriate official of the institution. Benefits will be granted if the records are adequate for rating purposes; otherwise findings will be verified by official examination. Reports received from private institutions not listed by the American Hospital Association must be certified by the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs or physician designee.


§ 3.159 Department of Veterans Affairs assistance in developing claims.

(a) Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) Competent medical evidence means evidence provided by a person who is qualified through education, training, or experience to offer medical diagnoses, statements, or opinions. Competent medical evidence may also mean statements conveying sound medical principles found in medical treatises. It would also include statements contained in authoritative

(2) Department of Veterans Affairs examinations. Where the veteran fails without adequate reason to respond to an order to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination within 1 year from the date of request and payments have been discontinued, the claim for such benefits will be considered abandoned.

(c) Disappearance. Where payments of pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or monetary allowance under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 have not been made or have been discontinued because a payee’s present whereabouts is unknown, payments will be resumed effective the day following the date of last payment if entitlement is otherwise established, upon receipt of a valid current address.


§ 3.159 Department of Veterans Affairs assistance in developing claims.

(a) Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) Competent medical evidence means evidence provided by a person who is qualified through education, training, or experience to offer medical diagnoses, statements, or opinions. Competent medical evidence may also mean statements conveying sound medical principles found in medical treatises. It would also include statements contained in authoritative
writings such as medical and scientific articles and research reports or analyses.

(2) **Competent lay evidence** means any evidence not requiring that the proponent have specialized education, training, or experience. Lay evidence is competent if it is provided by a person who has knowledge of facts or circumstances and conveys matters that can be observed and described by a lay person.

(3) **Substantially complete application** means an application containing the claimant’s name; his or her relationship to the veteran, if applicable; sufficient service information for VA to verify the claimed service, if applicable; the benefit claimed and any medical condition(s) on which it is based; the claimant’s signature; and in claims for nonservice-connected disability or death pension and parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation, a statement of income.

(4) For purposes of paragraph (c)(4)(i) of this section, **event** means one or more incidents associated with places, types, and circumstances of service giving rise to disability.

(5) **Information** means non-evidentiary facts, such as the claimant’s Social Security number or address; the name and military unit of a person who served with the veteran; or the name and address of a medical care provider who may have evidence pertinent to the claim.

(b) **VA’s duty to notify claimants of necessary information or evidence.** (1) When VA receives a complete or substantially complete application for benefits, it will notify the claimant of any information and medical or lay evidence that is necessary to substantiate the claim (hereafter in this paragraph referred to as the “notice”). In the notice, VA will inform the claimant which information and evidence, if any, that VA will attempt to obtain on behalf of the claimant. The information and evidence that the claimant is informed that the claimant is to provide must be provided within one year of the date of the notice. If the claimant has not responded to the notice within 30 days, VA may decide the claim prior to the expiration of the one-year period based on all the information and evidence contained in the file, including information and evidence it has obtained on behalf of the claimant and any VA medical examinations or medical opinions. If VA does so, however, and the claimant subsequently provides the information and evidence within one year of the date of the notice, VA must readjudicate the claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103)

(2) If VA receives an incomplete application for benefits, it will notify the claimant of the information necessary to complete the application and will defer assistance until the claimant submits this information.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5102(b), 5103A(3))

(3) No duty to provide the notice described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section arises:

(i) Upon receipt of a Notice of Disagreement; or

(ii) When, as a matter of law, entitlement to the benefit claimed cannot be established.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103(a), 5103A(a)(2))

(c) **VA’s duty to assist claimants in obtaining evidence.** Upon receipt of a substantially complete application for benefits, VA will make reasonable efforts to help a claimant obtain evidence necessary to substantiate the claim. In addition, VA will give the assistance described in paragraphs (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(3) to an individual attempting to reopen a finally decided claim. VA will not pay any fees charged by a custodian to provide records requested.

(1) **Obtaining records not in the custody of a Federal department or agency.** VA will make reasonable efforts to obtain relevant records not in the custody of a Federal department or agency, to include records from State or local governments, private medical care providers, current or former employers, and other non-Federal governmental sources. Such reasonable efforts will generally consist of an initial request for the records and, if the records are
not received, at least one follow-up request. A follow-up request is not required if a response to the initial request indicates that the records sought do not exist or that a follow-up request for the records would be futile. If VA receives information showing that subsequent requests to this or another custodian could result in obtaining the records sought, then reasonable efforts will include an initial request and, if the records are not received, at least one follow-up request to the new source or an additional request to the original source.

(i) The claimant must cooperate fully with VA’s reasonable efforts to obtain relevant records from non-Federal agency or department custodians. The claimant must provide enough information to identify and locate the existing records, including the person, company, agency, or other custodian holding the records; the approximate time frame covered by the records; and, in the case of medical treatment records, the condition for which treatment was provided.

(ii) If necessary, the claimant must authorize the release of existing records in a form acceptable to the person, company, agency, or other custodian holding the records.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(b))

(2) Obtaining records in the custody of a Federal department or agency. VA will make as many requests as are necessary to obtain relevant records from a Federal department or agency. These records include but are not limited to military records, including service medical records; medical and other records from VA medical facilities; records from non-VA facilities providing examination or treatment at VA expense; and records from other Federal agencies, such as the Social Security Administration. VA will end its efforts to obtain records from a Federal department or agency only if VA concludes that the records sought do not exist or that further efforts to obtain those records would be futile. Cases in which VA may conclude that no further efforts are required include those in which the Federal department or agency advises VA that the requested records do not exist or the custodian does not have them.

(i) The claimant must cooperate fully with VA’s reasonable efforts to obtain relevant records from Federal agency or department custodians. If requested by VA, the claimant must provide enough information to identify and locate the existing records, including the custodian or agency holding the records; the approximate time frame covered by the records; and, in the case of medical treatment records, the condition for which treatment was provided. In the case of records requested to corroborate a claimed stressful event in service, the claimant must provide information sufficient for the records custodian to conduct a search of the corroborative records.

(ii) If necessary, the claimant must authorize the release of existing records in a form acceptable to the custodian or agency holding the records.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(b))

(3) Obtaining records in compensation claims. In a claim for disability compensation, VA will make efforts to obtain the claimant’s service medical records, if relevant to the claim; other relevant records pertaining to the claimant’s active military, naval or air service that are held or maintained by a governmental entity; VA medical records or records of examination or treatment at non-VA facilities authorized by VA; and any other relevant records held by any Federal department or agency. The claimant must provide information sufficient for the records custodian to conduct a search of the corroborative records.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(c))

(4) Providing medical examinations or obtaining medical opinions. (i) In a claim for disability compensation, VA will provide a medical examination or obtain a medical opinion based upon a review of the evidence of record if VA determines it is necessary to decide the
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claim. A medical examination or medical opinion is necessary if the information and evidence of record does not contain sufficient competent medical evidence to decide the claim, but:

(A) Contains competent lay or medical evidence of a current diagnosed disability or persistent or recurrent symptoms of disability;

(B) Establishes that the veteran suffered an event, injury or disease in service, or has a disease or symptoms of a disease listed in §3.309, §3.313, §3.316, and §3.317 manifesting during an applicable presumptive period provided the claimant has the required service or triggering event to qualify for that presumption; and

(C) Indicates that the claimed disability or symptoms may be associated with the established event, injury, or disease in service or with another service-connected disability.

(ii) Paragraph (4)(i)(C) could be satisfied by competent evidence showing post-service treatment for a condition, or other possible association with military service.

(iii) Paragraph (4)(ii)(C) applies to a claim to reopen a finally adjudicated claim only if new and material evidence is presented or secured.

(3) An application requesting a benefit to which the claimant is not entitled as a matter of law.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(d))

(d) Circumstances where VA will refrain from or discontinue providing assistance. VA will refrain from providing assistance in obtaining evidence for a claim if the substantially complete application for benefits indicates that there is no reasonable possibility that any assistance VA would provide to the claimant would substantiate the claim.

VA will discontinue providing assistance in obtaining evidence for a claim if the evidence obtained indicates that there is no reasonable possibility that further assistance would substantiate the claim. Circumstances in which VA will refrain from or discontinue providing assistance in obtaining evidence include, but are not limited to:

(1) The claimant’s ineligibility for the benefit sought because of lack of qualifying service, lack of veteran status, or other lack of legal eligibility;

(2) Claims that are inherently incredible or clearly lack merit; and

(3) An application requesting a benefit to which the claimant is not entitled as a matter of law.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(a)(2))

(e) Duty to notify claimant of inability to obtain records. (1) If VA makes reasonable efforts to obtain relevant non-Federal records but is unable to obtain them, or after continued efforts to obtain Federal records concludes that it is reasonably certain they do not exist or further efforts to obtain them would be futile, VA will provide the claimant with oral or written notice of that fact. VA will make a record of any oral notice conveyed to the claimant. For non-Federal records requests, VA may provide the notice at the same time it makes its final attempt to obtain the relevant records. In either case, the notice must contain the following information:

(i) The identity of the records VA was unable to obtain;

(ii) An explanation of the efforts VA made to obtain the records;

(iii) A description of any further action VA will take regarding the claim, including, but not limited to, notice that VA will decide the claim based on the evidence of record unless the claimant submits the records VA was unable to obtain; and

(iv) A notice that the claimant is ultimately responsible for providing the evidence.

(2) If VA becomes aware of the existence of relevant records before deciding the claim, VA will notify the claimant of the records and request that the claimant provide a release for the records. If the claimant does not provide any necessary release of the relevant records that VA is unable to obtain, VA will request that the claimant obtain the records and provide them to VA.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5103A(b)(2))

(f) For the purpose of the notice requirements in paragraphs (b) and (e) of this section, notice to the claimant means notice to the claimant or his or her fiduciary, if any, as well as to his or her representative, if any.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5102(b), 5103(a))
§ 3.201 Exchange of evidence; Social Security and Department of Veterans Affairs.

(a) A claimant for dependency and indemnity compensation may elect to furnish to the Department of Veterans Affairs in support of that claim copies of evidence which was previously furnished to the Social Security Administration or to have the Department of Veterans Affairs obtain such evidence from the Social Security Administration. For the purpose of determining the earliest effective date for payment of dependency and indemnity compensation, such evidence will be deemed to have been received by the Department of Veterans Affairs on the date it was received by the Social Security Administration.

(b) A copy or certification of evidence filed in the Department of Veterans Affairs in support of a claim for
§ 3.202 Evidence from foreign countries.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, where an affidavit or other document is required to be executed under oath before an official in a foreign country, the signature of that official must be authenticated by a United States Consular Officer in that jurisdiction or by the State Department. Where the United States has no consular representative in a foreign country, such authentication may be made as follows:

(1) By a consular agent of a friendly government whereupon the signature and seal of the official of the friendly government may be authenticated by the State Department; or

(2) By the nearest American consul who will attach a certificate showing the result of the investigation concerning its authenticity.

(b) Authentication will not be required:

(1) On documents approved by the Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs, Ottawa, Canada; or

(2) When it is indicated that the attesting officer is authorized to administer oaths for general purposes and the document bears his or her signature and seal; or

(3) When the document is executed before a Department of Veterans Affairs employee authorized to administer oaths; or

(4) When a copy of a public or church record from any foreign country purports to establish birth, adoption, marriage, annulment, divorce, or death, provided it bears the signature and seal of the custodian of such record and there is no conflicting evidence in the file which would serve to create doubt as to the correctness of the record; or

(5) When a copy of the public or church record from one of the countries comprising the United Kingdom, namely: England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland, purports to establish birth, marriage, or death, provided it bears the signature or seal or stamp of the custodian of such record and there is no evidence which would serve to create doubt as to the correctness of the records; or

(6) When affidavits prepared in the Republic of the Philippines are certified by a Department of Veterans Affairs representative located in the Philippines having authority to administer oaths.

(c) Photocopies of original documents meeting the requirements of this section will be accepted if they satisfy the requirements of §3.204 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCE: State Department as agent of Department of Veterans Affairs. See §3.108.


§ 3.203 Service records as evidence of service and character of discharge.

(a) Evidence submitted by a claimant. For the purpose of establishing entitlement to pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation or burial benefits the Department of Veterans Affairs may accept evidence of service submitted by a claimant (or sent directly to the Department of Veterans Affairs by the service department), such as a DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, or original Certificate of Discharge, without verification from the appropriate service department if the evidence meets the following conditions:

(1) The evidence is a document issued by the service department. A copy of an original document is acceptable if the copy was issued by the service department or if the copy was issued by a public custodian of records who certifies that it is a true and exact copy of the document in the custodian’s custody or, if the copy was submitted by an accredited agent, attorney or service organization representative who has successfully completed VA-prescribed training on military records,
and who certifies that it is a true and exact copy of either an original document or of a copy issued by the service department or a public custodian of records; and

(2) The document contains needed information as to length, time and character of service; and

(3) In the opinion of the Department of Veterans Affairs the document is genuine and the information contained in it is accurate.

(b) Additional requirements for pension claimants. In addition to meeting the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section, a document submitted to establish a creditable period of wartime service for pension entitlement may be accepted without verification if the document (or other evidence of record) shows:

(1) Service of 4 months or more; or

(2) Discharge for disability incurred in line of duty; or

(3) Ninety days creditable service based on records from the service department such as hospitalization for 90 days for a line of duty disability.

(c) Verification from the service department. When the claimant does not submit evidence of service or the evidence submitted does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section, a document submitted to establish a creditable period of wartime service for pension entitlement may be accepted without verification if the document (or other evidence of record) shows:

(1) Service of 4 months or more; or

(2) Discharge for disability incurred in line of duty; or

(3) Ninety days creditable service based on records from the service department such as hospitalization for 90 days for a line of duty disability.

§ 3.204 Evidence of dependents and age.

(a)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, VA will accept, for the purpose of determining entitlement to benefits under laws administered by VA, the statement of a claimant as proof of marriage, dissolution of a marriage, birth of a child, or death of a dependent, provided that the statement contains: the date (month and year) and place of the event; the full name and relationship of the other person to the claimant; and, where the claimant’s dependent child does not reside with the claimant, the name and address of the person who has custody of the child. In addition, a claimant must provide the social security number of any dependent on whose behalf he or she is seeking benefits (see §3.216).

(b) Marriage or birth. The classes of evidence to be furnished for the purpose of establishing marriage, dissolution of marriage, age, relationship, or death, if required under the provisions of paragraph (a)(2), are indicated in §§3.205 through 3.211 in the order of preference. Failure to furnish the higher class, however, does not preclude the acceptance of a lower class if the evidence furnished is sufficient to prove the point involved.

(c) Acceptability of photocopies. Photocopies of documents necessary to establish birth, death, marriage or relationship under the provisions of §§3.205
§ 3.205 Marriage.

(a) Proof of marriage. Marriage is established by one of the following types of evidence:

(1) Copy or abstract of the public record of marriage, or a copy of the church record of marriage, containing sufficient data to identify the parties, the date and place of marriage, and the number of prior marriages if shown on the official record.

(2) Official report from service department as to marriage which occurred while the veteran was in service.

(3) The affidavit of the clergyman or magistrate who officiated.

(4) The original certificate of marriage, if the Department of Veterans Affairs is satisfied that it is genuine and free from alteration.

(5) The affidavits or certified statements of two or more eyewitnesses to the ceremony.

(6) In jurisdictions where marriages other than by ceremony are recognized the affidavits or certified statements of one or both of the parties to the marriage, if living, setting forth all of the facts and circumstances concerning the alleged marriage, such as the agreement between the parties at the beginning of their cohabitation, the period of cohabitation, places and dates of residences, and whether children were born as the result of the relationship. This evidence should be supplemented by affidavits or certified statements from two or more persons who know as the result of personal observation the reputed relationship which existed between the parties to the alleged marriage including the periods of cohabitation, places of residences, whether the parties held themselves out as married, and whether they were generally accepted as such in the communities in which they lived.

(7) Any other secondary evidence which reasonably supports a belief by the Adjudicating activity that a valid marriage actually occurred.

(b) Valid marriage. In the absence of conflicting information, proof of marriage which meets the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section together with the claimant’s certified statement concerning the date, place and circumstances of dissolution of any prior marriage may be accepted as establishing a valid marriage, provided that such facts, if they were to be corroborated by record evidence, would warrant acceptance of the marriage as valid. Where necessary to a determination because of conflicting information, proof of marriage which meets the requirements of §3.52, the claimant’s signed statement that he or she had no knowledge of an impediment to the marriage to the veteran will be accepted, in the absence of information to the contrary, as proof of that fact.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

CROSS REFERENCES: Marriages deemed valid. See §3.52. Definitions; marriage. See §3.1(j). Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

§ 3.206 Divorce.

The validity of a divorce decree regular on its face, will be questioned by the Department of Veterans Affairs only when such validity is put in issue...
by a party thereto or a person whose interest in a claim for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits would be affected thereby. In cases where recognition of the decree is thus brought into question:

(a) Where the issue is whether the veteran is single or married (dissolution of a subsisting marriage), there must be a bona fide domicile in addition to the standards of the granting jurisdiction respecting validity of divorce;

(b) Where the issue is the validity of marriage to a veteran following a divorce, the matter of recognition of the divorce by the Department of Veterans Affairs (including any question of bona fide domicile) will be determined according to the laws of the jurisdictions specified in §3.1(j).

(c) Where a foreign divorce has been granted the residents of a State whose laws consider such decrees to be valid, it will thereafter be considered as valid under the laws of the jurisdictions specified in §3.1(j).

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.


§3.208 Claims based on attained age.

In claims for pension where the age of the veteran or surviving spouse is material, the statements of age will be accepted where they are in agreement with other statements in the record as to age. However, where there is a variance in such records, the youngest age will be accepted subject to the submission of evidence as outlined in §3.209.

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

[40 FR 53581, Nov. 19, 1975, as amended at 52 FR 19349, May 22, 1987]

§3.209 Birth.

Age or relationship is established by one of the following types of evidence.

If the evidence submitted for proof of age or relationship indicates a difference in the name of the person as shown by other records, the discrepancy is to be reconciled by an affidavit or certified statement identifying the person having the changed name as the person whose name appears in the evidence of age or relationship.

(a) A copy or abstract of the public record of birth. Such a record established more than 4 years after the birth will be accepted as proof of age or relationship if, it is not inconsistent with material of record with the Department of Veterans Affairs, or if it shows on its face that it is based upon evidence which would be acceptable under this section.

(b) A copy of the church record of baptism. Such a record of baptism performed more than 4 years after birth will not be accepted as proof of age or relationship unless it is consistent with material of record with the Department of Veterans Affairs, which will include at least one reference to age or relationship made at a time when such reference was not essential to establishing entitlement to the benefit claimed.

(c) Official report from the service department as to birth which occurred while the veteran was in service.

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates, void or annulled marriage. See §3.400 (u) and (v). Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.
§ 3.210 Child’s relationship.

(a) Legitimate child. Where it is necessary to determine the legitimacy of a child, evidence will be required to establish the legitimacy of the marriage of the mother of the child to the veteran or to show that the child is otherwise legitimate by State laws together with evidence of birth as outlined in § 3.209. Where the legitimacy of a child is not a factor, evidence to establish legitimacy will not be required: Provided, That, evidence is on file which meets the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section sufficient to warrant recognition of the relationship of the child without regard to legitimacy.

(b) Illegitimate child. As to the mother of an illegitimate child, proof of birth is all that is required. As to the father, the sufficiency of evidence will be determined in accordance with the facts in the individual case. Proof of such relationship will consist of:

1. An acknowledgment in writing signed by him;
2. Evidence that he has been identified as the child’s father by a judicial decree ordering him to contribute to the child’s support or for other purposes; or
3. Any other secondary evidence which reasonably supports a finding of relationship, as determined by an official authorized to approve such findings, such as:
   (i) A copy of the public record of birth or church record of baptism, showing that the veteran was the informant and was named as parent of the child; or
   (ii) Statements of persons who know that the veteran accepted the child as his; or
   (iii) Information obtained from service department or public records, such as school or welfare agencies, which shows that with his knowledge the veteran was named as the father of the child.

(c) Adopted child. Except as provided in paragraph (c)(1) of this section evidence of relationship will include a copy of the decree of adoption or a copy of the adoptive placement agreement and such other evidence as may be necessary.

1. In jurisdictions where petition must be made to the court for release of adoption documents or information, or where release of such documents or information is prohibited, the following may be accepted to establish the fact of adoption:
   (i) As to a child adopted into the veteran’s family, a copy of the child’s revised birth certificate.
   (ii) As to a child adopted out of the veteran’s family, a statement over the signature of the judge or the clerk of the court setting forth the child’s former name and the date of adoption, or a certified statement by the veteran, the veteran’s surviving spouse, apportioneer, or their fiduciaries setting forth the child’s former name, date of birth, and the date and fact of adoption together with evidence indicating that
the child’s original public record of birth has been removed from such records. Where application is made for an apportionment under §3.458(d) on behalf of a child adopted out of the veteran’s family, the evidence must be sufficient to establish the veteran as the natural parent of the child.

(2) As to a child adopted by the veteran’s surviving spouse after the veteran’s death, the statement of the adoptive parent or custodian of the child will be accepted in absence of information to the contrary, to show that the child was a member of the veteran’s household at the date of the veteran’s death and that recurring contributions were not being received for the child’s maintenance sufficient to provide for the major portion of the child’s support, from any person other than the veteran or surviving spouse or from any public or private welfare organization which furnished services or assistance to children. (Pub. L. 86–195)

(d) Stepchild. Evidence of relationship of a stepchild will consist of proof of birth as outlined in §3.209, evidence of the marriage of the veteran to the natural parent of the child, and evidence that the child is a member of the veteran’s household or was a member of the veteran’s household at the date of the veteran’s death.

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

§ 3.211 Death.

Death should be established by one of the following types of evidence:

(a)(1) A copy of the public record of the State or community where death occurred.

(2) A copy of a coroner’s report of death or a verdict of a coroner’s jury of the State or community where death occurred, provided such report or verdict properly identified the deceased.

(b) Where death occurs in a hospital or institution under the control of the United States Government:

(1) A death certificate signed by a medical officer; or

(2) A clinical summary or other report showing fact and date of death signed by a medical officer.

(c) An official report of death of a member of a uniformed service from the Secretary of the department concerned where death occurs while deceased was on the retired list, in an inactive duty status, or in the active service.

(d) Where death occurs abroad:

(1) A United States consular report of death bearing the signature and seal of the United States consul; or

(2) A copy of the public record of death authenticated (see §3.202(b)(4) for exception) by the United States consul or other agency of the State Department; or

(3) An official report of death from the head of the department concerned, where the deceased person was, at the time of death, a civilian employee of such department.

(e) If the foregoing evidence cannot be furnished, the reason must be stated. The fact of death may then be established by the affidavits of persons who have personal knowledge of the fact of death, have viewed the body of the deceased, know it to be the body of the person whose death is being established, setting forth all the facts and circumstances concerning the death, place, date, time, and cause thereof.

(f) If proof of death, as defined in paragraphs (a) through (e) of this section cannot be furnished, a finding of fact of death, where death is otherwise shown by competent evidence, may be made by an official authorized to approve such findings. Where it is indicated that the veteran died under circumstances which precluded recovery or identification of the body, the fact of death should be established by the best evidence, which from the nature of the case must be supposed to exist.

(g) In the absence of evidence to the contrary, a finding of fact of death made by another Federal agency will be accepted for the purposes of paragraph (f) of this section.

CROSS REFERENCE: Evidence of dependents and age. See §3.204.

§ 3.212 Unexplained absence for 7 years.

(a) If satisfactory evidence is produced establishing the fact of the continued and unexplained absence of any individual from his or her home and family for a period of 7 years or more and that a diligent search disclosed no evidence of his or her existence after the date of disappearance, and if evidence as provided in § 3.211 cannot be furnished, the death of such individual as of the expiration of such period may be considered as sufficiently proved.

(b) No State law providing for presumption of death will be applicable to claims for benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the finding of death will be final and conclusive except where suit is filed for insurance under 38 U.S.C. 1984.

§ 3.213 Change of status affecting entitlement.

(a) General. For the purpose of establishing entitlement to a higher rate of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation based on the existence of a dependent, VA will require evidence which satisfies the requirements of § 3.204. For the purpose of reducing or discontinuing such benefits, a statement by a claimant or payee setting forth the month and year of change of status which would result in a reduction or discontinuance of benefits to that person will be accepted, in the absence of contradictory information. This includes:

(1) Veteran. A statement by the veteran setting forth the month and year of death of a spouse, child, or dependent parent.

(2) Surviving spouse. A statement by the surviving spouse or remarried surviving spouse setting forth the month and year of remarriage and any change of name. (An award for a child or children who are otherwise entitled may be made to commence the day following the date of discontinuance of any payments to the surviving spouse.)

(3) Child. A statement by the veteran or surviving spouse (where an additional allowance is being paid to the veteran or surviving spouse for a child), or fiduciary, setting forth the month and year of the child’s death, marriage, or discontinuance of school attendance. A similar statement by a child who is receiving payments direct will be accepted to establish the child’s marriage or the discontinuance of school attendance. Where appropriate, the month and year of discontinuance of school attendance will be required in addition to the month and year of death or marriage of a child.

(4) Parent. A statement by a parent setting forth the month and year:

(i) Of marriage or remarriage;

(ii) When two parents or a parent and spouse ceased living together;

(iii) When two parents or a parent and spouse resumed living together following a period of separation;

(iv) Of divorce or death of a spouse.

(b) Date not reported. If the month and year of the event is not reported, the award will be reduced or discontinued, whichever is appropriate, effective date of last payment. The payee will be requested to furnish within 60 days from the date of request a statement setting forth the date of the event. Where payments are continued at a reduced rate, the award will be discontinued effective date of last payment if the required statement is not received within the 60-day period. Payments on a discontinued award may be resumed, if otherwise in order, from the date of discontinuance if the necessary information is received within 1 year from the date of request; otherwise from the date of receipt of a new claim.

(c) Contradictory information. Where there is reason to believe that the event reported may have occurred at an earlier date, formal proof will be required.
§ 3.214 Court decisions; unremarried surviving spouses.

Effective July 15, 1958, a decision rendered by a Federal court in an action to which the United States was a party holding that a surviving spouse of a veteran has not remarried will be followed in determining eligibility for pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation.

§ 3.215 Termination of marital relationship or conduct.

On or after January 1, 1971, benefits may be resumed to an unmarried surviving spouse upon filing of an application and submission of satisfactory evidence that the surviving spouse has ceased living with another person and holding himself or herself out openly to the public as that person’s spouse or that the surviving spouse has terminated a relationship or conduct which had created an inference or presumption of remarriage or related to open or notorious adulterous cohabitation or similar conduct, if the relationship terminated prior to November 1, 1990. Such evidence may consist of, but is not limited to, the surviving spouse’s certified statement of the fact.

§ 3.216 Mandatory disclosure of social security numbers.

Any person who applies for or receives any compensation or pension benefit as defined in §§3.3, 3.4, or 3.5 of this part, or a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18, shall, as a condition for receipt or continued receipt of benefits, furnish the Department of Veterans Affairs upon request with his or her social security number and the social security number of any dependent or beneficiary on whose behalf, or based upon whom, benefits are sought or received. However, no one shall be required to furnish a social security number for any person to whom none has been assigned. Benefits will be terminated if a beneficiary fails to furnish the Department of Veterans Affairs with his or her social security number or the social security number of any dependent or beneficiary on whose behalf, or based upon whom, benefits are sought or received, within 60 days from the date the beneficiary is requested to furnish the social security number.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1832, 5101(c))

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900–0522)

§ 3.217 Submission of statements or information affecting entitlement to benefits.

(a) For purposes of this part, unless specifically provided otherwise, the submission of information or a statement that affects entitlement to benefits by e-mail, facsimile, or other written electronic means, will satisfy a requirement or authorization that the statement or information be submitted in writing.

Note to paragraph (a): Section 3.217(a) merely concerns the submission of information or a statement in writing. Other requirements specified in this part, such as a requirement to use a specific form, to provide specific information, to provide a signature, or to provide a certified statement, must still be met.

(b) For purposes of this part, unless specifically provided otherwise, VA may take action affecting entitlement to benefits based on oral or written information or statements provided to VA by a beneficiary or his or her fiduciary. However, VA may not take action based on oral information or statements unless the VA employee receiving the information meets the following conditions:
(1) During the conversation in which the information or statement is provided, the VA employee:
   (i) Identifies himself or herself as a VA employee who is authorized to receive the information or statement (these are VA employees authorized to take actions under §§ 2.3 or 3.100 of this chapter);
   (ii) Verifies the identity of the provider as either the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary by obtaining specific information about the beneficiary that can be verified from the beneficiary’s VA records, such as Social Security number, date of birth, branch of military service, dates of military service, or other information; and
   (iii) Informs the provider that the information or statement will be used for the purpose of calculating benefit amounts; and

(2) During or following the conversation in which the information or statement is provided, the VA employee documents in the beneficiary’s VA records the specific information or statement provided, the date such information or statement was provided, the identity of the provider, the steps taken to verify the identity of the provider as being either the beneficiary or his or her fiduciary, and that he or she informed the provider that the information would be used for the purpose of calculating benefit amounts.

66 FR 56614, Nov. 9, 2001

DEPENDENCY, INCOME AND ESTATE REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO PROGRAMS IN EFFECT PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 1979

§ 3.250 Dependency of parents; compensation.

(a) Income—(1) Conclusive dependency. Dependency of a parent (other than one who is residing in a foreign country) will be held to exist where the monthly income does not exceed:
   (i) $400 for a mother or father not living together;
   (ii) $600 for a mother and father, or remarried parent and spouse, living together;
   (iii) $185 for each additional “member of the family” as defined in paragraph (b)(2).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 102(a))

(2) Excess income. Where the income exceeds the monthly amounts stated in paragraph (a)(1) of this section dependency will be determined on the facts in the individual case under the principles outlined in paragraph (b) of this section. In such cases, dependency will not be held to exist if it is reasonable that some part of the corpus of the claimant’s estate be consumed for his or her maintenance.

(3) Foreign residents. There is no conclusive presumption of dependency. Dependency will be determined on the facts in the individual case under the principles outlined in this section.

(b) Basic rule. Dependency will be held to exist if the father or mother of the veteran does not have an income sufficient to provide reasonable maintenance for such father or mother and members of his or her family under legal age and for dependent adult members of the family if the dependency of such adult member results from mental or physical incapacity.

(1) “Reasonable Maintenance” includes not only housing, food, clothing, and medical care sufficient to sustain life, but such items beyond the bare necessities as well as other requirements reasonably necessary to provide those conveniences and comforts of living suitable to and consistent with the parents’ reasonable mode of life.

(2) “Member of the family” means a person (other than spouse) including a relative in the ascending as well as descending class, whom the father or mother is under moral or legal obligation to support. In determining whether other members of the family under legal age are factors in necessary expenses of the mother or father, consideration will be given to any income from business or property (including trusts) actually available, directly or indirectly, to the mother or father for the support of the minor but not to the corpus of the estate or the income of the minor which is not so available.

(c) Inception of dependency. The fact that the veteran has made habitual contributions to the father or mother,
or both, is not conclusive evidence that dependency existed but will be considered in connection with all other evidence. In death claims, it is not material whether dependency arose prior or subsequent to the veteran’s death. (See §3.100(d)(3) as to accrued.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 102(a))

(d) Remarriage. Dependency will not be denied solely because of remarriage (38 U.S.C. 102(b)(1)). Compensation may be continued if the parent submits evidence to show that dependency exists, considering the combined income and expenses of the parent and spouse.


§ 3.252 Annual income; pension; Mexican border period and later war periods.

(a) Annual income limitations; old-law pension. Where the right to old-law pension is payable under section 306(b) of Pub. L. 95–588 (92 Stat. 2497), pension is not payable if the pensioner’s annual income exceeds the income limitations prescribed by §3.26(c).

(b) Annual income and net worth limitations; Pub. L. 86–211. Pension is not payable to a veteran, surviving spouse or child whose annual income exceeds the limitations set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541 or 1542; or to a veteran, surviving spouse or child if it is reasonable that some part of the claimant’s estate be consumed for his or her maintenance. Where a veteran and spouse are living together, the separate income of the spouse will be considered as the veteran’s income as provided in §3.262(b).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1543)

(c) Basic rule. Payments of any kind or from any source will be counted as income unless specifically excluded. Income will be counted for the calendar year in which it is received and total income for the full calendar year will be considered except as provided in §3.260.

may be authorized for a married veteran if he or she is living with or, if estranged, is reasonably contributing to the support of his or her spouse. The determination of "reasonable" contribution will be based on all the circumstances in the case, considering the income and estate of the veteran and the separate income and estate of the spouse. Apportionment of the veteran’s pension under §3.451 meets the requirement of reasonable contribution.

(e) Surviving spouse with a child—(1) Child. The term "child" means a child as defined in §3.57. Where a veteran’s child is born after the veteran dies, the surviving spouse will not be considered a surviving spouse with a child prior to the child’s date of birth.

(2) Veteran’s child not in surviving spouse’s custody. Where the veteran was survived by a surviving spouse and by a child, the income increments for a surviving spouse and child apply even though the child is not the child of the surviving spouse and not in his or her custody.

(3) Income of child. The separate income received by a child or children, regardless of custody, will not be considered in computing the surviving spouse’s income. Where the separate income of the child is turned over to the surviving spouse, only so much of the money as is left after deducting any expenses for maintenance of the child will be considered the surviving spouse’s income.

(4) Alternative rate. Whenever the monthly pension rate payable to the surviving spouse under the formula in 38 U.S.C. 1541(c) is less than the rate payable for one child under section 1542 if the surviving spouse were not entitled, the surviving spouse will be paid the child’s rate.

(f) Income over maximum; reduced aid and attendance allowance. Beginning January 1, 1977, veterans in need of regular aid and attendance who are not receiving pension because their income exceeds the applicable statutory limitation may be eligible for a reduced aid and attendance allowance. The amount payable is the regular aid and attendance allowance authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1521(d)(1) reduced by 16.6 percent for each $100, or portion thereof, by which the veteran’s annual income exceeds the applicable maximum income limitation. The reduced aid and attendance allowance is payable when:

(1) A veteran in need of regular aid and attendance is denied pension under 38 U.S.C. 1521 solely because the veteran’s annual income exceeds the applicable maximum income limitation in 38 U.S.C. 1521 (b)(3) and (c)(3); or

(2) Pension payable under 38 U.S.C. 1521 to a veteran in need of regular aid and attendance is discontinued solely because the veteran’s annual income exceeds the applicable maximum income limitation in 38 U.S.C. 1521 (b)(3) or (c)(3); and

(3) The veteran’s annual income exceeds the applicable maximum income limitation in 38 U.S.C. 1521 (b)(3) or (c)(3) by an amount not greater than the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1521 (d)(2).

Cross References: Basic pension determinations. See §3.314. Determination of permanent need for regular aid and attendance and “permanently bedridden”. See §3.332.


§§ 3.253–3.255 [Reserved]

§ 3.256 Eligibility reporting requirements.

(a) Obligation to report changes in factors affecting entitlement. Any individual who has applied for or receives pension or parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation must promptly notify the Secretary of any change affecting entitlement in any of the following:

(1) Income;

(2) Net worth or corpus of estate;

(3) Marital status;

(4) Nursing home patient status;

(5) School enrollment status of a child 18 years of age or older; or

(6) Any other factor that affects entitlement to benefits under the provisions of this part.

(b) Eligibility verification reports. (1) For purposes of this section the term eligibility verification report means a form prescribed by the Secretary that is used to request income, net worth (if applicable), dependency status, and any
other information necessary to determine or verify entitlement to pension or parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation.

(2) VA will not require old law or section 306 pensioners to submit eligibility verification reports unless the Secretary determines that doing so is necessary to preserve program integrity.

(3) Except for a parent who has attained 72 years of age and has been paid dependency and indemnity compensation during two consecutive calendar years, the Secretary shall require an eligibility verification report from individuals receiving parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation under the following circumstances:

(i) If the Social Security Administration has not verified the beneficiary’s Social Security number and, if the beneficiary is married, his or her spouse’s Social Security number.

(ii) If there is reason to believe that the beneficiary or, if the spouse’s income could affect entitlement, his or her spouse may have received income other than Social Security during the current or previous calendar year; or

(iii) If the Secretary determines that an eligibility verification report is necessary to preserve program integrity.

(4) An individual who applies for or receives pension or parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation as defined in §§ 3.3 or 3.5 of this part shall, as a condition of receipt or continued receipt of benefits, furnish the Department of Veterans Affairs an eligibility verification report upon request.

(c) If VA requests that a claimant or beneficiary submit an eligibility verification report but he or she fails to do so within 60 days of the date of the VA request, the Secretary shall suspend the award or disallow the claim.

(Authority: Sec. 306(a)(2) and (b)(3), Pub. L. 95–588, 92 Stat. 2508–2509; 38 U.S.C. 1315(e))

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control numbers 2900–0101 and 2900–0624)

§ 3.261 Character of income; exclusions and estates.

The following factors will be considered in determining whether a claimant meets the requirements of §§ 3.250, 3.251 and 3.252 with reference to dependency, income limitations and corpus of estate:

(a) Income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Dependency (parents)</th>
<th>Dependency and indemnity compensation (parents)</th>
<th>Pension; old-law (veterans, surviving spouses and children)</th>
<th>Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses and children)</th>
<th>See—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Total income from employment, business, investments, or rents.</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>§ 3.262(a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Income of spouse</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.262(b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Earnings of members of family under legal age.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.250(b)(2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Earned income of child-claimant</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>included</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.252(e)(3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Gifts, including contributions from adult members of family:</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(k).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.262(k).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>§ 3.262(c).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Value of maintenance by relative, friend, or organization.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.262(d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Rental value of property owned by and re-sited in by claimant.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.262(d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Charitable donations</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>included</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.262(d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Family allowance authorized by service personnel.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>§ 3.262(d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Reasonable value of allowances to person in service in addition to base pay.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Included except as earned income of child-claimant</td>
<td>§ 3.262(d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) Mustering-out pay</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.262(d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) Six-months' death gratuity paid by any State based on service in Armed Forces of United States.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) Bonus or similar cash gratuity paid by any State based on service in Armed Forces of United States.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(d).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## § 3.261

### Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dependency (parents)</th>
<th>Dependency and indemnity compensation (parents)</th>
<th>Pension; old-age (veterans, surviving spouses and children)</th>
<th>Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses and children)</th>
<th>See—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(14) Retired Serviceman’s Family Protection Plan: Survivor Benefit Plan (10 U.S.C. ch. 73):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Serviceman’s Family Protection Plan (Subch. I):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annuity</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>§ 3.262(e).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refund (10 U.S.C. 1446)</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annuity under § 653, Pub. L. 100–456</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15) Retirement pay received direct from service department.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.262(f).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16) Retirement benefits; general</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17) Social security benefits:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old age and survivors’, and disability insurance.</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.262(g).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charitable programs</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lump-sum death payments</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental security income</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) Railroad Retirement benefits</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19) Retirement pay waived under Federal statute.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20) Department of Veterans Affairs payments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>§ 3.262(h).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World War I adjusted compensation</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Government life insurance or national service life insurance for disabilty or death, maturity of endowment policies, and dividends, including special and termination dividends</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicemembers’ group life insurance</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans’ group life insurance</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicemembers’ indemnity</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsistence allowance (38 U.S.C. ch. 31)</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans educational assistance in excess of amounts expended for training (38 U.S.C. ch. 34).</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational assistance (38 U.S.C. ch. 35)</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1313(a).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory burial allowance</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21) Compensation (civilian) for injury or death:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(22) Contributions by a public or private employer to a:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public or private health or hospitalization plan for an active or retired employee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired employee as reimbursement for premiums for supplementary medical insurance benefits under the Social Security Program (Pub. L. 91–588; 84 Stat. 1580).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Dependency (parents)</td>
<td>Dependency and indemnity compensation (parents)</td>
<td>Pension; old-law (veterans, surviving spouses and children)</td>
<td>Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses and children)</td>
<td>See--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(23) Overtime pay; Government employees</td>
<td>Included (as received)</td>
<td>Included (as received)</td>
<td>Disability pension—Excluded. Death pension—Included.</td>
<td>Included (as received)</td>
<td>§ 3.262(j)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(24) Commercial life insurance; disability, accident, or health insurance, less payments of medical or hospital expenses resulting from the accident or disease for which payments are made.</td>
<td>Included (as received)</td>
<td>Included (as received)</td>
<td>Included (special provision).</td>
<td>Included (as received)</td>
<td>§ 3.262(j)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25) Commercial annuities or endowments</td>
<td>Included (special provision)</td>
<td>Included (special provision)</td>
<td>Included (special provision).</td>
<td>Included (special provision).</td>
<td>§ 3.262(j)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(26) Dividends from commercial insurance</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(27) Insurance under Merchant Marine Act of 1936, as amended.</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>§ 3.262(k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(28) Reimbursement for casualty loss (Pub. L. 100–687)</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>§ 3.262(t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other fire Insurance</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29) Bequests, devises and inheritances:</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>§ 3.262(k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>§ 3.262(k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Included (special provision).</td>
<td>§ 3.262(j)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint bank accounts</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(k)(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(30) Profit from sale of property</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(31) Jury duty or obligatory civic duties</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(32) Relocation payments (Pub. L. 90–448; Pub. L. 90–496)</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(33) The following programs administered by the ACTION Agency:</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(q)(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Grandparent Program and Older Americans Community Service Programs payments (Pub. L. 93–29; 87 Stat. 55).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(q)(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), University Year for ACTION (UYA), Program for Local Services (PLS), ACTION Cooperative Volunteers (ACV), Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), and Older American Community Service Programs, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Companion Program (Pub. L. 93–113; 87 Stat. 394).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(q)(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(34) The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and Active Corps of Executives (ACE) administered by the Small Business Administration. (Pub. L. 90–913; 87 Stat. 394).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(q)(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(35) Agent Orange settlement payments (Pub. L. 101–201).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(36) Restitution to individuals of Japanese ancestry (Pub. L. 100–383).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(u)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(37) Income received by American Indian beneficiaries from Trust or Restricted lands (Pub. L. 103–66).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(38) Income received under Section 6 of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (Pub. L. 101–426).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Included</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(w)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(39) Cash, stock, land or other interests received from a Native Corporation under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(40) Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 16 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea (38 U.S.C. 1833(ii)).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(y)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Department of Veterans Affairs § 3.262

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Dependency (parents)</th>
<th>Dependency and indemnity compensation (parents)</th>
<th>Pension; old-law (veterans, surviving spouses and children)</th>
<th>Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses and children)</th>
<th>See—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(41) Income received under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10601–10605).</td>
<td>Excluded 1</td>
<td>Excluded 1</td>
<td>Excluded 1</td>
<td>Excluded 1</td>
<td>§ 3.262(z)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(42) Income received under the Medicare prescription drug discount card and transitional assistance program (42 U.S.C. 1395w–1411(a)(6)).</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>§ 3.262(aa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The compensation received through a crime victim compensation program will be excluded from income computations unless the total amount of assistance received from all federally funded programs is sufficient to fully compensate the claimant for losses suffered as a result of the crime.*

(b) Deduction of amounts paid by claimant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deduction</th>
<th>Dependency (parents)</th>
<th>Dependency and indemnity compensation</th>
<th>Pension; old-law (veterans, surviving spouses, and children)</th>
<th>Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses, and children)</th>
<th>See—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Unusual medical expenses</td>
<td>Not authorized</td>
<td>Authorized</td>
<td>Not authorized</td>
<td>Authorized</td>
<td>§§ 3.262(b)(1) and (1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Veteran: just debts, expenses of last illness and burial.</td>
<td>Not authorized</td>
<td>Authorized</td>
<td>Not authorized</td>
<td>Authorized</td>
<td>§§ 3.262(m) and (o).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Veteran’s spouse or child: expenses of last illness and burial.</td>
<td>Not authorized</td>
<td>Not authorized</td>
<td>Not authorized</td>
<td>Authorized</td>
<td>§ 3.262(n).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Corpus of estate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dependency (parents)</th>
<th>Dependency and indemnity compensation</th>
<th>Pension; old-law (veterans, widows, and children)</th>
<th>Pension; section 306 (veterans, surviving spouses, and children)</th>
<th>See—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Considered conditionally</td>
<td>Not considered</td>
<td>Not considered</td>
<td>Not considered</td>
<td>Considered</td>
<td>§ 3.263.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

§ 3.262 Evaluation of income.

(a) Total income. All income from sources such as wages, salaries, earnings, bonuses from employers, income from a business or profession or from investments or rents as well as the fair value of personal services, goods or room and board received in lieu thereof will be included. (1) Salary is not determined by “takehome” pay, but includes deductions made under a retirement act or
plan and amounts withheld by virtue of income tax laws.

(2) The gross income from a business or profession may be reduced by the necessary operating expenses, such as cost of goods sold, or expenditures for rent, taxes, and upkeep. Depreciation is not a deductible expense. The cost of repairs or replacement may be deducted. The value of an increase in stock inventory of a business is not considered income.

(3) A loss sustained in operating a business, profession, or farm or from investments may not be deducted from income derived from any other source.

(b) Income of spouse. Income of the spouse will be determined under the rules applicable to income of the claimant.

(1) Parents. Where the mother and father, or remarried parent and spouse are living together, the total combined income will be considered in determining dependency, or in determining the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation payable to the parent. This rule is equally applicable where both parents have remarried and each is living with his or her spouse. If the remarriage of a parent has been terminated, or the parent is separated from his or her spouse, income of the spouse will be excluded.

(2) Veterans. The separate income of the spouse of a disabled veteran who is entitled to pension under laws in effect on June 30, 1960, will not be considered. Where pension is payable under section 306(a) of Pub. L. 95–588, to a veteran who is living with a spouse there will be included as income of the veteran all income of the spouse in excess of whichever is the greater, the amount of the spousal income exclusion specified in section 306(a)(2)(B) of Pub. L. 95–588 as increased from time to time under section 306(a)(3) of Pub. L. 95–588 or the total earned income of the spouse, which is reasonably available to or for the veteran, unless hardship to the veteran would result. Each time there is an increase in the spousal income exclusion pursuant to section 306(a)(3) of Pub. L. 95–588, the actual amount of the exclusion will be published in the “Notices” section of the FEDERAL REGISTER. The presumption that inclusion of such income is available to the veteran and would not work a hardship on him or her may be rebutted by evidence of unavailability or of expenses beyond the usual family requirements.

(3) A loss sustained in operating a business, profession, or farm or from investments may not be deducted from income derived from any other source.

(b) Income of spouse. Income of the spouse will be determined under the rules applicable to income of the claimant.

(1) Parents. Where the mother and father, or remarried parent and spouse are living together, the total combined income will be considered in determining dependency, or in determining the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation payable to the parent. This rule is equally applicable where both parents have remarried and each is living with his or her spouse. If the remarriage of a parent has been terminated, or the parent is separated from his or her spouse, income of the spouse will be excluded.

(2) Veterans. The separate income of the spouse of a disabled veteran who is entitled to pension under laws in effect on June 30, 1960, will not be considered. Where pension is payable under section 306(a) of Pub. L. 95–588, to a veteran who is living with a spouse there will be included as income of the veteran all income of the spouse in excess of whichever is the greater, the amount of the spousal income exclusion specified in section 306(a)(2)(B) of Pub. L. 95–588 as increased from time to time under section 306(a)(3) of Pub. L. 95–588 or the total earned income of the spouse, which is reasonably available to or for the veteran, unless hardship to the veteran would result. Each time there is an increase in the spousal income exclusion pursuant to section 306(a)(3) of Pub. L. 95–588, the actual amount of the exclusion will be published in the “Notices” section of the FEDERAL REGISTER. The presumption that inclusion of such income is available to the veteran and would not work a hardship on him or her may be rebutted by evidence of unavailability or of expenses beyond the usual family requirements.


(c) Maintenance. The value of maintenance furnished by a relative, friend, or a charitable organization (civic or governmental) will not be considered income. Where the claimant is maintained in a rest home or other community institution or facility, public or private, because of impaired health or advanced age, money paid to the home or to the claimant to cover the cost of maintenance will not be considered income, regardless of whether it is furnished by a relative, friend or charitable organization. The expense of maintenance is not deductible if it is paid from the claimant’s income, except as provided in paragraph (1) of this section in claims for dependency and indemnity compensation.

(d) Charitable donations. Charitable donations from public or private relief or welfare organizations will not be considered income except in claims for pension under laws in effect on June 30, 1960. In the latter cases, additional charitable allowances received by a claimant for members of his or her family may not be divided per capita in determining the amount of the claimant’s income.

(e) Retirement benefits; general. Retirement benefits, including an annuity or endowment, paid under a Federal, State, municipal, or private business or industrial plan are considered income as limited by this paragraph. Where the payments received consist of part principal and part interest, interest will not be counted separately.

(1) Protected pension. Except as provided in this paragraph (e)(1), effective January 1, 1965, in determining income for pension purposes under laws in effect on June 30, 1960, 10 percent of the retirement payments received by a veteran, surviving spouse, or child will be excluded. The remaining 90 percent will be considered income as received. Where the retirement benefit is based on the claimant’s own employment,
payments will not be considered income until the amount of the claimant’s personal contribution (as distinguished from amounts contributed by the employer) has been received. Thereafter the 10 percent exclusion will apply.

(2) Pension: Pub. L. 86–211. Except as provided in this subparagraph, effective January 1, 1965, in determining income for pension purposes, under Pub. L. 86–211 (73 Stat. 432), 10 percent of the retirement payments received by a veteran, the veteran’s spouse, surviving spouse, or child will be excluded. The remaining 90 percent will be considered income as received. Where a person was receiving or entitled to receive pension and retirement benefits based on his or her own employment on December 31, 1964, the retirement payments will not be considered income until the amount of the claimant personal contribution (as distinguished from amounts contributed by the employer) has been received. Thereafter the 10 percent exclusion will apply.

(3) Compensation. In determining dependency of a parent for compensation purposes, all payments will be considered income as received.

(4) Dependency and indemnity compensation. Except as provided in this subparagraph, effective January 1, 1967, in determining income for dependency and indemnity compensation purposes, 10 percent of the retirement payments received by a deceased veteran’s parent or by the parent’s spouse will be excluded. The remaining 90 percent will be considered income as received. Where a parent was receiving or entitled to receive dependency and indemnity compensation and retirement benefits based on his or her own employment on December 31, 1966, the retirement payments will not be considered income until the amount of the claimant personal contribution (as distinguished from amounts contributed by the employer) has been received. Thereafter the 10 percent exclusion will apply.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1315(g), 1503(a)(6))

(f) Social security benefits. Old age and survivor’s insurance and disability insurance under title II of the Social Security Act will be considered income as a retirement benefit under the rules contained in paragraph (e) of this section. Benefits received under noncontributory programs, such as old age assistance, aid to dependent children, and supplemental security income are subject to the rules contained in paragraph (d) of this section applicable to charitable donations. The lumpsum death payment under title II of the Social Security Act will be considered as income except in claims for dependency and indemnity compensation and for pension under Pub. L. 86–211 (73 Stat. 432).

(g) Railroad retirement benefits—(1) Parents, surviving spouses and children. Retirement benefits received from the Railroad Retirement Board will be considered as income under the rules contained in paragraph (e) of this section. (See paragraph (h) of this section as to waivers.)

(2) Veterans. Effective July 1, 1959, retirement benefits received from the Railroad Retirement Board were excluded from consideration as income in determining eligibility for disability pension. (45 U.S.C. 228s–1) This exclusion continues to be applicable to claims under laws in effect on June 30, 1960. For purposes of section 306 pension, such retirement benefits will be considered as income under the rules contained in paragraph (e) of this section.

(h) Retirement benefits waived. Except as provided in this paragraph, retirement benefits (pension or retirement payments) which have been waived will be included as income. For the purpose of determining dependency of a parent, or eligibility of a parent for dependency and indemnity compensation or eligibility of a veteran, surviving spouse, or child for pension under laws in effect on June 30, 1960, retirement benefits from the following sources which have been waived pursuant to Federal statute will not be considered as income:

(1) Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund;

(2) Railroad Retirement Board (see paragraph (g)(2) of this section);

(3) District of Columbia, firemen, policemen, or public school teachers;

(4) Former lighthouse service.
(i) Compensation (civilian) for injury or death. (1) Compensation paid by the Bureau of Employees’ Compensation, Department of Labor (of the United States), or by Social Security Administration, or by Railroad Retirement Board, or pursuant to any workmen’s compensation or employer’s liability statute, or damages collected because of personal injury or death, less medical, legal, or other expenses incident to the injury or death, or the collection or recovery of such moneys will be considered income as received, except as provided in paragraph (i)(2) of this section. The criteria of paragraph (i)(1) of this section are for application as to all medical expenditures after such award or settlement.


(2) For pension, effective October 7, 1966, and for dependency and indemnity compensation effective January 1, 1967, if payments based on permanent and total disability or death are received from the Bureau of Employees’ Compensation, Social Security Administration or Railroad Retirement Board, or pursuant to any workmen’s compensation or employer’s liability statute, there will be excluded 10 percent of the payments received after deduction of medical, legal, and other expenses as authorized by paragraph (i)(1) of this section. The 10 percent exclusion does not apply to damages collected incident to a tort suit under other than an employer’s liability law of the United States or a political subdivision of the United States, or to determinations of dependency for compensation purposes.

(j) Commercial insurance—(1) Annuity or endowment insurance. For pension, effective January 1, 1965, or for dependency and indemnity compensation, effective January 1, 1967, the provisions of paragraph (e) of this section apply. In such cases, 10 percent of the payments received will be excluded. In dependency and indemnity compensation claims, where the parent is receiving or entitled to receive dependency and indemnity compensation on December 31, 1966, and is also receiving or entitled to receive annuity payments on that date, or endowment insurance matures on or before that date, no part of the payments received will be considered income until the full amount of the consideration has been received, after which 10 percent of the amount received will be excluded. For compensation, the full amount of each payment is considered income as received.

(2) Life insurance; general. In determining dependency, or eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation, or for section 306 pension the full amount of payments is considered income as received. For section 306 pension, effective October 7, 1966, and for dependency and indemnity compensation, effective January 1, 1967, 10 percent of the payments received will be excluded.

(3) Life insurance; old-law pension. For pension under laws in effect on June 30, 1960, 10 percent of the payments received will be excluded. Where it is considered that life insurance was received in a lump sum in the calendar year in which the veteran died and payments are actually received in succeeding years, no part of the payments received in succeeding years will be considered income until an amount equal to the lump-sum face value of the policy has been received, after which 10 percent of the payments received will be excluded. The 10 percent exclusion is authorized effective October 7, 1966.

(4) Disability, accident or health insurance. For pension, effective October 7, 1966, and for dependency and indemnity compensation, effective January 1, 1967, there will be excluded 10 percent of the payments received for disability after deduction of medical, legal, or other expenses incident to the disability. For compensation, after deduction of such expenses, the full amount of payments is considered income as received.

(k) Property—(1) Ownership. The terms of the recorded deed or other evidence of title will constitute evidence of ownership of real or personal property. This includes property acquired through purchase, bequest or inheritance except that, effective January 1, 1971, amounts in joint accounts in banks and similar institutions acquired by reason of the death of another joint owner shall not be considered income of a survivor for section 306 pension purposes. With the foregoing exception,
if property is owned jointly each person will be considered as owning a proportionate share. The claimant’s share of property held in partnership will be determined on the facts found. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the claimant’s statement as to the terms of ownership will be accepted.

(2) Income-producing property. Income received from real or personal property owned by the claimant will be counted. The claimant’s share will be determined in proportion to his right according to the rules of ownership.

(3) Sale of property. Except as provided in paragraphs (k)(4) and (5) of this section, net profit from the sale of real or personal property will be counted. In determining net profit from the sale of property owned prior to the date of entitlement, the value at the date of entitlement will be considered in relation to the selling price. Where payments are received in installments, payments will not be considered income until the claimant has received amounts equal to the value of the property at the date of entitlement. Principal and interest will not be counted separately.

(4) Homes. Net profit from the sale of the claimant’s residence which is received during the calendar year of sale will not be considered as income under the following conditions:

(i) To the extent that it is applied within the calendar year of the sale, or the succeeding calendar year, to the purchase price of another residence as his principal dwelling;

(ii) Such application of the net profit is reported within 1 year following the date so applied, and

(iii) The net profit is so applied after January 10, 1962, to a purchase made after said date.

This exclusion will not apply where the net profit is applied to the price of a home purchased earlier than the calendar year preceding the calendar year of sale of the old residence.

(5) Sale of property; section 306 pension and dependency and indemnity compensation. For pension under section 306 pension and for dependency and indemnity compensation, profit from the sale of real or personal property other than in the course of a business will not be considered income. This applies to property acquired either before or after the date of entitlement. Any amounts received in excess of the sales price will be counted as income. Where payments are received in installments, principal and interest will not be counted separately. For pension, this provision is effective January 1, 1965; for dependency and indemnity compensation, January 1, 1967.

(6) Payments on mortgages on real property; section 306 pension. Effective January 1, 1971, for the purposes of section 306 pension, an amount equaling any prepayments made by a veteran or surviving spouse on a mortgage or similar type security instrument in existence at the death of veteran or spouse on real property which prior to the death was the principal residence of the veteran and spouse will be excluded from consideration as income if such payment was made after the death and prior to the close of the year succeeding the year of death.

(1) Unusual medical expenses. Within the provisions of paragraphs (l)(1) through (4) of this section there will be excluded from the amount of the claimant’s annual income any unreimbursed amounts which have been paid within the calendar year for unusual medical expenses regardless of the year the indebtedness was incurred. The term unusual means excessive. It does not describe the nature of a medical condition but rather the amount expended for medical treatment in relationship to the claimant’s resources available for sustaining a reasonable mode of life. Unreimbursed expenditures which exceed 5 percent of the claimant’s reported annual income will be considered unusual. Health, accident, sickness and hospitalization insurance premiums will be included as medical expenses in determining whether the claimant’s unreimbursed medical expenses meet the criterion for unusual. A claimant’s statement as to amounts expended for medical expenses
ordinarily will be accepted unless the circumstances create doubt as to its credibility. An estimate based on a clear and reasonable expectation that unusual medical expenditure will be realized may be accepted for the purpose of authorizing prospective payments of benefits subject to necessary adjustment in the award upon receipt of an amended estimate or after the end of the calendar year upon receipt of an income questionnaire.

1. **Veterans.** For the purpose of section 306 pension, there will be excluded unreimbursed amounts paid by the veteran for unusual medical expenses of self, spouse, and other relatives of the veteran in the ascending as well as descending class who are members or constructive members of the veteran’s household and whom the veteran has a moral or legal obligation to support.

2. **Surviving spouses.** For the purpose of section 306 pension, there will be excluded unreimbursed amounts paid by the surviving spouse for the unusual medical expenses of self, the veteran’s children, and other relatives of the surviving spouse in the ascending as well as descending class who are members or constructive members of the surviving spouse’s household and whom the surviving spouse has a moral or legal obligation to support.

3. **Children.** For the purpose of section 306 pension, there will be excluded unreimbursed amounts paid by a child for the unusual medical expenses of self, parent, and brothers and sisters of the child.

4. **Parents.** For dependency and indemnity compensation purposes there will be excluded unreimbursed amounts paid by the parent for the unusual medical expenses of self, spouse, and other relatives of the parent in the ascending as well as descending class who are members or constructive members of the parent’s household and whom the parent has a moral or legal obligation to support. If the combined annual income of the parent and the parent’s spouse is the basis for dependency and indemnity compensation, the exclusion is applicable to the combined annual income and extends to the unusual unreimbursed medical expenses of the spouse’s relatives in the ascending as well as descending class who are members or constructive members of the household and whom the parent’s spouse has a moral or legal obligation to support.

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1. **Veteran’s final expenses; pension.** In claims for pension under section 306, there will be excluded, as provided in paragraph (p) of this section:

   1. From the income of a surviving spouse, amounts equal to amounts paid for the expenses of the veteran’s last illness;

   2. From the income of a surviving spouse, or of a child of a deceased veteran where there is no surviving spouse, amounts equal to amounts paid by the surviving spouse or child for the veteran’s just debts, for the expenses of the veteran’s last illness, and burial to the extent such expenses are not reimbursed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The term “just debts” does not include any debt that is secured by real or personal property.

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1. **Final expenses of veteran’s spouse or child; pension.** In claims for pension under section 306, there will be excluded, as provided in paragraph (p) of this section:

   1. From the income of a veteran, amounts equal to amounts paid by the veteran for the last illness and burial of the veteran’s deceased spouse or child; and

   2. From the income of a spouse or surviving spouse, amounts equal to amounts paid by her as spouse or surviving spouse of the deceased veteran for the last illness and burial of a child of such veteran.

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1. **Final expenses of veteran or parent’s spouse; dependency and indemnity compensation.** In claims for dependency and indemnity compensation there will be excluded from the income of a parent, as provided in paragraph (p) of this section, amounts equal to amounts paid by the parent for:

   1. The expenses of the veteran’s last illness and burial to the extent that
such expenses are not reimbursed under 38 U.S.C. ch. 23.

(2) The parent’s deceased spouse’s just debts, the expenses of the spouse’s last illness to the extent such expenses are not reimbursed under 38 U.S.C. ch. 51 and the expenses of the spouse’s burial to the extent that such expenses are not reimbursed under 38 U.S.C. ch. 23 or 51. The term “just debts” does not include any debt that is secured by real or personal property.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1315(f))

(p) Final expenses; year of exclusion. For the purpose of paragraphs (m), (n) and (o) of this section, in the absence of contradictory information, the claimant’s statement will be accepted as to the nature, amount and date of payment, and identity of the creditor. Except as provided in this paragraph, payments will be deducted from annual income for the year in which such payments are made. Payments made by a veteran, the spouse or surviving spouse of a veteran, child or, in dependency and indemnity compensation claims, by a parent during the calendar year following the year in which the veteran, spouse or child died may be deducted from the claimant’s income for the year of last illness or burial if this deduction is advantageous to the claimant.

(q) Volunteer programs—(1) Payments under Foster Grandparent Program and Older Americans Community Service Programs. Effective May 3, 1973, compensation received under the Foster Grandparent Program and the Older Americans Community Service Programs will be excluded from income in claims for compensation, pension and dependency and indemnity compensation.

(Authority: Pub. L. 93-29; 87 Stat. 55)

(2) Payments under domestic volunteer service act programs. Effective October 1, 1973, compensation or reimbursement received under a Domestic Volunteer Service Act Program (including Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), University Year for ACTION (UYA), Program for Local Services (PLS), ACTION Cooperative Volunteers (ACV), Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and Older American Community Service Program, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Companion Program, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and Active Corps of Executives (ACE), will be excluded from income in claims for compensation, pension and dependency and indemnity compensation.

(Authority: Pub. L. 93-113; 87 Stat. 394)

(r) Survivor benefit annuity. For the purposes of old law pension and section 306 pension, there shall be excluded from computation of income annuity paid by the Department of Defense under the authority of section 653, Public Law 100-456 to qualified surviving spouses of veterans who died prior to November 1, 1953. (September 29, 1988)

(Authority: Sec. 653, Pub. L. 100-456; 102 Stat. 1991)

(s) Agent Orange settlement payments. In claims for pension and parents’ dependency and indemnity income, there shall be excluded from computation of income payments received by any person in the case of In re Agent Orange Product Liability Litigation in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York (MDL No. 381). (January 1, 1989)

(Authority: Pub. L. 101-201, 103 Stat. 1795)

(t) Reimbursement for casualty loss. The following sources of reimbursements for casualty loss will not be considered as income in determining entitlement to benefits under the programs specified. Amounts to be excluded from computation in parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation claims are limited to amounts of reimbursement which do not exceed the greater of the fair market value or the reasonable replacement cost of the property involved at the time immediately preceding the loss.

(1) Reimbursement for casualty loss of any kind in determining entitlement to parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation benefits. For purposes of paragraph (t) of this section, the term “casualty loss” means the complete or partial destruction of property resulting from an identifiable event of a sudden, unexpected or unusual nature.

(2) Proceeds from fire insurance in determining dependency of a parent for
compensation purposes or in determining entitlement to old-law and section 306 pension benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1315(f))

(u) Restitution to individuals of Japanese ancestry. Effective August 10, 1988, for the purposes of old law pension, section 306 pension, parents’ death compensation, and parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation, there shall be excluded from income computation any payment made as restitution under Public Law 100-383 to individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned, evacuated, or relocated during the period December 7, 1941, through June 30, 1946, pursuant to any law, Executive order, Presidential proclamation, directive, or other official action respecting these individuals.

(v) Income received by American Indian beneficiaries from trust or restricted lands. There shall be excluded from income computation payments of up to $2,000 per calendar year to an individual Indian from trust lands or restricted lands as defined in 25 CFR 151.2. (January 1, 1994)

(Authority: Sec. 13736, Pub. L. 103-66; 107 Stat. 663)

(w) Radiation Exposure Compensation Act. For the purposes of parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation, there shall be excluded from income computation payments under Section 6 of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 2210 note)

(x) Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. There shall be excluded from income computation any cash (including cash dividends on stock received from a Native Corporation) to the extent that it does not, in the aggregate, exceed $2,000 per individual per annum; stock (including stock issued or distributed by a Native Corporation as a dividend or distribution on stock); a partnership interest; land or an interest in land (including land or an interest in land received from a Native Corporation as a dividend or distribution on stock); and an interest in a settlement trust. (November 2, 1994)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1833(c))

(y) Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea. There shall be excluded from income computation any allowance paid under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 to or for an individual who is a child of a Vietnam veteran or a child of a veteran with covered service in Korea.

(Authority: 28 FR 32, Jan. 1, 1963)

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting §3.262, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.fdsys.gov.

§3.263 Corpus of estate; net worth.

(a) General. The following rules are for application in determining the corpus of estate of a parent where dependency is a factor under §3.250, and the net worth of a veteran, surviving spouse, or child where pension is subject to Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432) under §3.252(b). Only the estate of the parent, in claims based on dependency,
or the estate of the veteran, surviving spouse, or child-claimant in claims for pension, will be considered. In the absence of contradictory information, the claimant’s statement as to ownership and estimate of value will be accepted.

(b) **Definition.** *Corpus of estate and net worth* mean the market value, less mortgages or other encumbrances, of all real and personal property owned by the claimant except the claimant’s dwelling (single-family unit) including a reasonable lot area, and personal effects suitable to and consistent with the claimant’s reasonable mode of life.

(c) **Ownership.** See §3.262(k).

(d) **Evaluation.** In determining whether some part of the claimant’s estate should be consumed for his or her maintenance, consideration will be given to the amount of the claimant’s income, together with the following factors: whether the property can be readily converted into cash at no substantial sacrifice; ability to dispose of property as limited by community property laws; life expectancy; number of dependents who meet the requirements of §3.250(b)(2); potential rate of depletion, including unusual medical expenses under the principles outlined in §3.262(1) for the claimant and his or her dependents.

(e) **Agent Orange settlement payments.** There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant any payment made from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other fund established pursuant to the settlement in the *In re Agent Orange product liability litigation*, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.). (January 1, 1989)

(f) **Restitution to individuals of Japanese ancestry.** Effective August 10, 1988, for the purposes of section 306 pension and parents' death compensation, there shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant any payment made as restitution under Public Law 100–383 to individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned, evacuated, or relocated during the period December 7, 1941, through June 30, 1946, pursuant to any law, Executive order, Presidential proclamation, directive, or other official action respecting these individuals.

(g) **Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea.** There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant any allowance paid under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 to or for an individual who is a child of a Vietnam veteran or a child of a veteran with covered service in Korea.

(h) **Victims of Crime Act.** There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant any amounts received as compensation under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 unless the total amount of assistance received from all federally funded programs is sufficient to fully compensate the claimant for losses suffered as a result of the crime.

(i) **Medicare Prescription Drug Discount Card and Transitional Assistance Program.** There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant payments received under the Medicare transitional assistance program and any savings associated with the Medicare prescription drug discount card.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 10602(c)

CROSS REFERENCES: Reductions and discontinuances; dependency. See §3.500(h).

Material change in income, net worth or change in status. See §3.660. Income and net worth questionnaires. See §3.661.


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§ 3.270 Applicability of various dependency, income and estate regulations.

(a) Sections 3.250 to 3.270. These sections are applicable to dependency, income and estate determinations needed to determine entitlement or continued entitlement for the following programs:

(1) Parents’ death compensation.

(2) Old-law pension.

(3) Section 306 pension.

(4) Parents’ dependency and indemnity compensation.

NOTE: Citations to title 38 U.S.C. in §§3.250 to 3.270 referring to section 306 or old-law pension generally refer to provisions of law in effect on December 31, 1978.

(b) Sections 3.271 to 3.300. These sections apply to income and estate determinations of entitlement to the improved disability and death pension program which became effective January 1, 1979.

[44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979]

REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE IMPROVED PENSION PROGRAM WHICH BECAME EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1979

SOURCE: 44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3.271 Computation of income.

(a) General. Payments of any kind from any source shall be counted as income during the 12-month annualization period in which received unless specifically excluded under § 3.272.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) Recurring income. Recurring income means income which is received or anticipated in equal amounts and at regular intervals (e.g., weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.), and which will continue throughout an entire 12-month annualization period. The amount of recurring income for pension purposes will be the amount received or anticipated during a 12-month annualization period. Recurring income which terminates prior to being counted for at least one full 12-month annualization period will be treated as nonrecurring income for computation purposes.

(2) Irregular income. Irregular income means income which is received or anticipated during a 12-month annualization period, but which is received in unequal amounts or at irregular intervals. The amount of irregular income for pension purposes will be the amount received or anticipated during a 12-month annualization period following initial receipt of such income.

(3) Nonrecurring income. Nonrecurring income means income received or anticipated on a one-time basis during a 12-month annualization period (e.g., an inheritance). Pension computations of income will include nonrecurring income for a full 12-month annualization period following receipt of the income.

(b) Salary. Salary means the gross amount of a person’s earnings or wages before any deductions are made for such things as taxes, insurance, retirement plans, social security, etc.

(c) Business, farm or professional income. (1) This includes gross income from a business, farm or profession as reduced by the necessary operating expenses such as cost of goods sold, or expenditures for rent, taxes, and upkeep, or costs of repairs or replacements. The value of an increase in stock inventory of a business is not considered income.

(2) Depreciation is not a deductible expense.

(3) A loss sustained in operating a business, profession, farm, or from investments, may not be deducted from income derived from any other source.

(d) Income from property. Income from real or personal property is countable as income of the property’s owner. The terms of a recorded deed or other evidence of title shall constitute evidence of ownership. This includes property acquired through purchase, gift, devise, or descent. If property is owned jointly, income of the various owners shall be determined in proportion to shares of ownership of the property. The owner’s shares of income held in partnership shall be determined on the basis of the facts found.

(e) Installments. Income shall be determined by the total amount received or anticipated during a 12-month annualization period.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)
(f) Deferred determinations. (1) When an individual is unable to predict with certainty the amount of countable annual income, the annual rate of improved pension shall be reduced by the greatest amount of anticipated countable income until the end of the 12-month annualization period, when total income received during that period will be determined and adjustments in pension payable made accordingly.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(2) When a claimed dependent is shown to have income which exceeds the additional amount of benefits payable based on the claimed dependency, but evidence requirements of §3.204, §3.205, §3.209, or §3.210 have not been met, the maximum annual rate of improved pension shall be determined without consideration of the claimed dependency. This amount shall be reduced by an amount which includes the income of the unestablished dependent. Adjustments in computation of the maximum annual rate of improved pension shall occur following receipt of evidence necessary to establish the dependency.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

(g) Compensation (civilian) for injury or death. Compensation paid by the United States Department of Labor, Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs, Social Security Administration, or the Railroad Retirement Board, or pursuant to any worker’s compensation or employer’s liability statute, or damages collected because of personal injury or death, will be considered income as received. However, medical, legal or other expenses incident to the injury or death, or incident to the collection or recovery of the amount of the award or settlement, may be deducted. The criteria in §3.272(g) apply as to all medical expenditures after the award or settlement.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(h) Fractions of dollars. Fractions of dollars will be disregarded in computing annual income.

(44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 53 FR 23235, June 21, 1988; 57 FR 59299, Dec. 15, 1992)

§ 3.272 Exclusions from income.

The following shall be excluded from countable income for the purpose of determining entitlement to improved pension. Unless otherwise provided, expenses deductible under this section are deductible only during the 12-month annualization period in which they were paid.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(a) Welfare. Donations from public or private relief, welfare, or charitable organizations.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(1))

(b) Maintenance. The value of maintenance furnished by a relative, friend, or a charitable organization (civic or governmental) will not be considered income. Where the individual is maintained in a rest home or other community institution or facility, public or private, because of impaired health or advanced age, money paid to the home or the individual to cover the cost of maintenance will not be considered income, regardless of whether it is furnished by a relative, friend, or charitable organization. The expense of maintenance is not deductible if it is paid from the individual’s income.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1503(a)(1))

(c) Department of Veterans Affairs pension benefits. Payments under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, including accrued pension benefits payable under 38 U.S.C. 5121.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(2))

(d) Reimbursement for casualty loss. Reimbursement of any kind for any casualty loss. The amount to be excluded is not to exceed the greater of the fair market value or the reasonable replacement cost of the property involved at the time immediately preceding the loss. For purposes of this paragraph, the term “casualty loss”
means the complete or partial destruction of property resulting from an identifiable event of a sudden, unexpected or unusual nature.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(5))

(e) Profit from sale of property. Profit realized from the disposition of real or personal property other than in the course of business, except amounts received in excess of the sales price, for example, interest on deferred sales is included as income. In installment sales, any payments received until the sales price is recovered are not included as income, but any amounts received which exceed the sales price are included, regardless of whether they represent principal or interest.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(6))

(f) Joint accounts. Amounts in joint accounts in banks and similar institutions acquired by reason of death of the other joint owner.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(7))

(g) Medical expenses. Within the provisions of the following paragraphs, there will be excluded from the amount of an individual’s annual income any unreimbursed amounts which have been paid within the 12-month annualization period for medical expenses regardless of when the indebtedness was incurred. An estimate based on a clear and reasonable expectation that unusual medical expenditure will be realized may be accepted for the purpose of authorizing prospective payments of benefits subject to necessary adjustment in the award upon receipt of an amended estimate, or after the end of the 12-month annualization period upon receipt of an eligibility verification report.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) Veteran’s income. Unreimbursed medical expenses will be excluded when all of the following requirements are met:

(i) They were or will be paid by a veteran or spouse for medical expenses of the veteran, spouse, children, parents and other relatives for whom there is a moral or legal obligation of support; and

(ii) They were or will be incurred on behalf of a person who is a member or a constructive member of the veteran’s or spouse’s household; and

(iii) They were or will be in excess of 5 percent of the applicable maximum annual pension rate or rates for the veteran (including increased pension for family members but excluding increased pension because of need for aid and attendance or being housebound) as in effect during the 12-month annualization period in which the medical expenses were paid.

(2) Surviving spouse’s income. Unreimbursed medical expenses will be excluded when all of the following requirements are met:

(i) They were or will be paid by a surviving spouse for medical expenses of the spouse, veteran’s children, parents and other relatives for whom there is a moral or legal obligation of support;

(ii) They were or will be incurred on behalf of a person who is a member or a constructive member of the spouse’s household; and

(iii) They were or will be in excess of 5 percent of the applicable maximum annual pension rate or rates for the spouse (including increased pension for family members but excluding increased pension because of need for aid and attendance or being housebound) as in effect during the 12-month annualization period in which the medical expenses were paid.

(3) Children’s income. Unreimbursed amounts paid by a child for medical expenses of self, parent, brothers and sisters, to the extent that such amounts exceed 5 percent of the maximum annual pension rate or rates payable to the child during the 12-month annualization period in which the medical expenses were paid.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(h) Expenses of last illnesses, burials, and just debts. Expenses specified in paragraphs (h)(1) and (h)(2) of this section which are paid during the calendar year following that in which death occurred may be deducted from annual income for the 12-month annualization period in which they were paid or from annual income for any 12-month
annualization period which begins during the calendar year of death, whichever is to the claimant’s advantage. Otherwise, such expenses are deductible only for the 12-month annualization period in which they were paid.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) Veteran’s final expenses. (i) Amounts paid by a spouse before a veteran’s death for expenses of the veteran’s last illness will be deducted from the income of the surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(3))

(ii) Amounts paid by a surviving spouse or child of a veteran for the veteran’s just debts, expenses of last illness and burial (to the extent such burial expenses are not reimbursed under chapter 23 of title 38 U.S.C.) will be deducted from the income of the surviving spouse or child. The term “just debts” does not include any debt that is secured by real or personal property.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(3))

(2) Spouse or child’s final expenses. (i) Amounts paid by a veteran for the expenses of the last illness and burial of the veteran’s deceased spouse or child will be deducted from the veteran’s income.

(ii) Amounts paid by a veteran’s spouse or surviving spouse for expenses of the last illness and burial of the veteran’s child will be deducted from the spouse’s or surviving spouse’s income.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(4))

(j) Child’s income. In the case of a child, any current work income received during the year, to the extent that the total amount of such income does not exceed an amount equal to the sum of the following:

(1) The lowest amount of gross income for which a Federal income tax return must be filed, as specified in section 6012(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, by an individual who is not married (as determined under section 143 of such Code), and is not a surviving spouse (as defined in section 2(a) of such Code), and is not a head of household (as defined in section 2(b) of such Code); and

(2) If the child is pursuing a course of postsecondary education or vocational rehabilitation or training, the amount paid by the child for those educational expenses including the amount paid for tuition, fees, books, and materials.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1503(a)(10))

(k) Domestic Volunteer Service Act Programs. Payments received under a Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) Program (including Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), University Year for ACTION (UYA), Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Senior Companion Program) shall be excluded as provided in paragraphs (k)(1) and (2) of this section:

(1) All DVSA payments received before December 13, 1979, shall be excluded from determining entitlement to improved pension.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 5044(g) (1973))

(2) DVSA payments received after December 12, 1979, shall be excluded from determining entitlement to improved pension unless the Director of the ACTION Agency has determined that the value of all DVSA payments, adjusted to reflect the number of hours served by the volunteer, equals or exceeds the minimum wage then in effect under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 or the minimum wage of the State
where the volunteer served, whichever is the greater.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 5014(g) (1979))

(l) Distributions of funds under 38 U.S.C. 1718. Distributions from the Department of Veterans Affairs Special Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Activities Fund as a result of participation in a therapeutic or rehabilitation activity under 38 U.S.C. 1718 and payments from participation in a program of rehabilitative services provided as part of the care furnished by a State home and which is approved by VA as conforming to standards for activities under 38 U.S.C. 1718 shall be considered donations from a public or private relief or welfare organization and shall not be countable as income for pension purposes.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1718(f))

(m) Hardship exclusion of child’s available income. When hardship is established under the provisions of §3.23(d)(6) of this part, there shall be excluded from the available income of any child or children an amount equal to the amount by which annual expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance exceed the sum of countable annual income plus VA pension entitlement computed without consideration of this exclusion. The amount of this exclusion shall not exceed the available income of any child or children, and annual expenses necessary for reasonable family maintenance shall not include any expenses which were considered in determining the available income of the child or children or the countable annual income of the veteran or surviving spouse.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(h), 1541(g))

(n) Survivor benefit annuity. Annuity paid by the Department of Defense under the authority of section 653, Public Law 100–456 to qualified surviving spouses of veterans who died prior to November 1, 1953. (September 29, 1988)


(o) Agent Orange settlement payments. Payments received by any person in settlement of the case of In re Agent Orange product liability litigation in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York (M.D.L. No. 381). (January 1, 1989)

(Authority: Pub. L. 101–201, 103 Stat. 1795)

(p) Restitution to individuals of Japanese ancestry. Any payment made as restitution under Public Law 100–383 to individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned, evacuated, or relocated during the period December 7, 1941, through June 30, 1946, pursuant to any law, Executive order, Presidential proclamation, directive, or other official action respecting these individuals. (August 10, 1988)

(Authority: Sec. 105, Pub. L. 100–383; 102 Stat. 905)

(q) Cash surrender value of life insurance. That portion of proceeds from the cash surrender of a life insurance policy which represents a return of insurance premiums.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

(r) Income received by American Indian beneficiaries from trust or restricted lands. Income of up to $2,000 per calendar year to an individual Indian from trust lands or restricted lands as defined in 25 CFR 151.2. (January 1, 1994)

(Authority: Sec. 13736, Pub. L. 103–66; 107 Stat. 633)


(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 2210 note)

(t) Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Any receipt by an individual of cash (including cash dividends on stock received from a Native Corporation) to the extent that it does not, in the aggregate, exceed $2,000 per individual per annum; stock (including stock issued or distributed by a Native Corporation as a dividend or distribution on stock); a partnership interest; land or an interest in land (including land or an interest in land received from a Native Corporation as a dividend or distribution
§ 3.273 Rate computation.

The commencement date of change in benefit payments based on rate computations under the provisions of this section will be determined under the provisions of § 3.31 or § 3.660.

(a) Initial award. For the purpose of determining initial entitlement, or for resuming payments on an award which was previously discontinued, the monthly rate of pension payable to a beneficiary shall be computed by reducing the beneficiary’s applicable maximum pension rate by the beneficiary’s countable income on the effective date of entitlement and dividing the remainder by 12. Effective June 1, 1983, the provisions of § 3.29(b) apply to this paragraph. Recomputation of rates due to changes in the maximum annual pension rate or rate of income following the initial date of entitlement are subject to the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) Running awards—(1) Change in maximum annual pension rate. Whenever there is change in a beneficiary’s applicable maximum annual pension rate, the monthly rate of pension payable shall be computed by reducing the new applicable maximum annual pension rate by the beneficiary’s countable income on the effective date of the change in the applicable maximum annual pension rate, and dividing the remainder by 12. Effective June 1, 1983, the provisions of § 3.29(b) apply to this paragraph.

(2) Change in amount of income. Whenever there is a change in a beneficiary’s amount of countable income the monthly rate of pension payable shall be computed by reducing the beneficiary’s applicable maximum annual pension rate by the beneficiary’s new amount of countable income on the effective date of the change in the amount of income, and dividing the remainder by 12. Effective June 1, 1983, the provisions of § 3.29(b) apply to this paragraph.

(c) Nonrecurring income. The amount of any nonrecurring countable income (e.g., an inheritance) received by a beneficiary shall be added to the beneficiary’s annual rate of income for a 12-month annualization period commencing on the effective date on which the nonrecurring income is countable.

(d) Recurring and irregular income. The amount of recurring and irregular income anticipated or received by a beneficiary shall be added to determine the beneficiary’s annual rate of income for a 12-month annualization period commencing at the beginning of the 12-month annualization, subject to the
§ 3.274 Relationship of net worth to pension entitlement.

(a) Veteran. Pension shall be denied or discontinued when the corpus of the estate of the veteran, and of the veteran’s spouse, are such that under all the circumstances, including consideration of the annual income of the veteran, the veteran’s spouse, and the veteran’s children, it is reasonable that some part of the corpus of such estates be consumed for the veteran’s maintenance.

(b) Increased pension payable to a veteran for a child. Increased pension payable to a veteran on account of a child shall be denied or discontinued when the corpus of the estate of the child is such that under all the circumstances, including consideration of the income of the child, the income of any person with whom the child is residing who is legally responsible for such child’s support, and the corpus of estate of such person, it is reasonable that some part of the corpus of such estates be consumed for the child’s maintenance.

(c) Surviving spouse. Pension payable to a surviving spouse shall be denied or discontinued when the corpus of the estate of the surviving spouse is such that under all the circumstances, including consideration of the surviving spouse’s income and the income of any child for whom the surviving spouse is receiving pension, it is reasonable that some part of the corpus of the surviving spouse’s estate be consumed for the surviving spouse’s maintenance.

(d) Increased pension payable to a surviving spouse for a child. Increased pension payable to a surviving spouse on account of a child shall be denied or discontinued when the corpus of the estate of the child is such that under all the circumstances, including consideration of the income of the surviving spouse and child and the income of any other child for whom the surviving spouse is receiving increased pension, it is reasonable that some part of the corpus of the child’s estate be consumed for the maintenance of the child.

§ 3.275 Criteria for evaluating net worth.

(a) General. The following rules are for application in determining the corpus of estate or net worth of a veteran, surviving spouse or child under §3.274.

(b) Definition. The terms corpus of estate and net worth mean the market value, less mortgages or other encumbrances, of all real and personal property owned by the claimant, except the claimant’s dwelling (single family unit), including a reasonable lot area, and personal effects suitable to and consistent with the claimant’s reasonable mode of life.

(c) Ownership. See §3.271(d).

(d) Evaluation. In determining whether some part of the claimant’s estate (or combined estates under §3.274(a) and (e)) should be consumed for the claimant’s maintenance, consideration will be given to the amount of the claimant’s income together with the following: Whether the property can be readily converted into cash at no substantial sacrifice; life expectancy; number of dependents who meet the definition of member of the family (the definition contained in §3.250(b)(2) is applicable to the improved pension program); potential rate of depletion, including unusual medical expenses under the principles outlined in §3.272(g) for the claimant and the claimant’s dependents.
(e) Educational expenses. There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a child reasonable amounts for actual or prospective educational or vocational expenses. The amount so excluded shall not be such as to provide for education or training beyond age 23.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(f) Agent Orange settlement payments. There shall be excluded from the corpus of the estate or net worth of a claimant any payment made from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other fund established pursuant to the settlement in the In re Agent Orange product liability litigation, M.D.L. No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.). (January 1, 1989)

(Authority: Pub. L. 101–201, 103 Stat. 1795)

(g) Restitution to individuals of Japanese ancestry. There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant any payment made as restitution under Public Law 100–383 to individuals of Japanese ancestry who were interned, evacuated, or relocated during the period December 7, 1941, through June 30, 1946, pursuant to any law, Executive order, Presidential proclamation, directive, or other official action respecting these individuals. (August 10, 1988)

(Authority: Sec. 105, Pub. L. 100–383; 102 Stat. 905)

(h) Radiation Exposure Compensation Act. There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant any payment made under Section 6 of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 2210 note)

(i) Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for certain individuals who are children of Vietnam veterans or children of veterans with covered service in Korea. There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant any allowance paid under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 to or for an individual who is a child of a Vietnam veteran or a child of a veteran with covered service in Korea.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1833(c))

(j) Victims of Crime Act. There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant any amounts received as compensation under the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 unless the total amount of assistance received from all federally funded programs is sufficient to fully compensate the claimant for losses suffered as a result of the crime.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 10602(c))

(k) Medicare Prescription Drug Discount Card and Transitional Assistance Program. There shall be excluded from the corpus of estate or net worth of a claimant payments received under the Medicare transitional assistance program and any savings associated with the Medicare prescription drug discount card.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 1395w–141(g)(6))


§ 3.276 Certain transfers or waivers disregarded.

(a) Waiver of receipt of income. Potential income, not excludable under § 3.272 and whose receipt has been waived by an individual, shall be included as countable income of that individual for Department of Veterans Affairs pension purposes.

(b) Transfer of assets. For pension purposes, a gift of property made by an individual to a relative residing in the same household shall not be recognized as reducing the corpus of the grantor’s estate. A sale of property to such a relative shall not be recognized as reducing the corpus of the seller’s estate if the purchase price, or other consideration for the sale, is so low as to be tantamount to a gift. A gift of property to someone other than a relative residing in the grantor’s household will not be recognized as reducing the corpus of the grantor’s estate unless it is clear that the grantor has relinquished all rights of ownership, including the right of control of the property.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)
§ 3.277 Eligibility reporting requirements.

(a) Evidence of entitlement. As a condition of granting or continuing pension, the Department of Veterans Affairs may require from any person who is an applicant for or a recipient of pension such information, proofs, and evidence as is necessary to determine the annual income and the value of the corpus of the estate of such person, and of any spouse or child for whom the person is receiving or is to receive increased pension (such child is hereinafter in this section referred to as a dependent child), and, in the case of a child applying for or in receipt of pension in his or her own behalf (hereinafter in this section referred to as a surviving child), of any person with whom such child is residing who is legally responsible for such child’s support.

(b) Obligation to report changes in factors affecting entitlement. Any individual who has applied for or receives pension must promptly notify the Secretary of any change affecting entitlement in any of the following:

1. Income;
2. Net worth or corpus of estate;
3. Marital status;
4. Nursing home patient status;
5. School enrollment status of a child 18 years of age or older; or
6. Any other factor that affects entitlement to benefits under the provisions of this Part.

(c) Eligibility verification reports. (1) For purposes of this section the term eligibility verification report means a form prescribed by the Secretary that is used to request income, net worth, dependency status, and any other information necessary to determine or verify entitlement to pension.

(2) The Secretary shall require an eligibility verification report under the following circumstances:

(i) If the Social Security Administration has not verified the beneficiary’s Social Security number and, if the beneficiary is married, his or her spouse’s Social Security number;

(ii) If the Secretary determines that an eligibility verification report is necessary to preserve program integrity.

(3) An individual who applies for or receives pension as defined in §3.3 of this part shall, as a condition of receipt or continued receipt of benefits, furnish the Department of Veterans Affairs an eligibility verification report upon request.

(d) If VA requests that a claimant or beneficiary submit an eligibility verification report but he or she fails to do so within 60 days of the date of the VA request, the Secretary shall suspend the award or disallow the claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1506)

(44 FR 45936, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 60 FR 51922, Oct. 4, 1995; 65 FR 16827, Mar. 30, 2000; 66 FR 56614, Nov. 9, 2001)

§ 3.300 Claims based on the effects of tobacco products.

(a) For claims received by VA after June 9, 1998, a disability or death will not be considered service-connected on the basis that it resulted from injury or disease attributable to the veteran’s use of tobacco products during service. For the purpose of this section, the term “tobacco products” means cigars, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, pipe tobacco, and roll-your-own tobacco.

(b) The provisions of paragraph (a) of this section do not prohibit service connection if:

1. The disability or death resulted from a disease or injury that is otherwise shown to have been incurred or aggravated during service. For purposes of this section, “otherwise shown” means that the disability or death can be service-connected on some basis other than the veteran’s use of tobacco products during service, or that the disability became manifest or death occurred during service; or

2. The disability or death resulted from a disease or injury that appeared to the required degree of disability
within any applicable presumptive period under §§ 3.307, 3.309, 3.313, or 3.316; or

(3) Secondary service connection is established for ischemic heart disease or other cardiovascular disease under §3.310(b).

(c) For claims for secondary service connection received by VA after June 9, 1998, a disability that is proximately due to or the result of an injury or disease previously service-connected on the basis that it is attributable to the veteran’s use of tobacco products during service will not be service-connected under §3.310(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1103, 1103 note)

§3.301 Line of duty and misconduct.

(a) Line of duty. Direct service connection may be granted only when a disability or cause of death was incurred or aggravated in line of duty, and not the result of the veteran’s own willful misconduct or, for claims filed after October 31, 1990, the result of his or her abuse of alcohol or drugs.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 105)

(b) Willful misconduct. Disability pension is not payable for any condition due to the veteran’s own willful misconduct.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521)

(c) Specific applications; willful misconduct. For the purpose of determining entitlement to service-connected and nonservice-connected benefits the definitions in §§ 3.1 (m) and (n) of this part apply except as modified within paragraphs (c)(1) through (c)(3) of this section. The provisions of paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(3) of this section are subject to the provisions of §3.302 of this part where applicable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) Venereal disease. The residuals of venereal disease are not to be considered the result of willful misconduct. Consideration of service connection for residuals of venereal disease as having been incurred in service requires that the initial infection must have occurred during active service. Increase in service of manifestations of venereal disease will usually be held due to natural progress unless the facts of record indicate the increase in manifestations was precipitated by trauma or by the conditions of the veteran’s service, in which event service connection may be established by aggravation. Medical principles pertaining to the incubation period and its relation to the course of the disease; i.e., initial or acute manifestation, or period and course of secondary and late residuals manifested, will be considered when time of incidence of venereal disease prior to or after entry into service is at issue. In the issue of service connection, whether the veteran complied with service regulations and directives for reporting the disease and undergoing treatment is immaterial after November 14, 1972, and the service department characterization of acquisition of the disease as willful misconduct or as not in line of duty will not govern.

(2) The simple drinking of alcoholic beverage is not of itself willful misconduct. The deliberate drinking of a known poisonous substance or under conditions which would raise a presumption to that effect will be considered willful misconduct. If, in the drinking of a beverage to enjoy its intoxicating effects, intoxication results proximately and immediately in disability or death, the disability or death will be considered the result of the person’s willful misconduct. Organic diseases and disabilities which are a secondary result of the chronic use of alcohol as a beverage, whether out of compulsion or otherwise, will not be considered willful misconduct origin. (See §§21.1043, 21.5041, and 21.7051 of this title regarding the disabling effects of chronic alcoholism for the purpose of extending delimiting periods under education or rehabilitation programs.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(3) Drug usage. The isolated and infrequent use of drugs by itself will not be considered willful misconduct; however, the progressive and frequent use of drugs to the point of addiction will be considered willful misconduct.
Where drugs are used to enjoy or experience their effects and the effects result proximately and immediately in disability or death, such disability or death will be considered the result of the person’s willful misconduct. Organic diseases and disabilities which are a secondary result of the chronic use of drugs and infections coinciding with the injection of drugs will not be considered of willful misconduct origin. (See paragraph (d) of this section regarding service connection where disability or death is a result of abuse of drugs.) Where drugs are used for therapeutic purposes or where use of drugs or addiction thereto, results from a service-connected disability, it will not be considered of misconduct origin.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 105, 1110, 1121, 1131, 1301, and 1521(a))

(d) Line of duty; abuse of alcohol or drugs. An injury or disease incurred during active military, naval, or air service shall not be deemed to have been incurred in line of duty if such injury or disease was a result of the abuse of alcohol or drugs by the person on whose service benefits are claimed. For the purpose of this paragraph, alcohol abuse means the use of alcoholic beverages over time, or such excessive use at any one time, sufficient to cause disability to or death of the user; drug abuse means the use of illegal drugs (including prescription drugs that are illegally or illicitly obtained), the intentional use of prescription or non-prescription drugs for a purpose other than the medically intended use, or the use of substances other than alcohol to enjoy their intoxicating effects.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 105(a))


§3.302 Service connection for mental unsoundness in suicide.

(a) General. (1) In order for suicide to constitute willful misconduct, the act of self-destruction must be intentional. (2) A person of unsound mind is incapable of forming an intent (mens rea, or guilty mind, which is an essential element of crime or willful misconduct). (3) It is a constant requirement for favorable action that the precipitating mental unsoundness be service connected.

(b) Evidence of mental condition. (1) Whether a person, at the time of suicide, was so unsound mentally that he or she did not realize the consequence of such an act, or was unable to resist such impulse is a question to be determined in each individual case, based on all available lay and medical evidence pertaining to his or her mental condition at the time of suicide. (2) The act of suicide or a bona fide attempt is considered to be evidence of mental unsoundness. Therefore, where no reasonable adequate motive for suicide is shown by the evidence, the act will be considered to have resulted from mental unsoundness. (3) A reasonable adequate motive for suicide may be established by affirmative evidence showing circumstances which could lead a rational person to self-destruction.

(c) Evaluation of evidence. (1) Affirmative evidence is necessary to justify reversal of service department findings of mental unsoundness where Department of Veterans Affairs criteria do not otherwise warrant contrary findings. (2) In all instances any reasonable doubt should be resolved favorably to support a finding of service connection (see §3.102).

CROSS REFERENCE: Cause of death. See §3.312.


RATINGS AND EVALUATIONS; SERVICE CONNECTION

§3.303 Principles relating to service connection.

(a) General. Service connection connotes many factors but basically it means that the facts, shown by evidence, establish that a particular injury or disease resulting in disability was incurred coincident with service in the Armed Forces, or if preexisting such service, was aggravated therein.
This may be accomplished by affirmatively showing inception or aggravation during service or through the application of statutory presumptions. Each disabling condition shown by a veteran’s service records, or for which he seeks a service connection must be considered on the basis of the places, types and circumstances of his service as shown by service records, the official history of each organization in which he served, his medical records and all pertinent medical and lay evidence. Determinations as to service connection will be based on review of the entire evidence of record, with due consideration to the policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the law under a broad and liberal interpretation consistent with the facts in each individual case.

(b) Chronicity and continuity. With chronic disease shown as such in service (or within the presumptive period under §3.307) so as to permit a finding of service connection, subsequent manifestations of the same chronic disease at any later date, however remote, are service connected, unless clearly attributable to intercurrent causes. This rule does not mean that any manifestation of joint pain, any abnormality of heart action or heart sounds, any urinary findings of casts, or any cough, in service will permit service connection of arthritis, disease of the heart, nephritis, or pulmonary disease, first shown as a clearcut clinical entity, at some later date. For the showing of chronic disease in service there is required a combination of manifestations sufficient to identify the disease entity, and sufficient observation to establish chronicity at the time, as distinguished from merely isolated findings or a diagnosis including the word “Chronic.” When the disease identity is established (leprosy, tuberculosis, multiple sclerosis, etc.), there is no requirement of evidentiary showing of continuity. Continuity of symptomatology is required only where the condition noted during service (or in the presumptive period) is not, in fact, shown to be chronic or where the diagnosis of chronicity may be legitimately questioned. When the fact of chronicity in service is not adequately supported, then a showing of continuity after discharge is required to support the claim.

(c) Preservice disabilities noted in service. There are medical principles so universally recognized as to constitute fact (clear and unmistakable proof), and when in accordance with these principles existence of a disability prior to service is established, no additional or confirmatory evidence is necessary. Consequently with notation or discovery during service of such residual conditions (scars; fibrosis of the lungs; atrophies following disease of the central or peripheral nervous system; healed fractures; absent, displaced or resected parts of organs; supernumerary parts; congenital malformations or hemorrhoidal tags or tabs, etc.) with no evidence of the pertinent antecedent active disease or injury during service the conclusion must be that they preexisted service. Similarly, manifestation of lesions or symptoms of chronic disease from date of enlistment, or so close thereto that the disease could not have originated in so short a period will establish preservice existence thereof. Conditions of an infectious nature are to be considered with regard to the circumstances of the infection and if manifested in less than the respective incubation periods after reporting for duty, they will be held to have preexisted service. In the field of mental disorders, personality disorders which are characterized by developmental defects or pathological trends in the personality structure manifested by a lifelong pattern of action or behavior, chronic psychoneurosis of long duration or other psychiatric symptomatology shown to have existed prior to service with the same manifestations during service, which were the basis of the service diagnosis, will be accepted as showing preservice origin. Congenital or developmental defects, refractive error of the eye, personality disorders and mental deficiency as such are not diseases or injuries within the meaning of applicable legislation.

(d) Postservice initial diagnosis of disease. Service connection may be granted for any disease diagnosed after discharge, when all the evidence, including that pertinent to service, establishes that the disease was incurred in
service. Presumptive periods are not intended to limit service connection to diseases so diagnosed when the evidence warrants direct service connection. The presumptive provisions of the statute and Department of Veterans Affairs regulations implementing them are intended as liberalizations applicable when the evidence would not warrant service connection without their aid.

[26 FR 1579, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.304 Direct service connection; wartime and peacetime.

(a) General. The basic considerations relating to service connection are stated in §3.303. The criteria in this section apply only to disabilities which may have resulted from service in a period of war or service rendered on or after January 1, 1947.

(b) Presumption of soundness. The veteran will be considered to have been in sound condition when examined, accepted and enrolled for service, except as to defects, infirmities, or disorders noted at entrance into service, or where clear and unmistakable (obvious or manifest) evidence demonstrates that an injury or disease existed prior thereto and was not aggravated by such service. Only such conditions as are recorded in examination reports are to be considered as noted.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1111)

(1) History of preservice existence of conditions recorded at the time of examination does not constitute a notation of such conditions but will be considered together with all other material evidence in determinations as to inception. Determinations should not be based on medical judgment alone as distinguished from accepted medical principles, or on history alone without regard to clinical factors pertinent to the basic character, origin and development of such injury or disease. They should be based on thorough analysis of the evidentiary showing and careful correlation of all material facts, with due regard to accepted medical principles pertaining to the history, manifestations, clinical course, and character of the particular injury or disease or residuals thereof.

(2) History conforming to accepted medical principles should be given due consideration, in conjunction with basic clinical data, and be accorded probative value consistent with accepted medical and evidentiary principles in relation to value consistent with accepted medical evidence relating to incidence, symptoms and course of the injury or disease, including official and other records made prior to, during or subsequent to service, together with all other lay and medical evidence concerning the inception, development and manifestations of the particular condition will be taken into full account.

(3) Signed statements of veterans relating to the origin, or incurrence of any disease or injury made in service if against his or her own interest is of no force and effect if other data do not establish the fact. Other evidence will be considered as though such statement were not of record.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 1219)

(c) Development. The development of evidence in connection with claims for service connection will be accomplished when deemed necessary but it should not be undertaken when evidence present is sufficient for this determination. In initially rating disability of record at the time of discharge, the records of the service department, including the reports of examination at enlistment and the clinical records during service, will ordinarily suffice. Rating of combat injuries or other conditions which obviously had their inception in service may be accomplished pending receipt of copy of the examination at enlistment and all other service records.

(d) Combat. Satisfactory lay or other evidence that an injury or disease was incurred or aggravated in combat will be accepted as sufficient proof of service connection if the evidence is consistent with the circumstances, conditions or hardships of such service even though there is no official record of such incurrence or aggravation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1154(b))

(e) Prisoners of war. Where disability compensation is claimed by a former prisoner of war, omission of history or findings from clinical records made
upon repatriation is not determinative of service connection, particularly if evidence of comrades in support of the incurrence of the disability during confinement is available. Special attention will be given to any disability first reported after discharge, especially if poorly defined and not obviously of intercurrent origin. The circumstances attendant upon the individual veteran's confinement and the duration thereof will be associated with pertinent medical principles in determining whether disability manifested subsequent to service is etiologically related to the prisoner of war experience.

(f) Posttraumatic stress disorder. Service connection for posttraumatic stress disorder requires medical evidence diagnosing the condition in accordance with §4.125(a) of this chapter; a link, established by medical evidence, between current symptoms and an in-service stressor; and credible supporting evidence that the claimed in-service stressor occurred. The following provisions apply to claims for service connection of posttraumatic stress disorder diagnosed during service or based on the specified type of claimed stressor:

(1) If the evidence establishes a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder during service and the claimed stressor is related to that service, in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, and provided that the claimed stressor is consistent with the circumstances, conditions, or hardships of the veteran's service, the veteran's lay testimony alone may establish the occurrence of the claimed in-service stressor.

(2) If the evidence establishes that the veteran engaged in combat with the enemy and the claimed stressor is related to that combat, in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, and provided that the claimed stressor is consistent with the circumstances, conditions, or hardships of the veteran's service, the veteran's lay testimony alone may establish the occurrence of the claimed in-service stressor.

(3) If a stressor claimed by a veteran is related to the veteran's fear of hostile military or terrorist activity and a VA psychiatrist or psychologist, or a psychiatrist or psychologist with whom VA has contracted, confirms that the claimed stressor is adequate to support a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder and that the veteran's symptoms are related to the claimed stressor, in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, and provided the claimed stressor is consistent with the places, types, and circumstances of the veteran's service, the veteran's lay testimony alone may establish the occurrence of the claimed in-service stressor. For purposes of this paragraph, "fear of hostile military or terrorist activity" means that a veteran experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or circumstance that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of the veteran or others, such as from an actual or potential improvised explosive device; vehicle-imbedded explosive device; incoming artillery, rocket, or mortar fire; grenade; small arms fire, including suspected sniper fire; or attack upon friendly military aircraft, and the veteran's response to the event or circumstance involved a psychological or psycho-physiological state of fear, helplessness, or horror.

(4) If the evidence establishes that the veteran was a prisoner-of-war under the provisions of §3.1(y) of this part and the claimed stressor is related to that prisoner-of-war experience, in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary, and provided that the claimed stressor is consistent with the circumstances, conditions, or hardships of the veteran's service, the veteran's lay testimony alone may establish the occurrence of the claimed in-service stressor.

(5) If a posttraumatic stress disorder claim is based on in-service personal assault, evidence from sources other than the veteran's service records may corroborate the veteran's account of the stressor incident. Examples of such evidence include, but are not limited to: records from law enforcement authorities, rape crisis centers, mental health counseling centers, hospitals, or physicians; pregnancy tests or tests for sexually transmitted diseases; and statements from family members, roommates, fellow service members, or
§ 3.305 Direct service connection; peacetime service before January 1, 1947.

(a) General. The basic considerations relating to service connection are stated in § 3.303. The criteria in this section apply only to disabilities which may have resulted from service other than in a period of war before January 1, 1947.

(b) Presumption of soundness. A peacetime veteran who has had active, continuous service of 6 months or more will be considered to have been in sound condition when examined, accepted and enrolled for service, except as to defects, infirmities or disorders noted at the time thereof, or where evidence or medical judgment, as distinguished from medical fact and principles, establishes that an injury or disease preexisted service. Any evidence acceptable as competent to indicate the time of existence or inception of the condition may be considered. Determinations based on medical judgment will take cognizance of the time of inception or manifestation of disease or injury following entrance into service, as shown by proper service authorities in service records, entries or reports. Such records will be accorded reasonable weight in consideration of other evidence and sound medical reasoning. Opinions may be solicited from Department of Veterans Affairs medical authorities when considered necessary.

(c) Campaigns and expeditions. In considering claims of veterans who engaged in combat during campaigns or expeditions satisfactory lay or other evidence of incurrence or aggravation in such combat of an injury or disease, if consistent with the circumstances, conditions or hardships of such service will be accepted as sufficient proof of service connection, even when there is no official record of incurrence or aggravation. Service connection for such injury or disease may be rebutted by clear and convincing evidence to the contrary.


§ 3.306 Aggravation of preservice disability.

(a) General. A preexisting injury or disease will be considered to have been aggravated by active military, naval, or air service, where there is an increase in disability during such service, unless there is a specific finding that the increase in disability is due to the natural progress of the disease.

(b) Wartime service; peacetime service after December 31, 1946. Clear and unmistakable evidence (obvious or manifest) is required to rebut the presumption of aggravation where the preservice disability underwent an increase in severity during service. This includes medical facts and principles which may be considered to determine
whether the increase is due to the natural progress of the condition. Aggravation may not be conceded where the disability underwent no increase in severity during service on the basis of all the evidence of record pertaining to the manifestations of the disability prior to, during and subsequent to service.

(1) The usual effects of medical and surgical treatment in service, having the effect of ameliorating disease or other conditions incurred before enlistment, including postoperative scars, absent or poorly functioning parts or organs, will not be considered service connected unless the disease or injury is otherwise aggravated by service.

(2) Due regard will be given the places, types, and circumstances of service and particular consideration will be accorded combat duty and other hardships of service. The development of symptomatic manifestations of a preexisting disease or injury during or proximately following action with the enemy or following a status as a prisoner of war will establish aggravation of a disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1154)

(c) Peacetime service prior to December 7, 1941. The specific finding requirement that an increase in disability is due to the natural progress of the condition will be met when the available evidence of a nature generally acceptable as competent shows that the increase in severity of a disease or injury or acceleration in progress was that normally to be expected by reason of the inherent character of the condition, aside from any extraneous or contributing cause or influence peculiar to military service. Consideration will be given to the circumstances, conditions, and hardships of service.


§ 3.307 Presumptive service connection for chronic, tropical or prisoner-of-war related disease, or disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents; wartime and service on or after January 1, 1947.

(a) General. A chronic, tropical, prisoner-of-war related disease, or a disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents listed in § 3.309(a) will be considered to have been incurred in or aggravated by service under the circumstances outlined in this section even though there is no evidence of such disease during the period of service. No condition other than one listed in § 3.309(a) will be considered chronic.

(1) Service. The veteran must have served 90 days or more during a war period or after December 31, 1946. The requirement of 90 days' service means active, continuous service within the period of service extending into or beyond a war period, or which began before and extended beyond December 31, 1946, or began after that date. Any period of service is sufficient for the purpose of establishing the presumptive service connection of a specified disease under the conditions listed in § 3.309(c) and (e).

(2) Separation from service. For the purpose of paragraph (a)(3) and (4) of this section the date of separation from wartime service will be the date of discharge or release during a war period, or if service continued after the war, the end of the war period. In claims based on service on or after January 1, 1947, the date of separation will be the date of discharge or release from the period of service on which the claim is based.

(3) Chronic disease. The disease must have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year (for Hansen’s disease (leprosy) and tuberculosis, within 3 years; multiple sclerosis, within 7 years) from the date of separation from service as specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(4) Tropical disease. The disease must have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year from date of separation from service as specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, or at a time when standard accepted treatises indicate that the incubation period commenced during such service. The resultant disorders or diseases originating because of therapy administered in connection with a tropical disease or as a preventative may also be service connected.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112)

(5) Diseases specific as to former prisoners of war. The diseases listed in § 3.309(c) shall have become manifest to
a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after discharge or release from active service.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112)

(6) Diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents. (i) For the purposes of this section, the term “herbicide agent” means a chemical in an herbicide used in support of the United States and allied military operations in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, specifically: 2,4-D; 2,4,5-T and its contaminant TCDD; cacodylic acid; and picloram.

(ii) The diseases listed at § 3.309(e) shall have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after service, except that chloracne or other acneform disease consistent with chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, and acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy shall have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within a year after the last date on which the veteran was exposed to an herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service.

(iii) A veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to an herbicide agent, unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the veteran was not exposed to any such agent during that service. See also 38 CFR 3.814(c)(2).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1116(a)(3), and 1821)

(b) Evidentiary basis. The factual basis may be established by medical evidence, competent lay evidence or both. Medical evidence should set forth the physical findings and symptomatology elicited by examination within the applicable period. Lay evidence should describe the material and relevant facts as to the veteran’s disability observed within such period, not merely conclusions based upon opinion. The chronicity and continuity factors outlined in § 3.303(b) will be considered. The diseases listed in § 3.309(a) will be accepted as chronic, even though diagnosed as acute because of insidious inception and chronic development, except: (1) Where they result from intercurrent causes, for example, cerebral hemorrhage due to injury, or active nephritis or acute endocarditis due to intercurrent infection (with or without identification of the pathogenic organism); or (2) where a disease is the result of drug ingestion or a complication of some other condition not related to service. Thus, leukemia will be accepted as a chronic disease whether diagnosed as acute or chronic. Unless the clinical picture is clear otherwise, consideration will be given as to whether an acute condition is an exacerbation of a chronic disease.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112)

(c) Prohibition of certain presumptions. No presumptions may be invoked on the basis of advancement of the disease when first definitely diagnosed for the purpose of showing its existence to a degree of 10 percent within the applicable period. This will not be interpreted as requiring that the disease be diagnosed in the presumptive period, but only that there be then shown by acceptable medical or lay evidence characteristic manifestations of the disease.
to the required degree, followed without unreasonable time lapse by definite diagnosis. Symptomatology shown in the prescribed period may have no particular significance when first observed, but in the light of subsequent developments it may gain considerable significance. Cases in which a chronic condition is shown to exist within a short time following the applicable presumptive period, but without evidence of manifestations within the period, should be developed to determine whether there was symptomatology which in retrospect may be identified and evaluated as manifestation of the chronic disease to the required 10-percent degree.

(d) Rebuttal of service incurrence or aggravation. (1) Evidence which may be considered in rebuttal of service incurrence of a disease listed in §3.309 will be any evidence of a nature usually accepted as competent to indicate the time of existence or inception of disease, and medical judgment will be exercised in making determinations relative to the effect of intercurrent injury or disease. The expression “affirmative evidence to the contrary” will not be taken to require a conclusive showing, but such showing as would, in sound medical reasoning and in the consideration of all evidence of record, support a conclusion that the disease was not incurred in service. As to tropical diseases the fact that the veteran had no service in a locality having a high incidence of the disease may be considered as evidence to rebut the presumption, as may residence during the period in question in a region where the particular disease is endemic. The known incubation periods of tropical diseases should be used as a factor in rebuttal of presumptive service connection as showing inception before or after service.

(2) The presumption of aggravation provided in this section may be rebutted by affirmative evidence that the preexisting condition was not aggravated by service, which may include affirmative evidence that any increase in disability was due to an intercurrent disease or injury suffered after separation from service or evidence sufficient, under §3.306 of this part, to show that the increase in disability was due to the natural progress of the preexisting condition.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C 1113 and 1153)


§ 3.308 Presumptive service connection; peacetime service before January 1, 1947.

(a) Chronic disease. There is no provision for presumptive service connection for chronic disease as distinguished from tropical diseases referred to in paragraph (b) of this section based on peacetime service before January 1, 1947.

(b) Tropical disease. In claims based on peacetime service before January 1, 1947, a veteran of 6 months or more service who contracts a tropical disease listed in §3.309(b) or a resultant disorder or disease originating because of therapy administered in connection with a tropical disease or as a preventative, will be considered to have incurred such disability in service when it is shown to exist to the degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year after separation from active service, or at a time when standard and accepted treatises indicate that the incubation period commenced during active service unless shown by clear and unmistakable evidence not to have been of service origin. The requirement of 6 months or more service means active, continuous service, during one or more enlistment periods.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1133)

[39 FR 34530, Sept. 26, 1974]

§ 3.309 Disease subject to presumptive service connection.

(a) Chronic diseases. The following diseases shall be granted service connection although not otherwise established as incurred in or aggravated by service if manifested to a compensable degree within the applicable time limits under §3.307 following service in a period of war or following peacetime
service on or after January 1, 1947, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of §3.307 are also satisfied.

Anemia, primary.
Arteriosclerosis.
Arthritis.
Atrophy, progressive muscular.
Brain hemorrhage.
Brain thrombosis.
Bronchiectasis.
Carcinoma of the kidney, bladder, or gall-bladder.
Cardiovascular-renal disease, including hypertension. (This term applies to combination involvement of the type of arteriosclerosis, nephritis, and organic heart disease, and since hypertension is an early symptom long preceding the development of those diseases in their more obvious forms, a disabling hypertension within the 1-year period will be given the same benefit of service connection as any of the chronic diseases listed.)
Cirrhosis of the liver.
Coccidioidomycosis.
Diabetes mellitus.
Encephalitis lethargica residuals.
Endocarditis. (This term covers all forms of valvular heart disease.)
Endocrinopathies.
Epilepsies.
Hansen’s disease.
Hodgkin’s disease.
Leukemia.
Lupus erythematosus, systemic.
Myasthenia gravis.
Myelitis.
Myocarditis.
Nephritis.
Other organic diseases of the nervous system.
Osteitis deformans (Paget’s disease).
Osteomalacia.
Palay, bulbar.
Paralysis agitans.
Psychoses.
Purpura idiopathic, hemorrhagic.
Raynaud’s disease.
Sarcoidosis.
Scleroderma.
Sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral.
Sclerosis, multiple.
Syringomyelia.
Thromboangiitis obliterans (Buerger’s disease).
Tuberculosis, active.
Tumors, malignant, or of the brain or spinal cord or peripheral nerves.
Ulcers, peptic (gastric or duodenal) (A proper diagnosis of gastric or duodenal ulcer (peptic ulcer) is to be considered established if it represents a medically sound interpretation of sufficient clinical findings warranting such diagnosis and provides an adequate basis for a differential diagnosis from other conditions with like symptomatology: in short, where the preponderance of evidence indicates gastric or duodenal ulcer (peptic ulcer). Whenever possible, of course, laboratory findings should be used in corroborating of the clinical data.
(b) Tropical diseases. The following diseases shall be granted service connection as a result of tropical service, although not otherwise established as incurred in service if manifested to a compensable degree within the applicable time limits under §3.307 or §3.308 following service in a period of war or following peacetime service, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of §3.307 are also satisfied.
Amebiasis.
Blackwater fever.
Cholera.
Dracontiasis.
Dysentery.
Filariasis.
Leishmaniasis, including kala-azar.
Loiasis.
Malaria.
Onchocerciasis.
Oroya fever.
Pinta.
Plague.
Schistosomiasis.
Yaws.
Yellow fever.
Resultant disorders or diseases originating because of therapy administered in connection with such diseases or as a preventative thereof.
(c) Diseases specific as to former prisoners of war. (1) If a veteran is a former prisoner of war, the following diseases shall be service connected if manifest to a degree of disability of 10 percent or more at any time after discharge or release from active military, naval, or air service even though there is no record of such disease during service, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of §3.307 are also satisfied.
Psychosis.
Any of the anxiety states.
Dysthymic disorder (or depressive neurosis). Organic residuals of frostbite, if it is determined that the veteran was interned in climatic conditions consistent with the occurrence of frostbite.
Post-traumatic osteoarthritis.
Department of Veterans Affairs § 3.309

Atherosclerotic heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease (including hypertensive heart disease) and their complications (including myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure, arrhythmia). Stroke and its complications.

On or after October 10, 2008, Osteoporosis, if the Secretary determines that the veteran has posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

(2) If the veteran:
   (i) Is a former prisoner of war and;
   (ii) Was interned or detained for not less than 30 days, the following diseases shall be service connected if manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after discharge or release from active military, naval, or air service even though there is no record of such disease during service, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of § 3.307 are also satisfied.

Avitaminosis.

Beriberi (including beriberi heart disease).

Chronic dysentery.

Helminthiasis.

Malnutrition (including optic atrophy associated with malnutrition).

Pellagra.

Any other nutritional deficiency.

Irritable bowel syndrome.

Peptic ulcer disease.

Peripheral neuropathy except where directly related to infectious causes.

Cirrhosis of the liver.

On or after September 28, 2009, Osteoporosis.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112(b))

(d) Diseases specific to radiation-exposed veterans. (1) The diseases listed in paragraph (d)(2) of this section shall be service-connected if they become manifest in a radiation-exposed veteran as defined in paragraph (d)(3) of this section, provided the rebuttable presumption provisions of § 3.307 of this part are also satisfied.

(2) The diseases referred to in paragraph (d)(1) of this section are the following:
   (i) Leukemia (other than chronic lymphocytic leukemia).
   (ii) Cancer of the thyroid.
   (iii) Cancer of the breast.
   (iv) Cancer of the pharynx.
   (v) Cancer of the esophagus.
   (vi) Cancer of the stomach.
   (vii) Cancer of the small intestine.
   (viii) Cancer of the pancreas.
   (ix) Multiple myeloma.
   (x) Lymphomas (except Hodgkin’s disease).
   (xi) Cancer of the bile ducts.
   (xii) Cancer of the gall bladder.
   (xiii) Primary liver cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated).
   (xiv) Cancer of the salivary gland.
   (xv) Cancer of the urinary tract.
   (xvi) Bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma.
   (xvii) Cancer of the bone.
   (xviii) Cancer of the brain.
   (xix) Cancer of the colon.
   (xx) Cancer of the lung.
   (xxi) Cancer of the ovary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112(c)(2))

(3) For purposes of this section:

(A) Onsite participation in a test involving the atmospheric detonation of a nuclear device.

(B) The occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, by United States forces during the period beginning on August 6, 1945, and ending on July 1, 1946.

(C) Internment as a prisoner of war in Japan (or service on active duty in Japan immediately following such internment) during World War II which resulted in an opportunity for exposure to ionizing radiation comparable to that of the United States occupation forces in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, during the period beginning on August 6, 1945, and ending on July 1, 1946.

(D)(I) Service in which the service member was, as part of his or her official military duties, present during a total of at least 250 days before February 1, 1992, on the grounds of a gaseous diffusion plant located in Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio, or the area identified as K25 at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, if, during such service the veteran:
   (i) Was monitored for each of the 250 days of such service through the use of
dosimetry badges for exposure at the plant of the external parts of veteran’s body to radiation; or
(ii) Served for each of the 250 days of such service in a position that had exposures comparable to a job that is or was monitored through the use of dosimetry badges; or
(2) Service before January 1, 1974, on Amchitka Island, Alaska, if, during such service, the veteran was exposed to ionizing radiation in the performance of duty related to the Long Shot, Milrow, or Cannikin underground nuclear tests.
(3) For purposes of paragraph (d)(3)(ii)(D)(1) of this section, the term “day” refers to all or any portion of a calendar day.
(E) Service in a capacity which, if performed as an employee of the Department of Energy, would qualify the individual for inclusion as a member of the Special Exposure Cohort under section 3621(14) of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 7384l(14)).
(iii) The term atmospheric detonation includes underwater nuclear detonations.
(iv) The term onsite participation means:
(A) During the official operational period of an atmospheric nuclear test, presence at the test site, or performance of official military duties in connection with ships, aircraft or other equipment used in direct support of the nuclear test.
(B) During the six month period following the official operational period of an atmospheric nuclear test, presence at the test site or other test staging area to perform official military duties in connection with completion of projects related to the nuclear test including decontamination of equipment used during the nuclear test.
(C) Service as a member of the garrison or maintenance forces on Eniwetok during the periods June 21, 1951, through July 1, 1952, August 7, 1956, through August 7, 1957, or November 1, 1958, through April 30, 1959.
(D) Assignment to official military duties at Naval Shipyards involving the decontamination of ships that participated in Operation Crossroads.
(v) For tests conducted by the United States, the term operational period means:
(A) For Operation TRINITY the period July 16, 1945 through August 6, 1945.
(B) For Operation CROSSROADS the period July 1, 1946 through August 31, 1946.
(C) For Operation SANDSTONE the period April 15, 1948 through May 20, 1948.
(D) For Operation RANGER the period January 27, 1951 through February 6, 1951.
(E) For Operation GREENHOUSE the period April 8, 1951 through June 20, 1951.
(F) For Operation BUSTER-JANGLE the period October 22, 1951 through December 20, 1951.
(G) For Operation TUMBLER-SNAP- PER the period April 1, 1952 through June 20, 1952.
(H) For Operation IVY the period November 1, 1952 through December 31, 1952.
(I) For Operation UPSHOT-KNOT-HOLE the period March 17, 1953 through June 20, 1953.
(J) For Operation CASTLE the period March 1, 1954 through May 31, 1954.
(K) For Operation TEAPOT the period February 18, 1955 through June 10, 1955.
(L) For Operation WIGWAM the period May 14, 1955 through May 15, 1955.
(M) For Operation REDWING the period May 5, 1956 through August 6, 1956.
(N) For Operation PLUMBBOB the period May 28, 1957 through October 22, 1957.
(O) For Operation ARGUS the period August 27, 1958 through September 10, 1958.
(Q) For Operation HARDTACK II the period September 19, 1958 through October 31, 1958.
(R) For Operation DOMINIC I the period April 25, 1962 through December 31, 1962.
(S) For Operation DOMINIC II/PLAY- SHARE the period July 6, 1962 through August 15, 1962.
(vi) The term “occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, by United States forces” means official military
duties within 10 miles of the city limits of either Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, which were required to perform or support military occupation functions such as occupation of territory, control of the population, stabilization of the government, demilitarization of the Japanese military, rehabilitation of the infrastructure or deactivation and conversion of war plants or materials.

(vii) Former prisoners of war who had an opportunity for exposure to ionizing radiation comparable to that of veterans who participated in the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, by United States forces shall include those who, at any time during the period August 6, 1945, through July 1, 1946:

(A) Were interned within 75 miles of the city limits of Hiroshima or within 150 miles of the city limits of Nagasaki, or

(B) Can affirmatively show they worked within the areas set forth in paragraph (d)(3)(vii)(A) of this section although not interned within those areas, or

(C) Served immediately following internment in a capacity which satisfies the definition in paragraph (d)(3)(vi) of this section, or

(D) Were repatriated through the port of Nagasaki.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1110, 1112, 1131)

(e) Disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents. If a veteran was exposed to an herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service, the following diseases shall be service-connected if the requirements of §3.307(a)(6) are met even though there is no record of such disease during service, provided further that the rebuttable presumption provisions of §3.307(d) are also satisfied.

All chronic B-cell leukemias (including, but not limited to, hairy-cell leukemia and chronic lymphocytic leukemia)

Multiple myeloma

Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma

Parkinson’s disease

Acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy

Porphyria cutanea tarda

Prostate cancer

Respiratory cancers (cancer of the lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea)

Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi’s sarcoma, or mesothelioma)

NOTE 1: The term “soft-tissue sarcoma” includes the following:

Adult fibrosarcoma

Dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans

Malignant fibrous histiocytoma

Liposarcoma

Leiomyosarcoma

Epithelioid leiomyosarcoma (malignant leiomyoblastoma)

Rhabdomyosarcoma

Ectomesenchymoma

Angiosarcoma (hemangiosarcoma and lymphangiosarcoma)

Proliferating angioendotheliomatosis

Malignant glomus tumor

Malignant hemangiopericytoma

Synovial sarcoma (malignant synovioma)

Malignant giant cell tumor of tendon sheath

Malignant schwannoma, including malignant schwannoma with rhabdomyoblastic differentiation (malignant Triton tumor), glanular and epithelioid malignant schwannomas

Malignant mesenchymoma

Malignant granular cell tumor

Alveolar soft part sarcoma

Epithelioid sarcoma

Clear cell sarcoma of tendons and aponeuroses

Extraskeletal Ewing’s sarcoma

Congenital and infantile fibrosarcoma

Malignant ganglioneuroma

NOTE 2: For purposes of this section, the term acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy means transient peripheral neuropathy that appears within weeks or months of exposure to an herbicide agent and resolves within two years of the date of onset.

NOTE 3: For purposes of this section, the term ischemic heart disease does not include hypertension or peripheral manifestations of arteriosclerosis such as peripheral vascular disease or stroke, or any other condition that does not qualify within the generally accepted medical definition of ischemic heart disease.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a) and 1112(b))

[41 FR 55873, Dec. 23, 1976]
§ 3.310 Disabilities that are proximately due to, or aggravated by, service-connected disease or injury.

(a) General. Except as provided in §3.300(c), disability which is proximately due to or the result of a service-connected disease or injury shall be service connected. When service connection is thus established for a secondary condition, the secondary condition shall be considered a part of the original condition.

(b) Aggravation of nonservice-connected disabilities. Any increase in severity of a nonservice-connected disease or injury that is proximately due to or the result of a service-connected disease or injury, and not due to the natural progress of the nonservice-connected disease, will be service connected. However, VA will not concede that a nonservice-connected disease or injury was aggravated by a service-connected disease or injury unless the baseline level of severity of the nonservice-connected disease or injury is established by medical evidence created before the onset of aggravation or by the earliest medical evidence created at any time between the onset of aggravation and the receipt of medical evidence establishing the current level of severity of the nonservice-connected disease or injury. The rating activity will determine the baseline and current levels of severity under the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (38 CFR part 4) and determine the extent of aggravation by deducting the baseline level of severity, as well as any increase in severity due to the natural progress of the disease, from the current level.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1101 and 1131)

(c) Cardiovascular disease. Ischemic heart disease or other cardiovascular disease developing in a veteran who has a service-connected amputation of one lower extremity at or above the knee or service-connected amputations of both lower extremities at or above the ankles, shall be held to be the proximate result of the service-connected amputation or amputations.


§ 3.311 Claims based on exposure to ionizing radiation.

(a) Determinations of exposure and dose—(1) Dose assessment. In all claims in which it is established that a radiogenic disease first became manifest after service and was not manifest to a compensable degree within any applicable presumptive period as specified in §3.307 or §3.309, and it is contended the disease is a result of exposure to ionizing radiation in service, an assessment will be made as to the size and nature of the radiation dose or doses. When dose estimates provided pursuant to paragraph (a)(2) of this section are reported as a range of doses to which a veteran may have been exposed, exposure at the highest level of the dose range reported will be presumed.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(2) Request for dose information. Where necessary pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this section, dose information will be requested as follows:

(i) Atmospheric nuclear weapons test participation claims. In claims based upon participation in atmospheric nuclear testing, dose data will be requested from the appropriate office of the Department of Defense.

(ii) Hiroshima and Nagasaki occupation claims. In all claims based on participation in the American occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, prior to July 1, 1946, dose data will be requested from the Department of Defense.

(iii) Other exposure claims. In all other claims involving radiation exposure, a request will be made for any available records concerning the veteran’s exposure to radiation. These records normally include but may not be limited to the veteran’s Record of Occupational Exposure to Ionizing Radiation (DD Form 1141), if maintained, service medical records, and other records which may contain information pertaining to the veteran’s radiation dose.
in service. All such records will be forwarded to the Under Secretary for Health, who will be responsible for preparation of a dose estimate, to the extent feasible, based on available methodologies.

(3) Referral to independent expert. When necessary to reconcile a material difference between an estimate of dose, from a credible source, submitted by or on behalf of a claimant, and dose data derived from official military records, the estimates and supporting documentation shall be referred to an independent expert, selected by the Director of the National Institutes of Health, who shall prepare a separate radiation dose estimate for consideration in adjudication of the claim. For purposes of this paragraph:

(i) The difference between the claimant’s estimate and dose data derived from official military records shall ordinarily be considered material if one estimate is at least double the other estimate.

(ii) A dose estimate shall be considered from a “credible source” if prepared by a person or persons certified by an appropriate professional body in the field of health physics, nuclear medicine or radiology and if based on analysis of the facts and circumstances of the particular claim.

(4) Exposure. In cases described in paragraph (a)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section:

(i) If military records do not establish presence at or absence from a site at which exposure to radiation is claimed to have occurred, the veteran’s presence at the site will be conceded.

(ii) Neither the veteran nor the veteran’s survivors may be required to produce evidence substantiating exposure if the information in the veteran’s service records or other records maintained by the Department of Defense is consistent with the claim that the veteran was present where and when the claimed exposure occurred.

(b) Initial review of claims. (1) When it is determined:

(i) A veteran was exposed to ionizing radiation as a result of participation in the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, from September 1945 until July 1946, or other activities as claimed;

(ii) The veteran subsequently developed a radiogenic disease; and

(iii) Such disease first became manifest within the period specified in paragraph (b)(5) of this section; before its adjudication the claim will be referred to the Under Secretary for Benefits for further consideration in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section. If any of the foregoing 3 requirements has not been met, it shall not be determined that a disease has resulted from exposure to ionizing radiation under such circumstances.

(2) For purposes of this section the term “radiogenic disease” means a disease that may be induced by ionizing radiation and shall include the following:

(i) all forms of leukemia except chronic lymphatic (lymphocytic) leukemia;

(ii) Thyroid cancer;

(iii) Breast cancer;

(iv) Lung cancer;

(v) Bone cancer;

(vi) Liver cancer;

(vii) Skin cancer;

(viii) Esophageal cancer;

(ix) Stomach cancer;

(x) Colon cancer;

(xi) Pancreatic cancer;

(xii) Kidney cancer;

(xiii) Urinary bladder cancer;

(xiv) Salivary gland cancer;

(xv) Multiple myeloma;

(xvi) Posterior subcapsular cataracts;

(xvii) Non-malignant thyroid nodular disease;

(xviii) Ovarian cancer;

(xix) Parathyroid adenoma;

(xx) Tumors of the brain and central nervous system;

(xxi) Cancer of the rectum;

(xxii) Lymphomas other than Hodgkin’s disease;

(xxiii) Prostate cancer; and

(xxiv) Any other cancer.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(3) Public Law 98–542 requires VA to determine whether sound medical and scientific evidence supports establishing a rule identifying polycythemia
§ 3.311

vera as a radiogenic disease. VA has determined that sound medical and scientific evidence does not support including polycythemia vera on the list of known radiogenic diseases in this regulation. Even so, VA will consider a claim based on the assertion that polycythemia vera is a radiogenic disease under the provisions of paragraph (b)(4) of this section. (Authority: Pub. L. 98–542, section 5(b)(2)(A)(i), (iii)).

(4) If a claim is based on a disease other than one of those listed in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, VA shall nevertheless consider the claim under the provisions of this section provided that the claimant has cited or submitted competent scientific or medical evidence that the claimed condition is a radiogenic disease.

(5) For the purposes of paragraph (b)(1) of this section:
(i) Bone cancer must become manifest within 30 years after exposure;
(ii) Leukemia may become manifest at any time after exposure;
(iii) Posterior subcapsular cataracts must become manifest 6 months or more after exposure; and
(iv) Other diseases specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section must become manifest 5 years or more after exposure.


(c) Review by Under Secretary for Benefits. (1) When a claim is forwarded for review pursuant to paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the Under Secretary for Benefits shall consider the claim with reference to the factors specified in paragraph (e) of this section and may request an advisory medical opinion from the Under Secretary for Health.

(i) If after such consideration the Under Secretary for Benefits is convinced sound scientific and medical evidence supports the conclusion it is at least as likely as not the veteran’s disease resulted from radiation exposure in service, the Under Secretary for Benefits shall so inform the regional office of jurisdiction in writing, setting forth the rationale for this conclusion.

(ii) If the Under Secretary for Benefits determines there is no reasonable possibility that the veteran’s disease resulted from radiation exposure in service, the Under Secretary for Benefits shall so inform the regional office of jurisdiction in writing, setting forth the rationale for this conclusion.

(2) If the Under Secretary for Benefits, after considering any opinion of the Under Secretary for Health, is unable to conclude whether it is at least as likely as not, or that there is no reasonable possibility, the veteran’s disease resulted from radiation exposure in service, the Under Secretary for Benefits shall refer the matter to an outside consultant in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (c)(1) of this section, “sound scientific evidence” means observations, findings, or conclusions which are statistically and epidemiologically valid, are statistically significant, are capable of replication, and withstand peer review, and “sound medical evidence” means observations, findings, or conclusions which are consistent with current medical knowledge and are so reasonable and logical as to serve as the basis of management of a medical condition.

(d) Referral to outside consultants. (1) Referrals pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section shall be to consultants selected by the Under Secretary for Health from outside VA, upon the recommendation of the Director of the National Cancer Institute. The consultant will be asked to evaluate the claim and provide an opinion as to the likelihood the disease is a result of exposure as claimed.

(2) The request for opinion shall be in writing and shall include a description of:
(i) The disease, including the specific cell type and stage, if known, and when the disease first became manifest;
(ii) The circumstances, including date, of the veteran’s exposure;
(iii) The veteran’s age, gender, and pertinent family history;
(iv) The veteran’s history of exposure to known carcinogens, occupationally or otherwise;
(v) Evidence of any other effects radiation exposure may have had on the veteran; and
§ 3.312 Cause of death.

(a) General. The death of a veteran will be considered as having been due to a service-connected disability when the evidence establishes that such disability was either the principal or a contributory cause of death. The issue involved will be determined by exercise of sound judgment, without recourse to speculation, after a careful analysis has been made of all the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of the veteran, including, particularly, autopsy reports.

(b) Principal cause of death. The service-connected disability will be considered as the principal (primary) cause of death when such disability, singly or jointly with some other condition, was the immediate or underlying cause of death.

(c) Contributory cause of death. (1) Contributory cause of death is inherently one not related to the principal cause. In determining whether the service-connected disability contributed to death, it must be shown that it contributed substantially or materially; that it combined to cause death; that it aided or lent assistance to the production of death. It is not sufficient to show that it casually shared in producing death, but rather it must be

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shown that there was a causal connection.

(2) Generally, minor service-connected disabilities, particularly those of a static nature or not materially affecting a vital organ, would not be held to have contributed to death primarily due to unrelated disability. In the same category there would be included service-connected disease or injuries of any evaluation (even though evaluated as 100 percent disabling) but of a quiescent or static nature involving muscular or skeletal functions and not materially affecting other vital body functions.

(3) Service-connected diseases or injuries involving active processes affecting vital organs should receive careful consideration as a contributory cause of death, the primary cause being unrelated, from the viewpoint of whether there were resulting debilitating effects and general impairment of health to an extent that would render the person materially less capable of resisting the effects of other disease or injury primarily causing death. Where the service-connected condition affects vital organs as distinguished from muscular or skeletal functions and is evaluated as 100 percent disabling, debilitation may be assumed.

(4) There are primary causes of death which by their very nature are so overwhelming that eventual death can be anticipated irrespective of coexisting conditions, but, even in such cases, there is for consideration whether there may be a reasonable basis for holding that a service-connected condition was of such severity as to have a material influence in accelerating death. In this situation, however, it would not generally be reasonable to hold that a service-connected condition accelerated death unless such condition affected a vital organ and was of itself of a progressive or debilitating nature.

CROSS REFERENCES: Reasonable doubt. See §3.102. Service connection for mental unsoundness in suicide. See §3.302.


§3.313 Claims based on service in Vietnam.

(a) Service in Vietnam. Service in Vietnam includes service in the waters off-shore, or service in other locations if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in Vietnam.

(b) Service connection based on service in Vietnam. Service in Vietnam during the Vietnam Era together with the development of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma manifested subsequent to such service is sufficient to establish service connection for that disease.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[55 FR 43124, Oct. 26, 1990]

§3.314 Basic pension determinations.

(a) Prior to the Mexican border period. While pensions are granted based on certain service prior to the Mexican border period, the only rating factors in claims therefor are:

(1) Claims based on service of less than 90 days in the Spanish-American War require a rating determination as to whether the veteran was discharged or released from service for a service-connected disability or had at the time of separation from service a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have warranted a discharge for disability. Eligibility in such cases requires a finding that the disability was incurred in or aggravated by service in line of duty without benefit of presumptive provisions of law or Department of Veterans Affairs regulations.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1512)

(2) Veterans entitled to pension on the basis of service in the Spanish-American War may be entitled to an increased rate of pension if rated as being in need of regular aid and attendance. Veterans who have elected pension under Pub. L. 86–211 (73 Stat. 432) who are not rated as being in need of regular aid and attendance may be entitled to increased pension based on 100 percent permanent disability together
with independent disability of 60 percent or more or by reason of being permanently housebound as provided in §3.351 (d).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502 (b), (c), 512)

(b) Mexican border period and later war periods. Non-service-connected disability and death pension may be paid based on service in the Mexican border period, World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict and the Vietnam era. Rating determinations in such claims will be required in the following situations:

(1) Claims based on service of less than 90 days may require a determination as to whether the veteran was discharged or released from service for a service-connected disability or had at the time of separation from service a service-connected disability, shown by official service records, which in medical judgment would have warranted a discharge for disability. Eligibility in such cases requires a finding that the disability was incurred in or aggravated by service in line of duty without benefit of presumptive provisions of law or Department of Veterans Affairs regulations (38 U.S.C. 1521(g)(2)) unless, in the case of death pension, the veteran was, at the time of death, receiving (or entitled to receive) compensation or retirement pay based upon a wartime service-connected disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(B))

(2) Determinations of permanent total disability for pension purposes will be based on non-service-connected disability or combined non-service-connected and service-connected disabilities not the result of willful misconduct. However, for pension under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432), permanent and total disability will be presumed where the veteran has attained age 65 or effective January 1, 1977, where the veteran became unemployable after age 65.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(a), 1523(a))

(3) Veterans entitled to nonservice-connected disability pension may be entitled to an increased rate of pension if rated as being in need of regular aid and attendance. Veterans entitled to protected pension or pension under Pub. L. 86-211 (73 Stat. 432) who are not rated as being in need of regular aid and attendance may be entitled to increased pension based on a 100 percent permanent disability together with independent disability of 60 percent or more or by reason of being permanently housebound as provided in §3.351 (d) or (e).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502 (b), (c), 1521)

§3.315 Basic eligibility determinations; dependents, loans, education.

(a) Child over 18 years. A child of a veteran may be considered a “child” after age 18 for purposes of benefits under title 38, United States Code (except ch. 19 and sec. 8502(b) of ch. 85), if found by a rating determination to have become, prior to age 18, permanently incapable of self-support.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4)(B))

(b) Loans. If a veteran of World War II the Korean conflict or the Vietnam era had less than 90 days of service, or if a veteran who served after July 25, 1947, and prior to June 27, 1950, or after January 31, 1955, and prior to August 5, 1964, or after May 7, 1975, has less than 181 days of service on active duty as defined in §§36.4301 and 36.4501, eligibility of the veteran for a loan under 38 U.S.C. ch. 37 requires a determination that the veteran was discharged or released because of a service-connected disability or that the official service department records show that he or she had at the time of separation from service a service-connected disability which in medical judgment would have warranted a discharge for disability. These determinations are subject to the presumption of incurring under §3.304(b). Determinations based on World War II, Korean conflict and Vietnam era service are also subject to the presumption of aggravation under §3.306(b) while determination based on service on or after February 1, 1955, and before August 5, 1964, or after May 7, 1975, are subject to the presumption of aggravation under §3.306 (a) and (c).
The provisions of this paragraph are also applicable, regardless of length of service, in determining eligibility to the maximum period of entitlement based on discharge or release for a service-connected disability. (See also the minimum service requirements of §3.12a.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3702, 3707)

(c) Veterans’ educational assistance. (1) A determination is required as to whether a veteran was discharged or released from active duty service because of a service-connected disability (or whether the official service department records show that the veteran had at time of separation from service a service-connected disability which in medical judgment would have warranted discharge for disability) whenever any of the following circumstances exist:

(i) The veteran applies for benefits under 38 U.S.C. chapter 32, the minimum active duty service requirements of 38 U.S.C. 5303A apply to him or her, and the veteran would be eligible for such benefits only if—

(A) He or she was discharged or released from active duty for a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty, or

(B) He or she has a disability that VA has determined to be compensable under 38 U.S.C. chapter 11; or

(ii) The veteran applies for benefits under 38 U.S.C. chapter 30 and—

(A) The evidence of record does not clearly show either that the veteran was discharged or released from active duty for disability or that the veteran’s discharge or release from active duty was unrelated to disability, and

(B) The veteran is eligible for basic educational assistance except for the minimum length of active duty service requirements of §21.7042(a) or §21.7044(a) of this chapter.

(2) A determination is required as to whether a veteran was discharged or released from service in the Selected Reserve for a service-connected disability or for a medical condition which preexisted the veteran’s having become a member of the Selected Reserve when—

(i) The reservist is otherwise entitled to educational assistance under 10 U.S.C. chapter 1606, and

(ii) He or she applies for an extension of his or her eligibility period.

(4) The determinations required by paragraphs (c)(1) through (c)(3) of this section are subject to the presumptions of incurrence under §3.304(b) and aggravation under §3.306(a) and (c) of this part, based on service rendered after May 7, 1975.


§ 3.316 Claims based on chronic effects of exposure to mustard gas and Lewisite.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, exposure to the specified vesicant agents during active military service under the circumstances described below together with the subsequent development of
any of the indicated conditions is sufficient to establish service connection for that condition:

(1) Full-body exposure to nitrogen or sulfur mustard during active military service together with the subsequent development of chronic conjunctivitis, keratitis, corneal opacities, scar formation, or the following cancers: Nasopharyngeal; laryngeal; lung (except mesothelioma); or squamous cell carcinoma of the skin.

(2) Full-body exposure to nitrogen or sulfur mustard or Lewisite during active military service together with the subsequent development of a chronic form of laryngitis, bronchitis, emphysema, asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

(3) Full-body exposure to nitrogen mustard during active military service together with the subsequent development of acute nonlymphocytic leukemia.

(b) Service connection will not be established under this section if the claimed condition is due to the veteran’s own willful misconduct (See §3.301(c)) or there is affirmative evidence that establishes a nonservice-related condition or event as the cause of the claimed condition (See §3.303).

(59 FR 42499, Aug. 18, 1994)

§ 3.317 Compensation for certain disabilities due to undiagnosed illnesses.

(a) Compensation for disability due to undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illnesses.

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(7) of this section, VA will pay compensation in accordance with chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, to a Persian Gulf veteran who exhibits objective indications of a qualifying chronic disability, provided that such disability:

(i) Became manifest either during active military, naval, or air service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations, or to a degree of 10 percent or more not later than December 31, 2011; and

(ii) By history, physical examination, and laboratory tests cannot be attributed to any known clinical diagnosis.

(2)(i) For purposes of this section, a qualifying chronic disability means a chronic disability resulting from any of the following (or any combination of the following):

(A) An undiagnosed illness;

(B) A medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illness that is defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms, such as:

(1) Chronic fatigue syndrome;

(2) Fibromyalgia;

(3) Irritable bowel syndrome.

(ii) For purposes of this section, the term medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illness means a diagnosed illness without conclusive pathophysiology or etiology, that is characterized by overlapping symptoms and signs and has features such as fatigue, pain, disability out of proportion to physical findings, and inconsistent demonstration of laboratory abnormalities. Chronic multisymptom illnesses of partially understood etiology and pathophysiology, such as diabetes and multiple sclerosis, will not be considered medically unexplained.

(3) For purposes of this section, ”objective indications of chronic disability” include both “signs,” in the medical sense of objective evidence perceptible to an examining physician, and other, non-medical indicators that are capable of independent verification.

(4) For purposes of this section, disabilities that have existed for 6 months or more and disabilities that exhibit intermittent episodes of improvement and worsening over a 6-month period will be considered chronic. The 6-month period of chronicity will be measured from the earliest date on which the pertinent evidence establishes that the signs or symptoms of the disability first became manifest.

(5) A qualifying chronic disability referred to in this section shall be rated using evaluation criteria from part 4 of this chapter for a disease or injury in which the functions affected, anatomical localization, or symptomatology are similar.

(6) A qualifying chronic disability referred to in this section shall be considered service connected for purposes of all laws of the United States.
§ 3.317  Compensation shall not be paid under this section for a chronic disability:  
(i) If there is affirmative evidence that the disability was not incurred during active military, naval, or air service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations; or  
(ii) If there is affirmative evidence that the disability was caused by a supervening condition or event that occurred between the veteran’s most recent departure from active duty in the Southwest Asia theater of operations and the onset of the disability; or  
(iii) If there is affirmative evidence that the disability is the result of the veteran’s own willful misconduct or the abuse of alcohol or drugs.  
(b) Signs or symptoms of undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illnesses. For the purposes of paragraph (a)(1) of this section, signs or symptoms which may be manifestations of undiagnosed illness or medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illness include, but are not limited to:  
(1) Fatigue.  
(2) Signs or symptoms involving skin.  
(3) Headache.  
(4) Muscle pain.  
(5) Joint pain.  
(6) Neurological signs or symptoms.  
(7) Neuropsychological signs or symptoms.  
(8) Signs or symptoms involving the respiratory system (upper or lower).  
(9) Sleep disturbances.  
(10) Gastrointestinal signs or symptoms.  
(11) Cardiovascular signs or symptoms.  
(12) Abnormal weight loss.  
(13) Menstrual disorders.  
(c) Presumptive service connection for infectious diseases. (1) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(4) of this section, a disease listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section will be service connected if it becomes manifest in a veteran with a qualifying period of service, provided the provisions of paragraph (c)(3) of this section are also satisfied.  
(2) The diseases referred to in paragraph (c)(1) of this section are the following:  
(i) Brucellosis.  
(ii) Campylobacter jejuni.  
(iii) Coxiella burnetii (Q fever).  
(iv) Malaria.  
(v) Mycobacterium tuberculosis.  
(vi) Nontyphoid Salmonella.  
(vii) Shigella.  
(viii) Visceral leishmaniasis.  
(ix) West Nile virus.  
(3) The diseases listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section will be considered to have been incurred in or aggravated by service under the circumstances outlined in paragraphs (c)(3)(i) and (ii) of this section even though there is no evidence of such disease during the period of service.  
(i) With three exceptions, the disease must have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year from the date of separation from a qualifying period of service as specified in paragraph (c)(3)(ii) of this section. Malaria must have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year from the date of separation from a qualifying period of service or at a time when standard or accepted treatises indicate that the incubation period commenced during a qualifying period of service. There is no time limit for visceral leishmaniasis or tuberculosis to have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more.  
(ii) For purposes of this paragraph (c), the term qualifying period of service means a period of service meeting the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section or a period of active military, naval, or air service on or after September 19, 2001, in Afghanistan.  
(4) A disease listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section shall not be presumed service connected:  
(i) If there is affirmative evidence that the disease was not incurred during a qualifying period of service; or  
(ii) If there is affirmative evidence that the disease was caused by a supervening condition or event that occurred between the veteran’s most recent departure from a qualifying period of service and the onset of the disease; or  
(iii) If there is affirmative evidence that the disease is the result of the veteran’s own willful misconduct or the abuse of alcohol or drugs.  
(d) Long-term health effects potentially associated with infectious diseases. (1) A
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The report of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences has identified the following long-term health effects that potentially are associated with the infectious diseases listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section. These health effects and diseases are listed alphabetically and are not categorized by the level of association stated in the National Academy of Sciences report (see Table to § 3.317). If a veteran who has or had an infectious disease identified in column A also has a condition identified in column B as potentially related to that infectious disease, VA must determine, based on the evidence in each case, whether the column B condition was caused by the infectious disease for purposes of paying disability compensation. This does not preclude a finding that other manifestations of disability or secondary conditions were caused by an infectious disease.

(2) If a veteran presumed service connected for one of the diseases listed in paragraph (c)(2) of this section is diagnosed with one of the diseases listed in column “B” in the table within the time period specified for the disease in the same table, if a time period is specified or, otherwise, at any time, VA will request a medical opinion as to whether it is at least as likely as not that the condition was caused by the veteran having had the associated disease in column “A” in that same table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brucellosis</strong></td>
<td>• Arthritis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cardiovascular, nervous, and respiratory system infections.</td>
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<td>• Chronic meningitis and meningocerebralitis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Deafness.</td>
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<td>• Demyelinating meningoencephalitis.</td>
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<td>• Epileptiform seizures.</td>
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<td>• Fatigue, inattention, amnesia, and depression.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Guillain-Barré syndrome.</td>
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<td>• Hepatic abnormalities, including granulomatous hepatitis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Multifocal chorioretinitis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Myelitis-raduloneuropathy.</td>
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<td>• Nummular keratitis.</td>
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<td>• Papilledema.</td>
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<td>• Optic neuritis.</td>
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<td>• Orchitis.</td>
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<td>• Soft tissue infection.</td>
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<td>• Spondylitis.</td>
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<td>• Uveitis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campylobacter jejuni</td>
<td>• Guillain-Barré syndrome if manifest within 2 months of the infection.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reactive Arthritis if manifest within 3 months of the infection.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Uveitis if manifest within 1 month of the infection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coxiella burnetii (Q fever)</td>
<td>• Chronic hepatitis.</td>
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<td>• Endocarditis.</td>
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<td>• Osteomyelitis.</td>
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<td>• Post-Q-fever chronic fatigue syndrome.</td>
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<td>• Vascular infection.</td>
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<td>• Demyelinating polyneuropathy.</td>
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<td>• Guillain-Barré syndrome.</td>
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<td>• Hematologic manifestations (particularly anemia after falciparum malaria and splenic rupture after vivax malaria).</td>
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<td>• Immune-complex glomerulonephritis.</td>
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<td>• Neurologic disease, neuropsychiatric disease, or both.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ophthalmologic manifestations, particularly retinal hemorrhage and scarring.</td>
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<td>• Plasmodium falciparum.</td>
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<td>• Plasmodium malariæ.</td>
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<td>• Plasmodium ovale.</td>
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<td>• Renal disease, especially nephrotic syndrome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaria</td>
<td>• Active tuberculosis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Long-term adverse health outcomes due to irreversible tissue damage from severe forms of pulmonary and extrapulmonary tuberculosis and active tuberculosis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</td>
<td>• Reactive Arthritis if manifest within 3 months of the infection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nontyphoid Salmonella</td>
<td>• Hemolytic-uremic syndrome if manifest within 1 month of the infection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shigellosis</td>
<td>• Reactive Arthritis if manifest within 3 months of the infection.</td>
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TABLE TO § 3.317—LONG-TERM HEALTH EFFECTS POTENTIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES
§ 3.318 Presumptive service connection for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, the development of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis manifested at any time after discharge or release from active military, naval, or air service is sufficient to establish service connection for that disease.

(b) Service connection will not be established under this section:

(1) If there is affirmative evidence that amyotrophic lateral sclerosis was not incurred during or aggravated by active military, naval, or air service;

(2) If there is affirmative evidence that amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is due to the veteran’s own willful misconduct; or

(3) If the veteran did not have active, continuous service of 90 days or more.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a)(1))

[73 FR 54693, Sept. 23, 2008]

§§ 3.319–3.320 [Reserved]

CROSS REFERENCES: 1

§ 3.321 General rating considerations.

(a) Use of rating schedule. The 1945 Schedule for Rating Disabilities will be used for evaluating the degree of disabilities in claims for disability compensation, disability and death pension, and in eligibility determinations. The provisions contained in the rating schedule will represent as far as can practicably be determined, the average impairment in earning capacity in civil occupations resulting from disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

(b) Exceptional cases—(1) Compensation. Ratings shall be based as far as practicable, upon the average impairments of earning capacity with the additional proviso that the Secretary shall from time to time readjust this schedule of ratings in accordance with experience. To accord justice, therefore, to the exceptional case where the schedular evaluations are found to be inadequate, the Under Secretary for Benefits or the Director, Compensation and Pension Service, upon field station submission, is authorized to approve on the basis of the criteria set forth in this paragraph an extra-schedular evaluation commensurate with the average earning capacity impairment due exclusively to the service-connected disability or disabilities. The governing

norm in these exceptional cases is: A finding that the case presents such an exceptional or unusual disability picture with such related factors as marked interference with employment or frequent periods of hospitalization as to render impractical the application of the regular schedular standards.

(2) Pension. Where the evidence of record establishes that an applicant for pension who is basically eligible fails to meet the disability requirements based on the percentage standards of the rating schedule but is found to be unemployable by reason of his or her disability(ies), age, occupational background and other related factors, the following are authorized to approve on an extra-schedular basis a permanent and total disability rating for pension purposes: the Veterans Service Center Manager or the Pension Management Center Manager; or where regular schedular standards are met as of the date of the rating decision, the rating board.

(3) Effective dates. The effective date of these extra-schedular evaluations granting or increasing benefits will be in accordance with §3.400(b)(1) and (2) as to original and reopened claims and in accordance with §3.400(o) in claims for increased benefits.

(c) Advisory opinion. Cases in which application of the schedule is not understood or the propriety of an extra-schedular rating is questionable may be submitted to Central Office for advisory opinion.

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates; disability benefits. See §3.400(b). Effective dates; increases. See §3.400(o).

§ 3.323 Combined ratings.

(a) Compensation—(1) Same type of service. When there are two or more service-connected compensable disabilities a combined evaluation will be made following the tables and rules prescribed in the 1945 Schedule for Rating Disabilities.

(b) Pension—(1) Nonservice-connected disabilities. Evaluation of two or more nonservice-connected disabilities not the result of the veteran’s own willful misconduct will be combined as provided in paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(2) Service-connected and nonservice-connected disabilities. Evaluations for service-connected disabilities may be...
§ 3.324 Multiple noncompensable service-connected disabilities.

Whenever a veteran is suffering from two or more separate permanent service-connected disabilities of such character as clearly to interfere with normal employability, even though none of the disabilities may be of compensable degree under the 1945 Schedule for Rating Disabilities the rating agency is authorized to apply a 10-percent rating, but not in combination with any other rating.

[40 FR 56435, Dec. 3, 1975]

§ 3.325 [Reserved]

§ 3.326 Examinations.

For purposes of this section, the term examination includes periods of hospital observation when required by VA.

(a) Where there is a claim for disability compensation or pension but medical evidence accompanying the claim is not adequate for rating purposes, a Department of Veterans Affairs examination will be authorized. This paragraph applies to original and reopened claims as well as claims for increase submitted by a veteran, surviving spouse, parent, or child. Individuals for whom an examination has been scheduled are required to report for the examination.

(b) Provided that it is otherwise adequate for rating purposes, any hospital report, or any examination report, from any government or private institution may be accepted for rating a claim without further examination. However, monetary benefits to a former prisoner of war will not be denied unless the claimant has been offered a complete physical examination conducted at a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or outpatient clinic.

(c) Provided that it is otherwise adequate for rating purposes, a statement from a private physician may be accepted for rating a claim without further examination.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5107(a))

Cross Reference: Failure to report for VA examination. See § 3.655.


§ 3.327 Reexaminations.

(a) General. Reexaminations, including periods of hospital observation, will be requested whenever VA determines there is a need to verify either the continued existence or the current severity of a disability. Generally, reexaminations will be required if it is likely that a disability has improved, or if evidence indicates there has been a material change in a disability or that the current rating may be incorrect. Individuals for whom reexaminations have been authorized and scheduled are required to report for such reexaminations. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section provide general guidelines for requesting reexaminations, but shall not be construed as limiting VA’s authority to request reexaminations, or periods of hospital observation, at any time in order to ensure that a disability is accurately rated.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(b) Compensation cases—(1) Scheduling reexaminations. Assignment of a prestabilization rating requires reexamination within the second 6 months period following separation from service. Following initial Department of Veterans Affairs examination, or any scheduled future or other examination, reexamination, if in order, will be scheduled within not less than 2 years nor more than 5 years within the judgment of the rating board, unless another time period is elsewhere specified.

(2) No periodic future examinations will be requested. In service-connected cases, no periodic reexamination will be scheduled: (i) When the disability is established as static;

(ii) When the findings and symptoms are shown by examinations scheduled in paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section or
other examinations and hospital reports to have persisted without material improvement for a period of 5 years or more;

(iii) Where the disability from disease is permanent in character and of such nature that there is no likelihood of improvement;

(iv) In cases of veterans over 55 years of age, except under unusual circumstances;

(v) When the rating is a prescribed scheduled minimum rating; or

(vi) Where a combined disability evaluation would not be affected if the future examination should result in reduced evaluation for one or more conditions.

(c) Pension cases. In nonservice-connected cases in which the permanent total disability has been confirmed by reexamination or by the history of the case, or with obviously static disabilities, further reexaminations will not generally be requested. In other cases further examination will not be requested routinely and will be accomplished only if considered necessary based upon the particular facts of the individual case. In the cases of veterans over 55 years of age, reexamination will be requested only under unusual circumstances.

CROSS REFERENCE: Failure to report for VA examination. See § 3.655.


§ 3.328 Independent medical opinions.

(a) General. When warranted by the medical complexity or controversy involved in a pending claim, an advisory medical opinion may be obtained from one or more medical experts who are not employees of VA. Opinions shall be obtained from recognized medical schools, universities, clinics or medical institutions with which arrangements for such opinions have been made, and an appropriate official of the institution shall select the individual expert(s) to render an opinion.

(b) Requests. A request for an independent medical opinion in conjunction with a claim pending at the regional office level may be initiated by the office having jurisdiction over the claim, by the claimant, or by his or her duly appointed representative. The request must be submitted in writing and must set forth in detail the reasons why the opinion is necessary. All such requests shall be submitted through the Compensation and Pension Service that the issue under consideration poses a medical problem of such obscurity or complexity, or has generated such controversy in the medical community at large, as to justify solicitation of an independent medical opinion. When approval has been granted, the Compensation and Pension Service shall obtain the opinion. A determination that an independent medical opinion is not warranted may be contested only as part of an appeal on the merits of the decision rendered on the primary issue by the agency of original jurisdiction.

(d) Notification. The Compensation and Pension Service shall notify the claimant when the request for an independent medical opinion has been approved with regard to his or her claim and shall furnish the claimant with a copy of the opinion when it is received. If, in the judgment of the Secretary, disclosure of the independent medical opinion would be harmful to the physical or mental health of the claimant, disclosure shall be subject to the special procedures set forth in § 1.577 of this chapter.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5109, 5701(b)(1); 5 U.S.C. 552a(f)(3))

[55 FR 18602, May 3, 1990]

§ 3.329 [Reserved]

§ 3.330 Resumption of rating when veteran subsequently reports for Department of Veterans Affairs examination.

Such ratings will be governed by the provisions of § 3.158, “Abandoned Claims,” and § 3.655, “Failure to report
§§ 3.331–3.339

for Department of Veterans Affairs examination.” The period following the termination or reduction for which benefits are precluded by the cited regulations will be stated in the rating. If the evidence is insufficient to evaluate disability during any period following the termination or reduction for which payments are not otherwise precluded, the rating will contain a notation reading “Evidence insufficient to evaluate from ________ to ________.”

CROSS REFERENCE: Failure to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination. See §3.655.

[29 FR 3623, Mar. 21, 1964]

§§ 3.331–3.339 [Reserved]

§ 3.340 Total and permanent total ratings and unemployability.

(a) Total disability ratings—(1) General. Total disability will be considered to exist when there is present any impairment of mind or body which is sufficient to render it impossible for the average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation. Total disability may or may not be permanent. Total ratings will not be assigned, generally, for temporary exacerbations or acute infectious diseases except where specifically prescribed by the schedule.

(2) Schedule for rating disabilities. Total ratings are authorized for any disability or combination of disabilities for which the Schedule for Rating Disabilities prescribes a 100 percent evaluation or, with less disability, where the requirements of paragraph 16, page 5 of the rating schedule are present or where, in pension cases, the requirements of paragraph 17, page 5 of the schedule are met.

(3) Ratings of total disability on history. In the case of disabilities which have undergone some recent improvement, a rating of total disability may be made, provided:

(i) That the disability must in the past have been of sufficient severity to warrant a total disability rating;

(ii) That it must have required extended, continuous, or intermittent hospitalization, or have produced total industrial incapacity for at least 1 year, or be subject to recurring, severe, frequent, or prolonged exacerbations; and

(iii) That it must be the opinion of the rating agency that despite the recent improvement of the physical condition, the veteran will be unable to effect an adjustment into a substantially gainful occupation. Due consideration will be given to the frequency and duration of totally incapacitating exacerbations since incurrence of the original disease or injury, and to periods of hospitalization for treatment in determining whether the average person could have reestablished himself or herself in a substantially gainful occupation.

(b) Permanent total disability. Permanence of total disability will be taken to exist when such impairment is reasonably certain to continue throughout the life of the disabled person. The permanent loss or loss of use of both hands, or of both feet, or of one hand and one foot, or of the sight of both eyes, or becoming permanently helpless or bedridden constitutes permanent total disability. Diseases and injuries of long standing which are actually totally incapacitating will be regarded as permanently and totally disabling when the probability of permanent improvement under treatment is remote. Permanent total disability ratings may not be granted as a result of any incapacity from acute infectious disease, accident, or injury, unless there is present one of the recognized combinations or permanent loss of use of extremities or sight, or the person is in the strict sense permanently helpless or bedridden, or when it is reasonably certain that a subsidence of the acute or temporary symptoms will be followed by irreducible totality of disability by way of residuals. The age of the disabled person may be considered in determining permanence.

(c) Insurance ratings. A rating of permanent and total disability for insurance purposes will have no effect on ratings for compensation or pension.


§ 3.341 Total disability ratings for compensation purposes.

(a) General. Subject to the limitation in paragraph (b) of this section, total disability compensation ratings may be assigned under the provisions of §3.340.
§ 3.342 Permanent and total disability ratings for pension purposes.

(a) General. Permanent total disability ratings for pension purposes are authorized for disabling conditions not the result of the veteran’s own willful misconduct whether or not they are service connected.

(b) Criteria. In addition to the criteria for determining total disability and permanency of total disability contained in §3.340, the following special considerations apply in pension cases:

1. Permanent total disability pension ratings will be authorized for congenital, developmental, hereditary or familial conditions, provided the other requirements for entitlement are met.

2. The permanence of total disability will be established as of the earliest date consistent with the evidence in the case. Active pulmonary tuberculosis not otherwise established as permanently and totally disabling will be presumed so after 6 months’ hospitalization without improvement. The same principle may be applied with other types of disabilities requiring hospitalization for indefinite periods. The need for hospitalization for periods shorter or longer than 6 months may be a proper basis for determining permanence. Where, in application of this principle, it is necessary to employ a waiting period to determine permanence of totality of disability and a report received at the end of such period shows the veteran’s condition is unimproved, permanence may be established as of the date of entrance into the hospital. Similarly, when active pulmonary tuberculosis is improved after 6 months’ hospitalization but still diagnosed as active after 12 months’ hospitalization permanence will also be established as of the date of entrance into the hospital. In other cases the rating will be effective the date the evidence establishes permanence.

3. Special consideration must be given the question of permanence in the case of veterans under 40 years of age. For such veterans, permanence of total disability requires a finding that the end result of treatment and adjustment to residual handicaps (rehabilitation) will be permanent disability of the required degree precluding more than marginal employment. Severe diseases and injuries, including multiple fractures or the amputation of a single extremity, should not be taken to establish permanent and total disability until it is shown that the veteran after treatment and convalescence, has been unable to secure or follow employment because of the disability and through no fault of the veteran.

4. The following shall not be considered as evidence of employability:
§ 3.343 Continuance of total disability ratings.

(a) General. Total disability ratings, when warranted by the severity of the condition and not granted purely because of hospital, surgical, or home treatment, or individual unemployability will not be reduced, in the absence of clear error, without examination showing material improvement in physical or mental condition. Examination reports showing material improvement must be evaluated in conjunction with all the facts of record, and consideration must be given particularly to whether the veteran attained improvement under the ordinary conditions of life, i.e., while working or actively seeking work or whether the symptoms have been brought under control by prolonged rest, or generally, by following a regimen which precludes work, and, if the latter, reduction from total disability ratings will not be considered pending reexamination after a period of employment (3 to 6 months).

(b) Tuberculosis; compensation. In service-connected cases, evaluations for active or inactive tuberculosis will be governed by the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (part 4 of this chapter). Where in the opinion of the rating board the veteran at the expiration of the period during which a total rating is provided will not be able to maintain inactivity of the disease process under the ordinary conditions of life, the case will be submitted under § 3.321.

(c) Individual unemployability. (1) In reducing a rating of 100 percent service-connected disability based on individual unemployability, the provisions of § 3.105(e) are for application but caution must be exercised in such a determination that actual employability is established by clear and convincing evidence. When in such a case the veteran is undergoing vocational rehabilitation, education or training, the rating will not be reduced by reason thereof unless there is received evidence of marked improvement or recovery in physical or mental conditions or of employment progress, income earned, and prospects of economic rehabilitation, which demonstrates affirmatively the veteran’s capacity to pursue the vocation or occupation for which the training is intended to qualify him or her,
Department of Veterans Affairs § 3.344

§ 3.344 Stabilization of disability evaluations.

(a) Examination reports indicating improvement. Rating agencies will handle cases affected by change of medical findings or diagnosis, so as to produce the greatest degree of stability of disability evaluations consistent with the laws and Department of Veterans Affairs regulations governing disability compensation and pension. It is essential that the entire record of examinations and the medical-industrial history be reviewed to ascertain whether the recent examination is full and complete, including all special examinations indicated as a result of general examination and the entire case history. This applies to treatment of intercurrent diseases and exacerbations, including hospital reports, bedside examinations, examinations by designated physicians, and examinations in the absence of, or without taking full advantage of, laboratory facilities and the cooperation of specialists in related lines. Examinations less full and complete than those on which payments were authorized or continued will not be used as a basis of reduction. Ratings on account of diseases subject to temporary or episodic improvement, e.g., manic depressive or other psychotic reaction, epilepsy, psychoneurotic reaction, arteriosclerotic heart disease, bronchial asthma, gastric or duodenal ulcer, many skin diseases, etc., will not be reduced on any one examination, except in those instances where all the evidence of record clearly warrants the conclusion that sustained improvement has been demonstrated. Ratings on account of diseases which become comparatively symptom free (findings absent) after prolonged rest, e.g., residuals of phlebitis, arteriosclerotic heart disease, etc., will not be reduced on examinations reflecting the results of bed rest. Moreover, though material improvement in the physical or mental condition is clearly reflected the rating agency will consider whether the evidence makes it reasonably certain that the improvement will be maintained under the ordinary conditions of life. When syphilis of the central nervous system or alcoholic deterioration is diagnosed following a long prior history of psychosis, psychoneurosis, epilepsy, or the like, it is rarely possible to exclude persistence, in masked form, of the preceding innocently acquired manifestations. Rating boards encountering a change of diagnosis will exercise caution in the determination as to whether a change in diagnosis represents no more than a progression of an earlier diagnosis, an error in prior diagnosis or possibly a disease entity independent of the service-connected disability. When the new diagnosis reflects mental deficiency or personality disorder only, the possibility of only temporary remission of a superimposed psychiatric disease will be borne in mind.

(b) Doubtful cases. If doubt remains, after according due consideration to all the evidence developed by the several items discussed in paragraph (a) of this
section, the rating agency will continue the rating in effect, citing the former diagnosis with the new diagnosis in parentheses, and following the appropriate code there will be added the reference “Rating continued pending reexamination [previous date] months from this date, §3.344.” The rating agency will determine on the basis of the facts in each individual case whether 18, 24 or 30 months will be allowed to elapse before the reexamination will be made.

(c) Disabilities which are likely to improve. The provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section apply to ratings which have continued for long periods at the same level (5 years or more). They do not apply to disabilities which have not become stabilized and are likely to improve. Reexaminations disclosing improvement, physical or mental, in these disabilities will warrant reduction in rating.


RATINGS FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

§ 3.350 Special monthly compensation ratings.

The rates of special monthly compensation stated in this section are those provided under 38 U.S.C. 1114. Special monthly compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) is payable for each anatomical loss or loss of use of one hand, one foot, both buttocks, one or more creative organs, blindness of one eye having only light perception, deafness of both ears, having absence of air and bone conduction, complete organic aphonias with constant inability to communicate by speech or, in the case of a woman veteran, loss of 25% or more of tissue from a single breast or both breasts in combination (including loss by mastectomy or partial mastectomy), or following receipt of radiation treatment of breast tissue. This special compensation is payable in addition to the basic rate of compensation otherwise payable on the basis of degree of disability, provided that the combined rate of compensation does not exceed the monthly rate set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) when authorized in conjunction with any of the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1114(a) through (j) or (s). When there is entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) (n) or an intermediate rate under (p) such additional allowance is payable for each such anatomical loss or loss of use existing in addition to the requirements for the basic rates, provided the total does not exceed the monthly rate set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1114(o). The limitations on the maximum compensation payable under this paragraph are independent of and do not preclude payment of additional compensation for dependents under 38 U.S.C. 1115, or the special allowance for aid and attendance provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(r).

(1) Creative organ. (i) Loss of a creative organ will be shown by acquired absence of one or both testicles (other than undescended testicles) or ovaries or other creative organ. Loss of use of one testicle will be established when examination by a board finds that:

(a) The diameters of the affected testicle are reduced to one-third of the corresponding diameters of the paired normal testicle, or

(b) The diameters of the affected testicle are reduced to one-half or less of the corresponding normal testicle and there is alteration of consistency so that the affected testicle is considerably harder or softer than the corresponding normal testicle; or

(c) If neither of the conditions (a) or (b) is met, when a biopsy, recommended by a board including a genitouralogist and accepted by the veteran, establishes the absence of spermatozoa.

(ii) When loss or loss of use of a creative organ resulted from wounds or other trauma sustained in service, or resulted from operations in service for the relief of other conditions, the creative organ becoming incidentally involved, the benefit may be granted.

(iii) Loss or loss of use traceable to an elective operation performed subsequent to service, will not establish entitlement to the benefit. If, however, the operation after discharge was required for the correction of a specific injury caused by a preceding operation in service, it will support authorization of the benefit. When the existence of disability is established meeting the above requirements for nonfunctioning testicle due to operation after service,
resulting in loss of use, the benefit may be granted even though the operation is one of election. An operation is not considered to be one of election where it is advised on sound medical judgment for the relief of a pathological condition or to prevent possible future pathological consequences.

(iv) Atrophy resulting from mumps followed by orchitis in service is service connected. Since atrophy is usually perceptible within 1 to 6 months after infection subsides, an examination more than 6 months after the subsidence of orchitis demonstrating a normal genitourinary system will be considered in determining rebuttal of service incurrence of atrophy later demonstrated. Mumps not followed by orchitis in service will not suffice as the antecedent cause of subsequent atrophy for the purpose of authorizing the benefit.

(2) Foot and hand. (i) Loss of use of a hand or a foot will be held to exist when no effective function remains other than that which would be equally well served by an amputation stump at the site of election below elbow or knee with use of a suitable prosthetic appliance. The determination will be made on the basis of the actual remaining function, whether the acts of grasping, manipulation, etc., in the case of the hand, or of balance, propulsion, etc., in the case of the foot, could be accomplished equally well by an amputation stump with prosthesis; for example:

(a) Extremely unfavorable complete ankylosis of the knee, or complete ankylosis of two major joints of an extremity, or shortening of the lower extremity of 3½ inches or more, will constitute loss of use of the hand or foot involved.

(b) Complete paralysis of the external popliteal nerve (common peroneal) and consequent footdrop, accompanied by characteristic organic changes including trophic and circulatory disturbances and other concomitants confirmatory of complete paralysis of this nerve, will be taken as loss of use of the foot.

(3) Both buttocks. (i) Loss of use of both buttocks shall be deemed to exist when there is severe damage by disease or injury to muscle group XVII, bilateral, (diagnostic code 5317) and additional disability making it impossible for the disabled person, without assistance, to rise from a seated position and from a stooped position (fingers to toes position) and to maintain postural stability (the pelvis upon head of femur). The assistance may be done by the person’s own hands or arms, and, in the matter of postural stability, by a special appliance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114(k))

(ii) Special monthly compensation for loss or loss of use of both lower extremities (38 U.S.C. 1114(l) through (n)) will not preclude additional compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) for loss of use of both buttocks where appropriate tests clearly substantiate that there is such additional loss.

(4) Eye. Loss of use or blindness of one eye, having only light perception, will be held to exist when there is inability to recognize test letters at 1 foot and when further examination of the eye reveals that perception of objects, hand movements, or counting fingers cannot be accomplished at 3 feet. Lesser extents of vision, particularly perception of objects, hand movements, or counting fingers at distances less than 3 feet is considered of negligible utility.

(5) Deafness. Deafness of both ears, having absence of air and bone conduction will be held to exist where examination in a Department of Veterans Affairs authorized audiology clinic under current testing criteria shows bilateral hearing loss is equal to or greater than the minimum bilateral hearing loss required for a maximum rating evaluation under the rating schedule.

(Authority: Pub. L. 88–20)

(6) Aphonia. Complete organic aphonia will be held to exist where there is a disability of the organs of speech which constantly precludes communication by speech.

(Authority: Pub. L. 88–22)
in both eyes with visual acuity of 5/200 or less or being permanently bedridden or so helpless as to be in need of regular aid and attendance.

(1) **Extremities.** The criteria for loss and loss of use of an extremity contained in paragraph (a)(2) of this section are applicable.

(2) **Eyes, bilateral.** 5/200 visual acuity or less bilaterally qualifies for entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 1114(l). However, evaluation of 5/200 based on acuity in excess of that degree but less than 10/200 (§ 4.83 of this chapter), does not qualify. Concentric contraction of the field of vision beyond 5 degrees in both eyes is the equivalent of 5/200 visual acuity.

(3) **Need for aid and attendance.** The criteria for determining that a veteran is so helpless as to be in need of regular aid and attendance are contained in §3.352(a).

(4) **Permanently bedridden.** The criteria for rating are contained in §3.352(a). Where possible, determinations should be on the basis of permanently bedridden rather than for need of aid and attendance (except where 38 U.S.C. 1114(r) is involved) to avoid reduction during hospitalization where aid and attendance is provided in kind.

(c) **Ratings under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).** (1) The special monthly compensation provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(m) is payable for any of the following conditions:

(i) Anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands;

(ii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of both legs at a level, or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place;

(iii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place with anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place;

(iv) Blindness in both eyes having only light perception;

(v) Blindness in both eyes leaving the veteran so helpless as to be in need of regular aid and attendance.

(2) **Natural elbow or knee action.** In determining whether there is natural elbow or knee action with prosthesis in place, consideration will be based on whether use of the proper prosthetic appliance requires natural use of the joint, or whether necessary motion is otherwise controlled, so that the muscles affecting joint motion, if not already atrophied, will become so. If there is no movement in the joint, as in ankylosis or complete paralysis, use of prosthesis is not to be expected, and the determination will be as though there were one in place.

(3) **Eyes, bilateral.** With visual acuity 5/200 or less or the vision field reduced to 5 degree concentric contraction in both eyes, entitlement on account of need for regular aid and attendance will be determined on the facts in the individual case.

(d) **Ratings under 38 U.S.C. 1114(n).** The special monthly compensation provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(n) is payable for any of the conditions which follow: Amputation is a prerequisite except for loss of use of both arms and blindness without light perception in both eyes. If a prosthesis cannot be worn at the present level of amputation but could be applied if there were a reamputation at a higher level, the requirements of this paragraph are not met; instead, consideration will be given to loss of natural elbow or knee action.

(1) Anatomical loss or loss of use of both arms at a level or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place;

(2) Anatomical loss of both legs so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance;

(3) Anatomical loss of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance with anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance;

(4) Anatomical loss of both eyes or blindness without light perception in both eyes.

(e) **Ratings under 38 U.S.C. 1114(o).** (1) The special monthly compensation provided by 38 U.S.C. 1114(o) is payable for any of the following conditions:

(i) Anatomical loss of both arms so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance;

(ii) Conditions entitling to two or more of the rates (no condition being considered twice) provided in 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) through (n);
(iii) Bilateral deafness rated at 60 percent or more disabling (and the hearing impairment in either one or both ears is service connected) in combination with service-connected blindness with bilateral visual acuity 20/200 or less.

(iv) Service-connected total deafness in one ear or bilateral deafness rated at 40 percent or more disabling (and the hearing impairment in either one of both ears is service-connected) in combination with service-connected blindness in both eyes having only light perception or less.

(2) Paraplegia. Paralysis of both lower extremities together with loss of anal and bladder sphincter control will entitle to the maximum rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(o), through the combination of loss of use of both legs and helplessness. The requirement of loss of anal and bladder sphincter control is met even though incontinence has been overcome under a strict regimen of rehabilitation of bowel and bladder training and other auxiliary measures.

(3) Combinations. Determinations must be based upon separate and distinct disabilities. This requires, for example, that where a veteran who had suffered the loss or loss of use of two extremities is being considered for the maximum rate on account of helplessness requiring regular aid and attendance, the latter must be based on need resulting from pathology other than that of the extremities. If the loss or loss of use of two extremities or being permanently bedridden leaves the person helpless, increase is not in order on account of this helplessness. Under no circumstances will the combination of “being permanently bedridden” and “being so helpless as to require regular aid and attendance” without separate and distinct anatomical loss, or loss of use, of two extremities, or blindness, be taken as entitling to the maximum benefit. The fact, however, that two separate and distinct entitling disabilities, such as anatomical loss, or loss of use of both hands and both feet, result from a common etiological agent, for example, one injury or rheumatoid arthritis, will not preclude maximum entitlement.

(4) Helplessness. The maximum rate, as a result of including helplessness as one of the entitling multiple disabilities, is intended to cover, in addition to obvious losses and blindness, conditions such as the loss of use of two extremities with absolute deafness and nearly total blindness or with severe multiple injuries producing total disability outside the useless extremities, these conditions being construed as loss of use of two extremities and helplessness.

(f) Intermediate or next higher rate. An intermediate rate authorized by this paragraph shall be established at the arithmetic mean, rounded to the nearest dollar, between the two rates concerned.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114 (p))

(1) Extremities. (i) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one foot with anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) and (m).

(ii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one foot with anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of prosthetic appliance shall entitle to the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).

(iii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one foot with anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm at a level, or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) and (m).

(iv) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one foot with anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance shall entitle to the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).

(vi) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place with anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114(m) and (n).

(vi) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place with anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114(m) and (n).
(vii) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one leg at a level, or with complications, preventing natural knee action with prosthesis in place with anatomical loss of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (m) and (n).

(viii) Anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance with anatomical loss or loss of use of one hand shall entitle to the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).

(ix) Anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance with anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm at a level, or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (m) and (n).

(x) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one hand with anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm at a level, or with complications, preventing natural elbow action with prosthesis in place, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (m) and (n).

(xi) Anatomical loss or loss of use of one hand with anatomical loss or loss of use of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance shall entitle to the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).

(xii) Anatomical loss of one leg so near the hip as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance with anatomical loss of one arm so near the shoulder as to prevent use of a prosthetic appliance, shall entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (n) and (o).

(2) Eyes, bilateral, and blindness in connection with deafness and/or loss of use of a hand or foot.

(i) Blindness of one eye with 5/200 visual acuity or less and blindness of the other eye having only light perception will entitle to the rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) and (m).

(ii) Blindness of one eye with 5/200 visual acuity or less and anatomical loss of, or blindness having no light perception in the other eye, will entitle to a rate equal to 38 U.S.C. 1114(m).

(iii) Blindness of one eye having only light perception and anatomical loss of, or blindness having no light perception in the other eye, will entitle to a rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (m) and (n).

(iv) Blindness in both eyes with visual acuity of 5/200 or less, or blindness in both eyes rated under subparagraph (2) (i) or (ii) of this paragraph, when accompanied by service-connected total deafness in one ear, will afford entitlement to the next higher intermediate rate of if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114, but in no event higher than the rate for (o).

(v) Blindness in both eyes having only light perception or less, or rated under subparagraph (2)(ii) of this paragraph, when accompanied by bilateral deafness and the hearing impairment in either one or both ears is service-connected rated at 10 or 20 percent disabling, will afford entitlement to the next higher intermediate rate, or if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114, but in no event higher than the rate for (o).

(Authority: Sec. 112, Pub. L. 98-223)

(vi) Blindness in both eyes rated under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l), (m) or (n), or rated under subparagraphs (2)(i), (ii) or (iii) of this paragraph, when accompanied by bilateral deafness and the hearing impairment in one or both ears is service-connected, will afford entitlement to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114, or if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher intermediate rate, but in no event higher than the rate for (o).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114(p))

(vii) Blindness in both eyes rated under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l), (m), or (n), or under the intermediate or next higher rate provisions of this subparagraph, when accompanied by:

(A) Service-connected loss or loss of use of one hand, will afford entitlement to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114 or, if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher intermediate rate, but in no event higher than the rate for (o); or

(B) Service-connected loss or loss of use of one foot which by itself or in combination with another compensable
disability would be ratable at 50 percent or more, will afford entitlement to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114 or, if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher intermediate rate, but in no event higher than the rate for (o); or

(C) Service-connected loss or loss of use of one foot which is ratable at less than 50 percent and which is the only compensable disability other than bilateral blindness, will afford entitlement to the next higher intermediate rate or, if the veteran is already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114, but in no event higher than the rate for (o).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114(p))

(3) Additional independent 50 percent disabilities. In addition to the statutory rates payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) through (n) and the intermediate or next higher rate provisions outlined above, additional single permanent disability or combinations of permanent disabilities independently ratable at 50 percent or more will afford entitlement to the next higher intermediate rate or if already entitled to an intermediate rate, to the next higher statutory rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114, but not above the (o) rate. In the application of this subparagraph the disability or disabilities independently ratable at 50 percent or more must be separate and distinct and involve different anatomical segments or bodily systems from the conditions establishing entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) through (n) or the intermediate rate provisions outlined above.

(i) Where the multiple loss or loss of use entitlement to a statutory or intermediate rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l) and (o) is caused by the same etiological disease or injury, that disease or injury may not serve as the basis for the independent 50 percent or 100 percent unless it is so rated without regard to the loss or loss of use.

(ii) The graduated ratings for arrested tuberculosis will not be utilized in this connection, but the permanent residuals of tuberculosis may be utilized.

(5) Three extremities. Anatomical loss or loss of use, or a combination of anatomical loss and loss of use, of three extremities shall entitle a veteran to the next higher rate without regard to whether that rate is a statutory rate or an intermediate rate. The maximum monthly payment under this provision may not exceed the amount stated in 38 U.S.C. 1114(p).

(g) Inactive tuberculosis (complete arrest). The rating criteria for determining inactivity of tuberculosis are set out in §3.375.

(1) For a veteran who was receiving or entitled to receive compensation for tuberculosis on August 19, 1968, the minimum monthly rate is $67. This minimum special monthly compensation is not to be combined with or added to any other disability compensation.

(2) For a veteran who was not receiving or entitled to receive compensation for tuberculosis on August 19, 1968, the special monthly compensation authorized by paragraph (g)(1) of this section is not payable.

(h) Special aid and attendance benefit; 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)—(1) Maximum compensation cases. A veteran receiving the maximum rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (o) or (p) who is in need of regular aid
§ 3.351 and attendance or a higher level of care
is entitled to an additional allowance
during periods he or she is not hos-
pitalized at United States Government
expense. (See § 3.552(b)(2) as to continu-
ance following admission for hos-
pitalization.) Determination of this
need is subject to the criteria of § 3.352.
The regular or higher level aid and at-
tendance allowance is payable whether
or not the need for regular aid and at-
tendance or a higher level of care was
a partial basis for entitlement to the
maximum rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (o)
or (p), or was based on an independent
factual determination.

(2) Entitlement to compensation at the
intermediate rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114
(n) and (o) plus special monthly com-
pensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k). A vet-
eran receiving compensation at the in-
termediate rate between 38 U.S.C. 1114
(n) and (o) plus special monthly com-
pensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) who
establishes a factual need for regular
aid and attendance or a higher level of
care, is also entitled to an additional
allowance during periods he or she is
not hospitalized at United States Gov-
ernment expense. (See § 3.552(b)(2) as to
continuance following admission for
hospitalization.) Determination of the
factual need for aid and attendance is
subject to the criteria of § 3.352:

(3) Amount of the allowance. The
amount of the additional allowance
payable to a veteran in need of regular
aid and attendance is specified in 38
U.S.C. 1114(r)(1). The amount of the ad-
titional allowance payable to a veteran
in need of a higher level of care is spe-
cified in 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(2). The higher
level aid and attendance allowance au-
thorized by 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(2) is pay-
able in lieu of the regular aid and at-
tendance allowance authorized by 38

(1) Total plus 60 percent, or house-
bound, 38 U.S.C. 1114(s). The special
monthly compensation provided by 38
U.S.C. 1114(s) is payable where the vet-
eran has a single service-connected dis-
ability rated as 100 percent and,

(1) Has additional service-connected
disability or disabilities independently
ratable at 60 percent, separate and dis-
tinct from the 100 percent service-con-
nect ed disability and involving dif-
ferent anatomical segments or bodily
systems, or

(2) Is permanently housebound by
reason of service-connected disability
or disabilities. This requirement is met
when the veteran is substantially con-
 fined as a direct result of service-con-
 nected disabilities to his or her dwell-
ing and the immediate premises or, if
institutionalized, to the ward or clin-
ical areas, and it is reasonably certain
that the disability or disabilities and
resultant confinement will continue
throughout his or her lifetime.

§ 3.351 Special monthly dependency
and indemnity compensation, death
compensation, pension and spouse's
compensation ratings.

(a) General. This section sets forth
criteria for determining whether:

(1) Increased pension is payable to a
veteran by reason of need for aid and
attendance or by reason of being house-
bound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(d), (e))

(2) Increased compensation is payable
to a veteran by reason of the veteran's
spouse being in need of aid and attend-
ance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1115(1)(E))

(3) Increased dependency and indem-
nity compensation is payable to a sur-
viving spouse or parent by reason of
being in need of aid and attendance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(c), 1315(h))

(4) Increased dependency and indem-
nity compensation is payable to a sur-
viving spouse who is not in need of aid
and attendance but is housebound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(d))

(5) Increased pension is payable to a
surviving spouse by reason of need for
aid and attendance, or if not in need of
aid and attendance, by reason of being housebound.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(d), (e))

(6) Increased death compensation is payable to a surviving spouse by reason of being in need of aid and attendance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1122)

(b) Aid and attendance; need. Need for aid and attendance means helplessness or being so nearly helpless as to require the regular aid and attendance of another person. The criteria set forth in paragraph (c) of this section will be applied in determining whether such need exists.

(c) Aid and attendance; criteria. The veteran, spouse, surviving spouse or parent will be considered in need of regular aid and attendance if he or she:

(1) Is blind or so nearly blind as to have corrected visual acuity of 5/200 or less, in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less; or

(2) Is a patient in a nursing home because of mental or physical incapacity; or

(3) Establishes a factual need for aid and attendance under the criteria set forth in § 3.352(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(b))

(d) Housebound, or permanent and total plus 60 percent; disability pension. The rate of pension payable to a veteran who is entitled to pension under 38 U.S.C. 1521 and who is not in need of regular aid and attendance shall be as prescribed in 38 U.S.C. 1521(e) if, in addition to having a single permanent disability rated 100 percent disabling under the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (not including ratings based upon unemployability under § 4.17 of this chapter) the veteran:

(1) Has additional disability or disabilities independently ratable at 60 percent or more, separate and distinct from the permanent disability rated as 100 percent disabling and involving different anatomical segments or bodily systems, or

(2) Is “permanently housebound” by reason of disability or disabilities. This requirement is met when the veteran is substantially confined to his or her dwelling and the immediate premises or, if institutionalized, to the ward or clinical area, and it is reasonably certain that the disability or disabilities and resultant confinement will continue throughout his or her lifetime.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(c), 1521(e))

(e) Housebound: dependency and indemnity compensation. The monthly rate of dependency and indemnity compensation payable to a surviving spouse who does not qualify for increased dependency and indemnity compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1311(c) based on need for regular aid and attendance shall be increased by the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 1311(d) if the surviving spouse is permanently housebound by reason of disability. The “permanently housebound” requirement is met when the surviving spouse is substantially confined to his or her home (ward or clinical areas, if institutionalized) or immediate premises by reason of disability or disabilities which it is reasonably certain will remain throughout the surviving spouse’s lifetime.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1311(d))

(f) Housebound; improved pension; death. The annual rate of death pension payable to a surviving spouse who does not qualify for an annual rate of death pension payable under § 3.23(a)(6) based on need for aid and attendance shall be as set forth in § 3.23(a)(7) if the surviving spouse is permanently housebound by reason of disability. The “permanently housebound” requirement is met when the surviving spouse is substantially confined to his or her home (ward or clinical areas, if institutionalized) or immediate premises by reason of disability or disabilities which it is reasonably certain will remain throughout the surviving spouse’s lifetime.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1541(e))

(44 FR 45939, Aug. 6, 1979)
The following will be accorded consideration in determining the need for regular aid and attendance (§3.351(c)(3): inability of claimant to dress or undress himself (herself), or to keep himself (herself) ordinarily clean and presentable; frequent need of adjustment of any special prosthetic or orthopedic appliances which by reason of the particular disability cannot be done without aid (this will not include the adjustment of appliances which normal persons would be unable to adjust without aid, such as supports, belts, lacing at the back, etc.); inability of claimant to feed himself (herself) through loss of coordination of upper extremities or through extreme weakness; inability to attend to the wants of nature; or incapacity, physical or mental, which requires care or assistance on a regular basis to protect the claimant from hazards or dangers incident to his or her daily environment. “Bedridden” will be a proper basis for the determination. For the purpose of this paragraph “bedridden” will be that condition which, through its essential character, actually requires that the claimant remain in bed. The fact that claimant has voluntarily taken to bed or that a physician has prescribed rest in bed for the greater or lesser part of the day to promote convalescence or cure will not suffice. It is not required that all of the disabling conditions enumerated in this paragraph be found to exist before a favorable rating may be made. The particular personal functions which the veteran is unable to perform should be considered in connection with his or her condition as a whole. It is only necessary that the evidence establish that the veteran is so helpless as to need regular aid and attendance, not that there be a constant need. Determinations that the veteran is so helpless, as to be in need of regular aid and attendance will not be based solely upon an opinion that the claimant’s condition is such as would require him or her to be in bed. They must be based on the actual requirement of personal assistance from others.

(b) Basic criteria for the higher level aid and attendance allowance. (1) A veteran is entitled to the higher level aid and attendance allowance authorized by §3.350(h) in lieu of the regular aid and attendance allowance when all of the following conditions are met:

(i) The veteran is entitled to the compensation authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1114(o), or the maximum rate of compensation authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1114(p).

(ii) The veteran meets the requirements for entitlement to the regular aid and attendance allowance in paragraph (a) of this section.

(iii) The veteran needs a “higher level of care” (as defined in paragraph (b)(2) of this section) than is required to establish entitlement to the regular aid and attendance allowance, and in the absence of the provision of such higher level of care the veteran would require hospitalization, nursing home care, or other residential institutional care.

(2) Need for a higher level of care shall be considered to be need for personal health-care services provided on a daily basis in the veteran’s home by a person who is licensed to provide such services or who provides such services under the regular supervision of a licensed health-care professional. Personal health-care services include (but are not limited to) such services as physical therapy, administration of injections, placement of indwelling catheters, and the changing of sterile dressings, or like functions which require professional health-care training or the regular supervision of a trained health-care professional to perform. A licensed health-care professional includes (but is not limited to) a doctor of medicine or osteopathy, a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, or a physical therapist licensed to practice by a State or political subdivision thereof.

(3) The term “under the regular supervision of a licensed health-care professional”, as used in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, means that an unlicensed person performing personal health-care services is following a regimen of personal health-care services prescribed by a health-care professional, and that the health-care professional consults with the unlicensed
person providing the health-care services at least once each month to monitor the prescribed regimen. The consultation need not be in person; a telephone call will suffice.

(4) A person performing personal health-care services who is a relative or other member of the veteran’s household is not exempted from the requirement that he or she be a licensed health-care professional or be providing such care under the regular supervision of a licensed health-care professional.

(5) The provisions of paragraph (b) of this section are to be strictly construed. The higher level aid-and-attendance allowance is to be granted only when the veteran’s need is clearly established and the amount of services required by the veteran on a daily basis is substantial.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1114(r)(2))

(c) Attendance by relative. The performance of the necessary aid and attendance service by a relative of the beneficiary or other member of his or her household will not prevent the granting of the additional allowance.

§ 3.353 Determinations of incompetency and competency.

(a) Definition of mental incompetency. A mentally incompetent person is one who because of injury or disease lacks the mental capacity to contract or to manage his or her own affairs, including disbursement of funds without limitation.

(b) Authority. (1) Rating agencies have sole authority to make official determinations of competency and incompetency for purposes of: insurance (38 U.S.C. 1922), and, subject to §13.56 of this chapter, disbursement of benefits. Such determinations are final and binding on field stations for these purposes.

(2) Where the beneficiary is rated incompetent, the Veterans Service Center Manager will develop information as to the beneficiary’s social, economic and industrial adjustment; appoint (or recommend appointment of) a fiduciary as provided in §13.55 of this chapter; select a method of disbursing payment as provided in §13.56 of this chapter, or in the case of a married beneficiary, appoint the beneficiary’s spouse to receive payments as provided in §13.57 of this chapter; and authorize disbursement of the benefit.

(3) If in the course of fulfilling the responsibilities assigned in paragraph (b)(2) the Veterans Service Center Manager develops evidence indicating that the beneficiary may be capable of administering the funds payable without limitation, he or she will refer that evidence to the rating agency with a statement as to his or her findings. The rating agency will consider this evidence, together with all other evidence of record, to determine whether its prior determination of incompetency should remain in effect. Reexamination may be requested as provided in §3.327(a) if necessary to properly evaluate the beneficiary’s mental capacity to contract or manage his or her own affairs.

(c) Medical opinion. Unless the medical evidence is clear, convincing and leaves no doubt as to the person’s incompetency, the rating agency will make no determination of incompetency without a definite expression regarding the question by the responsible medical authorities. Considerations of medical opinions will be in accordance with the principles in paragraph (a) of this section. Determinations relative to incompetency should be based upon all evidence of record and there should be a consistent relationship between the percentage of disability, facts relating to commitment or hospitalization and the holding of incompetency.

(d) Presumption in favor of competency. Where reasonable doubt arises regarding a beneficiary’s mental capacity to contract or to manage his or her own affairs, including the disbursement of funds without limitation, such doubt will be resolved in favor of competency (see §3.102 on reasonable doubt).

(e) Due process. Whenever it is proposed to make an incompetency determination, the beneficiary will be notified of the proposed action and of the right to a hearing as provided in §3.103. Such notice is not necessary if the beneficiary has been declared incompetent.
§ 3.354 Determinations of insanity.

(a) Definition of insanity. An insane person is one who, while not mentally defective or constitutionally psychopathic, except when a psychosis has been engrafted upon such basic condition, exhibits, due to disease, a more or less prolonged deviation from his normal method of behavior; or who interferes with the peace of society; or who has so departed (become antisocial) from the accepted standards of the community to which by birth and education he belongs as to lack the adaptability to make further adjustment to the social customs of the community in which he resides.

(b) Insanity causing discharge. When a rating agency is concerned with determining whether a veteran was insane at the time he committed an offense leading to his court-martial, discharge or resignation (38 U.S.C. 5303(b)), it will base its decision on all the evidence procurable relating to the period involved, and apply the definition in paragraph (a) of this section.

[26 FR 1589, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.355 Testamentary capacity for insurance purposes.

When cases are referred to a rating agency involving the testamentary capacity of the insured to execute designations or changes of beneficiary, or designations or changes of option, the following considerations will apply:

(a) Testamentary capacity is that degree of mental capacity necessary to enable a person to perform a testa-

mentary act. This, in general, requires that the testator reasonably comprehend the nature and significance of his act, that is, the subject and extent of his disposition, recognition of the object of his bounty, and appreciation of the consequence of his act, uninfluenced by any material delusion as to the property or persons involved.

(b) Due consideration should be given to all facts of record, with emphasis being placed on those facts bearing upon the mental condition of the testator (insured) at the time or nearest the time he executed the designation or change. In this connection, consideration should be given to lay as well as medical evidence.

(c) Lack of testamentary capacity should not be confused with insanity or mental incompetence. An insane person might have a lucid interval during which he would possess testamentary capacity. On the other hand, a sane person might suffer a temporary mental aberration during which he would not possess testamentary capacity. There is a general but rebuttable presumption that every testator possesses testamentary capacity. Therefore, reasonable doubts should be resolved in favor of testamentary capacity.

[26 FR 1589, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.356 Conditions which determine permanent incapacity for self-support.

(a) Basic determinations. A child must be shown to be permanently incapable of self-support by reason of mental or physical defect at the date of attaining the age of 18 years.

(b) Rating criteria. Rating determinations will be made solely on the basis of whether the child is permanently incapable of self-support through his own efforts by reason of physical or mental defects. The question of permanent incapacity for self-support is one of fact for determination by the rating agency on competent evidence of record in the individual case. Rating criteria applicable to disabled veterans are not controlling. Principal factors for consideration are:

(1) The fact that a claimant is earning his or her own support is prima facie evidence that he or she is not incapable of self-support. Incapacity for
self-support will not be considered to exist when the child by his or her own efforts is provided with sufficient income for his or her reasonable support.

(2) A child shown by proper evidence to have been permanently incapable of self-support prior to the date of attaining the age of 18 years, may be so held at a later date even though there may have been a short intervening period or periods when his or her condition was such that he or she was employed, provided the cause of incapacity is the same as that upon which the original determination was made and there were no intervening diseases or injuries that could be considered as major factors. Employment which was only casual, intermittent, tryout, unsuccessful, or terminated after a short period by reason of disability, should not be considered as rebutting permanent incapability of self-support otherwise established.

(3) It should be borne in mind that employment of a child prior or subsequent to the delimiting age may or may not be a normal situation, depending on the educational progress of the child, the economic situation of the family, indulgent attitude of parents, and the like. In those cases where the extent and nature of disability raises some doubt as to whether they would render the average person incapable of self-support, factors other than employment are for consideration. In such cases there should be considered whether the daily activities of the child in the home and community are equivalent to the activities of employment of any nature within the physical or mental capacity of the child which would provide sufficient income for reasonable support. Lack of employment of the child either prior to the delimiting age or thereafter should not be considered as a major factor in the determination to be made, unless it is shown that it was due to physical or mental defect and not to mere disinclination to work or indulgence of relatives or friends.

(4) The capacity of a child for self-support is not determinable upon employment afforded solely upon sympathetic or charitable considerations and which involved no actual or substantial rendition of services.

§ 3.357 Civil service preference ratings.

For the purpose of certifying civil service disability preference only, a service-connected disability may be assigned an evaluation of “less than ten percent.” Any directly or presumptively service-connected disease or injury which exhibits some extent of actual impairment may be held to exist at the level of less than ten percent. For disabilities incurred in combat, however, no actual impairment is required.

§ 3.358 Compensation for disability or death from hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, examinations or vocational rehabilitation training (§ 3.800).

(a) General. This section applies to claims received by VA before October 1, 1997. If it is determined that there is additional disability resulting from a disease or injury or aggravation of an existing disease or injury suffered as a result of hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, examination, or vocational rehabilitation training, compensation will be payable for such additional disability. For claims received by VA on or after October 1, 1997, see § 3.361.

(b) Additional disability. In determining that additional disability exists, the following considerations will govern:

(i) The veteran’s physical condition immediately prior to the disease or injury on which the claim for compensation is based will be compared with the subsequent physical condition resulting from the disease or injury, each body part involved being considered separately.

(ii) As applied to examinations, the physical condition prior to the disease or injury will be the condition at time of beginning the physical examination as a result of which the disease or injury was sustained.

(iii) As applied to medical or surgical treatment, the physical condition prior
(2) Compensation will not be payable under this section for the continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury for which hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, or examination was furnished, unless VA's failure to exercise reasonable skill and care in the diagnosis or treatment of the disease or injury caused additional disability or death that probably would have been prevented by proper diagnosis or treatment. Compensation will not be payable under this section for the continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury for which vocational rehabilitation training was provided.

(c) Cause. In determining whether such additional disability resulted from a disease or an injury or an aggravation of an existing disease or injury suffered as a result of training, hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, or examination, the following considerations will govern:

(1) It will be necessary to show that the additional disability is actually the result of such disease or injury or an aggravation of an existing disease or injury and not merely coincidental therewith.

(2) The mere fact that aggravation occurred will not suffice to make the additional disability compensable in the absence of proof that it resulted from disease or injury or an aggravation of an existing disease or injury suffered as the result of training, hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, or examination.

(3) Compensation is not payable for the necessary consequences of medical or surgical treatment or examination properly administered with the express or implied consent of the veteran, or, in appropriate cases, the veteran's representative. “Necessary consequences” are those which are certain to result from, or were intended to result from, the examination or medical or surgical treatment administered. Consequences otherwise certain or intended to result from a treatment will not be considered uncertain or unintended solely because it had not been determined at the time consent was given whether that treatment would in fact be administered.

(4) When the proximate cause of the injury suffered was the veteran's willful misconduct or failure to follow instructions, it will bar him (or her) from receipt of compensation hereunder except in the case of incompetent veterans.

(5) Compensation for disability resulting from the pursuit of vocational rehabilitation is not payable unless there is established a direct (proximate) causal connection between the injury or aggravation of an existing injury and some essential activity or function which is within the scope of the vocational rehabilitation course, not necessarily limited to activities or functions specifically designated by the Department of Veterans Affairs in the individual case, since ordinarily it is not to be expected that each and every different function and act of a veteran pursuant to his or her course of training will be particularly specified in the outline of the course or training program. For example, a disability resulting from the use of an item of mechanical or other equipment is within the purview of the statute if training in its use is implicit within the prescribed program or course outlined or if its use is implicit in the performance of some task or operation the trainee must learn to perform, although such use may not be especially mentioned in the training program. In determining whether the element of direct or proximate causation is present, it remains necessary for a distinction to be made between an injury arising out of an act performed in pursuance of the course of training, that is, a required “learning activity”; and one arising out of an activity which is incidental to, related to, or coexistent with the pursuit of the program of training. For a case to fall within the statute there must have been sustained an injury which, but for the performance of a “learning activity” in the prescribed course of training, would not have been sustained. A meticulous examination into all the circumstances is required, including a consideration of the time and place of the incident producing the injury.
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(6) Nursing home care furnished under section 1720 of title 38, United States Code is not hospitalization within the meaning of this section. Such a nursing home is an independent contractor and, accordingly, its agents and employees are not to be deemed agents and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. If additional disability results from medical or surgical treatment or examination through negligence or other wrongful acts or omissions on the part of such a nursing home, its employees, or its agents, entitlement does not exist under this section unless there was an act or omission on the part of the Department of Veterans Affairs independently giving rise to such entitlement and such acts on the part of both proximately caused the additional disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151, 1720)

§ 3.359 Determination of service connection for former members of the Armed Forces of Czechoslovakia or Poland.

Rating boards will determine whether or not the condition for which treatment is claimed by former members of the Armed Forces of Czechoslovakia or Poland under 38 U.S.C. 109(c) is service connected. This determination will be made using the same criteria that applies to determinations of service incurrence and in line of duty when there is no character of discharge bar.

[43 FR 15154, Apr. 11, 1978]

§ 3.360 Service-connected health-care eligibility of certain persons administratively discharged under other than honorable condition.

(a) General. The health-care and related benefits authorized by chapter 17 of title 38 U.S.C. shall be provided to certain former service persons with administrative discharges under other than honorable conditions for any disability incurred or aggravated during active military, naval, or air service in line of duty.

(b) Discharge categorization. With certain exceptions such benefits shall be furnished for any disability incurred or aggravated during a period of service terminated by a discharge under other than honorable conditions. Specifically, they may not be furnished for any disability incurred or aggravated during a period of service terminated by a bad conduct discharge or when one of the bars listed in §3.12(c) applies.

(c) Eligibility criteria. In making determinations of health-care eligibility the same criteria will be used as is now applicable to determinations of service incurrence and in line of duty when there is no character of discharge bar.

[43 FR 15154, Apr. 11, 1978]
§ 3.361

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treatment, examination, services, or program has stopped. VA considers each involved body part or system separately.

(c) Establishing the cause of additional disability or death. Claims based on additional disability or death due to hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination must meet the causation requirements of this paragraph and paragraph (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section. Claims based on additional disability or death due to training and rehabilitation services or compensated work therapy program must meet the causation requirements of paragraph (d)(3) of this section.

(1) Actual causation required. To establish causation, the evidence must show that the hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination resulted in the veteran’s additional disability or death. Merely showing that a veteran received care, treatment, or examination and that the veteran has an additional disability or died does not establish cause.

(2) Continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury. Hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination cannot cause the continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury for which the care, treatment, or examination was furnished unless VA’s failure to timely diagnose and properly treat the disease or injury proximately caused the continuance or natural progress. The provision of training and rehabilitation services or CWT program cannot cause the continuance or natural progress of a disease or injury for which the services were provided.

(3) Veteran’s failure to follow medical instructions. Additional disability or death caused by a veteran’s failure to follow properly given medical instructions is not caused by hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination.

(d) Establishing the proximate cause of additional disability or death. The proximate cause of disability or death is the action or event that directly caused the disability or death, as distinguished from a remote contributing cause.

(1) Care, treatment, or examination. To establish that carelessness, negligence, lack of proper skill, error in judgment, or similar instance of fault on VA’s part in furnishing hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination proximately caused a veteran’s additional disability or death, it must be shown that the hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination caused the veteran’s additional disability or death (as explained in paragraph (c) of this section); and

(i) VA failed to exercise the degree of care that would be expected of a reasonable health care provider; or

(ii) VA furnished the hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination without the veteran’s or, in appropriate cases, the veteran’s representative’s informed consent. To determine whether there was informed consent, VA will consider whether the health care providers substantially complied with the requirements of §17.32 of this chapter. Minor deviations from the requirements of §17.32 of this chapter that are immaterial under the circumstances of a case will not defeat a finding of informed consent. Consent may be express (i.e., given orally or in writing) or implied under the circumstances specified in §17.32(b) of this chapter, as in emergency situations.

(2) Events not reasonably foreseeable. Whether the proximate cause of a veteran’s additional disability or death was an event not reasonably foreseeable is in each claim to be determined based on what a reasonable health care provider would have foreseen. The event need not be completely unforeseeable or unimaginable but must be one that a reasonable health care provider would not have considered to be an ordinary risk of the treatment provided. In determining whether an event was reasonably foreseeable, VA will consider whether the risk of that event was the type of risk that a reasonable health care provider would have disclosed in connection with the informed consent procedures of §17.32 of this chapter.

(3) Training and rehabilitation services or compensated work therapy program. To establish that the provision of training and rehabilitation services or a CWT program proximately caused a veteran’s additional disability or
death, it must be shown that the veteran's participation in an essential activity or function of the training, services, or CWT program provided or authorized by VA proximately caused the disability or death. The veteran must have been participating in such training, services, or CWT program provided or authorized by VA as part of an approved rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31 or as part of a CWT program under 38 U.S.C. 1718. It need not be shown that VA approved that specific activity or function, as long as the activity or function is generally accepted as being a necessary component of the training, services, or CWT program that VA provided or authorized.

(e) Department employees and facilities.
(i) A Department employee is an individual—
(ii) Who is appointed by the Department in the civil service under title 38, United States Code, or title 5, United States Code, as an employee as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2105;
(iii) Whose day-to-day activities are subject to supervision by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(2) A Department facility is a facility over which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has direct jurisdiction.

(f) Activities that are not hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination furnished by a Department employee or in a Department facility. The following are not hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination furnished by a Department employee or in a Department facility.

(1) Hospital care or medical services furnished under a contract made under 38 U.S.C. 1703.

(2) Nursing home care furnished under 38 U.S.C. 1720.

(3) Hospital care or medical services, including examination, provided under 38 U.S.C. 8153 in a facility over which the Secretary does not have direct jurisdiction.

(g) Benefits payable under 38 U.S.C. 1151 for a veteran’s death.

(1) Death before January 1, 1957. The benefit payable under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) to an eligible survivor for a veteran’s death occurring before January 1, 1957, is death compensation. See §§3.5(b)(2) and 3.702 for the right to elect dependency and indemnity compensation.

(2) Death after December 31, 1956. The benefit payable under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) to an eligible survivor for a veteran’s death occurring after December 31, 1956, is dependency and indemnity compensation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151)
[69 FR 46433, Aug. 3, 2004]

§ 3.362 Offsets under 38 U.S.C. 1151(b) of benefits awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a).

(a) Claims subject to this section. This section applies to claims received by VA on or after October 1, 1997. This includes original claims and claims to reopen or otherwise readjudicate a previous claim for benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 or its predecessors.

(b) Offset of veterans’ awards of compensation. If a veteran’s disability is the basis of a judgment under 28 U.S.C. 1346(b) awarded, or a settlement or compromise under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677 entered, on or after December 1, 1962, the amount to be offset under 38 U.S.C. 1151(b) from any compensation awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) is the entire amount of the veteran’s share of the judgment, settlement, or compromise, including the veteran’s proportional share of attorney fees.

(c) Offset of survivors’ awards of dependency and indemnity compensation. If a veteran’s death is the basis of a judgment under 28 U.S.C. 1346(b) awarded, or a settlement or compromise under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677 entered, on or after December 1, 1962, the amount to be offset under 38 U.S.C. 1151(b) from any dependency and indemnity compensation awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) to a survivor is only the amount of the judgment, settlement, or compromise representing damages for the veteran’s death the survivor receives in an individual capacity or as distribution from the decedent veteran’s estate of sums included in the judgment, settlement, or compromise to compensate for harm suffered by the survivor, plus the survivor’s proportional share of attorney fees.
§ 3.363 Offset of structured settlements.

(d) Offset of structured settlements. This paragraph applies if a veteran’s disability or death is the basis of a structured settlement or structured compromise under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677 entered on or after December 1, 1962.

(1) The amount to be offset. The amount to be offset under 38 U.S.C. 1151(b) from benefits awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) is the veteran’s or survivor’s proportional share of the cost to the United States of the settlement or compromise, including the veteran’s or survivor’s proportional share of attorney fees.

(2) When the offset begins. The offset of benefits awarded under 38 U.S.C. 1151(a) begins the first month after the structured settlement or structured compromise has become final that such benefits would otherwise be paid.


(1) If a judgment, settlement, or compromise covered in paragraphs (b) through (d) of this section becomes final on or after December 10, 2004, and includes an amount that is specifically designated for a purpose for which benefits are provided under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 (38 CFR 3.809 and 3.809a) or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39 (38 CFR 3.808), and if VA awards 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39 benefits after the date on which the judgment, settlement, or compromise becomes final, the amount of the award will be reduced by the amount received under the judgment, settlement, or compromise for the same purpose.

(2) If the amount described in paragraph (e)(1) of this section is greater than the amount of an award under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39, the excess amount received under the judgment, settlement, or compromise will be offset against benefits otherwise payable under 38 U.S.C. chapter 11.

§ 3.370 Pulmonary tuberculosis shown by X-ray in active service.

(a) Active disease. X-ray evidence alone may be adequate for grant of direct service connection for pulmonary tuberculosis. When under consideration, all available service department films and subsequent films will be secured and read by specialists at designated stations who should have a current examination report and X-ray. Resulting interpretations of service films will be accorded the same consideration for service-connection purposes as if clinically established, however, a compensable rating will not be assigned prior to establishment of an active condition by approved methods.

(b) Inactive disease. Where the veteran was examined at time of entrance into active service but X-ray was not made, or if made, is not available and there was no notation or other evidence of active or inactive reinfection type pulmonary tuberculosis existing prior to such entrance, it will be assumed that the condition occurred during service and direct service connection will be in order for inactive pulmonary tuberculosis shown by X-ray evidence during service in the manner prescribed in

§ 3.363 Bar to benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151.

(a) Claims subject to this section. This section applies to claims received by VA on or after October 1, 1997. This includes original claims and claims to re-open or otherwise readjudicate a previous claim for benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 or its predecessors.

(b) Administrative award, compromises, or settlements, or judgments that bar benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151. If a veteran’s disability or death was the basis of an administrative award under 28 U.S.C. 1346(b) made, or a settlement or compromise under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677 finalized, before December 1, 1962, VA may not award benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 for any period after such award, settlement, or compromise was made or became final. If a veteran’s disability or death was the basis of a judgment that became final before December 1, 1962, VA may award benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151 for the disability or death unless the terms of the judgment provide otherwise.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151.

[69 FR 46434, Aug. 3, 2004]
paragraph (a) of this section, unless lesions are first shown so soon after entry on active service as to compel the conclusion, on the basis of sound medical principles, that they existed prior to entry on active service.

(c) **Primary lesions.** Healed primary type tuberculosis shown at the time of entrance into active service will not be taken as evidence to rebut direct or presumptive service connection for active reinfection type pulmonary tuberculosis.


§ 3.371 Presumptive service connection for tuberculous disease; wartime and service on or after January 1, 1947.

(a) **Pulmonary tuberculosis.** (1) Evidence of activity on comparative study of X-ray films showing pulmonary tuberculosis within the 3-year presumptive period provided by § 3.307(a)(3) will be taken as establishing service connection for active pulmonary tuberculosis subsequently diagnosed by approved methods but service connection and evaluation may be assigned only from the date of such diagnosis or other evidence of clinical activity.

(2) A notation of inactive tuberculosis of the reinfection type at induction or enlistment definitely prevents the grant of service connection under § 3.307 for active tuberculosis, regardless of the fact that it was shown within the appropriate presumptive period.

(b) **Pleurisy with effusion without obvious cause.** Pleurisy with effusion without evidence of diagnostic studies ruling out obvious nontuberculous causes will qualify as active tuberculosis. The requirements for presumptive service connection will be the same as those for tuberculous pleurisy.

(c) **Tuberculous pleurisy and endobronchial tuberculosis.** Tuberculous pleurisy and endobronchial tuberculosis fall within the category of pulmonary tuberculosis for the purpose of service connection on a presumptive basis. Either will be held incurred in service when initially manifested within 36 months after the veteran’s separation from service as determined under § 3.307(a)(2).

(d) **Miliary tuberculosis.** Service connection for miliary tuberculosis involving the lungs is to be determined in the same manner as for other active pulmonary tuberculosis.


§ 3.372 Initial grant following inactivity of tuberculosis.

When service connection is granted initially on an original or reopened claim for pulmonary or nonpulmonary tuberculosis and there is satisfactory evidence that the condition was active previously but is now inactive (arrested), it will be presumed that the disease continued to be active for 1 year after the last date of established activity, provided there is no evidence to establish activity or inactivity in the intervening period. For a veteran entitled to receive compensation on August 19, 1968, the beginning date of graduated ratings will commence at the end of the 1-year period. For a veteran who was not receiving or entitled to receive compensation on August 19, 1968, ratings will be assigned in accordance with the Schedule for Rating Disabilities (part 4 of this chapter). This section is not applicable to running award cases.

[33 FR 16275, Nov. 6, 1968]

§ 3.373 [Reserved]

§ 3.374 Effect of diagnosis of active tuberculosis.

(a) **Service diagnosis.** Service department diagnosis of active pulmonary tuberculosis will be accepted unless a board of medical examiners, Clinic Director or Chief, Outpatient Service certifies, after considering all the evidence, including the favoring or opposing tuberculosis and activity, that such diagnosis was incorrect. Doubtful cases may be referred to the Chief Medical Director in Central Office.

(b) **Department of Veterans Affairs diagnosis.** Diagnosis of active pulmonary tuberculosis by the medical authorities of the Department of Veterans Affairs as the result of examination, observation, or treatment will be accepted for
rating purposes. Reference to the Clinic Director or Chief, Outpatient Service, will be in order in questionable cases and, if necessary, to the Chief Medical Director in Central Office.

(c) Private physician’s diagnosis. Diagnosis of active pulmonary tuberculosis by private physicians on the basis of their examination, observation or treatment will not be accepted to show the disease was initially manifested after discharge from active service unless confirmed by acceptable clinical, X-ray or laboratory studies, or by findings of active tuberculosis based upon acceptable hospital observation or treatment.


§ 3.375 Determination of inactivity (complete arrest) in tuberculosis.

(a) Pulmonary tuberculosis. A veteran shown to have had pulmonary tuberculosis will be held to have reached a condition of “complete arrest” when a diagnosis of inactive is made.

(b) Nonpulmonary disease. Determination of complete arrest of nonpulmonary tuberculosis requires absence of evidence of activity for 6 months. If there are two or more foci of such tuberculosis, one of which is active, the condition will not be considered to be inactive until the tuberculous process has reached arrest in its entirety.

(c) Arrest following surgery. Where there has been surgical excision of the lesion or organ, the date of complete arrest will be the date of discharge from the hospital, or 6 months from the date of excision, whichever is later.


§§ 3.376–3.377 [Reserved]

§ 3.378 Changes from activity in pulmonary tuberculosis pension cases.

A permanent and total disability rating in effect during hospitalization will not be discontinued before hospital discharge on the basis of a change in classification from active. At hospital discharge, the permanent and total rating will be discontinued unless (a) the medical evidence does not support a finding of complete arrest (§ 3.375), or (b) where complete arrest is shown but the medical authorities recommend that employment not be resumed or be resumed only for short hours (not more than 4 hours a day for a 5-day week). If either of the two aforementioned conditions is met, discontinuance will be deferred pending examination in 6 months. Although complete arrest may be established upon that examination, the permanent and total rating may be extended for a further period of 6 months provided the veteran’s employment is limited to short hours as recommended by the medical authorities (not more than 4 hours a day for a 5-day week). Similar extensions may be granted under the same conditions at the end of 12 and 18 months periods. At the expiration of 24 months after hospitalization, the case will be considered under § 3.321(b) if continued short hours of employment is recommended or if other evidence warrants submission.


§ 3.379 Anterior poliomyelitis.

If the first manifestations of acute anterior poliomyelitis present themselves in a veteran within 35 days of termination of active military service, it is probable that the infection occurred during service. If they first appear after this period, it is probable that the infection was incurred after service.

[26 FR 1592, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.380 Diseases of allergic etiology.

Diseases of allergic etiology, including bronchial asthma and urticaria, may not be disposed of routinely for compensation purposes as constitutional or developmental abnormalities. Service connection must be determined on the evidence as to existence prior to enlistment and, if so existent, a comparative study must be made of its severity at enlistment and subsequently. Increase in the degree of disability during service may not be disposed of routinely as natural progress nor as due to the inherent nature of the disease. Seasonal and other acute allergic manifestations subsiding on the absence of or removal of the allergen are generally to be regarded as acute diseases,
healing without residuals. The determination as to service incurrence or aggravation must be on the whole evidentiary showing.

[26 FR 1592, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.381 Service connection of dental conditions for treatment purposes.

(a) Treatable carious teeth, replaceable missing teeth, dental or alveolar abscesses, and periodontal disease will be considered service-connected solely for the purpose of establishing eligibility for outpatient dental treatment as provided in § 17.161 of this chapter.

(b) The rating activity will consider each defective or missing tooth and each disease of the teeth and periodontal tissues separately to determine whether the condition was incurred or aggravated in line of duty during active service. When applicable, the rating activity will determine whether the condition is due to combat or other in-service trauma, or whether the veteran was interned as a prisoner of war.

(c) In determining service connection, the condition of teeth and periodontal tissues at the time of entry into active duty will be considered. Treatment during service, including filling or extraction of a tooth, or placement of a prosthesis, will not be considered evidence of aggravation of a condition that was noted at entry, unless additional pathology developed after 180 days or more of active service.

(d) The following principles apply to dental conditions noted at entry and treated during service:

(1) Teeth noted as normal at entry will be service-connected if they were filled or extracted after 180 days or more of active service.

(2) Teeth noted as filled at entry will be service-connected if they were extracted, or if the existing filling was replaced, after 180 days or more of active service.

(3) Teeth noted as carious but restorable at entry will not be service-connected on the basis that they were filled during service. However, new caries that developed 180 days or more after such a tooth was filled will be service-connected.

(4) Teeth noted as carious but restorable at entry, whether or not filled, will be service-connected if extraction was required after 180 days or more of active service.

(5) Teeth noted at entry as non-restorable will not be service-connected, regardless of treatment during service.

(6) Teeth noted as missing at entry will not be service connected, regardless of treatment during service.

(e) The following will not be considered service-connected for treatment purposes:

(1) Calculus;

(2) Acute periodontal disease;

(3) Third molars, unless disease or pathology of the tooth developed after 180 days or more of active service, or was due to combat or in-service trauma; and

(4) Impacted or malposed teeth, and other developmental defects, unless disease or pathology of these teeth developed after 180 days or more of active service.

(f) Teeth extracted because of chronic periodontal disease will be service-connected only if they were extracted after 180 days or more of active service.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1712)

[64 FR 30393, June 8, 1999]

§ 3.382 [Reserved]

§ 3.383 Special consideration for paired organs and extremities.

(a) Entitlement criteria. Compensation is payable for the combinations of service-connected and nonservice-connected disabilities specified in paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(5) of this section as if both disabilities were service-connected, provided the nonservice-connected disability is not the result of the veteran’s own willful misconduct.

(1) Impairment of vision in one eye as a result of service-connected disability and impairment of vision in the other eye as a result of non-service-connected disability and

(i) The impairment of vision in each eye is rated at a visual acuity of 20/200 or less; or

(ii) The peripheral field of vision for each eye is 20 degrees or less.

(2) Loss or loss of use of one kidney as a result of service-connected disability and involvement of the other kidney as a result of nonservice-connected disability.
(3) Hearing impairment in one ear compensable to a degree of 10 percent or more as a result of service-connected disability and hearing impairment as a result of nonservice-connected disability that meets the provisions of §3.385 in the other ear.

(4) Loss or loss of use of one hand or one foot as a result of service-connected disability and loss or loss of use of the other hand or foot as a result of nonservice-connected disability.

(5) Permanent service-connected disability of one lung, rated 50 percent or more disabling, in combination with a nonservice-connected disability of the other lung.

(b) Effect of judgment or settlement. (1) If a veteran receives any money or property of value pursuant to an award in a judicial proceeding based upon, or a settlement or compromise of, any cause of action for damages for the nonservice-connected disability which established entitlement under this section, the increased compensation payable by reason of this section shall not be paid for any month following the month in which any such money or property is received until such time as the total amount of such increased compensation that would otherwise have been payable equals the total of the amount of any such money received and the fair market value of any such property received. The provisions of this section do not apply, however, to any portion of such increased compensation payable for any period preceding the end of the month in which such money or property of value was received.

(2) With respect to the disability combinations specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3) and (a)(5) of this section, the provisions of this paragraph apply only to awards of increased compensation made on or after October 28, 1986.

(c) Social security and workers' compensation. Benefits received under social security or workers' compensation are not subject to recoupment under paragraph (b) of this section even though such benefits may have been awarded pursuant to a judicial proceeding.

(d) Veteran’s duty to report. Any person entitled to increased compensation under this section shall promptly report to VA the receipt of any money or property received pursuant to a judicial proceeding based upon, or a settlement or compromise of, any cause of action or other right of recovery for damages for the nonservice-connected loss or loss of use of the impaired extremity upon which entitlement under this section is based. The amount to be reported is the total of the amount of money received and the fair market value of property received. Expenses incident to recovery, such as attorneys’ fees, may not be deducted from the amount to be reported.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1160)

Cross-References: §3.385 Disability due to impaired hearing; §4.85 Evaluation of hearing impairment.

[53 FR 23236, June 21, 1988, as amended at 69 FR 48149, Aug. 9, 2004; 74 FR 11483, Mar. 18, 2009]

§ 3.384 Psychosis.

For purposes of this part, the term “psychosis” means any of the following disorders listed in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision, of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-IV-TR):

(a) Brief Psychotic Disorder;

(b) Delusional Disorder;

(c) Psychotic Disorder Due to General Medical Condition;

(d) Psychotic Disorder Not Otherwise Specified;

(e) Schizoaffective Disorder;

(f) Schizophrenia;

(g) Schizophreniform Disorder;

(h) Shared Psychotic Disorder; and

(i) Substance-Induced Psychotic Disorder.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1101, 1112(a) and (b))

[71 FR 42760, July 28, 2006]

§ 3.385 Disability due to impaired hearing.

For the purposes of applying the laws administered by VA, impaired hearing will be considered to be a disability when the auditory threshold in any of the frequencies 500, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000 Hertz is 40 decibels or greater; or when the auditory thresholds for at least three of the frequencies 500, 1000, 2000,
3000, or 4000 Hertz are 26 decibels or greater; or when speech recognition scores using the Maryland CNC Test are less than 94 percent.

[59 FR 60560, Nov. 25, 1994]

§ 3.400 Effective dates

§ 3.400 General.

Except as otherwise provided, the effective date of an evaluation and award of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation based on an original claim, a claim reopened after final disallowance, or a claim for increase will be the date of receipt of the claim or the date entitlement arose, whichever is the later.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(a))

(a) Unless specifically provided. On basis of facts found.

(b) Disability benefits—(1) Disability pension (§ 3.3). An award of disability pension may not be effective prior to the date entitlement arose.

(i) Claims received prior to October 1, 1984. Date of receipt of claim or date on which the veteran became permanently and totally disabled, if claim is filed within one year from such date, whichever is to the advantage of the veteran.

(ii) Claims received on or after October 1, 1984. Date of receipt of claim, or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. While rating board judgment must be applied to the facts and circumstances of each case, extensive hospitalization will generally qualify as sufficiently incapacitating to have prevented the filing of a claim. For the purposes of this subparagraph, the presumptive provisions of § 3.342(a) do not apply.

(2) Disability compensation—(i) Direct service connection (§ 3.4(b)). Day following separation from active service or date entitlement arose if claim is received within 1 year after separation from service; otherwise, date of receipt of claim, or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. Separation from service means separation under conditions other than dishonorable from continuous active service which extended from the date the disability was incurred or aggravated.

(ii) Presumptive service connection (§§ 3.307, 3.308, 3.309). Date entitlement arose, if claim is received within 1 year after separation from active duty; otherwise date of receipt of claim, or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. Where the requirements for service connection are met during service, the effective date will be the day following separation from service if there was continuous active service following the period of service on which the presumption is based and a claim is received within 1 year after separation from active duty.

(c) Death benefits—(1) Death in service (38 U.S.C. 5110(j), Pub. L. 87–825) (§§ 3.4(c), 3.5(b)). First day of the month fixed by the Secretary concerned as the date of actual or presumed death, if claim is received within 1 year after the date the initial report of actual death or finding of presumed death was made; however benefits based on a report of actual death are not payable for any period for which the claimant has received, or is entitled to receive an allowance, allotment, or service pay of the veteran.

(2) Service-connected death after separation from service (38 U.S.C. 5110(d), Pub. L. 87–825) (§§ 3.4(c), 3.5(b)). First day of the month in which the veteran’s death occurred if claim is received within 1 year after the date of death; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(3) Nonservice-connected death after separation from service. (i) For awards based on claims received prior to October 1, 1984, or on or after December 10, 2004, first day of the month in which the veteran’s death occurred if claim is
received within one year after the date of death; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(ii) For awards based on claims received between October 1, 1984, and December 9, 2004, first day of the month in which the veteran’s death occurred if claim is received within 45 days after the date of death; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(d))

(4) Dependency and indemnity compensation—

(i) Deaths prior to January 1, 1957 (§ 3.702). Date of receipt of election.

(ii) Child (38 U.S.C. 5110(e), Pub. L. 87–835). First day of the month in which entitlement arose if claim is received within one year after the date of entitlement; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(iii) Deaths on or after May 1, 1957 (in-service waiver cases) (§§ 3.5(b)(3) and 3.702). Date of receipt of election. (See § 3.114(a)).

(d) [Reserved]

(e) Apportionment (§§ 3.450 through 3.461, 3.551). On original claims, in accordance with the facts found. On other than original claims from the first day of the month following the month in which:

(1) Claim is received for apportionment of a veteran’s award, except that where payments to him (her) have been interrupted, apportionment will be effective the day following date of last payment if a claim for apportionment is received within one year after that date;

(2) Notice is received that a child included in the surviving spouse’s award is not in the surviving spouse’s custody, except that where payments to the surviving spouse have been interrupted, apportionment will be effective the day following date of last payment if such notice is received within one year after that date.

(f) Federal employees’ compensation cases (§ 3.708). Date authorized by applicable law, subject to any payments made by the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs under the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act over the same period of time.

(g) Correction of military records (38 U.S.C. 5110(i); Pub. L. 87–825). Where entitlement is established because of the correction, change or modification of a military record, or of a discharge or dismissal, by a Board established under 10 U.S.C. 1552 or 1553, or because of other corrective action by competent military naval, or air authority, the award will be effective from the latest of these dates:

(1) Date application for change, correction, or modification was filed with the service department, in either an original or a disallowed claim;

(2) Date of receipt of claim if claim was disallowed; or

(3) One year prior to date of reopening of disallowed claim.

(h) Difference of opinion (§ 3.105). (1) As to decisions not final prior to receipt of an application for reconsideration or to reopen, or prior to reconsideration on Department of Veterans Affairs initiative, the date from which benefits would have been payable if the former decision had been favorable.

(2) As to decisions which have become final (by appellate decision or failure to timely initiate and perfect an appeal) prior to receipt of an application for reconsideration or to reopen, the date of receipt of such application or the date entitlement arose, whichever is later.

(3) As to decisions which have become final (by appellate decision or failure to timely initiate and perfect an appeal) and reconsideration is undertaken solely on Department of Veterans Affairs initiative, the date of Central Office approval authorizing a favorable decision or the date of the favorable Board of Veterans Appeals decision.

(4) Where the initial determination for the purpose of death benefits is favorable, the commencing date will be determined without regard to the fact that the action may reverse, on a difference of opinion, an unfavorable decision for disability purposes by an adjudicative agency other than the Board of Veterans Appeals, which was in effect at the date of the veteran's death.

(i) Disability or death due to hospitalization, etc. (38 U.S.C. 5110(c), (d); Public Law 87–825; §§ 3.358, 3.361, and 3.800.) (1) Disability. Date injury or aggravation was suffered if claim is received within one year after that date; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.
Department of Veterans Affairs § 3.400

(2) Death. First day of month in which the veteran's death occurred if a claim is received within 1 year following the date of death; otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(j) Election of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits (§ 3.700 series). (1) Unless otherwise provided, the date of receipt of election, subject to prior payments.

(2) July 1, 1960, as to pension payable under Pub. L. 86–211, where pension is payable for June 30, 1960, under the law in effect on that date, including an award approved after that date, if the election is filed within (generally) 120 days from date of notice of the award. The award will be subject to prior payments over the same period of time.

(3) January 1, 1965, as to pension payable under Pub. L. 86–211 (73 Stat. 432) as amended by Pub. L. 88–664 if there was basic eligibility for pension on June 30, 1960, under the law in effect on that date and an election if filed prior to May 1, 1965.

(4) January 1, 1965, as to pension payable under Pub. L. 86–211 (73 Stat. 432) as amended by Pub. L. 86–664 if there was basic eligibility on that date for pension on the basis of service in the Indian wars or Spanish-American War and an election is filed prior to May 1, 1965.

(5) January 1, 1969, as to pension payable under Pub. L. 86–211 (73 Stat. 432) as amended by Pub. L. 90–275 (82 Stat. 64), if there was basic eligibility for pension on June 30, 1960, under the law in effect on that date and an election is filed prior to May 1, 1965.

(6) August 1, 1972, as to pension payable under Pub. L. (73 Stat. 432) as amended by Pub. L. 92–328 (86 Stat. 439) if there was basic eligibility on that date based on death of a veteran of the Spanish-American War and an election is filed prior to December 1, 1972.

(k) Error (§ 3.105). Date from which benefits would have been payable if the corrected decision had been made on the date of the reversed decision.

(1) Foreign residence. (See § 3.653).

(m) Forfeiture (§§ 3.901, 3.902). Day following date of last payment on award to payee who forfeited.

(n) Guardian. Day following date of last payment to prior payee or fiduciary.

Note: Award to guardian shall include amounts withheld for possible apportionments as well as money in Personal Funds of Patients.

(o) Increases (38 U.S.C. 5110(a) and 5110(b)(2), Pub. L. 94–71, 89 Stat. 395; §§ 3.109, 3.156, 3.157) — (1) General. Except as provided in paragraph (o)(2) of this section and § 3.401(b), date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. A retroactive increase or additional benefit will not be awarded after basic entitlement has been terminated, such as by severance of service connection.

(2) Disability compensation. Earliest date as of which it is factually ascertainable that an increase in disability had occurred if claim is received within 1 year from such date otherwise, date of receipt of claim.

(p) Liberalizing laws and Department of Veterans Affairs issues. See § 3.114.

(q) New and material evidence (§ 3.156) other than service department records — (1) Received within appeal period or prior to appellate decision. The effective date will be as though the former decision had not been rendered. See §§ 20.1103, 20.1104 and 20.1304(b)(1) of this chapter.

(2) Received after final disallowance. Date of receipt of new claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later.

(r) Reopened claims. (§§ 3.109, 3.156, 3.157, 3.160(e)) Date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later, except as provided in § 20.1304(b)(1) of this chapter.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(s) Renunciation (§ 3.106). Except as provided in § 3.106(c). Date of receipt of new claim.

(t) Whereabouts now known. (See § 3.158(c).)

(u) Void, annulled or terminated marriage of a child (38 U.S.C. 5110(a), (b), (l); Pub. L. 93–327, 88 Stat. 1702; § 3.55) — (1) Void. Date the parties ceased to cohabit or date of receipt of claim, whichever is later.

(2) Annulled. Date the decree of annulment became final if claim is filed within 1 year after that date; otherwise date of receipt of claim.
§ 3.401 Veterans.

Awards of pension or compensation payable to or for a veteran will be effective as follows:

(a) Aid and attendance and housebound benefits. (1) Except as provided in §3.400(o)(2), the date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. However, when an award of pension or compensation based on an original or reopened claim is effective for a period prior to the date of receipt of the claim, any additional pension or compensation payable by reason of need for aid and attendance or housebound status shall also be awarded for any part of the award’s retroactive period for which entitlement to the additional benefit is established.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; 5110(b)(1), (3))

(2) Date of departure from hospital, institution, or domiciliary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(b) Spouse, additional compensation for aid and attendance: Date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. However, when an award of disability compensation based on an original or reopened claim is effective for a period prior to date of receipt of the claim additional disability compensation payable to a veteran by reason of the veteran’s spouse’s need for aid and attendance shall also be awarded for any part of the award’s retroactive period for which the spouse’s entitlement to aid and attendance is established.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; 5110(b)(1), (2))
(b) Dependent, additional compensation or pension for. Latest of the following dates:

(1) Date of claim. This term means the following, listed in their order of applicability:
   (i) Date of veteran’s marriage, or birth of his or her child, or, adoption of a child, if the evidence of the event is received within 1 year of the event; otherwise.
   (ii) Date notice is received of the dependent’s existence, if evidence is received within 1 year of the Department of Veterans Affairs request.

(2) Date dependency arises.

(3) Effective date of the qualifying disability rating provided evidence of dependency is received within 1 year of notification of such rating action.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(f))

(4) Date of commencement of veteran’s award. (Other increases, see § 3.400(o). For school attendance see § 3.667.)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110 (f), (n))

(c) Divorce of veteran and spouse. See § 3.501(d).

(d) Institutional awards (§ 3.852)—(1) Chief officer of non-Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or institution. From first day of month in which award is approved or day following date of last payment to veteran, whichever is later.

   NOTE: If apportionment under §§ 3.452(c) and 3.454 is in order or payment under § 3.850(a), Personal Funds of Patients account will not be set up but difference withheld for dependents.

(2) Director of a Department of Veterans Affairs medical center or domiciliary. From day following date of last payment to veteran where veteran previously received payments. On initial or resumed payments from date of entitlement to benefits subject to any amounts payable to or withheld for apportionments for dependents.

(e) Retirement pay (§ 3.750)—(1) Election. Date of entitlement if timely filed. Subject to prior payments of retirement pay.

(2) Waiver. Day following date of discontinuance or reduction of retirement pay.

(3) Reelection. Day the reelection is received by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(f) Service pension (§ 3.3(a)). Date of receipt of claim.

(g) Tuberculosis, special compensation for arrested. As of the date the graduated evaluation of the disability or compensation for that degree of disability combined with other service-connected disabilities would provide compensation payable at a rate less than $67. See § 3.350(g).

(h) Temporary increase “General Policy in Rating,” 1945 Schedule for Rating Disabilities—(1) Section 4.29 of this chapter. Date of entrance into hospital, after 21 days of continuous hospitalization for treatment.

(2) Section 4.30 of this chapter. Date of entrance into hospital, after discharge from hospitalization (regular or release to non-bed care).

(i) Increased disability pension based on attainment of age 76. First day of the month during which veteran attains age 78.

housebound status shall also be awarded for any part of the award’s retroactive period for which entitlement to the additional benefit is established.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; 5110(d))

(2) Date of departure from hospital, institutional or domiciliary care at Department of Veterans Affairs expense. This is applicable only to aid and attendance benefits. Housebound benefits may be awarded during hospitalization at Department of Veterans Affairs expense.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

[45 FR 34887, May 23, 1980]

§ 3.403 Children.

(a) Awards of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation to or for a child, or to or for a veteran or surviving spouse on behalf of such child, will be effective as follows:

1. Permanently incapable of selfsupport (§ 3.57(a)(3)). In original claims, date fixed by §§ 3.400(b) or (c) or 3.401(b). In claims for continuation of payments, 18th birthday if the condition is claimed prior to or within 1 year after that date; otherwise from date of receipt of claim.

2. Majority (§ 3.854). Direct payment to child if competent, from date of majority or, date of last payment, whichever is the earlier date.

3. Posthumous child. Date of child’s birth if proof of birth is received within 1 year of that date, or if notice of the expected or actual birth meeting the requirements of an informal claim, is received within 1 year after the veteran’s death; otherwise, date of claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(n))

4. School attendance. (See §3.667.)

5. Adopted child. Date of adoption either interlocutory or final or date of adoptive placement agreement, but not earlier than the date from which benefits are otherwise payable.

(b) Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1805 for an individual suffering from spina bifida who is a child of a Vietnam veteran. Except as provided in §3.814(e), an award of the monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1805 to or for an individual suffering from spina bifida who is a child of a Vietnam veteran will be effective either date of birth if claim is received within one year of that date, or the later of the date of claim or the date entitlement arose, but not earlier than October 1, 1997.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1805, 1832, 5110)

(c) Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1815 for an individual with covered birth defects who is a child of a woman Vietnam veteran. Except as provided in §3.114(a) or §3.815(i), an award of the monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1815 to or for an individual with one or more covered birth defects who is a child of a woman Vietnam veteran will be effective as of the date VA received the claim (or the date of birth if the claim is received within one year of that date), the date entitlement arose, or December 1, 2001, whichever is latest.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1815, 1832, 1834, 5110)

(d) Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1821 for an individual suffering from spina bifida who is a child of a veteran with covered service in Korea. Except as provided in §3.814(e), an award of the monetary allowance based on the existence of an individual suffering from spina bifida who is a child of a veteran with covered service in Korea will be effective from either the date of birth if claim is received within 1 year of that date, or the later of the date of claim or date entitlement arose, but not earlier than December 16, 2003.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1821, 1832, 5110)


§ 3.404 Parents.

Awards of additional amounts of compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation based on a parent’s need for aid and attendance will be effective the date of receipt of claim or date entitlement arose, whichever is later. However, when an award of dependency and indemnity compensation based on an original or reopened claim
is effective for a period prior to date of receipt of claim, any additional dependency and indemnity compensation payable by reason of need for aid and attendance may also be awarded for any part of the award’s retroactive period for which entitlement to aid and attendance is established. When the parent is provided hospital, institutional or domiciliary care at Department of Veterans Affairs expense, the effective date will be the date of departure therefrom.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; 5110(d))
[45 FR 34887, May 23, 1980]

§ 3.405 Filipino veterans and their survivors; benefits at the full-dollar rate.

Public Laws 106–377 and 108–183, which provide disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation at full-dollar rates to certain Filipino veterans and their survivors, are considered liberalizing laws. As such, the provisions of 38 CFR 3.114(a) apply when determining the effective date of an award. If the requirements of § 3.114(a) are not satisfied, then the effective date of an award of benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 will be determined as follows:

(a) Initial entitlement to full-dollar rate. The latest of the following:

(1) Date entitlement arose;

(2) Date on which the veteran or survivor first met the residency and citizenship or permanent resident alien status requirements in § 3.42, if VA receives evidence of this within one year of that date; or

(3) Effective date of service connection, provided VA receives evidence that the veteran or survivor meets the residency and citizenship or permanent resident alien status requirements in § 3.42 within one year of the date of notification of the decision establishing service connection.

(b) Resumption of full-dollar rate. (1) Date the veteran or survivor returned to the United States after an absence of more than 60 consecutive days; or

(2) First day of the calendar year following the year in which the veteran or survivor was absent from the United States for a total of 183 days or more, or the first day after that date that the veteran or survivor returns to the United States.

[71 FR 8221, Feb. 16, 2006]

APPORTIONMENTS

§ 3.450 General.

(a)(1) All or any part of the pension, compensation, or emergency officers’ retirement pay payable on account of any veteran may be apportioned.

(i) On behalf of his or her spouse, children, or dependent parents if the veteran is incompetent and is being furnished hospital treatment, institutional, or domiciliary care by the United States, or any political subdivision thereof.

(ii) If the veteran is not residing with his or her spouse, or if the veteran’s children are not residing with the veteran and the veteran is not reasonably discharging his or her responsibility for the spouse’s or children’s support.

(2) Where any of the children of a deceased veteran are not living with the veteran’s surviving spouse, the pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation otherwise payable to the surviving spouse may be apportioned.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5307)

(b) Except as provided in § 3.458(e), no apportionment of disability or death benefits will be made or changed solely because a child has entered active duty with the air, military, or naval services of the United States.

(c) No apportionment will be made where the veteran, the veteran’s spouse (when paid “as wife” or “as husband”), surviving spouse, or fiduciary is providing for dependents. The additional benefits for such dependents will be paid to the veteran, spouse, surviving spouse, or fiduciary.

(d) Any amounts payable for children under §§ 3.459, 3.460 and 3.461 will be equally divided among the children.

(e) The amount payable for a child in custody of and residing with the surviving spouse shall be paid to the surviving spouse. Amounts payable to a surviving spouse for a child in the surviving spouse’s custody but residing with someone else may be apportioned.
§ 3.451 Special apportionments.

Without regard to any other provision regarding apportionment where hardship is shown to exist, pension, compensation, emergency officers’ retirement pay, or dependency and indemnity compensation may be specially apportioned between the veteran and his or her dependents or the surviving spouse and children on the basis of the facts in the individual case as long as it does not cause undue hardship to the other persons in interest, except as to those cases covered by §3.458(b) and (c). In determining the basis for special apportionment, consideration will be given such factors as: Amount of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits payable; other resources and income of the veteran and those dependents in whose behalf apportionment may be claimed; and special needs of the veteran, his or her dependents, and the apportionment claimants. The amount apportioned should generally be consistent with the total number of dependents involved. Ordinarily, apportionment of more than 50 percent of the veteran’s benefits would constitute undue hardship on him or her while apportionment of less than 20 percent of his or her benefits would not provide a reasonable amount for any apportionee.

[44 FR 45940, Aug. 6, 1979]

§ 3.452 Situations when benefits may be apportioned.

Veterans benefits may be apportioned:

(a) If the surviving spouse is not reasonably contributing to the child’s support.

(f) Prior to release of any amounts the relationship of the claimant and the dependency of a parent will be fully developed, and the necessary evidence secured.

(g) The provisions of §3.460 are applicable where the surviving spouse is entitled to a higher rate of pension under the circumstances described in that section.


§ 3.453 Veterans compensation or service pension or retirement pay.

Rates of apportionment of disability compensation, service pension or retirement pay will be determined under §3.451.

[26 FR 7266, Aug. 11, 1961]

§ 3.454 Veterans disability pension.

Apportionment of disability pension will be as follows:

(a) Where a married veteran is receiving section 306 or improved pension and the amount payable is reduced under §3.551(c) because of hospitalization, an apportionment may be paid to the veteran’s spouse as provided in §3.454(b).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a); 5017; 5503(a))

(d) Where additional compensation is payable on behalf of a parent and the veteran or his or her guardian neglects or refuses to contribute such an amount to the support of the parent the additional compensation will be paid to the parent upon receipt of a claim.


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§ 3.458 Veteran’s benefits not apportionable.

Veteran’s benefits will not be apportioned:

(a) Where the total benefit payable to the disabled person does not permit payment of a reasonable amount to any apportionee.

(b) Where the spouse of the disabled person has been found guilty of conjugal infidelity by a court having proper jurisdiction.

(c) For purported or legal spouse of the veteran if it has been determined that he or she has lived with another person and held herself or himself out openly to the public to be the spouse of such other person, except where such relationship was entered into in good faith with a reasonable basis (for example trickery on the part of the veteran) for the spouse believing that the marriage to the veteran was legally terminated. No apportionment to the spouse will thereafter be made unless there has been a reconciliation and later estrangement.

(d) Where the child of the disabled person has been legally adopted by another person, except the additional compensation payable for the child.

(e) Where a child enters the active military, air, or naval service, any additional amount will be paid to the veteran unless such child is included in an existing apportionment to an estranged spouse. No adjustment in the apportioned award will be made based on the child’s entry into service.

(f) Where a child enters the active military, air, or naval service, any additional amount will be paid to the veteran unless such child is included in an existing apportionment to an estranged spouse. No adjustment in the apportioned award will be made based on the child’s entry into service.

[Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a)]

§ 3.458 Veteran’s benefits not apportionable.

Veteran’s benefits will not be apportioned:

(a) Where the total benefit payable to the disabled person does not permit payment of a reasonable amount to any apportionee.

(b) Where the spouse of the disabled person has been found guilty of conjugal infidelity by a court having proper jurisdiction.

(c) For purported or legal spouse of the veteran if it has been determined that he or she has lived with another person and held herself or himself out openly to the public to be the spouse of such other person, except where such relationship was entered into in good faith with a reasonable basis (for example trickery on the part of the veteran) for the spouse believing that the marriage to the veteran was legally terminated. No apportionment to the spouse will thereafter be made unless there has been a reconciliation and later estrangement.

(d) Where the child of the disabled person has been legally adopted by another person, except the additional compensation payable for the child.

(e) Where a child enters the active military, air, or naval service, any additional amount will be paid to the veteran unless such child is included in an existing apportionment to an estranged spouse. No adjustment in the apportioned award will be made based on the child’s entry into service.

(f) For the spouse, child, father or mother of a disabled veteran, where forfeiture was declared prior to September 2, 1959, if the dependent is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs to have been guilty of mutiny, treason, sabotage, or rendering assistance to an enemy of the United States or its allies.

[Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a)]

§ 3.458 Veteran’s benefits not apportionable.

Veteran’s benefits will not be apportioned:

(a) Where the total benefit payable to the disabled person does not permit payment of a reasonable amount to any apportionee.

(b) Where the spouse of the disabled person has been found guilty of conjugal infidelity by a court having proper jurisdiction.

(c) For purported or legal spouse of the veteran if it has been determined that he or she has lived with another person and held herself or himself out openly to the public to be the spouse of such other person, except where such relationship was entered into in good faith with a reasonable basis (for example trickery on the part of the veteran) for the spouse believing that the marriage to the veteran was legally terminated. No apportionment to the spouse will thereafter be made unless there has been a reconciliation and later estrangement.

(d) Where the child of the disabled person has been legally adopted by another person, except the additional compensation payable for the child.

(e) Where a child enters the active military, air, or naval service, any additional amount will be paid to the veteran unless such child is included in an existing apportionment to an estranged spouse. No adjustment in the apportioned award will be made based on the child’s entry into service.

(f) For the spouse, child, father or mother of a disabled veteran, where forfeiture was declared prior to September 2, 1959, if the dependent is determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs to have been guilty of mutiny, treason, sabotage, or rendering assistance to an enemy of the United States or its allies.
§ 3.459 Death compensation.

(a) Death compensation will be apportioned if the child or children of the deceased veteran are not in the custody of the surviving spouse.

(b) The surviving spouse may not be paid less than $65 monthly plus the amount of an aid and attendance allowance where applicable.

§ 3.460 Death pension.

Death pension will be apportioned if the child or children of the deceased veteran are not in the custody of the surviving spouse. Where the surviving spouse’s rate is in excess of $70 monthly because of having been the spouse of the veteran during service or because of need for regular aid and attendance, the additional amount will be added to the surviving spouse’s share.

(a) Civil, Indian and Spanish-American wars. Where pension is payable under 38 U.S.C. 1532, 1534, or 1536 apportionment will be based on the facts in the individual case in accordance with §3.451.

(b) Section 306 and old-law death pension. Appointment of benefits provided under these pension programs will be at rates approved by the Under Secretary for Benefits except when the facts and circumstances in a case warrant special apportionment under §3.451.

(c) Improved death pension. Apportionment of the benefits provided under this program shall be made under the special apportionment provision of §3.451.

§ 3.461 Dependency and indemnity compensation.

(a) Conditions under which apportionment may be made. The surviving spouse’s award of dependency and indemnity compensation will be apportioned where there is a child or children under 18 years of age and not in the custody of the surviving spouse. The surviving spouse’s award of dependency and indemnity compensation will not be apportioned under this condition for a child over the age of 18 years.

(b) Rates payable. (1) The share for each of the children under 18 years of age, including those in the surviving spouse’s custody as well as those who are not in such custody, will be at rates approved by the Under Secretary for Benefits except when the facts and circumstances in a case warrant special apportionment under §3.451. The share for the surviving spouse will be the difference between the children’s share and the total amount payable. In the application of this rule, however, the surviving spouse’s share will not be reduced to an amount less than 50 percent of that to which the surviving spouse would otherwise be entitled.

(2) The additional amount of aid and attendance, where applicable, will be added to the surviving spouse’s share and not otherwise included in the computation.

(3) Where the surviving spouse has elected to receive dependency and indemnity compensation instead of death compensation, the share of dependency and indemnity compensation for a child or children under 18 years of age will be whichever is the greater:

(i) The apportioned share computed under paragraph (b)(1) of this section; or

(ii) The share which would have been payable as death compensation but not
in excess of the total dependency and indemnity compensation.


REDUCTIONS AND DISCONTINUANCES

§ 3.500 General.
The effective date of a rating which results in the reduction or discontinuance of an award will be in accordance with the facts found except as provided in §3.105. The effective date of reduction or discontinuance of an award of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation for a payee or dependent will be the earliest of the dates stated in these paragraphs unless otherwise provided. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be effective the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b))

(a) Except as otherwise provided (38 U.S.C. 5112(a)). In accordance with the facts found.

(b) Error; payee’s or administrative (38 U.S.C. 5112(b), (9), (10)). (1) Effective date of award or day preceding act, whichever is later, but not prior to the date entitlement ceased, on an erroneous award based on an act of commission or omission by a payee or with the payee’s knowledge.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (r) of this section, and §3.501 (e) and (g), date of last payment on an erroneous award based solely on administrative error or error in judgment.

(c) Annual income. See §3.660.

(d) Apportionment (§§3.450 series; §3.550). (1) Except as otherwise provided, date of last payment when reason for apportionment no longer exists.

(2) Where pension was apportioned under §3.551(c), day preceding date of veteran’s release from hospital, unless overpayment would result; date of last payment if necessary to avoid overpayment.

(e) Federal employees’ compensation (§3.708). The day preceding the date the award of benefits under the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act became effective. If children on rolls and surviving spouse has primary title, award to children discontinued same date as surviving spouse’s award.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 8116)

(f) Contested claims §3.402(b) and §subpart F of part 20 of this chapter). Date of last payment.

(g) Death (38 U.S.C. 5112 (a), (b))—(1) Payee (includes apportionee). Last day of month before death.

(2) Dependent of payee (includes apportionee):

(i) Death prior to October 1, 1982: last day of the calendar year in which death occurred.

(ii) Death on or after October 1, 1982: last day of the month in which death occurred, except that section 306 and old-law pension reductions or terminations will continue to be effective the last day of the calendar year in which death occurred.

(3) Veteran receiving retirement pay. Date of death.


(1) Election of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits (§3.700 series). Day preceding beginning date of award under other law.

(j) Foreign residence (38 U.S.C. 5308(a)). See §3.653.

(k) Fraud (38 U.S.C. 6103(a), (d); §§3.669 and 3.901). Beginning date of award or day preceding date of fraudulent act, whichever is later.

(l) Guardian, marriage or divorce of (§3.856). Date of last payment (pending receipt of information as to change of name).

(m) Incompetency (§3.855). Date of last payment.

(n) Marriage (or remarriage) (38 U.S.C. 101(3), 5112 (b))—(1) Payee (includes apportionee). Last day of month before marriage.

(2) Dependent of payee (includes apportionee):

(i) Marriage prior to October 1, 1982: last day of the calendar year in which marriage occurred.

(ii) Marriage on or after October 1, 1982: last day of the month in which marriage occurred, except that section 306 and old-law pension reductions or terminations will continue to be effective the last day of the calendar year in which marriage occurred.
(3) Conduct of surviving spouse. Last day of month before inception of relationship.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(4), 501)

(o) Penal institutions. See §3.666.

(p) Philippines (38 U.S.C. 107(a)(3); §3.40). Date of last payment when recognition of service withdrawn.

(q) Renouncement (§3.106). Last day of the month in which the renouncement is received.

(r) Service connection (38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(6); §3.105). Last day of month following 60 days after notice to payee. Applies to reduced evaluation, and severance of service connection.

(s) Treasonable acts or subversive activities (38 U.S.C. 6104 and 6105; §§3.902, 3.903). (1) Treasonable acts. Date of the forfeiture decision or date of last payment, whichever is earlier.

(2) Subversive activities. Beginning date of award or day preceding date of commission of subversive activities for which convicted, whichever is later.

(t) Whereabouts unknown (§§3.158, 3.666). Date of last payment.

(u) Change in law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue, or interpretation. See §3.114.

(v) Failure to furnish evidence of continued eligibility. See §3.652 (a) and (b).

(w) Failure to furnish Social Security number. Last day of the month during which the 60 day period following the date of VA request expires.

(x) Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990 (§3.715). (Compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation only.) Last day of the month preceding the month in which payment under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990 is issued.

(y) Compensation for certain disabilities due to undiagnosed illnesses (§§3.105; 3.317). Last day of the month in which the 60-day period following notice to the payee of the final rating action expires. This applies to both reduced evaluations and severance of service connection. (Authority: Pub. L. 103–446; 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 8301)

Cross Reference: Failure to return questionnaire. See §3.661(b).

[26 FR 1596, Feb. 24, 1961]
Pension. Last day of month in which reduction or discontinuance is approved.

(2) Compensation. Last day of month following 60 days after notice to payee.

(h) Examination; failure to report. See §3.655.

(i) Hospitalization—(1) Section 3.551(b). Last day of the sixth calendar month following admission if veteran without dependents.

(2) Section 3.551(c). (i) Last day of the second calendar month following admission to domiciliary care if veteran without spouse or child or, though married, is receiving pension at the rate provided for a veteran without dependents. (ii) Last day of the third calendar month following admission for hospital or nursing home care if veteran without spouse or child or, though married, is receiving pension at the rate provided for a veteran without dependents. (iii) Upon readmission to hospital, domiciliary, or nursing home care within 6 months of a period for which pension was reduced under §3.551(e)(1), the last day of the month of such readmission.

(k) Lump-sum readjustment pay. See §3.700(a)(2).

(m) Temporary increase (38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(8); §4.29 of this chapter). Last day of month in which hospitalization or treatment terminated, whichever is earlier, where temporary increase in compensation was authorized because of hospitalization for treatment.

(n) Section 3.853. Incompetents; estate over $25,000. Incompetent veteran receiving compensation, without spouse, child, or dependent parent, whose estate exceeds $25,000: Last day of the
§ 3.502 Surviving spouses.

The effective date of discontinuance of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation to or for a surviving spouse will be the earliest of the dates stated in this section. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be payable the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(a) Additional allowance of dependency and indemnity compensation for children (38 U.S.C. 5112(b) § 3.5(e)(3). (1) If marriage occurred prior to October 1, 1982, the day preceding child’s 18th birthday or last day of calendar year in which child’s marriage occurred (see §3.500(n) (2) and (3)), whichever is earlier.

(2) If marriage occurred on or after October 1, 1982, the day preceding child’s 18th birthday or last day of the month in which marriage occurred (see §3.500(n) (2) and (3)), whichever is earlier.

(b) Pay grade; dependency and indemnity compensation (38 U.S.C. 1311(a), 5112(b)(10); Pub. L. 91–96, 83 Stat. 144).

Date of last payment when rate is reduced because of new certification of pay grade.

(c) Legal surviving spouse entitled. Date of last payment on award to another person as surviving spouse. See §3.657.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(d) Marriage. See §3.500(n).

(e) Aid and attendance (§3.351(a)). (1) Date of last payment, if need for aid and attendance has ceased.

(2) If hospitalized at Department of Veterans Affairs expense as a veteran, the date specified in §3.552(b) (1) or (3).

(f) Medicaid-covered nursing home care (§3.551(i)). (1) Last day of the calendar month in which Medicaid payments begin, last day of the month following 60 days after issuance of a prereduction notice required under §3.103(b)(2), or the earliest date on which payment may be reduced without creating an overpayment, whichever date is later; or

(2) If the surviving spouse willfully conceals information necessary to make the reduction, the last day of the month in which that willful concealment occurred.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503)


§ 3.503 Children.

(a) The effective date of discontinuance of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation to or for a child, or to or for a veteran or surviving spouse on behalf of such child, will be the earliest of the dates stated in this section. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be payable the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) Age 18 (or 23) (38 U.S.C. 5112(a); §3.57). Day before 18th (or 23d) birthday.

(2) Enters service. Date of last payment of apportioned disability benefits for child not in custody of estranged spouse. Full rate payable to veteran. No change where payments are being made for the child to the veteran, his (her) estranged spouse, his (her) surviving spouse, or to the fiduciary of a child not in the surviving spouse’s custody.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(3) Permanently incapable of selfsupport (38 U.S.C. 5112(a), (b)(6); Pub. L. 87–825, §§3.57, 3.950)—(1) Pension. Date of last payment.

(11) Compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation. Last day of
§ 3.504 Parents; aid and attendance.

The effective date of discontinuance of an increased award because of the parent's need for aid and attendance will be the day of last payment if need for aid and attendance has ceased. If hospitalized at Department of Veterans Affairs expense as a veteran the date will be specified in §3.552(b) (1) or (3).


§ 3.505 Filipino veterans and their survivors; benefits at the full-dollar rate.

The effective date of discontinuance of compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation for a Filipino veteran or his or her survivor under § 3.42 will be the earliest of the dates stated in this section. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be payable the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(a) If a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 is physically absent from the U.S. for a total of 183 days or more during any calendar year, VA will reduce benefits to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the 183rd day of absence from the U.S.

(b) If a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 is physically absent from the U.S. for more than 60 consecutive days, VA will reduce benefits to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the 61st day of the absence.

(c) If a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 loses either U.S. citizenship or status as an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S., VA will reduce benefits to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the day he or she no longer satisfies one of these criteria.

(d) If mail to a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 is returned to VA by the U.S. Postal Service, VA will make reasonable efforts to determine the correct mailing address. If VA is unable to determine the veteran’s or survivor’s correct address through reasonable efforts, VA will reduce benefits to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under law, effective the first day of the month that follows the month for which VA last paid benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107) [71 FR 8221, Feb. 16, 2006]

§ 3.505 Filipino veterans and their survivors; benefits at the full-dollar rate.

The effective date of discontinuance of compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation for a Filipino veteran or his or her survivor under § 3.42 will be the earliest of the dates stated in this section. Where an award is reduced, the reduced rate will be payable the day following the date of discontinuance of the greater benefit.

(a) If a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 is physically absent from the U.S. for a total of 183 days or more during any calendar year, VA will reduce benefits to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the 183rd day of absence from the U.S.

(b) If a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 is physically absent from the U.S. for more than 60 consecutive days, VA will reduce benefits to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the 61st day of the absence.

(c) If a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 losses either U.S. citizenship or status as an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S., VA will reduce benefits to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under the law, effective on the day he or she no longer satisfies one of these criteria.

(d) If mail to a veteran or survivor receiving benefits at the full-dollar rate under § 3.42 is returned to VA by the U.S. Postal Service, VA will make reasonable efforts to determine the correct mailing address. If VA is unable to determine the veteran’s or survivor’s correct address through reasonable efforts, VA will reduce benefits to the rate of $0.50 for each dollar authorized under law, effective the first day of the month that follows the month for which VA last paid benefits.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 107) [71 FR 8221, Feb. 16, 2006]
§ 3.551 Reduction because of hospitalization.

(a) General. Pension is subject to reduction as specified below when a veteran who has neither spouse, child nor dependent parent is hospitalized, unless the veteran is hospitalized for Hansen's disease. The provisions of this section apply to initial periods of hospitalization and to readmissions following discharge from a prior period of hospitalization. If the veteran is hospitalized for observation and examination, the date treatment began is considered the date of admission. Special rules governing discontinuance of aid and attendance allowance are contained in §3.552. Except as otherwise indicated the terms "hospitalized" and "hospitalization" in §§3.551 through 3.556 mean:

(1) Hospital treatment in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or in any hospital at Department of Veterans Affairs expense.

(2) Institutional, domiciliary or nursing home care in a Department of Veterans Affairs institution or domiciliary or at Department of Veterans Affairs expense.

(b) Old-law pension. (1) Old law pension in excess of $30 monthly for a veteran who has neither spouse, child nor dependent parent shall continue at the full monthly rate until the end of the sixth calendar month following the month of admission for hospitalization. The rate payable will be reduced effective the first of the seventh calendar month to $30 monthly or 50 percent of the amount otherwise payable, whichever is greater. The reduced rate will be effective the first day of the seventh calendar month following admission. Payment of the amount withheld may be made on termination of hospitalization, as provided in §3.556. (Sec. 306(b))

(2) Readmission following regular discharge. Where a veteran has been given an approved discharge or release, readmission the next day to the same or any other VA institution begins a new period of hospitalization, unless the veteran was released for purposes of admission to another VA institution.

(c) Section 306 pension. (1) Where any veteran having neither spouse nor child, or any veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, is being furnished hospital, nursing home or domiciliary care by the Department of Veterans Affairs, no pension in excess of $50 monthly shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the second full calendar month following the month of admission for such care.

(2) No pension in excess of $50 monthly shall be paid to or for a veteran having neither spouse nor child, or to a veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, for any period after the month in which the veteran is readmitted within 6 months of a period of care for which pension was reduced under paragraph (c) (1) of this section.

(d) Improved pension prior to February 1, 1990. (1) Where section 306 pension is being paid to a married veteran at a rate for a veteran without dependents all or any part of the monthly amount of pension withheld in excess of $50 may be apportioned for a spouse as provided in §3.454(b).

(3) Readmission following irregular discharge. When a veteran whose award is subject to reduction under this paragraph has been discharged or released from a VA institution against medical advice or as a result of disciplinary action, reentry within 6 months from the date of previous admission constitutes a continuation of that period of hospitalization and the award will not be reduced prior to the first day of the seventh calendar month following the month of original admission, exclusive of authorized absences. Reentry 6 months or more after such discharge or release shall be considered a new admission.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))
is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, is being furnished domiciliary care by VA, no pension in excess of $60 monthly shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the second full calendar month following the month of admission for such care. (38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(2) Where any veteran having neither spouse nor child, or any veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, is furnished hospital or nursing home care by VA, no pension in excess of $60 monthly shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the third full calendar month following the month of admission for such care. (38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(3) No pension in excess of $60 monthly shall be paid to or for a veteran having neither spouse nor child, or to a veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, for any period after the month in which the veteran is readmitted within 6 months of a period of domiciliary or nursing home care for which pension was reduced under paragraph (d)(1) or (2) of this section. (38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(4) Where improved pension is being paid to a married veteran at the rate prescribed by 38 U.S.C. 1521(b) all or any part of the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1521(c) may be apportioned for a spouse as provided in §3.454(b). (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(5) The provisions of paragraphs (d)(1), (2), and (3) of this section are not applicable to any veteran who has a child, but is receiving pension as a veteran without a dependent because it is reasonable that some part of the child’s estate be consumed for the child’s maintenance under 38 U.S.C. 1522(b).

(e) Improved pension after January 31, 1990.

(1) Where any veteran having neither spouse nor child, or any veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, is furnished domiciliary or nursing home care by VA, no pension in excess of $90 monthly shall be paid to or for the veteran for any period after the end of the third full calendar month following the month of admission for such care.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(2) No pension in excess of $90 monthly shall be paid to a veteran having neither spouse nor child, or to a veteran who is married or has a child and is receiving pension as a veteran without dependents, for any period after the month in which the veteran is readmitted within six months of a period of domiciliary or nursing home care for which pension was reduced under paragraph (e)(1) of this section.

(3) Where improved pension is being paid to a married veteran at the rate prescribed by 38 U.S.C. 1521(b) all or any part of the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1521(c) may be apportioned for a spouse as provided in §3.454(b).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

(4) For the purposes of paragraph (e)(1) of this section, if a veteran is furnished hospital care by VA and then is transferred to VA-furnished nursing home or domiciliary care, the period of hospital care shall not be considered as nursing home or domiciliary care. Transfers from VA-furnished nursing home or domiciliary care to VA-furnished hospital care then back to nursing home or domiciliary care shall be considered as continuous nursing home or domiciliary care provided the period of hospitalization does not exceed six months. Similarly, if a veteran is transferred from domiciliary or nursing home to a VA hospital and dies while so hospitalized, the entire period of VA care shall be considered as domiciliary or nursing home care. Nursing home or domiciliary care shall be considered as terminated effective the date of transfer to a VA hospital if the veteran is completely discharged from
VA care following the period of hospitalization or if the period of hospitalization exceeds six months.

(5) Effective February 1, 1990, reductions of improved pension based on admissions or readmissions to VA hospitals or any hospital at VA expense shall no longer be made except when required under the provisions of 38 CFR 3.552.

(6) The provisions of paragraphs (e)(1) and (2) of this section are not applicable to any veteran who has a child, but is receiving pension as a veteran without a dependent because it is reasonable that some part of the child’s estate be consumed for the child’s maintenance under 38 U.S.C. 1522(b).

(f) Computation of period. For purposes of computing periods of hospitalization in paragraph (c) of this section, authorized absences of 96 hours or less will be included as periods of hospitalization, and those of over 96 hours excluded. Also, for purposes of that paragraph, periods of treatment or care of 60 total days will be considered two calendar months of hospitalization and periods of 90 total days considered three calendar months, exclusive of authorized absences in excess of 96 hours.

(g) Proof of dependents. The veteran will be considered to have neither spouse, child nor dependent parent in the absence of satisfactory proof. Statements contained in the claims folder concerning the existence of such dependents will be considered a prima facie showing. If the necessary evidence is not received: (1) Within 60 days after the date of request where the award is subject to reduction under paragraph (b) of this section, or (2) prior to the effective date of reduction under paragraph (c) of this section, the veteran’s award will be reduced on the basis of no dependents. The full rate may be authorized from the date of reduction if the necessary evidence is received within 1 year after the date of request.

(h) Hospitalization—(1) General. The reduction required by paragraphs (d) and (e), except as they refer to domiciliary care, shall not be made for up to three additional calendar months after the last day of the third month referred to in paragraphs (d)(3) or (e)(2) of this section, under the following conditions:

   (i) The Chief Medical Director, or designee, certifies that the primary purpose for furnishing hospital or nursing home care during the additional period is to provide the veteran with a prescribed program of rehabilitation under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, designed to restore the veteran’s ability to function within the veteran’s family and community.

   (ii) The veteran is admitted to a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or nursing home after October 16, 1981.

   (2) Continued hospitalization for rehabilitation. The reduction required by paragraph (d) or (e) of this section shall not be made for periods after the expiration of the additional period provided by paragraph (h)(1) of this section under the following conditions:

      (i) The veteran remains hospitalized or in a nursing home after the expiration of the additional period provided by paragraph (h)(1) of this section;

      (ii) The Chief Medical Director, or designee, certifies that the primary purpose for furnishing continued hospital or nursing home care after the additional period provided by paragraph (h)(1) of this section is to provide the veteran with a program of rehabilitation under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, designed to restore the veteran’s ability to function within the veteran’s family and community.

   (3) Termination of hospitalization for rehabilitation. Pension in excess of $60 monthly or $90, if reduction is under paragraph (e)(1) payable to a veteran under this paragraph shall be reduced the end of the calendar month in which the primary purpose of hospitalization or nursing home care is no longer to provide the veteran with a program of rehabilitation under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code designed to restore the veteran’s ability to function within the veteran’s family and community.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(a))

   (i) Certain veterans and surviving spouses receiving Medicaid-covered nursing home care. Effective November 5, 1990, and terminating on September 30, 2011, if a veteran having neither spouse...
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§ 3.552 Adjustment of allowance for aid and attendance.

(a)(1) When a veteran who is already entitled to the aid and attendance allowance is hospitalized, the additional compensation or increased pension for aid and attendance shall be discontinued as provided in paragraph (b) of this section except as to disabilities specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section. (See paragraph (k) of this section for rules applicable to a veteran who establishes entitlement to the aid and attendance allowance on or after date of admission to hospitalization).

(2) The allowance for aid and attendance will be continued during hospitalization where the disability is paraplegia involving paralysis of both lower extremities together with loss of anal and bladder sphincter control, or Hansen’s disease, except where discontinuance is required by paragraph (b)(2) of this section. In addition, in pension cases only, the aid and attendance allowance will be continued where the pensionable disability is blindness (visual acuity 5/200 or less) or concentric contraction of visual field to 5 degrees or less. Awards are, however, subject to the provisions of §3.551 (except where the disabling condition is Hansen’s disease).

(3) Additional compensation for dependents under §3.4(b)(2) is payable during hospitalization in addition to the rates authorized by this section. The rates specified will also be increased by amounts authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) based on independently ratable disability, subject to the statutory ceiling on the total amount of compensation payable as set forth in §3.350(a).

(b)(1) Where a veteran is admitted for hospitalization on or after October 1, 1964, the additional compensation or increased pension for aid and attendance will be discontinued effective the last day of the month following the month in which the veteran is admitted for hospitalization at the expense of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) When a veteran is hospitalized at the expense of the United States Government, the additional aid and attendance allowance authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1114(r)(1) or (2) will be discontinued effective the last day of the month following the month in which the veteran is admitted for hospitalization.

(3) Where a veteran affected by the provisions of paragraph (b)(1) and (2) or paragraph (k) of this section is discharged or released from the hospital against medical advice or as the result of disciplinary action, and is readmitted to such hospitalization within 6 months after that date, the allowance, additional compensation, or increased pension will be discontinued effective the day preceding the date of readmission. A readmission 6 months or more after such discharge or release will be considered as a new admission.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503(e))

(c) Reduction will not be made where the same monthly rate of compensation would be payable without consideration of need for regular aid and attendance. This can only be determined after careful review of the current maximum entitlement without regard to any amount for aid and attendance.

(d) Where entitlement by reason of need for regular aid and attendance is the basis of the monthly rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(1) the award will be reduced
to the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(s).

(e) Where a veteran is in receipt of section 306 pension, the aid and attendance allowance shall be reduced to the housebound rate of $61 monthly (or $76.25 if the veteran was age 78 or older on December 31, 1978). Where a veteran is in receipt of old-law pension, the total amount payable shall be reduced to $100 monthly. Where a veteran is in receipt of improved pension, the applicable aid and attendance rate shall be reduced to the otherwise applicable rate under 38 U.S.C. 1521(e). No reduction shall be made, however, for any case involving the disabilities specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(f) Where entitlement to the rate in 38 U.S.C. 1114(o) is based in part on need for regular aid and attendance reduction because of being hospitalized will be to the rate payable for the other conditions shown.

(g) Where a veteran entitled to one of the rates under 38 U.S.C. 1114 (l), (m), or (n) by reason of anatomical losses or losses of use of extremities, blindness (visual acuity 5/200 or less or light perception only), or anatomical loss of both eyes is being paid compensation at the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(o) because of entitlement to another rate under section 1114(l) on account of need for aid and attendance, the compensation will be reduced while hospitalized to the following:

(1) If entitlement is under section 1114(l) and in addition there is need for regular aid and attendance for another disability, the award during hospitalization will be at the rate under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m) since the disability requiring aid and attendance is 100 percent disabling.

(h) If, because of blindness, a veteran requires regular aid and attendance, but has better vision than “light perception only” the award under 38 U.S.C. 1114(m) will be reduced while hospitalized to the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(l).

(i) If the disability meets the aid and attendance requirements of 38 U.S.C. 1114(l) and the intermediate or next higher rate was assigned for disability independently ratable at 50 percent or 100 percent, the award based on such entitlement will be reduced because of hospitalization to the amount payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(s).

(j) The section 306 pension aid and attendance allowance authorized by §3.252(f) is subject to reduction for hospitalization under the provisions of this section in the same manner as the regular section 306 pension aid and attendance allowance. The amount payable shall not be reduced to less than the housebound rate of $61 monthly (or $76.25 monthly if the veteran was age 78 or older on December 31, 1978).

(k)(1) This paragraph is applicable to hospitalized veterans who were not entitled to the aid and attendance allowance prior to hospital admission but who establish entitlement to it on or after the date of hospital admission.

(2) If the effective date of entitlement to the aid and attendance allowance is on or after the date of admission to hospitalization, the aid and attendance allowance shall not be paid until the date of discharge or release from hospitalization, unless the aid and attendance allowance is based on a disability specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section. If the aid and attendance allowance is based on a disability specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, the aid and attendance allowance shall be paid during hospitalization.

(3) If the aid and attendance allowance is not payable to a veteran under paragraph (k)(2) of this section, the veteran shall receive the appropriate reduced rate under paragraphs (d)
§ 3.556 Adjustment on discharge or release.

(a) Temporary Absence—30 days. (1) Where a competent veteran whose award was reduced under §3.551(b) is placed on non-bed care status or other authorized absence of 30 days or more the full monthly rate, excluding any allowance for regular aid and attendance, will be restored effective the date of reduction. The full monthly rate for an incompetent veteran, or for a competent veteran whose pension was reduced under §3.551(c), will be restored effective the date of departure from the hospital unless it is determined that apportionment for a spouse should be continued. In all instances, any allowance for regular aid and attendance will be restored effective the date of departure from the hospital.

(2) Upon the veteran’s return to the hospital, an award which is subject to reduction under §3.551(b) or (c) will again be reduced effective the date of the veteran’s return to the hospital. In all instances, any allowance for regular aid and attendance will be discontinued, if in order, effective the date of the veteran’s return to the hospital.

(b) Temporary absence—less than 30 days. A temporary absence of less than 30 days, including the day of departure, will not require adjustment of the award. This applies to any approved absence. Any allowance for regular aid and attendance for such periods will be authorized after the veteran has been discharged from the hospital.

(c) Adjustment based on need. Where an award of pension was reduced under §3.551(c), the full rate covering absences of less than 30 days may be restored, subject to prior payments, prior to discharge from hospitalization at the request of the Director of the hospital, center or domiciliary, where this action is necessary to meet the veteran’s financial needs, if the veteran has been hospitalized for more than 6 months and the periods of absence exceed a total of 30 days.

(d) Irregular discharge. When a competent veteran is given an irregular discharge, the full rate will be restored effective the date of release from the hospital. Payment of any amount withheld under §3.551(b) will not be authorized until the expiration of 6 months after termination of hospitalization unless the prior release is changed to a regular release. However, amounts not paid under paragraph (c) of this section covering absence of less than 30 days where the award was reduced under §3.551(c) will be authorized immediately.

(e) Regular discharge. When a veteran, either competent or incompetent, is given a regular discharge or release, the full rate, including any allowance for regular aid and attendance will be restored effective the date of release from the hospital, subject to prior payments. The award will be based on the most recent rating and, where the award was reduced under §3.551(b), will include, in the case of a competent veteran, any amounts withheld because of hospitalization. The amount withheld for an incompetent veteran will not be authorized until the expiration of 6 months following a rating of competency by VA. Any institutional award will be discontinued effective the date of last payment, as provided in §3.501(j). Where an apportionment made under §3.551(c) is not continued, the apportionment will be discontinued effective the day preceding the date of the veteran’s release from the hospital, or, if adjusted, effective the date of the veteran’s release from the hospital, unless an overpayment would result. In the excepted cases, the awards to the veteran and apportionee will be adjusted as of date of last payment.


§§ 3.553–3.555 [Reserved]
authorized absence, is considered irregular.

§ 3.557 [Reserved]

§ 3.558 Resumption and payment of withheld benefits; incompetents with estates that equaled or exceeded statutory limit.

(a) Payments for the veteran will be resumed and apportionment awards discontinued under the applicable provisions of § 3.556(a), (d), and (e) upon authorized absence from the hospital for 30 days or more or a regular or irregular discharge or release. Care and maintenance payments to an institution will not be made for any period the veteran is not receiving such care and maintenance.

(b) Any amount not paid because of the provisions of former § 3.557(b) (as in effect prior to December 27, 2001), and any amount of compensation or retirement pay withheld pursuant to the provisions of § 3.551(b) (and/or predecessor regulatory provisions) as it was constituted prior to August 1, 1972, and not previously paid because of the provisions of former § 3.557(b) (as in effect prior to December 27, 2001), will be awarded to the veteran if he or she is subsequently rated competent by VA for a period of not less than six months.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5503)

§ 3.559 [Reserved]

ADJUSTMENTS AND RESUMPTIONS

§ 3.650 Rate for additional dependent.

(a) Running awards. Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section where a claim is filed by an additional dependent who has apparent entitlement which, if established, would require reduction of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation being paid to another dependent, payments to the person or persons on the rolls will be reduced as follows:

(1) Where benefits would be payable from a date prior to the date of filing claim, the reduction will be effective from the date of potential entitlement of the additional dependent.

(2) Where benefits would be payable from the date of filing claim, the reduction will be effective the date of receipt of the claim by the additional dependent, or date of last payment, whichever is later.

If entitlement of the additional dependent is not established, benefits previously being paid will be resumed, if otherwise in order, commencing the day following the effective date of reduction.

(b) New awards. If the additional dependent is found to be entitled, the full rate payable will be authorized effective the date of entitlement.

(c) Retroactive DIC award to a school child—(1) General. If DIC (dependency and indemnity compensation) is being currently paid to a veteran’s child or children under 38 U.S.C. 1313(a), and DIC is retroactively awarded to an additional child of the veteran based on school attendance, the full rate payable to the additional child shall be awarded the first of the month following the month in which the award to the additional child is approved. The rate payable under the current award shall be reduced effective the date the full rate is awarded to the additional child. The rate payable to the additional child for periods prior to the date the full rate is awarded shall be the difference between the rate payable for all the children and the rate that was payable before the additional child established entitlement.

(2) Applicability. The provisions of paragraph (c)(1) of this section are applicable only when the following conditions are met:

(i) The additional child was receiving DIC under 38 U.S.C. 1313(a) prior to attaining age 18; and

(ii) DIC for the additional child was discontinued on or after attainment of age 18; and
(iii) After DIC has been discontinued, the additional child reestablishes entitlement to DIC under 38 U.S.C. 1313(a) based on attendance at an approved school and the effective date of entitlement is prior to the date the Department of Veterans Affairs receives the additional child’s claim to reestablish entitlement.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1313(b))

(3) **Effective date.** This paragraph is applicable to DIC paid after September 30, 1981. If DIC is retroactively awarded for a period prior to October 1, 1981, payment for the period prior to October 1, 1981 shall be made under paragraph (a) of this section and payment for the period after September 30, 1981, shall be made under this paragraph.

[29 FR 9564, July 15, 1964, as amended at 47 FR 24551, June 7, 1982]

§ 3.651 **Change in status of dependents.**

Except as otherwise provided:

(a) A payee who becomes entitled to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation or to a greater rate because payment of that benefit to another payee has been reduced or discontinued will be awarded the benefit or increased benefit without the filing of a new claim.

(b) The commencement or adjustment will be effective the day following the reduction or discontinuance of the award to the other payee if the necessary evidence is received in the Department of Veterans Affairs within 1 year from the date of request thereof; otherwise from the date of receipt of a new claim.

(c) The rate for the persons entitled will be the rate that would have been payable if they had been the only original persons entitled.


§ 3.652 **Periodic certification of continued eligibility.**

Except as otherwise provided:

(a) Individuals to whom benefits are being paid are required to certify, when requested, that any or all of the eligibility factors which established entitlement to the benefit being paid continue to exist. The beneficiary will be advised at the time of the request that the certification must be furnished within 60 days from the date of the request therefor and that failure to do so will result in the reduction or termination of benefits.

(1) If the certification is not received within 60 days from the date of the request, the eligibility factor(s) for which certification was requested will be considered to have ceased to exist as of the end of the month in which it was last shown by the evidence of record to have existed. For purposes of this paragraph, the effective date of reduction or termination of benefits will be in accordance with §§3.500 through 3.504 as in effect on the date the eligibility factor(s) is considered to have ceased to exist. The claimant will be advised of the proposed reduction or termination of benefits and the date the proposed action will be effective. An additional 60 days from the date of notice of the proposed action will be provided for the claimant to respond.

(b) When the required certification is received, benefits will be adjusted, if necessary, in accordance with the facts found.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

**CROSS REFERENCES:** Employment Questionnaire, failure to return. See §3.501(f). Income and Net Worth Questionnaires. See §3.661.

[52 FR 43063, Nov. 9, 1987]

§ 3.653 **Foreign residence.**

(a) **General.** Pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation is not payable to an alien who is located in the territory of or under the control of an enemy of the United States or of its allies. The benefit may, however, be paid to the dependents of such alien, but not in excess of the amount which would be payable to the dependent if the alien were dead.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5308)

(b) **Retroactive payments.** Any amount not paid to an alien under this section, together with any amounts placed to the alien’s credit in the special deposit
§ 3.654  Active service pay.

(a) General. Pension, compensation, or retirement pay will be discontinued under the circumstances stated in §3.700(a)(1) for any period for which the veteran received active service pay. For the purposes of this section, active service pay means pay received for active duty, active duty for training or inactive duty training.

(b) Active duty. (1) Where the veteran returns to active duty status, the award will be discontinued effective the day preceding reentrance into active duty status. If the exact date is not known, payments will be discontinued effective date of last payment and as of the correct date when the date of reentrance has been ascertained from the service department.

(2) Payments, if otherwise in order, will be resumed effective the day following release from active duty if claim for recommencement of payments is received within 1 year from the date of such release; otherwise payments will be resumed effective 1 year prior to the date of receipt of a new claim. Prior determinations of service connection will not be disturbed except as provided in §3.105. Compensation will be authorized based on the degree of disability found to exist at the time the award is resumed. Disability will be evaluated on the basis of all facts, including records from the service department relating to the most recent period of active service. If a disability is incurred or aggravated in the second period of service, compensation for that disability cannot be paid unless a claim therefor is filed.

(c) Training duty. Prospective adjustment of awards may be made where the veteran waives his or her Department of Veterans Affairs benefit covering anticipated receipt of active service pay because of expected periods of active duty for training or inactive duty training. Where readjustment is in order because service pay was not received for expected training duty, retroactive payments may be authorized if a claim for readjustment is received within 1 year after the end of the fiscal year for which payments were waived.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5309(b))

§ 3.654  Active service pay.

(a) General. Pension, compensation, or retirement pay will be discontinued under the circumstances stated in §3.700(a)(1) for any period for which the veteran received active service pay. For the purposes of this section, active service pay means pay received for active duty, active duty for training or inactive duty training.

(b) Active duty. (1) Where the veteran returns to active duty status, the award will be discontinued effective the day preceding reentrance into active duty status. If the exact date is not known, payments will be discontinued effective date of last payment and as of the correct date when the date of reentrance has been ascertained from the service department.

(2) Payments, if otherwise in order, will be resumed effective the day following release from active duty if claim for recommencement of payments is received within 1 year from the date of such release; otherwise payments will be resumed effective 1 year prior to the date of receipt of a new claim. Prior determinations of service connection will not be disturbed except as provided in §3.105. Compensation will be authorized based on the degree of disability found to exist at the time the award is resumed. Disability will be evaluated on the basis of all facts, including records from the service department relating to the most recent period of active service. If a disability is incurred or aggravated in the second period of service, compensation for that disability cannot be paid unless a claim therefor is filed.

(c) Training duty. Prospective adjustment of awards may be made where the veteran waives his or her Department of Veterans Affairs benefit covering anticipated receipt of active service pay because of expected periods of active duty for training or inactive duty training. Where readjustment is in order because service pay was not received for expected training duty, retroactive payments may be authorized if a claim for readjustment is received within 1 year after the end of the fiscal year for which payments were waived.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5309(b))

§ 3.655 Failure to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination.

(a) General. When entitlement or continued entitlement to a benefit cannot be established or confirmed without a current VA examination or reexamination and a claimant, without good cause, fails to report for such examination, or reexamination, action shall be taken in accordance with paragraph (b) or (c) of this section as appropriate. Examples of good cause include, but are not limited to, the illness or hospitalization of the claimant, death of an immediate family member, etc. For purposes of this section, the terms examination and reexamination include periods of hospital observation when required by VA.

(b) Original or reopened claim, or claim for increase. When a claimant fails to report for an examination scheduled in conjunction with an original compensation claim, the claim shall be rated based on the evidence of record. When the examination was scheduled in conjunction with any other original claim, a reopened claim for a benefit which was previously disallowed, or a claim for increase, the claim shall be denied.

(c) Running award. (1) When a claimant fails to report for a reexamination and the issue is continuing entitlement, VA shall issue a pretermination notice advising the payee that payment for the disability or disabilities for which the reexamination was scheduled will be discontinued or, if a minimum evaluation is established in part 4 of this title or there is an evaluation protected under §3.951(b) of this part, reduced to the lower evaluation. Such notice shall also include the prospective date of discontinuance or reduction, the reason therefor and a statement of the claimant’s procedural and appellate rights. The claimant shall be allowed 60 days to indicate his or her willingness to report for a reexamination or to present evidence that payment for the disability or disabilities for which the reexamination was scheduled should not be discontinued or reduced.

(2) If there is no response within 60 days, or if the evidence submitted does not establish continued entitlement, payment for such disability or disabilities shall be discontinued or reduced as of the date indicated in the pretermination notice or the date of last payment, whichever is later.

(3) If notice is received that the claimant is willing to report for a reexamination before payment has been discontinued or reduced, action to adjust payment shall be deferred. The reexamination shall be rescheduled and the claimant notified that failure to report for the rescheduled examination shall be cause for immediate discontinuance or reduction of payment. When a claimant fails to report for such rescheduled examination, payment shall be reduced or discontinued as of the date of last payment and shall not be further adjusted until a VA examination has been conducted and the report reviewed.

(4) If within 30 days of a pretermination notice issued under paragraph (c)(1) of this section the claimant requests a hearing, action to adjust payment shall be deferred as set forth in §3.105(h)(1) of this part. If a hearing is requested more than 30 days after such pretermination notice but before the proposed date of discontinuance or reduction, a hearing shall be scheduled, but payment shall nevertheless be discontinued or reduced as of the date proposed in the pretermination notice or date of last payment, whichever is later, unless information is presented which warrants a different determination. When the claimant has also expressed willingness to report for an examination, however, the provisions of paragraph (c)(3) of this section shall apply.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)


§ 3.656 Disappearance of veteran.

(a) When any veteran has disappeared for 90 days or more and his or her whereabouts remain unknown to the members of his or her family and the
Department of Veterans Affairs, disability compensation which he or she was receiving or entitled to receive may be paid to or for his or her spouse, children and parents, effective the day following the date of last payment to the veteran if a claim is received within 1 year after that date; otherwise from the date of receipt of a claim. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

1. Dependency and indemnity compensation.

2. Amount of compensation payable to the veteran at the time of disappearance, subject to authorized insurance deductions.

(b) Where a veteran’s whereabouts become known to the Department of Veterans Affairs after an award to dependents has been made as provided in this section, the award to the dependents will be discontinued effective date of last payment, and appropriate action will be taken to adjust the veteran’s award in accordance with the facts found.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1158)

(c) Awards to dependents will not be continued under this section in any case where the facts are such as to bring into effect the presumption of death under §3.212.

(d) When any veteran has disappeared for 90 days or more and the veteran’s whereabouts remain unknown to members of the veteran’s family and the Department of Veterans Affairs, any improved pension, section 306 or service pension which the veteran was receiving or entitled to receive may be paid to or for the spouse or children. The status of the veteran at the time of disappearance, with respect to permanent and total disability, income and net worth will be presumed to continue unchanged. Payment for the spouse or children will be effective the day following the date of last payment to the veteran if a claim is received within 1 year after that date; otherwise from date of receipt of a claim. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

1. The service death pension rate if the veteran was receiving service pension or the improved death pension rate if the veteran was receiving section 306 or improved pension.

2. The amount of pension payable to the veteran at the time of disappearance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1507)


§ 3.657 Surviving spouse becomes entitled, or entitlement terminates.

Where a surviving spouse establishes entitlement to pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation, an award to another person as surviving spouse, or for a child or children as if there were no surviving spouse will be discontinued or adjusted as provided in this section.

(a) Surviving spouse’s awards. For periods on or after December 1, 1962, where a legal surviving spouse establishes entitlement after payments have been made to another person as surviving spouse, the full rate payable to the legal surviving spouse will be authorized effective the date of entitlement. Payments to the former payee will be discontinued as follows:

1. Where benefits are payable to the legal surviving spouse from a date prior to the date of filing claim, the award to the former payee will be terminated the day preceding the effective date of the award to the legal surviving spouse.

(b) Children’s awards. Where a surviving spouse establishes entitlement and:

1. Payments were being made for a child or children at a lower monthly rate than that provided where there is a surviving spouse, the award to the surviving spouse will be effective the date provided by the applicable law, and will be the difference between the rate paid for the children and the rate payable for the surviving spouse and children. The full rate will be payable for the surviving spouse effective the...
§ 3.660 Dependency, income and estate.

(a) Reduction or discontinuance—(1) General. A veteran, surviving spouse or

day following the date of last payment for the children;

(ii) Payments were being made for a child or children at the same or higher monthly rate than that provided where there is a surviving spouse, the award to the surviving spouse will be effective the day following the date of last payment on the awards on behalf of the children.

(2) Where a surviving spouse has received benefits after entitlement was terminated and,

(i) The child or children were entitled to a lower monthly rate, the award to the surviving spouse will be amended to authorize payment at the rate provided for the children as if there were no surviving spouse, covering the period from the date the surviving spouse’s entitlement terminated to the date of last payment. The award for the child or children will be made effective the following day.

(ii) The child or children were entitled to a higher monthly rate, the award to the surviving spouse will be discontinued effective date of last payment. The award to the children will be effective the day following the date the surviving spouse’s entitlement terminated to the date of last payment. The award for the child or children will be made effective the following day.

(38 U.S.C. 103(d)(2), 5304(b)(3))

[41 FR 17387, Apr. 26, 1976]

§ 3.659 Two parents in same parental line.

The provisions of this section are applicable for periods commencing on or after January 1, 1957 in cases involving payments of death compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation, and in addition, for periods commencing on or after June 9, 1960, in cases involving payments of death pension based on death on or after that date.

(a) If death pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation is payable based on the service of one parent, an award of such benefits to or on account of a child will be made subject to any payments of these benefits made to or on account of that child over the same period of time based on the service of another parent in the same parental line.

(b) Any reduction or discontinuance of an award to the child or to a surviving spouse will be effective the day preceding the commencing date of death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation or, under the circumstances described in § 3.707, the commencing date of dependents’ educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. ch. 35, to or on account of the child based on the service of another parent in the same parental line. Any increase to a surviving spouse or another child will be effective the commencing date of the award to the child.

CROSS REFERENCE: Two-parent cases. See §3.503(a)(7). Two parents in same parental line. See §3.703.


§ 3.660 Dependency, income and estate.

(a) Reduction or discontinuance—(1) General. A veteran, surviving spouse or
child who is receiving pension, or a parent who is receiving compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation must notify the Department of Veterans Affairs of any material change or expected change in his or her income or other circumstances which would affect his or her entitlement to receive, or the rate of, the benefit being paid. Such notice must be furnished when the recipient acquires knowledge that he or she will begin to receive additional income or when his or her marital or dependency status changes. In pension claims subject to §3.252(b) or §3.274 and in compensation claims subject to §3.250(a)(2), notice must be furnished of any material increase in corpus of the estate or net worth.

(2) Effective dates. Where reduction or discontinuance of a running award of section 306 pension or old-law pension is required because dependency of another person ceased due to marriage, annulment, divorce or death, or because of an increase in income, which increase could not reasonably have been anticipated based on the amount actually received from that source the year before, the reduction or discontinuance shall be made effective the end of the year in which the increase occurred. Where reduction or discontinuance of a running award of improved pension or dependency and indemnity compensation is required because of an increase in income, the reduction or discontinuance shall be made effective the end of the month in which the increase occurred. Where reduction or discontinuance of a running award of any benefit is required because of an increase in net worth or corpus of estate, because dependency of a parent ceased, or because dependency of another person ceased prior to October 1, 1982, due to marriage, annulment, divorce or death, the reduction or discontinuance shall be effective the last day of the month in which dependency ceased.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b))

(3) Overpayments. Overpayments created by retroactive discontinuance of benefits will be subject to recovery if not waived. Where dependency and indemnity compensation was being paid to two parents living together, an overpayment will be established on the award to each parent.

(b) Award or increase; income. Where pension or dependency and indemnity compensation was not paid for a particular 12-month annualization period because the claim was disallowed, an award was deferred under §3.260(b) or §3.271(f), payments were discontinued or made at a lower rate based on anticipated or actual income, benefits otherwise payable may be authorized commencing the first of a 12-month annualization period as provided in this paragraph. In all other cases, benefits may not be authorized for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.

1 Anticipated income. Where payments were not made or were made at a lower rate because of anticipated income, pension or dependency and indemnity compensation may be awarded or increased in accordance with the facts found but not earlier than the beginning of the appropriate 12-month annualization period if satisfactory evidence is received within the same or the next calendar year.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(h))

2 Actual income. Where the claimant's actual income did not permit payment, or payment was made at a lower rate, for a given 12-month annualization period, pension or dependency and indemnity compensation may be awarded or increased, effective the beginning of the next 12-month annualization period, if satisfactory evidence is received within that period.

(c) Increases; change in status. Where there is change in the payee's marital status or status of dependents which would permit payment at a higher rate and the change in status is by reason of the claimant's marriage or birth or adoption of a child, the effective date of the increase will be the date of the
event if the required evidence is received within 1 year of the event. Where there is a change in dependency status for any reason other than marriage, or the birth or adoption of a child, which would permit payment at a higher rate, the increased rate will be effective the date of receipt of notice constituting an informal claim if the required evidence is received within 1 year of Department of Veterans Affairs request. The rate payable for each period will be determined, as provided in §§3.260(f) or 3.273(c). (See §3.651 as to increase due to termination of payments to another payee. Also see §3.667 as to increase based on school attendance.)

(d) Corpus of estate; net worth. Where a claim has been finally disallowed or terminated because of the corpus of estate and net worth provisions of §§3.263 or 3.274 and entitlement is established on the basis of a reduction in estate or net worth, or a change in circumstances such as health, acquisition of a dependent, or increased rate of depletion of the estate, benefits or increased benefits will not be paid for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.


§ 3.661 Eligibility Verification Reports.

(a) Determination and entitlement. (1) Where the report shows a change in income, net worth, marital status, status of dependents or change in circumstances affecting the application of the net worth provisions, the award will be adjusted in accordance with §3.660(a)(2).

(2) Where there is doubt as to the extent of anticipated income payment of pension or dependency and indemnity compensation will be authorized at the lowest appropriate rate or will be withheld, as provided in §3.260(b) or §3.271(f).

(b) Failure to return report—(1) Section 306 and old-law pension—(i) Discontinuance. Discontinuance of old-law or section 306 pension shall be effective the last day of the calendar year for which income (and net worth in a section 306 pension case) was to be reported.

(ii) Resumption of benefits. Payment of old-law or section 306 pension may be resumed, if otherwise in order, from the date of last payment if evidence of entitlement is received within the calendar year following the calendar year for which income (and net worth in a section 306 pension case) was to be reported; otherwise pension may not be paid for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new claim.

(ii) Improved pension and dependency and indemnity compensation—(i) Discontinuance. Discontinuance of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) or improved pension shall be effective the first day of the 12-month annualization period for which income (and net worth in an improved pension case) was to be reported or the effective date of the award, whichever is the later date.

(ii) Adjustment of overpayment. If evidence of entitlement to improved pension or DIC for any period for which payment of improved pension or DIC was discontinued for failure to file an Eligibility Verification Report is received at any time, payment of improved pension or DIC shall be awarded for the period of entitlement for which benefits were discontinued for failure to file an Eligibility Verification Report.

(iii) Resumption of benefits. Payment of improved pension and DIC may be resumed, if otherwise in order, from the date of last payment if evidence of entitlement is received within the 12-month annualization period following the 12-month annualization period for which income (and net worth in an improved pension case) was to be reported; otherwise pension or DIC may not be paid for any period prior to receipt of a new claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)


§§ 3.662-3.664 [Reserved]

§ 3.665 Incarcerated beneficiaries and fugitive felons—compensation.

(a) General. Any person specified in paragraph (c) of this section who is incarcerated in a Federal, State or local penal institution in excess of 60 days for conviction of a felony will not be paid compensation or dependency and
indemnity compensation (DIC) in excess of the amount specified in paragraph (d) of this section beginning on the 61st day of incarceration. VA will inform a person whose benefits are subject to this reduction of the rights of the person’s dependents to an apportionment if the VA is aware of their existence and can obtain their addresses. However, no apportionment will be made if the veteran or the dependent is a fugitive felon as defined in paragraph (n) of this section.

(b) Definitions. For the purposes of this section the term compensation includes disability compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1151. The term dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) includes death compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1121 or 1141, death compensation and DIC payable under 38 U.S.C. 1151, and any benefit payable under chapter 13 of title 38, United States Code. The term release from incarceration includes participation in a work release or halfway house program, parole, and completion of sentence. For purposes of this section, a felony is any offense punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding 1 year, unless specifically categorized as a misdemeanor under the law of the prosecuting jurisdiction.

(c) Applicability. The provisions of paragraph (a) of this section are applicable to the following persons:

(1) A person serving a period of incarceration for conviction of a felony committed after October 7, 1980.

(2) A person serving a period of incarceration after September 30, 1980 (regardless of when the felony was committed) when the following conditions are met:
   (i) The person was incarcerated on October 1, 1980; and
   (ii) An award of compensation or DIC is approved after September 30, 1980.

(3) A veteran who, on October 7, 1980, was incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for a felony committed before that date, and who remains so incarcerated for a conviction of that felony as of December 27, 2001.

(d) Amount payable during incarceration—(1) Veteran rated 20 percent or more. A veteran to whom the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section apply with a service-connected disability evaluation of 20 percent or more shall receive the rate of compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(a).

(2) Veteran rated less than 20 percent. A veteran to whom the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section apply with a service-connected disability evaluation of less than 20 percent (even though the rate for 38 U.S.C. 1114(k) or (q) is paid) shall receive one-half the rate of compensation payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(a).

(e) Apportionment—(1) Compensation. All or part of the compensation not paid to an incarcerated veteran may be apportioned to the veteran’s spouse, child or children and dependent parents on the basis of individual need. Consideration shall be given to such factors as the apportionee claimant’s income and living expenses, the amount of compensation available to be apportioned, the needs and living expenses of other apportionee claimants as well as any special needs, if any, of all apportionee claimants.

(2) DIC. All or part of the DIC not paid to an incarcerated surviving spouse or other children not in the surviving spouse’s custody may be apportioned to another child or children. All or part of the DIC not paid to an incarcerated child may be apportioned to the surviving spouse or other children. These apportionments shall be made on the basis of individual need giving consideration to the factors set forth in paragraph (e)(1) of this section.

(f) Effective dates. An apportionment under this section shall be effective the date of reduction of payments made to the incarcerated person, subject to payments to the incarcerated person over the same period, if an informal
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claim is received within 1 year after notice to the incarcerated person as required by paragraph (a) of this section, and any necessary evidence is received within 1 year from the date of request by the Department of Veterans Affairs; otherwise, payments may not be made for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new informal claim.

(g) Incarcerated dependent. No apportionment may be made to or on behalf of any person who is incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for conviction of a felony.

(h) Notice to dependent for whom apportionment granted. A dependent for whom an apportionment is granted under this section shall be informed that the apportionment is subject to immediate discontinuance upon the incarcerated person’s release or participation in a work release or halfway house program. A dependent shall also be informed that if the dependent and the incarcerated person do not live together when the incarcerated person is released (or participates in a work release or halfway house program) the dependent may submit a new claim for apportionment.

(i) Resumption upon release—(1) No apportionment or family reunited. If there was no apportionment at the time of release from incarceration, or if the released person is reunited with all dependents for whom an apportionment was granted, the released person’s award shall be resumed the date of release from incarceration if the Department of Veterans Affairs receives notice of release within 1 year following release; otherwise the award shall be resumed the date of receipt of notice of release from incarceration, it shall be discontinued date of last payment to the apportionee upon receipt of notice of release of the incarcerated person. Payment to the released person shall then be resumed at the full rate from date of last payment to the apportionee.

(2) Veteran subject to reduction under paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section. If prior to approval of an award of increased compensation the veteran’s compensation was reduced under the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section, the amount of the increase shall be reduced as follows if the veteran remains incarcerated:

(i) If the veteran’s schedular evaluation is increased from 10 percent to 20 percent or greater, the amount payable during incarceration.

(2) Apportionment granted and family not reunited. If there was an apportionment granted during incarceration and the released person is not reunited with all dependents for whom an apportionment was granted, the released person’s award shall be resumed as stated in paragraph (i)(1) of this section except that when the released person’s award is resumed it shall not include any additional amount payable by reason of a dependent(s) not reunited with the released person. The award to this dependent(s) will then be reduced to the additional amount payable for the dependent(s).

(3) Apportionment to a dependent parent. An apportionment made to a dependent parent under this section cannot be continued beyond the veteran’s release from incarceration unless the veteran is incompetent and the provisions of § 3.652(c) (1) and (2) are for application. When a competent veteran is released from incarceration an apportionment made to a dependent parent shall be discontinued and the veteran’s award resumed as provided in paragraph (i)(1) of this section.

(j) Increased compensation during incarceration—(1) General. The amount of any increased compensation awarded to an incarcerated veteran that results from other than a statutory rate increase may be subject to reduction due to incarceration. This applies to a veteran whose compensation is subject to reduction under paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section prior to approval of an award of increased compensation as well as to veteran whose compensation is not subject to reduction under paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section prior to approval of an award of increased compensation.

(2) Veteran subject to reduction under paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section. If prior to approval of an award of increased compensation the veteran’s compensation was reduced under the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section, the amount of the increase shall be reduced as follows if the veteran remains incarcerated:

(i) If the veteran’s schedular evaluation is increased from 10 percent to 20 percent or greater, the amount payable
to the veteran shall be increased from one-half the rate payable under 38 U.S.C. 1114(a) to the rate payable under section 1114(a).

(ii) If the veteran’s schedular evaluation was 20 percent or more, none of the increased compensation shall be paid to the veteran while the veteran remains incarcerated.

(3) Veteran’s compensation not subject to reduction under paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section prior to award of increased compensation. If prior to the approval of an award of increased compensation the veteran is incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for conviction of a felony and the veteran’s compensation was not reduced under the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c) of this section, none of the increased compensation shall be paid to the veteran for periods after October 7, 1980, subject to the following conditions:

(i) The veteran remains incarcerated after October 7, 1980 in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for conviction of a felony; and

(ii) The award of increased compensation is approved after October 7, 1980. If the effective date of the increase is prior to October 8, 1980, the amount payable for periods prior to October 8, 1980, shall not be reduced.

(4) Apportionments. The amount of any increased compensation reduced under this paragraph may be apportioned as provided in paragraph (e) of this section.

(k) Retroactive awards. Whenever compensation or DIC is awarded to an incarcerated person any amounts due for periods prior to date of reduction under this section shall be paid to the incarcerated person.

(l) DIC parents. If two parents are both entitled to DIC and were living together prior to the time of the DIC payable to one parent was reduced due to incarceration, they shall be considered as two parents not living together for the purpose of determining entitlement to DIC.

(m) Conviction overturned on appeal. If a conviction is overturned on appeal, any compensation or DIC withheld under this section as a result of incarceration for such conviction (less the amount of any apportionment) shall be restored to the beneficiary.

(n) Fugitive felons. (1) Compensation is not payable on behalf of a veteran for any period during which he or she is a fugitive felon. Compensation or DIC is not payable on behalf of a dependent of a veteran for any period during which the veteran or the dependent is a fugitive felon.

(2) For purposes of this section, the term fugitive felon means a person who is a fugitive by reason of:

(i) Fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction, for an offense, or an attempt to commit an offense, which is a felony under the laws of the place from which the person flees; or

(ii) Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed for commission of a felony under Federal or State law.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (n) of this section, the term felony includes a high misdemeanor under the laws of a State which characterizes as high misdemeanors offenses that would be felony offenses under Federal law.

(4) For purposes of paragraph (n) of this section, the term dependent means a spouse, surviving spouse, child, or dependent parent of a veteran.


this section. Payments of pension authorized under this section will continue until notice is received by the Department of Veterans Affairs that the imprisonment has terminated.

(a) Disability pension. Payment may be made to the spouse, child or children of a veteran disqualified under this section:

(1) If the veteran continues to be eligible except for the provisions of this section, and

(2) If the annual income of the spouse or child is such that death pension would be payable.

(3) At the rate payable under the death pension law or the rate which the veteran was receiving at the time of imprisonment, whichever is less.

(4) From the day following the date of discontinuance of payments to the veteran, subject to payments made to the veteran over the same period, if an informal claim is received within 1 year after notice to the veteran as required by this section and any necessary evidence is received within 1 year from the date of request; otherwise payments may not be made for any period prior to the date of receipt of a new informal claim.

(b) Death pension. Payment may be made to a child or children where a surviving spouse or child is disqualified under this section:

(1) If surviving spouse is disqualified to child or children at the rate of death pension payable if there were no such surviving spouse; or

(2) If a child is disqualified, to a surviving spouse or other child or children at the rate of death pension payable if there were no such child, and

(3) From the day following the date of discontinuance of payments to the disqualified person, subject to payments made to that person over the same period if evidence of income is received within 1 year after date of request; otherwise payments may not be made for any period prior to the date of receipt of an informal claim.

(c) Resumption of pension upon release from incarceration. Pension will be resumed as of the day of release if notice (which constitutes an informal claim) is received within 1 year following release; otherwise resumption will be effective the date of receipt of such notice. Where an award or increased award was made to any other payee based upon the disqualification of the veteran, surviving spouse, or child while in prison, such award will be reduced or discontinued as of date of last payment and pension will be resumed to the released prisoner at a rate which will be the difference, if any, between the total pension payable and the amount which was paid to the other person or persons through the date of last payment and thereafter the full rate.

(d) Veteran entitled to compensation. If an imprisoned veteran is entitled to a lesser rate of disability compensation, it shall be awarded as of the first day of imprisonment in lieu of the pension the veteran was receiving if the veteran has neither spouse nor child. If the veteran has a spouse or a child, compensation will be awarded only after the veteran has been furnished an explanation of the effect of electing compensation on the amount available for apportionment. If the veteran then requests compensation, it shall be awarded from the date veteran requests the Department of Veterans Affairs to take such action.

(e) Fugitive felons. (1) Pension is not payable on behalf of a veteran for any period during which he or she is a fugitive felon. Pension or death pension is not payable on behalf of a dependent of a veteran for any period during which the veteran or the dependent is a fugitive felon.

(2) For purposes of this section, the term fugitive felon means a person who is a fugitive by reason of:

(i) Fleeing to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement after conviction for an offense, or an attempt to commit an offense, which is a felony under the laws of a place from which the person flees; or

(ii) Violating a condition of probation or parole imposed for commission of a felony under Federal or State law.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (e) of this section, the term felony includes a high misdemeanor under the laws of a
§ 3.667 School attendance.

(a) General. (1) Pension or compensation may be paid from a child's 18th birthday based upon school attendance if the child was at that time pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution and a claim for such benefits is filed within 1 year from the child's 18th birthday.

(2) Pension or compensation based upon a course of instruction at an approved educational institution which was begun after a child's 18th birthday may be paid from the commencement of the course if a claim is filed within 1 year from that date.

(3) An initial award of DIC (dependency and indemnity compensation) to a child in the child's own right is payable from the first day of the month in which the child attains age 18 if the child was pursuing a course of instruction at an approved educational institution on the child's 18th birthday, and if a claim for benefits is filed within 1 year from the child's 18th birthday. In the case of a child who attains age 18 after September 30, 1981, if the child was, immediately before attaining age 18, counted under 38 U.S.C. 1311(b) for the purpose of determining the amount of DIC payable to the surviving spouse, the effective date of an award of DIC to the child shall be the date the child attains age 18 if a claim for DIC is filed within 1 year from that date.

(b) Vacation periods. A child is considered to be in school during a vacation or other holiday period if he or she was attending an approved educational institution at the end of the preceding school term and resumes attendance, either in the same or a different approved educational institution, at the beginning of the next term. If an award has been made covering a vacation period, and the child fails to commence or resume school attendance, benefits will be terminated the date of last payment or the last day of the month preceding the date of failure to pursue the course, whichever is the earlier.

(c) Ending dates. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, benefits may be authorized through the last day of the month in which a course was or will be completed.

(d) Transfers to other schools. When benefits have been authorized based upon school attendance and it is shown that during a part or all of that period the child was pursuing a different course in the same approved educational institution or a course in a different approved educational institution, payments previously made will not be disturbed.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(e))
(e) **Accrued benefits only.** When a claim for accrued benefits is filed by or on behalf of a veteran’s child over 18 but under 23 years of age, who was pursuing a course of instruction at the time of the payee’s death and payment of accrued benefits only is involved, evidence of school attendance need not be confirmed by the school. When the payee’s death occurred during a school vacation period, the requirements will be considered to have been met if the child was carried on the school rolls on the last day of the regular school term immediately preceding the date of the payee’s death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5112(b)(7))

(f) **Nonduplication.** Pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation may not be authorized:

(1) After a child has elected to receive educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 (see §3.707 and §21.3023 of this chapter); or

(2) Based on an educational program in a school where the child is wholly supported at the expense of the Federal Government, such as a service academy.

Cross Reference: Dependents’ educational assistance. See §3.707.


§ 3.668  [Reserved]

§ 3.669  **Forfeiture.**

(a) **General.** Upon receipt of notice from a Regional Counsel (or in cases under the jurisdiction of the Manila Regional Office, the Veterans Service Center Manager) that a case is being formally submitted for consideration of forfeiture of a payee’s rights under §3.905 of this part or that the payee has been indicted for subversive activities, payments will be suspended effective date of last payment.

(b) **Fraud or treasonable act—(1) Fraud.** If forfeiture of rights is not declared, payments shall be resumed from date of last payment, if otherwise in order. If it is determined that rights have been forfeited, benefits shall be discontinued effective the commencing date of the award or the day preceding the commission of the act resulting in the forfeiture, whichever is later.

(2) **Treasonable acts.** If forfeiture of rights is not declared, payments shall be resumed from date of last payment, if otherwise in order. If it is determined that rights have been forfeited, benefits shall be discontinued the date of the forfeiture decision or date of last payment, whichever is earlier.

(c) **Subversive activities.** If the payee is acquitted of the charge, payments will be resumed from date of last payment, if otherwise in order. If the payee is convicted, benefits will be discontinued effective the commencing date of the award or the day preceding the commission of the act resulting in the forfeiture, whichever is later.

(d) **Pardons.** (1) Where the payee’s offense has been pardoned by the President of the United States, the award will be resumed, if otherwise in order, effective the date of the pardon if claim is filed within 1 year from that date; otherwise benefits may not be authorized for any period prior to the date of filing claim. The award will be subject to any existing overpayment.

(2) Payments to a dependent of the person whose benefits were declared forfeited before September 2, 1959, will be discontinued effective the day preceding the date of the pardon.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

Cross References: Fraud. See §3.901. Treasonable acts. See §3.902. Subversive activities. See §3.903.


**CONCURRENT BENEFITS AND ELECTIONS**

§ 3.700  **General.**

Not more than one award of pension, compensation, or emergency officers’, regular or reserve retirement pay will be made concurrently to any person based on his or her own service except as provided in §§3.803 relating to naval pension and §3.750(c) relating to waiver of retirement pay. Not more than one award of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation
(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304(a))

(a) Veterans—
(1) Active service pay. (1) Pension, compensation, or retirement pay on account of his or her own service will not be paid to any person for any period for which he or she receives active service pay.

(2) Lump-sum readjustment pay. (1) Where entitlement to disability compensation was established prior to September 15, 1981, a veteran who has received a lump-sum readjustment payment under former 10 U.S.C. 687 (as in effect on September 14, 1981) may receive disability compensation for disability incurred in or aggravated by service prior to the date of receipt of lump-sum readjustment payment subject to deduction of an amount equal to 75 percent of the amount received as readjustment payment.

(2) Readjustment pay authorized under former 10 U.S.C. 3814(a) is not subject to recoupment through withholding of disability compensation, entitlement to which was established prior to September 15, 1981.

(3) Severance pay. Where the disability or disabilities found to be service-connected are the same as those upon which disability severance pay is granted, or where entitlement to disability compensation was established on or after September 15, 1981, an award of compensation will be made subject to recoupment of the disability severance pay. Prior to the initial determination of the degree of disability recoupment shall not be at a monthly rate in excess of the monthly compensation payable for that degree of disability. For this purpose the term “initial determination of the degree of disability” means the first regular schedular compensable rating in accordance with the provisions of subpart B, part 4 of this chapter and does not mean a rating based in whole or in part on a need for hospitalization or a period of convalescence. Where entitlement to disability compensation was established prior to September 15, 1981,
compensation payable for service-connected disability other than the disability for which disability severance pay was granted will not be reduced for the purpose of recouping disability severance pay. Where entitlement to disability compensation was established on or after September 15, 1981, a veteran may receive disability compensation for disability incurred or aggravated by service prior to the date of receipt of the severance pay, but VA must recoup from that disability compensation an amount equal to the severance pay. Where payment of severance pay was made on or before September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of the severance pay. Where payment of severance pay was made after September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of severance pay less the amount of Federal income tax withheld from such pay. For members of the Armed Forces who separated under Chapter 61 of title 10, United States Code, on or after January 28, 2008, no recoupment of severance pay will be made for disabilities incurred in line of duty in a combat zone or incurred during performance of duty in combat-related operations as designated by the Department of Defense.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 1174(h)(2) and 1212(d))

(4) Improved pension. If a veteran is entitled to improved pension on the basis of the veteran’s own service and is also entitled to pension under any pension program currently or previously in effect on the basis of any other person’s service, the Department of Veterans Affairs shall pay the veteran only the greater benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1521(i))

(5) Separation pay and special separation benefits. (i) Where entitlement to disability compensation was established on or after September 15, 1981, a veteran who has received separation pay may receive disability compensation for disability incurred in or aggravated by service prior to the date of receipt of separation pay subject to recoupment of the separation pay. Where payment of separation pay was made on or before September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of separation pay. Where payment of separation pay was made after September 30, 1996, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of separation pay less the amount of Federal income tax withheld from such pay. The Federal income tax withholding amount is the flat withholding rate for Federal income tax withholding.

(ii) The receipt of separation pay does not affect the payment of disability compensation based on a subsequent period of service. Compensation payable for service-connected disability incurred or aggravated in a subsequent period of service will not be reduced for the purpose of offsetting separation pay based on a prior period of service.

(iii) Where payment of special separation benefits under 10 U.S.C. 1174a was made on or after December 5, 1991, VA will recoup from disability compensation an amount equal to the total amount of special separation benefits less the amount of Federal income tax withheld from such pay. The Federal income tax withholding amount is the flat withholding rate for Federal income tax withholding.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 1174 and 1174a)

(b) Dependents—(1) Surviving spouse. Subject to the provisions of paragraph (a)(4) of this section, the receipt of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation by a surviving spouse because of the death of any veteran, or receipt of pension or compensation because of his or her own service, shall not bar the payment to the surviving spouse of pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation because of the death or disability of any other veteran; however, other than insurance, concurrent benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs may not be authorized to a surviving spouse by reason of the death of more than one veteran to whom the surviving spouse has been married. The surviving spouse may elect to receive benefits based on the death of one such
§ 3.701 Elections of pension or compensation.

(a) General. Except as otherwise provided, a person entitled to receive pension or compensation under more than one law or section of a law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs may elect to receive whichever benefit, regardless of whether it is the greater or lesser benefit, even though the election reduces the benefits payable to him or her dependents. Such person may at any time elect or reelect the other benefit. An election by a veteran controls the rights of all dependents in that case. An election by a surviving spouse controls the claims of all children including children over 18 and children not in the custody of the surviving spouse. The election of improved pension by a surviving spouse, however, shall not prejudice the rights of any child receiving an apportionment on December 31, 1978. Termination of a marriage or marital relationship which had been the reason for terminating an award of section 306 or old-law pension does not restore to the surviving spouse the right to receive section 306 or old-law pension. The claimant’s entitlement, if otherwise established, is under the current provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1541.

(b) Form of election. A statement which meets the requirements of an informal claim may be accepted as an election.

(c) Change from one law to another. Except as otherwise provided, where payments of pension or compensation are being made to a person under one law, the right to receive benefits under another law being in suspension, and a higher rate of pension or compensation becomes payable under the other law, benefits at the higher rate will not be paid for any date prior to the date of receipt of an election.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 3.702 Dependency and indemnity compensation.

(a) Right to elect. A person who is eligible for death compensation and who has entitlement to dependency and indemnity compensation pursuant to the provisions of §3.5(b)(2) or (3) may receive dependency and indemnity compensation upon the filing of a claim. The claim of such a person for service-connected death benefits shall be considered a claim for dependency and indemnity compensation subject to confirmation by the claimant. The effective date of payment is controlled by the provisions of §3.400(c)(4).
§ 3.703 Two parents in same parental line.

(a) General. Death compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation is not payable for a child if dependency and indemnity compensation is paid to or for a child or to the surviving spouse on account of the child by reason of the death of another parent in the same parental line where both parents died before June 9, 1960. Where the death of one such parent occurred on or after June 9, 1960, gratuitous benefits may not be paid or furnished to or on account of any child by reason of the death of more than one parent in the same parental line.

(b) Election. The child or his or her fiduciary may elect to receive benefits based on the service of either veteran. An election of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation based on the death of one parent pluses the right to such benefits based on the death of another parent in
suspension. The suspension may be lifted at any time by making another election.

(c) Other payees. Where a child has elected to receive pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation or dependents’ educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. ch. 35 based on the death of a veteran, he (or she) will be excluded from consideration in determining the eligibility or rate payable to a surviving spouse or another child or children in the case of another deceased veteran in the same parental line. See §3.659(b).

CROSS REFERENCES: Two-parent cases. See §3.503(a)(7). Two parents in same parental line. See §3.659.


§ 3.704 Elections within class of dependents.

(a) Children. Where children are eligible to receive monthly benefits under more than one law in the same case, the election of benefits under one law by or on behalf of one child will not serve to increase the rate allowable for any other child under another law in that case. The rate payable for each child will not exceed the amount which would be paid if all children were receiving benefits under the same law. Where a child is no longer eligible to receive pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation because of having elected dependents’ educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35, the child will be excluded from consideration in determining the rate payable for another child or children.

(b) Parents. If there are two parents eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and only one parent files claim for this benefit, the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation for that parent will not exceed the amount which would be paid to him or her if both parents had filed claim for dependency and indemnity compensation. The rate of death compensation for the other parent will not exceed the amount which would be paid if both parents were receiving this benefit.


§§ 3.705–3.706 [Reserved]

§ 3.707 Dependents’ educational assistance.

(a) Child. The conditions applicable to the bar to payment of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation for a child concurrently with educational assistance allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 are set forth in §21.3023 of this chapter.

(b) Spouse or surviving spouse. There is no bar to the payment of pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation to a spouse concurrently with educational assistance allowance under 38 U.S.C. ch. 35.

CROSS REFERENCES: Discontinuance. See §3.503(a)(8). Certification. See §3.807.

[34 FR 840, Jan. 18, 1969, as amended at 41 FR 29120, July 15, 1976]

§ 3.708 Federal Employees’ Compensation.

(a) Military service—(1) Initial election. Where a person is entitled to compensation from the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs, under the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA) based upon disability or death due to service in the Armed Forces and is also entitled based upon service in the Armed Forces to pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation under the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the claimant will elect which benefit he or she will receive. Pension compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation may not be paid in such instances by the Department of Veterans Affairs concurrently with compensation from the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs. Benefits are not payable by the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs for disability or death incurred on or after January 1, 1957, based on military service.

(2) Right of reelection. Persons receiving compensation from the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs
based on death due to military service may elect to receive dependency and indemnity compensation at any time. Once payment of dependency and indemnity compensation has been granted, all further right to FECA benefits is extinguished and only dependency and indemnity compensation is payable thereafter.

(3) Rights of children. Where primary title is vested in the surviving spouse, the claimant’s election controls the rights of any of the veteran’s children, regardless of whether they are in the claimant’s custody and regardless of the fact that such children may not be eligible to receive benefits under laws administered by the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs. A child who is eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation or other benefits independent of the surviving spouse’s entitlement may receive such benefits concurrently with payment of FECA benefits to the surviving spouse.

(4) Entitlement based on 38 U.S.C. 1151. The provisions of this paragraph are applicable also in those cases in which disability or death occurs as a result of having submitted to an examination, medical or surgical treatment, hospitalization or hospital care, training, or compensated work therapy program. See §§3.358 and 3.361.

(b) Civilian employment—(1) Same disability or death. Where a person is entitled to compensation from the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs based upon civilian employment and is also entitled to compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs for the same disability or death, the claimant will elect which benefit he or she will receive. On or after September 13, 1960, an award cannot be approved for payment of compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation concurrently with compensation from the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs in such instances. See 38 U.S.C. §3.958. There is no right of reelection. (5 U.S.C. §8116(b)) A child who is eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation or other benefits independent of the surviving spouse’s entitlement may receive such benefits concurrently with payment of FECA benefits to the surviving spouse.

(2) Not the same disability or death. There is no prohibition against payment of benefits under the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act concurrently with other benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs when such benefits are not based on the same disability or death.


§ 3.710 Civil service annuitants.

Department of Veterans Affairs benefits may be paid concurrently with civil service retirement benefits. However, payments will be considered income as provided in §3.262 (e) and (h).

[29 FR 15208, Nov. 11, 1964]

§ 3.711 Improved pension elections.

Except as otherwise provided by this section and §3.712, a person entitled to receive section 306 or old-law pension on December 31, 1978, may elect to receive improved pension under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. §1521, §1541, or §1542 as in effect on January 1, 1979. Except as provided by §3.714, an election of improved pension is final when the payee (or the payee’s fiduciary) negotiates one check for this benefit and there is no right to reelection. Any veteran eligible to make an election under this section who is married to a veteran who is also eligible to make such an election may not receive improved pension unless the veteran’s spouse also elects to receive improved pension.

[Authority: Sec. 306(a)(1) of Pub. L. 95–588, 92 Stat. 2497]

[46 FR 11661, Feb. 10, 1981]

§ 3.712 Improved pension elections; surviving spouses of Spanish-American War veterans.

(a) General. A surviving spouse of a Spanish-American War veteran eligible for pension under 38 U.S.C. §1536 may elect to receive improved pension under 38 U.S.C. §1541. Except as provided by §3.714, an election of improved pension is final when the payee (or the payee’s fiduciary) negotiates one check for this benefit and there is no right of reelection.
§ 3.713 Aid and attendance. A surviving spouse of a Spanish-American War veteran who is receiving or entitled to receive pension based on need for regular aid and attendance shall be paid whichever is the greater: The monthly rate authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1536 (a) and (b) and 1544 or the monthly rate authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1541 and 544, as 38 U.S.C. 1541 and 1544 were in effect on December 31, 1978, based on the surviving spouse’s current income and net worth. Pension under 38 U.S.C. 1541 and 1544, as in effect on December 31, 1978, is not payable if the current size of the surviving spouse’s net worth is a bar to payment under § 3.252(b) or if the surviving spouse’s income exceeds the applicable limitation as in effect on December 31, 1978. Elections are not required for this purpose. The change in rate shall be effective the first day of the month in which the facts warrant such change.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1536)

§ 3.714 Improved pension elections—public assistance beneficiaries.

(a) Definitions. The following definitions are applicable to this section.

(1) Pensioner. This means a person who was entitled to section 306 or old-law pension, or a dependent of such a person for the purposes of chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code as in effect on December 31, 1978.

(2) Public assistance. This means payments under the following titles of the Social Security Act:

(i) Title I (Grants to States for Old Age Assistance and Medical Assistance to the Aged).

(ii) Title X (Grants to States for Aid to the Blind).

(iii) Title XIV (Grants to States for Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled).

(iv) Part A of title IV (Aid to Families with Dependent Children).

(v) Title XVI (Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind and Disabled).

(3) Medicaid. This means a State plan for medical assistance under title XIX of the Social Security Act.

(4) Informed election. The term “informed election” means an election of improved pension (or a reaffirmation of a previous election of improved pension) after the Department of Veterans Affairs has complied with the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section.

(b) General. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section an election to receive improved pension shall be effective the date of receipt of the election.

(b) Persons entitled to pension on December 31, 1978. The effective date of an election to receive improved pension filed before October 1, 1979, by a person entitled to receive either old-law pension or section 306 pension on December 31, 1978, shall be January 1, 1979, or if to the beneficiary’s advantage, at any date after January 1, 1979, and before October 1, 1979. The amount of improved pension payable from the effective date of the election shall be reduced by the amount of old-law pension or section 306 pension paid to the beneficiary for such period.

(Authority: Sec. 306(d) of Pub. L. 95–588, 92 Stat. 2497).

§ 3.714 Improved pension elections—public assistance beneficiaries.

(a) Definitions. The following definitions are applicable to this section.

(1) Pensioner. This means a person who was entitled to section 306 or old-law pension, or a dependent of such a person for the purposes of chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code as in effect on December 31, 1978.

(2) Public assistance. This means payments under the following titles of the Social Security Act:

(i) Title I (Grants to States for Old Age Assistance and Medical Assistance to the Aged).

(ii) Title X (Grants to States for Aid to the Blind).

(iii) Title XIV (Grants to States for Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled).

(iv) Part A of title IV (Aid to Families with Dependent Children).

(v) Title XVI (Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind and Disabled).

(3) Medicaid. This means a State plan for medical assistance under title XIX of the Social Security Act.

(4) Informed election. The term “informed election” means an election of improved pension (or a reaffirmation of a previous election of improved pension) after the Department of Veterans Affairs has complied with the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section.

(b) General. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section an election to receive improved pension shall be effective the date of receipt of the election.

(b) Persons entitled to pension on December 31, 1978. The effective date of an election to receive improved pension filed before October 1, 1979, by a person entitled to receive either old-law pension or section 306 pension on December 31, 1978, shall be January 1, 1979, or if to the beneficiary’s advantage, at any date after January 1, 1979, and before October 1, 1979. The amount of improved pension payable from the effective date of the election shall be reduced by the amount of old-law pension or section 306 pension paid to the beneficiary for such period.

(Authority: Sec. 306(d) of Pub. L. 95–588, 92 Stat. 2497).

§ 3.714 Improved pension elections—public assistance beneficiaries.

(a) Definitions. The following definitions are applicable to this section.

(1) Pensioner. This means a person who was entitled to section 306 or old-law pension, or a dependent of such a person for the purposes of chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code as in effect on December 31, 1978.

(2) Public assistance. This means payments under the following titles of the Social Security Act:

(i) Title I (Grants to States for Old Age Assistance and Medical Assistance to the Aged).

(ii) Title X (Grants to States for Aid to the Blind).

(iii) Title XIV (Grants to States for Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled).

(iv) Part A of title IV (Aid to Families with Dependent Children).

(v) Title XVI (Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind and Disabled).

(3) Medicaid. This means a State plan for medical assistance under title XIX of the Social Security Act.

(4) Informed election. The term “informed election” means an election of improved pension (or a reaffirmation of a previous election of improved pension) after the Department of Veterans Affairs has complied with the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section.

(b) General. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section an election to receive improved pension shall be effective the date of receipt of the election.

(b) Persons entitled to pension on December 31, 1978. The effective date of an election to receive improved pension filed before October 1, 1979, by a person entitled to receive either old-law pension or section 306 pension on December 31, 1978, shall be January 1, 1979, or if to the beneficiary’s advantage, at any date after January 1, 1979, and before October 1, 1979. The amount of improved pension payable from the effective date of the election shall be reduced by the amount of old-law pension or section 306 pension paid to the beneficiary for such period.

(Authority: Sec. 306(d) of Pub. L. 95–588, 92 Stat. 2497).

§ 3.714 Improved pension elections—public assistance beneficiaries.

(a) Definitions. The following definitions are applicable to this section.

(1) Pensioner. This means a person who was entitled to section 306 or old-law pension, or a dependent of such a person for the purposes of chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code as in effect on December 31, 1978.

(2) Public assistance. This means payments under the following titles of the Social Security Act:

(i) Title I (Grants to States for Old Age Assistance and Medical Assistance to the Aged).

(ii) Title X (Grants to States for Aid to the Blind).

(iii) Title XIV (Grants to States for Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled).

(iv) Part A of title IV (Aid to Families with Dependent Children).

(v) Title XVI (Supplemental Security Income for the Aged, Blind and Disabled).

(3) Medicaid. This means a State plan for medical assistance under title XIX of the Social Security Act.

(4) Informed election. The term “informed election” means an election of improved pension (or a reaffirmation of a previous election of improved pension) after the Department of Veterans Affairs has complied with the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section.

(b) General. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section an election to receive improved pension shall be effective the date of receipt of the election.

(b) Persons entitled to pension on December 31, 1978. The effective date of an election to receive improved pension filed before October 1, 1979, by a person entitled to receive either old-law pension or section 306 pension on December 31, 1978, shall be January 1, 1979, or if to the beneficiary’s advantage, at any date after January 1, 1979, and before October 1, 1979. The amount of improved pension payable from the effective date of the election shall be reduced by the amount of old-law pension or section 306 pension paid to the beneficiary for such period.

(Authority: Sec. 306(d) of Pub. L. 95–588, 92 Stat. 2497).
sec. 13(c)) shall be deemed to have remained payable to a pensioner for each month after December 1978 when the following conditions are met:

1. The pensioner was in receipt of pension for the month of December 1978; and
2. The pensioner was in receipt of public assistance (or a supplementary payment under Pub. L. 93–233, sec. 13(c)) prior to June 17, 1980, and for the month of December 1978, and
3. The pensioner’s public assistance payments (or a supplementary payment under Pub. L. 93–233, sec. 13(c)) were discontinued because of an increase in income resulting from an election of improved pension.

(d) End of the deemed period of entitlement to public assistance. The deemed period of entitlement to public assistance (or a supplementary payment under Pub. L. 93–233, sec. 13(c)) ends the first calendar month that begins more than 10 days after a pensioner makes an informed election of improved pension. (If the pensioner is unable to make an informed election the informed election may be made by a member of the pensioner’s family.) A pensioner who fails to disaffirm a previously made election of improved pension within the time limits set forth in paragraph (e) of this section shall be deemed to have reaffirmed the previous election. This will also end the deemed period of entitlement to public assistance.

(e) Notice of right to make informed election or disaffirm election previously made. The Department of Veterans Affairs shall send a written notice to each pensioner to whom paragraph (b) of this section applies and who is eligible to elect or who has elected improved pension. The notice shall be in clear and understandable language. It shall include the following:

1. A description of the consequences to the pensioner (and the pensioner’s family if applicable) of losing medicaid eligibility because of an increase in income resulting from electing improved pension; and
2. A description of the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section; and
3. In the case of a pensioner who has previously elected improved pension, a form for the purpose of enabling the pensioner to disaffirm the previous election of improved pensions; and
   i. That a pensioner has 90 days from the date the notice is mailed to the pensioner to disaffirm a previous election by completing the disaffirmation form and mailing it to the Department of Veterans Affairs.
   ii. That a pensioner who disaffirms a previous election shall receive, beginning the calendar month after the calendar month in which the Department of Veterans Affairs receives the disaffirmation, the amount of pension payable if improved pension had not been elected.
   iii. That a pensioner who disaffirms a previous election may again elect improved pension but without a right to disaffirm the subsequent election.
   iv. That a pensioner who disaffirms an election of improved pension shall not be indebted to the United States for the period in which the pensioner received improved pension.

(Authority: Pub. L. 96–272, sec. 310; 94 Stat. 500)

(f) Notification to the Social Security Administration. The Department of Veterans Affairs shall promptly furnish the Social Security Administration the following information:

1. The name and identifying information of each pensioner who disaffirms his or her election of improved pension.
2. The name and identifying information of each pensioner who fails to disaffirm and election of improved pension within the 90-day period described in paragraph (e)(4)(i) of this section.
3. The name and identifying information of each pensioner who after disaffirming his or her election of improved pension, subsequently reelect improved pension.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)


(a) Compensation. (1) A radiation-exposed veteran, as defined in 38 CFR 3.309(d)(3), who receives a payment
under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2210 note) (RECA), will not be denied compensation to which the veteran is entitled under 38 CFR 3.309(d) for months beginning after March 26, 2002.

(2) A veteran who is not a “radiation-exposed veteran,” as defined in 38 CFR 3.309(d)(3), is not entitled to VA compensation for disability caused by a disease that is attributable to exposure to radiation for which the veteran has received a payment under RECA.

(b) Dependency and indemnity compensation. A person who receives a payment under RECA based upon a veteran’s death will not be denied dependency and indemnity compensation to which the person is entitled under 38 CFR 3.5 and 3.22 for months beginning after March 26, 2002.

(c) Offset of RECA payment against VA benefits. Notwithstanding paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, the amount of a RECA payment will be deducted from the amount of compensation payable pursuant to §3.309(d) or the amount of dependency and indemnity compensation payable.

[Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1112(c)(4), 1310(c); 42 U.S.C. 2210 note] [71 FR 44919, Aug. 8, 2006]

§3.750 Entitlement to concurrent receipt of military retired pay and disability compensation.

(a) Definition of military retired pay. For the purposes of this part, military retired pay is payment received by a veteran that is classified as retired pay by the Service Department, including retainer pay, based on the recipient’s service as a member of the Armed Forces or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Environmental Science Services Administration, or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(b) Payment of both military retired pay and disability compensation or improved pension—(1) Compensation. Subject to paragraphs (b)(2) and (b)(3) of this section, a veteran who is entitled to military retired pay and disability compensation for a service-connected disability rated 50 percent or more, or a combination of service-connected disabilities rated 50 percent or more, under the schedule for rating disabilities (38 CFR part 4, subpart B), is entitled to receive both payments subject to the phase-in period described in paragraph (c) of this section.

(2) Chapter 61 disability retirees retiring with 20 or more years of service. Disability retired pay payable under 10 U.S.C. Chapter 61 to a veteran with 20 or more years of creditable service may be paid concurrently with disability compensation to a qualifying veteran subject to the following:

(i) Any waiver required during the phase-in period under paragraph (c)(1)(ii) of this section; and

(ii) If the veteran’s disability retired pay exceeds the amount of retired pay the veteran would have received had the veteran retired based on length of service, the veteran must waive that excess amount of disability retired pay in order to receive VA disability compensation.

(3) Chapter 61 disability retirees retiring with less than 20 years of service. Veterans who receive disability retired pay under 10 U.S.C. Chapter 61 with less than 20 years of creditable service are not eligible for concurrent receipt.

(4) Improved Pension. A veteran may receive improved pension and military retired pay at the same time without having to waive military retired pay. However, in determining entitlement to improved pension, VA will treat military retired pay in the same manner as countable income from other sources.

(c) Waiver—(1) When a waiver is necessary. (i) A waiver of military retired pay is necessary in order to receive disability compensation when a veteran is eligible for both military retired pay and disability compensation but is not eligible under paragraphs (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section to receive both benefits at the same time.

(ii) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, all veterans who are eligible to receive both military retired pay and disability compensation at the same time under paragraphs (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section must file
a waiver in order to receive the maximum allowable amount of disability compensation during the phase-in period. The phase-in period ends on December 31, 2013. After the phase-in period, veterans retired under 10 U.S.C. chapter 61 who are eligible for concurrent receipt must still file a waiver under the circumstances described in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section.

(2) When a waiver is not necessary. Unless paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section applies, veterans who are entitled to receive disability compensation based on a VA determination of individual unemployability as well as veterans rated 100-percent disabled under the VA schedule for rating disabilities need not file waivers of military retired pay. The phase-in period does not apply to this group of veterans.

(3) How to file a waiver of military retired pay. A veteran may request a waiver of military retired pay in any written, signed statement, including a VA form, which reflects a desire to waive all or some military retired pay. The statement must be submitted to VA or to the Federal agency that pays the veteran’s military retired pay. VA will treat as a waiver an application for VA compensation filed by a veteran who is entitled to military retired pay.

(d) Elections and the right to reelect either benefit. (1) A veteran who has filed a waiver of military retired pay under this section has elected to receive disability compensation. A veteran may reelect between benefits covered by this section at any time by submitting a written, signed statement to VA or to the Federal agency that pays the veteran’s military retired pay.

(2) An election filed within 1 year from the date of notification of Department of Veterans Affairs entitlement will be considered as “timely filed” for effective date purposes. See §3.401(e)(1). If the veteran is incompetent, the 1-year period will begin on the date that notification is sent to the next friend or fiduciary. In initial determinations, elections may be applied retroactively if the claimant was not advised of his or her right of election and its effect.


§ 3.751 Statutory awards; retired service personnel.

Retired Regular and Reserve officers and enlisted personnel are not entitled to statutory awards of disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs in addition to their retirement pay. However, under §3.750(c), eligible persons may waive an amount equal to the basic disability compensation and any statutory award otherwise payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

§ 3.752 [Reserved]

§ 3.753 Public Health Service.

Disability compensation may be paid concurrently with retirement pay to an officer of the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service, who was receiving disability compensation on December 31, 1956, as follows:

(a) An officer who incurred a disability before July 29, 1945, but retired for nondisability purposes prior to such date.

(b) An officer who incurred a disability before July 29, 1945, but retired for nondisability purposes between July 4, 1952, and December 31, 1956.

(c) An officer who incurred a disability between July 29, 1945, and July 3, 1952, but retired for nondisability purposes between July 4, 1952, and December 31, 1956.

[26 FR 1604, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.754 Emergency officers’ retirement pay.

A retired emergency officer of World War I has basic eligibility to retirement pay by the Department of Veterans Affairs under Pub. L. 87–875 (sec. 11(b), Pub. L. 85–857 (sec. 11(b), Pub. L. 85–857) from date of filing application therefor after October 24, 1962, if the following requirements are met:

(a) Emergency officers’ retirement pay would have been granted under Pub. L. 506, 70th Congress (Act of May
§ 3.800 Disability or death due to hospitalization, etc.

This section applies to claims received by VA before October 1, 1997. For claims received by VA on or after October 1, 1997, see §§3.362 and 3.363.

(a) Where disease, injury, death or the aggravation of an existing disease or injury occurs as a result of having submitted to an examination, medical or surgical treatment, hospitalization or the pursuit of a course of vocational rehabilitation under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and not the result of his (or her) own willful misconduct, disability or death compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation will be awarded for such disease, injury, aggravation, or death as if such condition were service connected. The commencing date of benefits is subject to the provisions of §3.400(i).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151)

(1) Benefits under paragraph (a) of this section will be in lieu of any benefits the veteran may be entitled to receive under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act inasmuch as concurrent payments are prohibited. (See §3.708.)

(2) Where any person is awarded a judgment on or after December 1, 1962, against the United States in a civil action brought pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 1346(b), or enters into a settlement or compromise on or after December 1, 1962, under 28 U.S.C. 2672 or 2677, by reason of a disability, aggravation or death within the purview of this section, no compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation shall be paid to such person for any month beginning after the date such judgment, settlement, or compromise on account of such disability, aggravation, or death becomes final until the total amount of benefits which would be paid except for this provision equals the total amount included in such judgment, settlement, or compromise. The provisions of this paragraph do not apply, however, to any portion of such compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation payable for any period preceding the end of the month in which such judgment, settlement or compromise becomes final.

(3) If an administrative award was made or a settlement or compromise became final before December 1, 1962, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation may not be authorized for any period after such award settlement, or compromise whether before or after December 1, 1962. There is no bar to payment of compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation and no set-off because of a judgment which became final before December 1, 1962, unless specified in the terms of the judgment.


(i) If a judgment, settlement, or compromise covered by paragraph (a)(2) of this section becomes final on or after December 10, 2004, and includes an amount that is specifically designated for a purpose for which benefits are provided under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 (38 CFR 3.809 and 3.809a) or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39 (38 CFR 3.808), and if VA awards 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39 benefits after the date on which the judgment, settlement, or compromise becomes final, the amount of the award will be reduced by the amount received under the judgment, settlement, or compromise for the same purpose.

(ii) If the amount described in paragraph (a)(4)(i) of this section is greater than the amount of an award under 38 U.S.C. chapter 21 or 38 U.S.C. chapter 39, the excess amount received under
§ 3.802

Medal of Honor.

(a) The Secretary of the Department of the Army, the Department of the Navy, the Department of the Air Force, or the Department of Transportation will determine the eligibility of applicants to be entered on the Medal of Honor Roll and will deliver to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs a certified copy of each certificate issued in which the right of the person named in the certificate to the special pension is set forth. The special pension will be authorized on the basis of such certification.

(b) An award of special pension at the monthly rate specified in 38 U.S.C. 1562 will be made as of the date of filing of the application with the Secretary concerned. The special pension will be paid in addition to all other payments under laws of the United States. However, a person awarded more than one Medal of Honor may not receive more than one special pension.

(c) VA will pay to each person who is receiving or who in the future receives Medal of Honor pension a retroactive lump sum payment equal to the total amount of Medal of Honor pension that person would have received during the period beginning the first day of the
§ 3.803 Naval pension.

(a) Payment of naval pension will be authorized on the basis of a certification by the Secretary of the Navy.

(Authority: 10 U.S.C. 6160)

(b) Awards of naval pension in effect prior to July 14, 1943, or renewed or continued may be paid concurrently with Department of Veterans Affairs pension or compensation; however, naval pension allowance under 10 U.S.C. 6160 may not exceed one-fourth of the rate of disability pension or compensation otherwise payable, exclusive of additional allowances for dependents or specific disabilities.

(c) New awards of naval pension may not be made concurrently with Department of Veterans Affairs pension or compensation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304(a))

(d) Naval pension remaining unpaid at the date of the veteran’s death is not payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs as an accrued benefit.

from the period of such duty, under conditions other than dishonorable.

(2) Where the veteran died after separation from service: (i) Discharge from service must have been under conditions other than dishonorable as outlined in §3.12.

(ii) Line of duty and service connection will be determined as outlined in §3.1(k) and (m) and the §3.300 series.

[26 FR 1605, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.807 Dependents’ educational assistance; certification.

For the purposes of dependents’ educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 (see §21.3020), the child, spouse or surviving spouse of a veteran or serviceperson will have basic eligibility if the following conditions are met:

(a) General. Basic eligibility exists if the veteran:

(1) Was discharged from service under conditions other than dishonorable, or died in service; and

(2) Has a permanent total service-connected disability; or

(3) A permanent total service-connected disability was in existence at the date of the veteran’s death; or

(4) Died as a result of a service-connected disability; or (if a serviceperson)

(5) Is on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces and

§3.807 Dependents’ educational assistance; certification.

For the purposes of dependents’ educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 (see §21.3020), the child, spouse or surviving spouse of a veteran or serviceperson will have basic eligibility if the following conditions are met:

(a) General. Basic eligibility exists if the veteran:

(1) Was discharged from service under conditions other than dishonorable, or died in service; and

(2) Has a permanent total service-connected disability; or

(3) A permanent total service-connected disability was in existence at the date of the veteran’s death; or

(4) Died as a result of a service-connected disability; or (if a serviceperson)

(5) Is on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces and
§ 3.808 Automobiles or other conveyances; certification.

(a) Entitlement. A certificate of eligibility for financial assistance in the purchase of one automobile or other conveyance in an amount not exceeding the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 3902 (including all State, local, and other taxes where such are applicable and included in the purchase price) and of basic entitlement to necessary adaptive equipment will be provided to—

(1) A veteran who is entitled to compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, for a disability described in paragraph (b) of this section; or

(2) A member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who has a disability described in paragraph (b) of this section that is the result of an injury or disability incurred or disease contracted in or aggravated by active military, naval, or air service.

(b) Disability. One of the following must exist:

(1) Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both feet;

(2) Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands;

(3) Permanent impairment of vision of both eyes: Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20° in the better eye.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3565)

(c) Service connection. For purposes of this section, the term “service-connected disability” encompasses combinations of disabilities of paired organs or extremities treated as if service-connected under the provisions of §3.383(a) of this part. The standards and criteria for determining service connection, either direct or presumptive, are those applicable to the period of service during which the disability was incurred or aggravated (38 U.S.C. 3501(a)). Cases where eligibility for service-connected benefits is established under §§3.358, 3.361, or 3.800 are not included.

(d) Relationship—(1) “Child” means the son or daughter of a veteran who meets the requirements of §3.57, except as to age and marital status.

(2) “Spouse” means a person whose marriage to the veteran meets the requirements of §3.50(a) of this part.

(3) “Surviving spouse” means a person whose marriage to the veteran meets the requirements of §§3.50(b) or 3.52 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3501)


(4) For adaptive equipment eligibility only, ankylosis of one or both knees or one or both hips.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3902)

(c) Claim for conveyance and certification for adaptive equipment. A specific application for financial assistance in purchasing a conveyance is required which must contain a certification by the claimant that the conveyance will be operated only by persons properly licensed. The application will also be considered as an application for the added equipment to insure that the claimant will be able to operate the conveyance in a manner consistent with safety and to satisfy the applicable standards of licensure of the proper licensing authorities. Simultaneously with the certification provided pursuant to the introductory text of this section, a claimant for financial assistance in the purchase of an automobile will be furnished a certificate of eligibility for financial assistance in the purchase of such adaptive equipment as may be appropriate to the claimant’s losses unless the need for such equipment is contraindicated by a physical or legal inability to operate the vehicle. There is no time limitation in which to apply. An application by a claimant on active duty will be deemed to have been filed with VA on the date it is shown to have been placed in the hands of military authority for transmittal.

(d) Additional eligibility criteria for adaptive equipment. Claimants for adaptive equipment must also satisfy the additional eligibility criteria of §§ 17.156, 17.157, and 17.158 of this chapter.

(e) Definition. The term adaptive equipment, means generally, that equipment which must be part of or added to a conveyance manufactured for sale to the general public to make it safe for use by the claimant and to assist him or her in meeting the applicable standards of licensure of the proper licensing authority.

(1) With regard to automobiles and similar vehicles the term includes a basic automatic transmission as to a claimant who has lost or lost the use of a limb. In addition, the term includes but is not limited to, power steering, power brakes, power window lifts and power seats. The term also includes air-conditioning equipment when such equipment is necessary to the health and safety of the veteran and to the safety of others, and special equipment necessary to assist the eligible person into or out of the automobile or other conveyance, regardless of whether the automobile or other conveyance is to be operated by the eligible person or is to be operated for such person by another person; and any modification of the interior space of the automobile or other conveyance if needed because of the physical condition of such person in order for such person to enter or operate the vehicle.

(2) With regard to automobiles and similar vehicles the term includes such items of equipment as the Chief Medical Director may, by directive, specify as ordinarily necessary for any of the classes of losses specified in paragraph (b) of this section and for any combination of such losses. Such specifications of equipment may include a limit on the financial assistance to be provided based on judgment and experience.

(3) The term also includes other equipment which the Chief Medical Director or designee may deem necessary in an individual case.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1151(c)(2), 3902)

§ 3.809 Specially adapted housing under 38 U.S.C. 2101(a).

A certificate of eligibility for assistance in acquiring specially adapted housing under 38 U.S.C. 2101(a) or 2101A(a) may be extended to a veteran or a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty if the following requirements are met:

(a) Eligibility. A veteran must have had active military, naval, or air service after April 20, 1898. Benefits are not restricted to veterans with wartime service. On or after December 16, 2003, the benefit under this section is also available to a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty.

§ 3.809a

(b) Disability. A member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty must have a disability rated as permanent and total that was incurred or aggravated in line of duty in active military, naval, or air service. A veteran must be entitled to compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, for a disability rated as permanent and total. In either case, the disability must be due to:

(1) The loss, or loss of use, of both lower extremities, such as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair, or

(2) Blindness in both eyes, having only light perception, plus the anatomical loss or loss of use of one lower extremity, or

(3) The loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with residuals of organic disease or injury which so affect the functions of balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair, or

(4) The loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with the loss or loss of use of one upper extremity which so affect the functions of balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair, or

(5) The loss or loss of use of both upper extremities such as to preclude use of the arms at or above the elbow, or

(6) Full thickness or subdermal burns that have resulted in contractures with limitation of motion of two or more extremities or of at least one extremity and the trunk.

(c) "Preclude locomotion." This term means the necessity for regular and constant use of a wheelchair, braces, crutches or canes as a normal mode of locomotion although occasional locomotion by other methods may be possible.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151(c)(1), 2101, 2101A)

Cross Reference: Assistance to certain disabled veterans in acquiring specially adapted housing. See §§36.4400 through 36.4410 of this chapter.

(iv) Residuals of an inhalation injury (including, but not limited to, pulmonary fibrosis, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1151(c)(1), 2101, 2101A, 2104)

CROSS-REFERENCE: Assistance to certain disabled veterans in acquiring specially adapted housing. See §§ 36.4400 through 36.4410 of this chapter.


§ 3.810 Clothing allowance.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section a veteran who has a service-connected disability, or a disability compensable under 38 U.S.C. 1151 as if it were service-connected, is entitled, upon application therefor, to an annual clothing allowance as specified in 38 U.S.C. 1162. The annual clothing allowance is payable in a lump sum, and the following eligibility criteria must also be satisfied:

(1) A VA examination or hospital or examination report from a facility specified in § 3.326(c) discloses that the veteran wears or uses certain prosthetic or orthopedic appliances which tend to wear or tear clothing (including a wheelchair) because of such disability and such disability is the loss or loss of use of a hand or foot compensable at a rate specified in § 3.350(a), (b), (c), (d), of (f); or

(2) The Chief Medical Director or designee certifies that because of such disability a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance is worn or used which tends to wear or tear the veteran’s clothing, or that because of the use of a physician-prescribed medication for a skin condition which is due to the service-connected disability irreparable damage is done to the veteran’s outer garments. For the purposes of this paragraph “appliance” includes a wheelchair.

(b) Effective August 1, 1972, the initial lump sum clothing allowance is due and payable for veterans meeting the eligibility requirements of paragraph (a) of this section as of that date. Subsequent annual payments for those meeting the eligibility requirements of paragraphs (a) of this section will become due on the anniversary date thereafter, both as to initial claims and recurring payments under previously established entitlement.

(c)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the application for clothing allowance must be filed within 1 year of the anniversary date (August 1) for which entitlement is initially established, otherwise, the application will be acceptable only to effect payment of the clothing allowance becoming due on any succeeding anniversary date for which entitlement is established, provided the application is filed within 1 year of such date. The 1-year period for filing application will include the anniversary date and terminate on July 31 of the following year.

(c)(2) Where the initial determination of service connection for the qualifying disability is made subsequent to an anniversary date for which entitlement is established, the application for clothing allowance may be filed within 1 year from the date of notification to the veteran of such determination.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1162)

(d) If a veteran is incarcerated in a Federal, State, or local penal institution for a period of more than 60 days and is furnished clothing without charge by the institution, VA shall reduce the amount of the annual clothing allowance by 1/365th of the amount otherwise payable for each day the veteran was incarcerated during the 12-month period preceding the anniversary date for which entitlement is established. No reduction shall be made for the first 60 days of incarceration.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5331A)


§ 3.811 Minimum income annuity and gratuitous annuity.

(a) Eligibility for minimum income annuity. The minimum income annuity authorized by Public Law 92–425 as amended is payable to a person:

(1) Whom the Department of Defense or the Department of Transportation has determined meets the eligibility criteria of section 4(a) of Pub. L. 92–425
as amended other than section 4(a)(1) and (2); and

(2) Who is eligible for pension under subchapter III of chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, or section 306 of the Veterans’ and Survivors’ Pension Improvement Act of 1978; and

(3) Whose annual income, as determined in establishing pension eligibility, is less than the maximum annual rate of pension in effect under 38 U.S.C. 1541(b).

(b) Computation of the minimum income annuity payment—(1) Annual income. VA will determine a beneficiary’s annual income for minimum income annuity purposes under the provisions of §§3.271 and 3.272 of this part for beneficiaries receiving improved pension, or under §§3.260 through 3.262 of this part for beneficiaries receiving old law or section 306 pensions, except that the amount of the minimum income annuity will be excluded from the calculation.

(2) VA will determine the minimum income annuity payment for beneficiaries entitled to improved pension by subtracting the annual income for minimum income annuity purposes from the maximum annual pension rate under 38 U.S.C. 1541(b).

(3) VA will determine the minimum income annuity payment for beneficiaries receiving old law and section 306 pensions by reducing the maximum annual pension rate under 38 U.S.C. 1541(b) by the amount of the Retired Servicemen’s Family Protection Plan benefit, if any, that the beneficiary receives and subtracting from that amount the annual income for minimum income annuity purposes.

(4) VA will recompute the monthly minimum income annuity payment whenever there is a change to the maximum annual rate of pension in effect under 38 U.S.C. 1541(b), and whenever there is a change in the beneficiary’s income.

(c) An individual otherwise eligible for pension under subchapter III of chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, or section 306 of the Veterans’ and Survivors’ Pension Improvement Act of 1978 shall be considered eligible for pension for purposes of determining eligibility for the minimum income annuity even though as a result of adding the amount of the minimum income annuity authorized under Public Law 92–425 as amended to any other countable income, no amount of pension is due.

(d) If the Department of Defense or the Department of Transportation determines that a minimum income annuitant also is entitled to the gratuitous annuity authorized by Pub. L. 100–456 as amended, which is payable to certain surviving spouses of servicemembers who died before November 1, 1953, and were entitled to retired or retainer pay on the date of death, VA will combine the payment of the gratuitous annuity with the minimum income annuity payment.

(e) Termination. Other than as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, if a beneficiary receiving the minimum income annuity becomes ineligible for pension, VA will terminate the minimum income annuity effective the same date.


The provisions of this section apply to the payment of a special allowance to certain surviving spouses and children of individuals who died on active duty prior to August 13, 1981, or who died as a result of a service-connected disability which was incurred or aggravated prior to August 13, 1981. This special allowance is a replacement for certain social security benefits which were either reduced or terminated by provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981.

(a) Eligibility requirements. (1) A determination must first be made that the person on whose earnings record the claim is based either died on active duty prior to August 13, 1981, or who died as a result of a service-connected disability which was incurred or aggravated prior to August 13, 1981. For purposes of this determination, character of discharge is not a factor for consideration, and death on active duty subsequent to August 12, 1981, is qualifying provided that the death resulted from a service-connected disability which was
incurred or aggravated prior to August 13, 1981.

(2) Once a favorable determination has been made under paragraph (a)(1) of this section, determinations as to the age, relationship and school attendance requirements contained in paragraphs (a)(1) and (b)(1) of section 156 of Pub. L. 97–377 will be made. In making these eligibility determinations VA shall apply the provisions of the Social Security Act, and any regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, as in effect during the claimant’s period of eligibility. Unless otherwise provided in this section, when issues are raised concerning eligibility or entitlement to this special allowance which cannot be appropriately resolved under the provisions of the Social Security Act, or the regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, the provisions of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, are for application.

(b) Computation of payment rate—

(1) Basic entitlement rate. A basic entitlement rate will be computed for each eligible claimant in accordance with the provisions of subparagraphs (a)(2) and (b)(2) of section 156 of Pub. L. 97–377 using data to be provided by the Social Security Administration. This basic entitlement rate will then be used to compute the monthly payment rate as described in paragraphs (b)(2) to (b)(6) of this section.

(2) Original or reopened awards to surviving spouses. The monthly payment rate shall be equal to the basic entitlement rate increased by the overall average percentage increase (rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent) of each legislative increase in dependency and indemnity compensation rates under 38 U.S.C. 1311 which became effective concurrently with or subsequent to the effective date of the earliest adjustment under section 215(i) of the Social Security Act that was disregarded in computing the basic entitlement rate.

(4) Subsequent legislative increases in rates. The monthly rate of special allowance payable to a surviving spouse shall be increased by the same overall average percentage increase (rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent) and on the same effective date as any legislative increase in the rates payable under 38 U.S.C. 1311. The monthly rate of special allowance payable to a child shall be increased by the same overall average percentage increase (rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent) and on the same effective date as any legislative increase in the rates payable under 38 U.S.C. 3531(b).

(5) Amendment of awards. Prompt action shall be taken to amend any award of this special allowance to conform with evidence indicating a change in basic eligibility, any basic entitlement rate, or any effective date previously determined. It is the claimant’s responsibility to promptly notify VA of any change in their status or employment which affects eligibility or entitlement.

(6) Rounding of monthly rates. Any monthly rate computed under the provisions of this paragraph, if not a multiple of $1, shall be rounded to the next lower multiple of $1.

(c) Claimants not entitled to this special allowance. The following are not entitled to this special allowance for the reasons indicated.

(1) Claimants eligible for death benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151. The deaths in such cases are not service-connected.

(2) Claimants eligible for death benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1318. The deaths in such cases are not service connected.

(3) Claimants whose claims are based on an individual’s service in:

(i) The Commonwealth Army of the Philippines while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, including recognized guerrilla forces (see 38 U.S.C. 107).

§ 3.813  Interim benefits for disability or death due to chloracne or porphyria cutanea tarda.

(a) Disability benefits. Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, a veteran who served in the active military, naval or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era, and who suffers from chloracne or porphyria cutanea tarda which became manifest within one year after the date of the veteran's most recent departure from the Republic of Vietnam during such service, shall be paid interim disability benefits under this section in the same manner and to the same extent that compensation would be payable if such disabilities were service-connected.

(b) Death benefits. Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, if a veteran described in paragraph (a) of this section dies as a result of chloracne or porphyria cutanea tarda, the veteran's survivors shall be paid interim death benefits under this section based upon the same eligibility requirements and at the same rates that dependency and indemnity compensation would be payable if the death were service-connected.

(c) Exceptions. Benefits under this section are not payable for any month for which compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation is payable for the same disability or death, nor are benefits payable under this section (1) when there is affirmative evidence that the disease was not incurred by the veteran during service in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era, (2) when there is affirmative evidence to establish that an intercurrent injury or disease, which is a recognized cause of the disease for which benefits are being claimed, was suffered by the veteran between the date of the veteran's most recent departure from the Republic of Vietnam during active military, naval or air service and the onset of the claimed disease, or (3) if it is determined, based on evidence in the veteran's service records and other records provided by the Secretary of Defense, that the veteran was not exposed to dioxin during active military, naval or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era.

(d) Similarity to service-connected benefits. For purposes of all laws administered by VA (except chapters 11 and 13 of title 38 U.S.C.), a disease establishing eligibility for disability or death benefits under this section shall be treated as if it were service-connected, and the receipt of disability or death benefits shall be treated as if such benefits were compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation, respectively.

(e) Effective dates. Benefits under this section may not be paid for any period
§ 3.814 Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual suffering from spina bifida whose biological father or mother is or was a Vietnam veteran or a veteran with covered service in Korea.

(a) Monthly monetary allowance. VA will pay a monthly monetary allowance under subchapter I of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18, based upon the level of disability determined under the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section, to or for a person who VA has determined is an individual suffering from spina bifida whose biological mother or father is or was a Vietnam veteran or a veteran with covered service in Korea. Receipt of this allowance will not affect the right of the individual or any related person to receive any other benefit to which he or she may be entitled under any law administered by VA. An individual suffering from spina bifida is entitled to only one monthly allowance under this section, even if the individual’s biological father and mother are or were both Vietnam veterans or veterans with covered service in Korea.

(b) [Reserved]

(c) Definitions—

(1) Vietnam veteran. For the purposes of this section, the term “Vietnam veteran” means a person who performed active military, naval, or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, without regard to the characterization of the person’s service. Service in the Republic of Vietnam includes service in the waters offshore and service in other locations if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam.

(2) Covered service in Korea. For the purposes of this section, the term “covered service in Korea” means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service in or near the Korean DMZ between September 1, 1967, and August 31, 1971, and who is determined by VA, in consultation with the Department of Defense, to have been exposed to an herbicide agent during such service. Exposure to an herbicide agent will be conceded if the veteran served between April 1, 1968, and August 31, 1971, in a unit that, as determined by the Department of Defense, operated in or near the Korean DMZ in an area in which herbicides are known to have been applied during that period, unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the veteran was not exposed to any such agent during that service.

(3) Individual. For the purposes of this section, the term “individual” means a person, regardless of age or marital status, whose biological father or mother is or was a Vietnam veteran and who was conceived after the date on which the veteran first served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam era, or whose biological father or mother is or was a veteran with covered service in Korea and who was conceived after the date on which the veteran first had covered service in Korea as defined in this section. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 3.204(a)(1), VA will require the types of evidence specified in §§ 3.209 and 3.210 sufficient to establish in the judgment of the Secretary that a person is the biological son or daughter of a Vietnam veteran or a veteran with covered service in Korea.

(4) Spina bifida. For the purposes of this section, the term “spina bifida” means any form and manifestation of spina bifida except spina bifida occulta.

(d) Disability evaluations. (1) Except as otherwise specified in this paragraph, VA will determine the level of payment as follows:

(i) Level I. The individual walks without braces or other external support as his or her primary means of mobility in the community, has no sensory or motor impairment of the upper extremities, has an IQ of 90 or higher, and is continent of urine and feces without the use of medication or other means to control incontinence.

(ii) Level II. Provided that none of the disabilities is severe enough to warrant payment at Level III, and the individual: walks with braces or other external support as his or her primary means of mobility in the community; or, has sensory or motor impairment of the upper extremities, but is able to...
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grasp pen, feed self, and perform self care; or, has an IQ of at least 70 but less than 90; or, requires medication or other means to control the effects of urinary bladder impairment and no more than two times per week is unable to remain dry for at least three hours at a time during waking hours; or, requires bowel management techniques or other treatment to control the effects of bowel impairment but does not have fecal leakage severe or frequent enough to require wearing of absorbent materials at least four days a week; or, has a colostomy that does not require wearing a bag.

(iii) Level III.

The individual uses a wheelchair as his or her primary means of mobility in the community; or, has sensory or motor impairment of the upper extremities severe enough to prevent grasping a pen, feeding self, and performing self care; or, has an IQ of 69 or less; or, despite the use of medication or other means to control the effects of urinary bladder impairment, at least three times per week is unable to remain dry for three hours at a time during waking hours; or, despite bowel management techniques or other treatment to control the effects of bowel impairment, has fecal leakage severe or frequent enough to require wearing of absorbent materials at least four days a week; or, regularly requires manual evacuation or digital stimulation to empty the bowel; or, has a colostomy that requires wearing a bag.

(2) If an individual who would otherwise be paid at Level I or II has one or more disabilities, such as blindness, uncontrolled seizures, or renal failure that result either from spina bifida, or from treatment procedures for spina bifida, the Director of the Compensation and Pension Service may increase the monthly payment to the level that, in his or her judgment, best represents the extent to which the disabilities resulting from spina bifida limit the individual’s ability to engage in ordinary day-to-day activities, including activities outside the home. A Level II or Level III payment will be awarded depending on whether the effects of a disability are of equivalent severity to the effects specified under Level II or Level III.

(3) VA may accept statements from private physicians, or examination reports from government or private institutions, for the purpose of rating spina bifida claims without further examination, provided the statements or reports are adequate for assessing the level of disability due to spina bifida under the provisions of paragraph (d)(1) of this section. In the absence of adequate medical information, VA will schedule an examination for the purpose of assessing the level of disability.

(4) VA will pay an individual eligible for a monetary allowance due to spina bifida at Level I unless or until it receives medical evidence supporting a higher payment. When required to reassess the level of disability under paragraph (d)(5) or (d)(6) of this section, VA will pay an individual eligible for this monetary allowance at Level I in the absence of evidence adequate to support a higher level of disability or if the individual fails to report, without good cause, for a scheduled examination. Examples of good cause include, but are not limited to, the illness or hospitalization of the claimant, death of an immediate family member, etc.

(5) VA will pay individuals under the age of one year at Level I unless a pediatric neurologist or a pediatric neurosurgeon certifies that, in his or her medical judgment, there is a neurological deficit that will prevent the individual from ambulating, grasping a pen, feeding himself or herself, performing self care, or from achieving urinary or fecal continence. If any of those deficits are present, VA will pay the individual at Level III. In either case, VA will reassess the level of disability when the individual reaches the age of one year.

(6) VA will reassess the level of payment whenever it receives medical evidence indicating that a change is warranted. For individuals between the ages of one and twenty-one, however, it must reassess the level of payment at least every five years.

(e) Effective dates. Except as otherwise provided, VA will award the monetary allowance for an individual suffering from spina bifida based on an original claim, a claim reopened after final disallowance, or a claim for increase as of the date VA received the
§ 3.815  Monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 for an individual with disability from covered birth defects whose biological mother is or was a Vietnam veteran; identification of covered birth defects.

(a) Monthly monetary allowance—(1) General. VA will pay a monthly monetary allowance under subchapter II of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 to or for an individual whose biological mother is or was a Vietnam veteran and who VA has determined to have disability resulting from one or more covered birth defects. Except as provided in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, the amount of the monetary allowance paid will be based upon the level of such disability suffered by the individual, as determined in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (e) of this section.

(2) Affirmative evidence of cause other than mother’s service during Vietnam era. No monetary allowance will be provided under this section based on a particular birth defect of an individual in any case where affirmative evidence establishes that the birth defect results from a cause other than the active military, naval, or air service of the individual’s mother during the Vietnam era and, in determining the level of disability for an individual with more than one birth defect, the particular defect resulting from other causes will be excluded from consideration. This will not prevent VA from paying a monetary allowance under this section for other birth defects.

(3) Nonduplication; spina bifida. In the case of an individual whose only covered birth defect is spina bifida, a monetary allowance will be paid under § 3.814, and not under this section, nor will the individual be evaluated for disability under this section. In the case of an individual who has spina bifida and one or more additional covered birth defects, a monetary allowance will be paid under this section and the amount of the monetary allowance will be not less than the amount the individual would receive if his or her only covered birth defect were spina bifida. If, but for the individual’s one or more additional covered birth defects, the monetary allowance payable to or for the individual would be based on an evaluation at Level I, II, or III, respectively, under § 3.814(d), the evaluation of the individual’s level of disability under paragraph (e) of this section will be not less than Level II, III, or IV, respectively.

(b) No effect on other VA benefits. Receipt of a monetary allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 will not affect the right of the individual, or the right of any person based on the individual’s relationship to that person, to receive any other benefit to which the individual, or that person, may be entitled under any law administered by VA.

(c) Definitions—(1) Vietnam veteran. For the purposes of this section, the term Vietnam veteran means a person who performed active military, naval,
or air service in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975, without regard to the characterization of the person’s service. Service in the Republic of Vietnam includes service in the waters offshore and service in other locations if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam.

(2) Individual. For the purposes of this section, the term individual means a person, regardless of age or marital status, whose biological mother is or was a Vietnam veteran and who was conceived after the date on which the veteran first entered the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975. Notwithstanding the provisions of §3.204(a)(1), VA will require the types of evidence specified in §§3.209 and 3.210 sufficient to establish that a person is the biological son or daughter of a Vietnam veteran.

(3) Covered birth defect. For the purposes of this section, the term covered birth defect means any birth defect identified by VA as a birth defect that is associated with the service of women Vietnam veterans in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975. Notwithstanding the provisions of §3.209(a)(1), VA will require the types of evidence specified in §§3.209 and 3.210 sufficient to establish that a person is the biological son or daughter of a Vietnam veteran.

(a) Identification of covered birth defects. All birth defects that are not excluded under the provisions of this paragraph are covered birth defects.

(1) Covered birth defects include, but are not limited to, the following (however, if a birth defect is determined to be familial in a particular family, it will not be a covered birth defect):

(i) Achondroplasia;
(ii) Birth-related injury;
(iii) Cleft lip and cleft palate;
(iv) Congenital heart disease;
(v) Congenital talipes equinovarus (clubfoot);
(vi) Esophageal and intestinal atresia;
(vii) Hirschprung’s disease (congenital megacolon);
(viii) Hydrocephalus due to aqueductal stenosis;
(ix) Hypoplasia;
(x) Imperforate anus;
(xi) Neural tube defects (including spina bifida, encephalocele, and anencephaly);
(xii) Poland syndrome;
(xiii) Pyloric stenosis;
(xiv) Syndactyly (fused digits);
(xv) Tracheoesophageal fistula;
(xvi) Undescended testicle; and
(xvii) Williams syndrome.

(2) Birth defects that are familial disorders, including hereditary genetic conditions, are not covered birth defects. Familial disorders include, but are not limited to, the following, unless the birth defect is not familial in a particular family:

(i) Albinism;
(ii) Alpha-antitrypsin deficiency;
(iii) Crouzon syndrome;
(iv) Cystic fibrosis;
(v) Duchenne’s muscular dystrophy;
(vi) Galactosemia;
(vii) Hemophilia;
(viii) Huntington’s disease;
(ix) Hurler syndrome;
(x) Kartagener’s syndrome (Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia);
(xi) Marfan syndrome;
(xii) Neurofibromatosis;
(xiii) Osteogenesis imperfecta;
(xiv) Pectus excavatum;
(xv) Phenylketonuria;
(xvi) Sickle cell disease;
(xvii) Tay-Sachs disease;
(xviii) Thalassemia; and
(xix) Wilson’s disease.

(3) Conditions that are congenital malignant neoplasms are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

(i) Medulloblastoma;
(ii) Neuroblastoma;
(iii) Retinoblastoma;
(iv) Teratoma; and
(v) Wilms tumor.

(4) Conditions that are chromosomal disorders are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

(i) Down syndrome and other Trisomies;
(ii) Fragile X syndrome;
(iii) Klinefelter’s syndrome; and
(iv) Turner’s syndrome.

(5) Conditions that are due to birth-related injury are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
   (i) Brain damage due to anoxia during or around time of birth;
   (ii) Cerebral palsy due to birth trauma, (iii) Facial nerve palsy or other peripheral nerve injury;
   (iv) Fractured clavicle; and
   (v) Horner’s syndrome due to forceful manipulation during birth.

(6) Conditions that are due to a fetal or neonatal infirmity with well-established causes or that are miscellaneous pediatric conditions are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
   (i) Asthma and other allergies;
   (ii) Effects of maternal infection during pregnancy, including but not limited to, maternal rubella, toxoplasmosis, or syphilis;
   (iii) Fetal alcohol syndrome or fetal effects of maternal drug use;
   (iv) Hyaline membrane disease;
   (v) Maternal-infant blood incompatibility;
   (vi) Neonatal infections;
   (vii) Neonatal jaundice;
   (viii) Post-infancy deafness/hearing impairment (onset after the age of one year);
   (ix) Prematurity; and
   (x) Refractive disorders of the eye.

(7) Conditions that are developmental disorders are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to,
   the following:
   (i) Attention deficit disorder;
   (ii) Autism;
   (iii) Epilepsy diagnosed after infancy (after the age of one year);
   (iv) Learning disorders; and
   (v) Mental retardation (unless part of a syndrome that is a covered birth defect).

(8) Conditions that do not result in permanent physical or mental disability are not covered birth defects. These include, but are not limited to:
   (i) Conditions rendered non-disabling through treatment;
   (ii) Congenital heart problems surgically corrected or resolved without disabling residuals;
   (iii) Heart murmurs unassociated with a diagnosed cardiac abnormality;
   (iv) Hemangiomas that have resolved with or without treatment; and
   (v) Scars (other than of the head, face, or neck) as the only residual of corrective surgery for birth defects.

(e) Disability evaluations. Whenever VA determines, upon receipt of competent medical evidence, that an individual has one or more covered birth defects, VA will determine the level of disability currently resulting, in combination, from the covered birth defects and associated disabilities. No monetary allowance will be payable under this section if VA determines under this paragraph that an individual has no current disability resulting from the covered birth defects, unless VA determines that the provisions of paragraph (a)(3) of this section are for application. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, VA will determine the level of disability as follows:

(i) Levels of disability.

(1) Level 0. The individual has no current disability resulting from covered birth defects.

(2) Level I. The individual meets one or more of the following criteria:
   (A) The individual has residual physical or mental effects that only occasionally or intermittently limit or prevent some daily activities; or
   (B) The individual has disfigurement or scarring of the head, face, or neck without gross distortion or gross asymmetry of any facial feature (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, or lips).

(3) Level II. The individual meets one or more of the following criteria:
   (A) The individual has residual physical or mental effects that frequently or constantly limit or prevent some daily activities, but the individual is able to work or attend school, carry out most household chores, travel, and provide age-appropriate self-care, such as eating, dressing, grooming, and carrying out personal hygiene, and communication, behavior, social interaction, and intellectual functioning are appropriate for age; or
   (B) The individual has disfigurement or scarring of the head, face, or neck with either gross distortion or gross asymmetry of one facial feature or one paired set of facial features (nose, chin,
forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, or lips).

(iv) **Level III.** The individual meets one or more of the following criteria:

(A) The individual has residual physical or mental effects that frequently or constantly limit or prevent most daily activities, but the individual is able to provide age-appropriate self-care, such as eating, dressing, grooming, and carrying out personal hygiene;

(B) The individual is unable to work or attend school, travel, or carry out household chores, or does so intermittently and with difficulty;

(C) The individual's communication, behavior, social interaction, and intellectual functioning are not entirely appropriate for age; or

(D) The individual has disfigurement or scarring of the head, face, or neck with either gross distortion or gross asymmetry of two facial features or two paired sets of facial features (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, or lips).

(v) **Level IV.** The individual meets one or more of the following criteria:

(A) The individual has residual physical or mental effects that prevent age-appropriate self-care, such as eating, dressing, grooming, and carrying out personal hygiene;

(B) The individual's communication, behavior, social interaction, and intellectual functioning are grossly inappropriate for age; or

(C) The individual has disfigurement or scarring of the head, face, or neck with either gross distortion or gross asymmetry of three facial features or three paired sets of facial features (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, or lips).

(vi) **Assessing limitation of daily activities.**

Physical or mental effects on the following functions are to be considered in assessing limitation of daily activities:

(i) Mobility (ability to stand and walk, including balance and coordination);

(ii) Manual dexterity;

(iii) Stamina;

(iv) Speech;

(v) Hearing;

(vi) Vision (other than correctable refraction errors);

(vii) Memory;

(viii) Ability to concentrate;

(ix) Appropriateness of behavior; and

(x) Urinary and fecal continence.

(f) **Information for determining whether individuals have covered birth defects and rating disability levels.** (1) VA may accept statements from private physicians, or examination reports from government or private institutions, for the purposes of determining whether an individual has a covered birth defect and for rating claims for covered birth defects. If they are adequate for such purposes, VA may make the determination and rating without further examination. In the absence of adequate information, VA may schedule examinations for the purpose of determining whether an individual has a covered birth defect and/or assessing the level of disability.

(2) Except in accordance with paragraph (a)(3) of this section, VA will not pay a monthly monetary allowance unless or until VA is able to obtain medical evidence adequate to determine that an individual has a covered birth defect and adequate to assess the level of disability due to covered birth defects.

(g) **Redeterminations.** VA will reassess a determination under this section whenever it receives evidence indicating that a change is warranted.

(h) **Referrals.** If a regional office is unclear in any case as to whether a condition is a covered birth defect, it may refer the issue to the Director of the Compensation and Pension Service for determination.

(i) **Effective dates.** Except as provided in §3.114(a) or paragraph (i)(1) or (2) of this section, VA will award the monetary allowance under subchapter II of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18, for an individual with disability resulting from one or more covered birth defects, based on an original claim, a claim reopened after final disallowance, or a claim for increase, as of the date VA received the claim (or the date of birth if the claim is received within one year of that date), the date entitlement arose, or December 1, 2001, whichever is latest. Subject to the condition that no benefits may be paid for any period prior to December 1, 2001:
(1) VA will increase benefits as of the earliest date the evidence establishes that the level of severity increased, but only if the beneficiary applies for an increase within one year of that date.

(2) If a claimant reopens a previously disallowed claim based on corrected military records, VA will award the benefit from the latest of the following dates: the date the veteran or beneficiary applied for a correction of the military records; the date the disallowed claim was filed; or, the date one year before the date of receipt of the reopened claim.

(j) Reductions and discontinuances. VA will generally reduce or discontinue awards under subchapter II of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 according to the facts found except as provided in §§3.105 and 3.114(b).

(1) If benefits were paid erroneously because of beneficiary error, VA will reduce or discontinue benefits as of the effective date of the erroneous award.

(2) If benefits were paid erroneously because of administrative error, VA will reduce or discontinue benefits as of the date of last payment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1811, 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834, 5101, 5110, 5111, 5112)


§3.816 Awards under the Nehmer Court Orders for disability or death caused by a condition presumptively associated with herbicide exposure.

(a) Purpose. This section states effective-date rules required by orders of a United States district court in the class-action case of Nehmer v. United States Department of Veterans Affairs, No. CV–86–6160 TEH (N.D. Cal.).

(b) Definitions. For purposes of this section—

(1) Nehmer class member means:

(i) A Vietnam veteran who has a covered herbicide disease; or

(ii) A surviving spouse, child, or parent of a deceased Vietnam veteran who died from a covered herbicide disease.

(2) Covered herbicide disease means a disease for which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has established a presumption of service connection before October 1, 2002 pursuant to the Agent Orange Act of 1991, Public Law 102–4, other than chloracne. Those diseases are:

(i) Type 2 Diabetes (Also known as type II diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes).

(ii) Hodgkin’s disease.

(iii) Multiple myeloma.

(iv) Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

(v) Acute and Subacute peripheral neuropathy.

(vi) Porphyria cutanea tarda.

(vii) Prostate cancer.

(viii) Respiratory cancers (cancer of the lung, bronchus, larynx, or trachea).

(ix) Soft-tissue sarcoma (as defined in §3.309(e)).

(c) Effective date of disability compensation. If a Nehmer class member is entitled to disability compensation for a covered herbicide disease, the effective date of the award will be as follows:

(1) If VA denied compensation for the same covered herbicide disease in a decision issued between September 25, 1985 and May 3, 1989, the effective date of the award will be the later of the date VA received the claim on which the prior denial was based or the date the disability arose, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c)(3) of this section. A prior decision will be construed as having denied compensation for the same disease if the prior decision denied compensation for a disease that reasonably may be construed as the same covered herbicide disease for which compensation has been awarded. Minor differences in the terminology used in the prior decision will not preclude a finding, based on the record at the time of the prior decision, that the prior decision denied compensation for the same covered herbicide disease.

(2) If the class member’s claim for disability compensation for the covered herbicide disease was either pending before VA on May 3, 1989, or was received by VA between that date and the effective date of the statute or regulation establishing a presumption of service connection for the covered disease, the effective date of the award will be the later of the date such claim was received by VA or the date the disability arose, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c)(3) of this section. A claim will be considered a
claim for compensation for a particular covered herbicide disease if:

(i) The claimant’s application and other supporting statements and submissions may reasonably be viewed, under the standards ordinarily governing compensation claims, as indicating an intent to apply for compensation for the covered herbicide disability; or

(ii) VA issued a decision on the claim, between May 3, 1989 and the effective date of the statute or regulation establishing a presumption of service connection for the covered disease, in which VA denied compensation for a disease that reasonably may be construed as the same covered herbicide disease for which compensation has been awarded.

(3) If the class member’s claim referred to in paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of this section was received within one year from the date of the class member’s separation from service, the effective date of the award shall be the day following the date of the class member’s separation from active service.

(4) If the requirements of paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of this section are not met, the effective date of the award shall be determined in accordance with §§3.114 and 3.400.

(d) Effective date of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC). If a Nehmer class member is entitled to DIC for a death due to a covered herbicide disease, the effective date of the award shall be as follows:

(1) If VA denied DIC for the death in a decision issued between September 25, 1985 and May 3, 1989, the effective date of the award will be the later of the date VA received the claim on which such prior denial was based or the date the death occurred, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (d)(3) of this section.

(2) If the class member’s claim for DIC for the death was either pending before VA on May 3, 1989, or was received by VA between that date and the effective date of the statute or regulation establishing a presumption of service connection for the covered herbicide disease that caused the death, the effective date of the award will be the later of the date such claim was received by VA or the date the death occurred, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (d)(3) of this section. In accordance with §3.152(b)(1), a claim by a surviving spouse or child for death pension will be considered a claim for DIC. In all other cases, a claim will be considered a claim for DIC if the claimant’s application and other supporting statements and submissions may reasonably be viewed, under the standards ordinarily governing DIC claims, as indicating an intent to apply for DIC.

(3) If the class member’s claim referred to in paragraph (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section was received within one year from the date of the veteran’s death, the effective date of the award shall be the first day of the month in which the death occurred.

(4) If the requirements of paragraph (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section are not met, the effective date of the award shall be determined in accordance with §§3.114 and 3.400.

(e) Effect of other provisions affecting retroactive entitlement—(1) General. If the requirements specified in paragraphs (c)(1) or (c)(2) or (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section are satisfied, the effective date shall be assigned as specified in those paragraphs, without regard to the provisions in 38 U.S.C. 5110(g) or §3.114 prohibiting payment for periods prior to the effective date of the statute or regulation establishing a presumption of service connection for a covered herbicide disease. However, the provisions of this section will not apply if payment to a Nehmer class member based on a claim described in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section is otherwise prohibited by statute or regulation, as, for example, where a class member did not qualify as a surviving spouse at the time of the prior claim or denial.

(2) Claims Based on Service in the Republic of Vietnam Prior to August 5, 1964. If a claim referred to in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section was denied by VA prior to January 1, 1997, and the veteran’s service in the Republic of Vietnam ended before August 5, 1964, the effective-date rules of this regulation do not apply. The effective date of benefits in such cases shall be determined in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5110. If a claim referred to in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section was pending before VA
on January 1, 1997, or was received by VA after that date, and the veteran's service in the Republic of Vietnam ended before August 5, 1964, the effective date shall be the later of the date provided by paragraph (c) or (d) of this section or January 1, 1997.

(Authority: Public Law 104-275, sec. 505)

(f) Payment of Benefits to Survivors or Estates of Deceased Beneficiaries—

(1) General. If a Nehmer class member entitled to retroactive benefits pursuant to paragraphs (c)(1) through (c)(3) or (d)(1) through (d)(3) of this section dies prior to receiving payment of any such benefits, VA shall pay such unpaid retroactive benefits to the first individual or entity listed below that is in existence at the time of payment:

(i) The class member’s spouse, regardless of current marital status.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (f)(1)(i): For purposes of this paragraph, a spouse is the person who was legally married to the class member at the time of the class member’s death.

(ii) The class member’s child(ren), regardless of age or marital status (if more than one child exists, payment will be made in equal shares, accompanied by an explanation of the division).

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (f)(1)(ii): For purposes of this paragraph, the term “child” includes natural and adopted children, and also includes any stepchildren who were members of the class member’s household at the time of the class member’s death.

(iii) The class member’s parent(s), regardless of dependency (if both parents are alive, payment will be made in equal shares, accompanied by an explanation of the division).

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (f)(1)(iii): For purposes of this paragraph, the term “parent” includes natural and adoptive parents, but in the event of successive parents, the persons who last stood as parents in relation to the class member will be considered the parents.

(iv) The class member’s estate.

(2) Inapplicability of certain accrued benefit requirements. The provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5121(c) and §3.1000(c) requiring survivors to file claims for accrued benefits do not apply to payments under this section. When a Nehmer class member dies prior to receiving retroactive payments under this section, VA will pay the amount to an identified payee in accordance with paragraph (f)(1) of this section without requiring an application from the payee. Prior to releasing such payment, however, VA may ask the payee to provide further information as specified in paragraph (f)(3) of this section.

(3) Identifying payees. VA shall make reasonable efforts to identify the appropriate payee(s) under paragraph (f)(1) of this section based on information in the veteran’s claims file. If further information is needed to determine whether any appropriate payee exists or whether there are any persons having equal or higher precedence than a known prospective payee, VA will request such information from a survivor or authorized representative if the claims file provides sufficient contact information. Before releasing payment to an identified payee, VA will ask the payee to state whether there are any other survivors of the class member who may have equal or greater entitlement to payment under this section, unless the circumstances clearly indicate that such a request is unnecessary. If, following such efforts, VA releases the full amount of unpaid benefits to a payee, VA may not thereafter pay any portion of such benefits to any other individual, unless VA is able to recover the payment previously released.

(4) Bar to accrued benefit claims. Payment of benefits pursuant to paragraph (f)(1) of this section shall bar a later claim by any individual for payment of all or any part of such benefits as accrued benefits under 38 U.S.C. 5121 and §3.1000.

(g) Awards covered by this section. This section applies only to awards of disability compensation or DIC for disability or death caused by a disease listed in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 3.850 General.

(a) Payment of benefits to a duly recognized fiduciary may be made on behalf of a person who is mentally incompetent or who is a minor; or, payment may be made directly to the beneficiary or to a relative or other person for the use of the beneficiary, regardless of legal disability, when it is determined to be in the best interest of the beneficiary by the Veterans Service Center Manager.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5502)

(1) Unless otherwise contraindicated by evidence of record payment will be made direct to the following classes of minors without any referral to the Veterans Service Center Manager:

(i) Those who are serving in or have been discharged from the military forces of the United States; and

(ii) Those who qualify for survivors benefits as a surviving spouse.

(2) Unless otherwise contraindicated by evidence of record, immediate payment of benefits may be made to the spouse of an incompetent veteran having no guardian for the use of the veteran and his or her dependents prior to referral to the Veterans Service Center Manager. (Sec. 13.57 of this chapter.)

(b) When payments have been discontinued or withheld from a fiduciary, benefits may be temporarily paid to the person having custody of the minor or incompetent.

(c) Where a child is in the custody of a natural, adoptive or stepparent, benefits payable on behalf of such child may be paid to the parent as custodian of the child.

(d) Benefits due a minor or incompetent adult Indian who is a recognized ward of the Government, for whom no fiduciary has been appointed, may be paid to the proper officer of the Indian Service designated by the Secretary of the Interior to receive funds for said person.


§ 3.851 St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, DC.

Benefits due or becoming due any person who is a patient at St. Elizabeths Hospital will be paid to a duly appointed fiduciary of such person. The benefits payable to a veteran who has no spouse, child, or dependent parent will be paid by an institutional award in accordance with § 3.852 if there is no such fiduciary. Benefits payable to veterans’ dependents who are patients at this hospital will be paid direct or to a fiduciary of such dependent, except that any awards now being paid to the superintendent will be continued while such dependent remains a patient.


§ 3.852 Institutional awards.

(a) When an incompetent veteran entitled to pension, compensation or retirement pay is a patient in a hospital or other institution, payments on his (or her) account may be made to the chief officer of a Department of Veterans Affairs or non-Department of Veterans Affairs institution:

(1) When no fiduciary has been appointed or when payments to an unsatisfactory fiduciary have been discontinued;

(2) When the Veterans Service Center Manager certifies that a fiduciary is not furnishing the chief officer funds required for the veteran’s comforts and desires not otherwise provided by the institution.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a); 5307; 5502)

(b) In an institutional award of pension, compensation or retirement pay there may be paid to the chief officer of a non-Department of Veterans Affairs institution on behalf of the veteran an amount not in excess of $60 per month. An institutional award of disability pension will not exceed $25 per month if the award is apportionable under § 3.454(a).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(1) All sums, otherwise payable in excess of the institutional award, apportionments or awards to fiduciaries, will be deposited in Personal Funds of Patients.
(2) There may be paid on behalf of a veteran, having no spouse, child or dependent parent and receiving care in a non-Department of Veterans Affairs institution, such additional amount, within the limit of the total payable and as may be certified by the Veterans Service Center Manager, needed for the benefit of the veteran and to pay for his (or her) care and maintenance. Moneys on deposit in Personal Funds of Patients will not be used for this purpose except as authorized by the Veterans Service Center Manager under §13.72 of this chapter.

(3) If the veteran has dependents, or more is payable under his (or her) rating, or there are funds to his (or her) credit in “Funds Due Incompetent Beneficiaries,” such additional amount as may be needed will be allowed on the basis of a certification by the chief officer with respect to need and amount required.

(c) Where there arises a situation as enumerated in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, apportionment to dependents will be under §3.451.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5307)

(d) Any excess funds held by the chief officer of a non-Department of Veterans Affairs institution, not necessary for the benefit of the veteran, will be returned to the Department of Veterans Affairs or to a fiduciary, if one is serving. Upon death of a veteran with no surviving heirs, excess funds will be returned to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5505)

(CROSS REFERENCES: Veterans Benefits Apportionable. See §3.452. Payment to Chief Officer of Institution. See §13.61 of this chapter.)


§ 3.854 Limitation on payments for minor.

Benefits will not be authorized to a fiduciary recognized or appointed for a child, by reason of its minority, for any period subsequent to the day preceding the date on which the child will attain its majority under the law of the State in which the child resides. Payments on or after that date, if otherwise in order, will be made direct to the child, if competent, or, if incompetent and direct payment under §3.850 is not in order, to a fiduciary appointed for the child as a mentally incompetent adult.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5505)

§ 3.855 Beneficiary rated or reported incompetent.

(a) General. Payments being made directly to a beneficiary who is or may be incompetent will not be routinely suspended pending certification of a fiduciary (or a recommendation that payments should be paid directly to the beneficiary) by the Veterans Service Center Manager or development of the issue of incompetency.

(b) Application. This policy applies to all cases including (but not limited to) the following:

(1) Notice or evidence is received that a guardian has been appointed for the beneficiary.

(2) Notice or evidence is received that the beneficiary has been committed to a hospital.

(3) The beneficiary has been rated incompetent by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

[42 FR 2069, Jan. 10, 1977]

§ 3.856 Change of name of female fiduciary.

If a female fiduciary receiving benefits in such capacity marries or is restored to her former name by divorce decree, her statement setting forth her present name may be accepted.

[39 FR 34533, Sept. 26, 1974]

§ 3.857 Children’s benefits to fiduciary of surviving spouse.

Where children are separated from the surviving spouse by reason of her (or his) incompetency, no apportionment is required. All amounts payable on behalf of the children may be paid to the fiduciary of the surviving spouse provided the fiduciary is adequately taking care of the needs of the children from the beneficiary’s estate voluntarily or pursuant to a decree of court.


§ 3.900 General.

(a) Forfeiture of benefits based on one period of service does not affect entitlement to benefits based on a period of service beginning after the offense causing the prior forfeiture.

(b)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, any offense committed prior to January 1, 1959, may cause a forfeiture and any forfeiture in effect prior to January 1, 1959, will continue to be a bar on and after January 1, 1959.

(Authority: Section 3, Pub. L. 85-857)

(2) Effective September 2, 1959, forfeiture of benefits may not be declared except under the circumstances set forth in §3.901(d), §3.902(d), or §3.903. Forfeitures declared before September 2, 1959, will continue to be a bar on and after that date.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103(d) and 6105)

(c) Pension or compensation payments are not subject to forfeiture because of violation of hospital rules.

(d) When the person primarily entitled has forfeited his or her rights by reason of fraud or a treasonable act determination as to the rights of any dependents of record to benefits under §3.901(c) or §3.902(c) may be made upon receipt of an application.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103(b) and 38 U.S.C. 6104(b))

a veteran entitled to disability compensation, the compensation payable except for the forfeiture may be paid to the veteran’s spouse, children and parents provided the decision to apportion was authorized prior to September 2, 1959. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103)

(1) Service-connected death benefit payable.

(2) Amount of compensation payable but for the forfeiture.

No benefits are payable to any person who participated in the fraud causing the forfeiture.

(d) Forfeiture after September 1, 1959. After September 1, 1959, forfeiture by reason of fraud may be declared only

(1) Where the person was not residing or domiciled in a State as defined in §3.1(i) at the time of commission of the fraudulent act; or

(2) Where the person ceased to be a resident of or domiciled in a State as defined in §3.1(i) before expiration of the period during which criminal prosecution could be instituted; or

(3) The fraudulent act was committed in the Philippine Islands.

Where the veteran’s rights have been forfeited, no part of his or her benefit may be paid to his or her dependents.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103)

(e) Remission of forfeitures imposed prior to September 2, 1959. Where it is determined that a forfeiture for fraud which was imposed prior to September 2, 1959, would not be imposed under the law and regulation in effect on and after September 2, 1959, the forfeiture shall be remitted effective June 30, 1972. Benefits to which a person becomes eligible by virtue of the remission, upon application therefor, shall be awarded effective as provided by §3.114.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103)


§ 3.902 Treasonable acts.

(a) Definition. An act of mutiny, treason, sabotage or rendering assistance to an enemy of the United States or of its allies.

(b) Effect on claim. For the purposes of paragraph (d) of this section, any person determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be guilty of a treasonable act forfeits all gratuitous benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs which he or she may be receiving or would have been entitled to receive in the future.

(c) Forfeiture before September 2, 1959. Where forfeiture for treasonable acts was declared before September 2, 1959, the Secretary may pay any part of benefits so forfeited to the dependents of the person provided the decision to apportion was authorized prior to September 2, 1959, except that the amount may not be in excess of that which the dependent would be entitled to as a death benefit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6104(c))

(1) Compensation. Whenever a veteran entitled to disability compensation has forfeited his or her right, any part of the compensation payable except for the forfeiture may be paid to the veteran’s spouse, children and parents. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

(i) Service-connected death benefit payable.

(ii) Amount of compensation payable but for the forfeiture.

No benefits are payable to any person participating in the treasonable act causing the forfeiture.

(2) Pension. Whenever a veteran entitled to pension has forfeited his or her right, any part of the pension payable except for the forfeiture provision may be paid to the veteran’s spouse and children. The total amount payable will be the lesser of these amounts:

(i) Nonservice-connected death benefit payable.

(ii) Amount of pension being paid the veteran at the time of forfeiture.

No benefits are payable to any person who participated in the treasonable act causing the forfeiture.

(d) Forfeiture after September 1, 1959. After September 1, 1959, forfeiture by reason of a treasonable act may be declared only
§ 3.903

(1) Where the person was not residing or domiciled in a State as defined in §3.1(i) at the time of commission of the act; or

(2) Where the person ceased to be a resident of or domiciled in a State as defined in §3.1(i) before expiration of the period during which criminal prosecution could be instituted; or

(3) The treasonable act was committed in the Philippine Islands.

No part of the benefits forfeited by the person primarily entitled shall be paid to any dependent.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6104)

(e) Children. A treasonable act committed by a child or children, regardless of age, who are in the surviving spouse’s custody and included in an award to such person will not affect the award to the surviving spouse.


§ 3.904 Effect of forfeiture after veteran’s death.

(a) Fraud. Whenever a veteran has forfeited his or her right by reason of fraud, his or her surviving dependents upon proper application may be paid pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation, if otherwise eligible. No benefits are payable to any person who participated in the fraud causing the forfeiture.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6103(c))

(b) Treasonable acts. Death benefits may be paid as provided in paragraph (a) of this section where forfeiture by reason of a treasonable act was declared before September 2, 1959, and such benefits were authorized prior to that date. Otherwise, no award of gratuitous benefits (including the right to burial in a national cemetery) may be made to any person based on any period of service commencing before the date of commission of the offense which resulted in the forfeiture.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6104(c))

(c) Subversive activities. Where the veteran was convicted of subversive activities after September 1, 1959, no award of gratuitous benefits (including the right to burial in a national cemetery) may be made to any person based on any period of service commencing

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6104(c))
before the date of commission of the offense which resulted in the forfeiture unless the veteran had been granted a pardon of the offense by the President of the United States. If pardoned, the veteran’s surviving dependents upon proper application may be paid pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation, if otherwise eligible, and the right to burial in a national cemetery is restored.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 6105(a))

§ 3.950 Helpless children; Spanish-American and prior wars.

Marriage is not a bar to the payment of pension or compensation to a helpless child under an award approved prior to April 1, 1944. The presumption, arising from the fact of marriage, that helplessness has ceased may be overcome by positive proof of continuing helplessness. As to awards approved on or after April 1, 1944, pension or compensation may not be paid to a helpless child who has married.

[26 FR 1608, Feb. 24, 1961]
§ 3.951 Preservation of disability ratings.

(a) A readjustment to the Schedule for Rating Disabilities shall not be grounds for reduction of a disability rating in effect on the date of the readjustment unless medical evidence establishes that the disability to be evaluated has actually improved.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

(b) A disability which has been continuously rated at or above any evaluation of disability for 20 or more years for compensation purposes under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs will not be reduced to less than such evaluation except upon a showing that such rating was based on fraud. Likewise, a rating of permanent total disability for pension purposes which has been in force for 20 or more years will not be reduced except upon a showing that the rating was based on fraud. The 20-year period will be computed from the effective date of the evaluation to the effective date of reduction of evaluation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 110)

[34 FR 11970, July 16, 1969, as amended at 57 FR 10426, Mar. 26, 1992]

§ 3.952 Protected ratings.

Ratings under the Schedule of Disability Ratings, 1925, which were the basis of compensation on April 1, 1946, are subject to modification only when a change in physical or mental condition would have required a reduction under the 1925 schedule, or an increased evaluation has been assigned under the Schedule for Rating Disabilities, 1945 (looseleaf edition), after which time all evaluations will be under the 1945 schedule (loose-leaf edition) only. Such increased evaluations must be of an other than temporary nature (due to hospitalization, surgery, etc.). When a temporary evaluation is involved, the 1925 schedule evaluation will be restored after the period of increase has elapsed unless the permanent residuals would have required reduction under that schedule, or unless an increased evaluation would be assignable under a 1945 schedule (looseleaf edition) rating. In any instance where the changed condition represents an increased degree of disability under either rating schedule but the evaluation provided by the 1945 schedule (looseleaf edition) is less than the evaluation in effect under the 1925 schedule on April 1, 1946, the 1925 schedule evaluation and award are protected.

[26 FR 12766, Dec. 30, 1961]


(a) In receipt of or entitled to receive benefits on December 31, 1958. Any person receiving or entitled to receive benefits under any public law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs on December 31, 1958, may, except where there was fraud, clear and unmistakable error of fact or law, or misrepresentation of material facts, continue to receive such benefits as long as the conditions warranting such payment under those laws continue. The greater benefit under the previous law or the corresponding section of title 38 U.S.C., will be paid in the absence of an election to receive the lesser benefit.

(Authority: Section 10, Pub. L. 85–857)

(b) Emergency officers’ retirement pay. Any person who was receiving, or entitled to receive, emergency officers’ retirement pay, or other privileges or benefits as a retired emergency officer of World War I, on December 31, 1958, under the laws in effect on that day, will, except where there was fraud, clear and unmistakable error as to conclusion of fact or law, or misrepresentation of material facts, continue to receive, or be entitled to receive, emergency officers’ retirement pay at the rate otherwise payable on December 31, 1958, and such other privileges and benefits, so long as the conditions warranting such pay, privileges, and benefits under those laws continue.

(Authority: Section 11, Pub. L. 85–857)

(c) Service connection established under prior laws. In the absence of fraud, misrepresentation of material facts or clear and unmistakable error, all cases where compensation was payable on December 31, 1957, for disability service connected under prior laws, repealed by Pub. L. 85–56, including those service connected under the second proviso of
§ 3.960

Section 306 and old-law pension protection.

(a) General. Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, any person eligible to elect improved pension under §3.711 or 3.712 who is in receipt of section 306 or old-law pension on December 31, 1978, shall in the absence of an election to receive improved pension, continue to receive such pension at the monthly rate payable on December 31, 1978.

(b) Termination. Pension payable under paragraph (a) of this section shall be terminated for any one of the following reasons:

(1) A veteran pensioner ceases to be permanently and totally disabled.

(2) A surviving spouse pensioner ceases to meet the definition of surviving spouse in 38 U.S.C. 101(3).

(3) A child pensioner ceases to meet the definition of child in 38 U.S.C. 101(4).

(4) A section 306 pensioner’s countable annual income, determined under

§ 3.959 Tuberculosis.

Any veteran who, on August 19, 1968, was receiving or entitled to receive compensation for active or inactive (arrested) tuberculosis may receive compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1114(q) and 1156 as in effect before August 20, 1968.

(Authority: Pub. L. 90–493; 82 Stat. 809)

[33 FR 16275, Nov. 6, 1968]

§ 3.958 Federal employees’ compensation cases.

Any award approved prior to September 13, 1960, authorizing Department of Veterans Affairs benefits concurrently with an award of benefits under the Federal Employees Compensation Act based on a finding that the same disability or death was due to civilian employment is not affected by the prohibition against concurrent awards contained in 5 U.S.C. 8116(b).

[41 FR 20408, May 18, 1976]

§ 3.957 Service connection.

Service connection for any disability or death granted or continued under title 38 U.S.C., which has been in effect for 10 or more years will not be severed except upon a showing that the original grant was based on fraud or it is clearly shown from military records that the person concerned did not have the requisite service or character of discharge. The 10-year period will be computed from the effective date of the Department of Veterans Affairs finding of service connection to the effective date of the rating decision severing service connection, after compliance with §3.105(d). The protection afforded in this section extends to claims for dependency and indemnity compensation or death compensation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1159)

[33 FR 15286, Oct. 15, 1968]
§ 3.260 § 3.250 to 3.270, exceeds the applicable amount stated in § 3.26(a).

(5) An old-law pensioner’s countable annual income determined under §§ 3.250 to 3.270 exceeds the applicable amount stated in § 3.26(c).

(6) A section 306 pensioner has a net worth of such size that it is reasonable that some part of it be consumed for the pensioner’s maintenance. Evaluation of net worth shall be made under § 3.263.

§ 3.260 Reduction. The pension rate payable under paragraph (a) of this section shall be reduced by the amount of any additional pension payable by reason of a dependent upon the loss of such dependent. A veteran or surviving spouse who no longer has any dependents shall not continue to receive either section 306 pension or old-law pension if countable annual income exceeds the appropriate rate in § 3.26(a), (b), or (c).

§ 3.260 Finality of termination. Termination of section 306 pension or old-law pension for one of the reasons listed in paragraph (b) of this section precludes a person from thereafter establishing entitlement under any other pension program except the improved pension program.

(Authority: Sec. 306 of Pub. L. 95–588, 92 Stat. 2497)

[44 FR 45944, Aug. 6, 1979, as amended at 56 FR 28824, June 25, 1991]

ACCRUED

§ 3.1000 Entitlement under 38 U.S.C. 5121 to benefits due and unpaid upon death of a beneficiary.

(a) Basic entitlement. Except as provided in §§ 3.1001 and 3.1008, where death occurred on or after December 1, 1962, periodic monetary benefits (other than insurance and servicemembers’ indemnity) authorized under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to which a payee was entitled at his or her death under existing ratings or decisions or those based on evidence in the file at date of death, and due and unpaid will, upon the death of such person, be paid as follows:

(i) Upon the death of a veteran to the living person first listed as follows:

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121(a))

(1) His or her spouse;

(ii) His or her children (in equal shares);

(iii) His or her dependent parents (in equal shares) or the surviving parent.

(2) Upon the death of a surviving spouse or remarried surviving spouse, to the veteran’s children.

(3) Upon the death of a child, to the surviving children of the veteran entitled to death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation.

(4) Upon the death of a child claiming benefits under chapter 18 of this title, to the surviving parents.

(5) In all other cases, only so much of the accrued benefit may be paid as may be necessary to reimburse the person who bore the expense of last sickness or burial. (See § 3.1002.)

(b) Apportionments. (1) Upon the death of a person receiving an apportioned share of benefits payable to a veteran, all or any part of such unpaid amount is payable to the veteran or to any other dependent or dependents of the veteran.

(2) Where at the date of death of the veteran an apportioned share is being paid to or has been withheld on behalf of another person, the apportioned amount remaining unpaid for periods prior to the last day of the month before the veteran’s death is payable to the apportionee.

(3) Where the accrued death pension, compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation was payable for a child as an apportioned share of the surviving spouse’s benefit, payment will be made under the provisions of paragraph (a)(4) of this section, on the expenses of such deceased child’s last sickness or burial.

(c) Claims and evidence. Application for accrued benefits must be filed within 1 year after the date of death. A claim for death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation, by an apportionee, surviving spouse, child or parent is deemed to include claim for any accrued benefits. (See § 3.152(b)).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121(a)(1))

(1) If an application for accrued benefits is incomplete because the claimant has not furnished information necessary to establish that he or she is
within the category of eligible persons under the provisions of paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(4) or paragraph (b) of this section and that circumstances exist which make the claimant the specific person entitled to payment of all or part of any benefits which may have accrued, VA shall notify the claimant:

(i) Of the type of information required to complete the application;
(ii) That VA will take no further action on the claim unless VA receives the required information; and
(iii) That if VA does not receive the required information within 1 year of the date of the original VA notification of information required, no benefits will be awarded on the basis of that application.

(2) Failure to file timely claim, or a waiver of rights, by a preferred dependent will not serve to vest title in a person in a lower class or a claimant for reimbursement; neither will such failure or waiver by a person or persons in a joint class serve to increase the amount payable to another or others in the class.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121(c); 5112(b))

(d) Definitions. (1) Spouse means the surviving spouse of the veteran, whose marriage meets the requirements of § 3.1(j) or § 3.52. Where the marriage meets the requirements of § 3.1(j) date of marriage and continuous cohabitation are not factors.

(2) Child is as defined in § 3.57 and includes an unmarried child who became permanently incapable of self-support prior to attaining 18 years of age as well as an unmarried child over the age of 18 but not over 23 years of age, who was pursuing a course of instruction within the meaning of § 3.57 at the time of the payee’s death. However, upon the death of a child in receipt of death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation, any accrued will be payable to the surviving child or children of the veteran entitled to death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation. Upon the death of a child, another child who has elected dependents’ educational assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 35 may receive accrued death pension, compensation, or dependency and indemnity compensation, payable on behalf of the deceased child for periods prior to the commencement of benefits under that chapter.

(3) Dependent parent is as defined in § 3.59: Provided, That the mother or father was dependent within the meaning of § 3.250 at the date of the veteran’s death.

(4) Evidence in the file at date of death means evidence in VA’s possession on or before the date of the beneficiary’s death, even if such evidence was not physically located in the VA claims folder on or before the date of death, in support of a claim for VA benefits pending on the date of death.

(5) Claim for VA benefits pending on the date of death means a claim filed with VA that had not been finally adjudicated by VA on or before the date of death. Such a claim includes a deceased beneficiary’s claim to reopen a finally disallowed claim based upon new and material evidence or a deceased beneficiary’s claim of clear and unmistakable error in a prior rating or decision. Any new and material evidence must have been in VA’s possession on or before the date of the beneficiary’s death.

(e) Subsistence allowance. Subsistence allowance under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. ch. 31 remaining due and unpaid at the date of the veteran’s death, is payable under the provisions of this section.

(f) Dependents’ educational assistance. Educational assistance allowance or special restorative training allowance under 38 U.S.C. ch. 35, remaining due and unpaid at the date of death of an eligible surviving spouse or eligible child is payable to a child or children of the veteran (see paragraphs (a)(2), (a)(3) and (d)(2) of this section), or on the expenses of last sickness and burial (see paragraph (a)(4) of this section.) Benefits due and unpaid at the date of death of an eligible spouse are payable only on the expenses of last sickness and burial (see paragraph (a)(4) of this section).

(g) Veterans educational assistance. Educational assistance allowance under 38 U.S.C. chapters 30, 32, or 34, and 10 U.S.C. chapter 1606 remaining
due and unpaid at the date of the veteran’s death is payable under the provisions of this section.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121)

(h) Clothing allowance. Clothing allowance under 38 U.S.C. 1162 remaining due and unpaid at the date of the veteran’s death is payable under the provisions of this section.

(i) Active service pay. Benefits awarded under this section do not include compensation or pension benefits for any period for which the veteran received active service pay.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5304(c))


§ 3.1001 Hospitalized competent veterans.

The provisions of this section apply only to the payment of amounts actually withheld on a running award under § 3.551(b) which are payable in a lump sum after the veteran's death.

(a) Basic entitlement. Where an award of disability pension for a competent veteran without dependents was reduced because of hospital treatment or institutional or domiciliary care by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veteran dies while receiving such treatment or care or before payment of amounts withheld, the lump sum is payable to the living person first listed as follows:

(1) The veteran's spouse, as defined in § 3.1000(d)(1);

(2) The veteran's children (in equal shares), as defined in § 3.57 but without regard to their age or marital status;

(3) The veteran's dependent parents (in equal shares), or the surviving dependent parent, as defined in § 3.1000(d)(3); and

(4) In all other cases, only so much of the lump sum may be paid as may be necessary to reimburse a person who bore the expenses of last sickness or burial. (See § 3.1002.)

(b) Claims. Applications must be filed with the Department of Veterans Af-

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§ 3.1002 Political subdivisions of United States.

No part of any accrued benefits will be used to reimburse any political subdivision of the United States for expenses incurred in the last sickness or burial of any beneficiary. (See § 3.1(o)).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5121(b) and 5502(d))

[39 FR 15126, May 1, 1974]

§ 3.1003 Returned and canceled checks.

Where the payee of a check for benefits has died prior to negotiating the check, the check shall be returned to the issuing office and canceled.

(a) The amount represented by the returned check, or any amount recovered following improper negotiation of the check, shall be payable to the living person or persons in the order of precedence listed in § 3.1000(a)(1) through (4), except that the total amount payable shall not include any
¶ 3.1009 Payment for the month in which the payee died (see § 3.500(g)), and payments to persons described in § 3.1000(a)(4) shall be limited to the amount necessary to reimburse such persons for the expenses of last sickness and/or burial.

(1) There is no limit on the retroactive period for which payment of the amount represented by the check may be made, and no time limit for filing a claim to obtain the proceeds of the check or for furnishing evidence to perfect a claim.

(2) Nothing in this section will preclude payment to an otherwise entitled claimant having a lower order of precedence under § 3.1000(a)(1) through (4), if it is shown that the person or persons having a higher order of precedence are deceased at the time the claim is adjudicated.

(b) Subject to the limitations in § 3.500(g) of this part, any amount not paid in the manner provided in paragraph (a) of this section shall be paid to the estate of the deceased payee, provided that the estate, including the amount paid under this paragraph, will not revert to the state because there is no one eligible to inherit it.

(c) The provisions of this section do not apply to checks for lump sums representing amounts withheld under § 3.551(b) or § 3.557. These amounts are subject to the provisions of §§ 3.1001 and 3.1007, as applicable.

(Approved: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5122)

[59 FR 25329, May 16, 1994, as amended at 64 FR 54207, Oct. 6, 1999]

§§ 3.1004–3.1006 [Reserved]

§ 3.1007 Hospitalized incompetant veterans.

Where an award of disability pension for an incompetent veteran without dependents was reduced under § 3.551(b) because of hospitalization, institutional or domiciliary care by the Department of Veterans Affairs, or an award of disability pension, compensation or emergency officers’ retirement pay was discontinued under former § 3.557(b) (as applicable prior to December 27, 2001) because the veteran was hospitalized by the United States or a political subdivision and had an estate which equaled or exceeded the statutory maximum, and the veteran dies before payment of amounts withheld or not paid by reason of such care, no part of such amount will be paid to any person. The provisions of this section are applicable to amounts withheld for periods prior to as well as subsequent to the rating of incompetency. The term dies before payment includes cases in which a check was issued and the veteran died before negotiating the check.

(Approved: 38 U.S.C. 5503)


§ 3.1008 Accrued benefits payable to foreign beneficiaries.

In case of death of the payee of any check in payment of periodic monetary benefits (other than insurance and servicemembers’ indemnity) accruing under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, while the amount thereof remains in the special deposit account established by Pub. L. 828, 76th Congress, such amount will be payable under section 3 of that act (31 U.S.C. 125) However, the accrued amount will be payable only if the person on whose behalf checks were issued and the person claiming the accrued amount have not been guilty of mutiny, treason, sabotage, or rendering assistance to an enemy of the United States or of its allies.

[26 FR 1609, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.1009 Personal funds of patients.

The provisions of this section are applicable to gratuitous benefits deposited by the Department of Veterans Affairs either before, on, or after December 1, 1959, in a personal funds of patients account for an incompetent veteran who was incompetent at the date of death. Where the veteran died after November 30, 1959:

(a) Eligible persons. Gratuitous benefits shall be paid to the living person first listed as follows:

(1) His or her spouse, as defined in § 3.1000(d)(1);

(2) His or her children (in equal shares), as defined in § 3.57 but without regard to their age or marital status;

(3) His or her dependent parents (in equal shares) as defined in § 3.59 or the
surviving parent, provided that the parent was dependent within the meaning of §3.250 at the date of the veteran's death.

(4) In all other cases, only so much may be paid as may be necessary to reimburse a person who bore the expense of last sickness or burial. (See §3.1002.)

(b) Claim. Application must be filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs within 5 years after the death of the veteran. If, however, any person otherwise entitled is under legal disability at the time of the veteran's death, the 5-year period will run from the date of termination or removal of the legal disability.

(1) There is no time limit for the submission of evidence.

(2) Failure to file a timely claim, or a waiver of rights, by a preferred dependent will not serve to vest title in a person in a lower class or a claimant for reimbursement; neither will such failure or waiver by a person or persons in a joint class serve to increase the amount payable to another or others in the class.


Subpart B—Burial Benefits

AUTHORITY: 105 Stat. 386, 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 2302–2308, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3.1600 Payment of burial expenses of deceased veterans.

For the purpose of payment of burial expenses the term veteran includes a person who died during a period deemed to be active military, naval or air service under §3.6(b)(6). The period of active service upon which the claim is based must have been terminated by discharge or release from active service under conditions other than dishonorable.

(a) Service-connected death and burial allowance. If a veteran dies as a result of a service-connected disability or disabilities, an amount not to exceed the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 2307 (or if entitlement is under §3.40(b), (c), or (d), an amount computed in accordance with the provisions of §3.40(b) or (c)) may be paid toward the veteran’s funeral and burial expenses including the cost of transporting the body to the place of burial. Entitlement to this benefit is subject to the applicable further provisions of this section and §§3.1601 through 3.1610. Except as provided in §3.1604(d)(5), payment of the service-connected death burial allowance is in lieu of payment of any benefit authorized under paragraph (b), (c) or (f) of this section.

(b) Nonservice-connected death burial allowance. If a veteran’s death is not service-connected, an amount not to exceed the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 2302 (or if entitlement is under §3.40(b), (c), or (d), an amount computed in accordance with the provisions of §3.40(b) or (c)) may be paid toward the veteran’s funeral and burial expenses including the cost of transporting the body to the place of burial. Entitlement is subject to the following conditions:

(1) At the time of death the veteran was in receipt of pension or compensation (or but for the receipt of military retirement pay would have been in receipt of compensation); or

(2) The veteran has an original or reopened claim for either benefit pending at the time of the veteran’s death, and

(1) In the case of an original claim there is sufficient evidence of record on the date of the veteran’s death to have supported an award of compensation or pension effective prior to the date of the veteran’s death, or

(ii) In the case of a reopened claim, there is sufficient prima facie evidence of record on the date of the veteran’s death to indicate that the deceased would have been entitled to compensation or pension prior to date of death.

If the Department of Veterans Affairs determines that additional evidence is needed to confirm that the deceased would have been entitled prior to death, it shall be submitted within 1 year from date of request to the burial allowance claimant for submission of the confirming evidence. If the confirming evidence is not received by the Department of Veterans Affairs within
1 year from date of request, the burial allowance claim shall be disallowed; or

(3) The deceased was a veteran of any war or was discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service for a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty, and the body of the deceased is being held by a State (or a political subdivision of a State), and the Secretary determines,

(i) That there is no next of kin or other person claiming the body of the deceased veteran, and

(ii) That there are not available sufficient resources in the veteran’s estate to cover burial and funeral expenses; and

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2302(a))

(4) The applicable further provisions of this section and §§3.1601 through 3.1610.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 2302)

(c) Death while properly hospitalized. If a person dies from non-service-connected causes while properly hospitalized by VA, there is payable an allowance not to exceed the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 2303(a) for the actual cost of the person’s funeral and burial, and an additional amount for transportation of the body to the place of burial. For burial allowance purposes, the term hospitalized by VA means admission to a VA facility (as described in 38 U.S.C. 1701(3)) for hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 1710 or 1711(a); admission (transfer) to a non-VA facility (as described in 38 U.S.C. 1701(d)) for hospital care under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 1703; admission (transfer) to a State nursing home for nursing home care at the expense of the United States; or admission (transfer) to a State nursing home for nursing home care with respect to which payment is authorized under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 1711. If the hospitalized person’s death is service-connected, entitlement to the burial allowance and transportation expenses fall under paragraphs (a) and (g) of this section instead of this paragraph.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2303(a))

(d) Determinations. Where a claim for burial allowance would be or has been disallowed because the service department holds that the disability was not incurred in line of duty and evidence is submitted which permits a different finding, the decision of the service department is not binding and the Department of Veterans Affairs will determine line of duty. The burden of proof will rest upon the claimant.

(e) Persons not included. Except as provided in §3.1605(c) burial allowance is not payable in the following cases:

(1) A discharged or rejected draftee or selectee.

(2) A member of the National Guard who reported to camp in answer to the President’s call for World War I or World War II service, but who, when medically examined was not finally accepted for active military service.

(3) An alien who does not come within the purview of §3.7(b).

(4) Philippine Scouts enlisted on or after October 6, 1945, under section 14, Pub. L. 190, 79th Congress.

(5) Temporary members of the Coast Guard Reserve.

(f) Plot or interment allowance. A plot or interment allowance is payable to the person or entity who incurred the expenses in an amount not to exceed the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 2303(b) (or if the entitlement is under §3.40 (c) or (d), an amount computed in accordance with the provisions of §3.40(c)) if the following conditions are met:

(1) For claims filed on or after December 16, 2003:

(i) The deceased veteran is eligible for burial in a national cemetery;

(ii) The veteran is not buried in a national cemetery or other cemetery under the jurisdiction of the United States;

(iii) The applicable further provisions of this section and §§3.1601 through 3.1610.

(2) For claims filed before December 16, 2003:

(i) The deceased veteran is eligible for the burial allowance under paragraph (b) or (c) of this section; or

(ii) The veteran served during a period of war and the conditions set forth in §3.1604(d)(1)(ii)-(v) (relating to burial
§ 3.1601 Claims and evidence.

(a) Claims. Claims for reimbursement or direct payment of burial and funeral expenses under §3.1600(b) and plot or interment allowance under §3.1600(f) must be received by VA within 2 years after the permanent burial or cremation of the body. Where the burial allowance was not payable at the death of the veteran because of the nature of his (or her) discharge from service, but after his (or her) death the discharge has been corrected by competent authority so as to reflect a discharge under conditions other than dishonorable, claim may be filed within 2 years from date of correction of the discharge. This time limit does not apply to claims for service-connected burial allowance under §3.1600(a) or for the cost of transporting a veteran’s body to the place of burial under §3.1600(c) or §3.1600(g).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 904)

(1) Claims for burial allowance may be executed by:

(i) The funeral director, if entire bill or any balance is unpaid (if unpaid bill or the unpaid balance is less than the applicable statutory burial allowance, only the unpaid amount may be claimed by the funeral director); or

(ii) The individual whose personal funds were used to pay burial, funeral, and transportation expenses; or

(iii) The executor or administrator of the estate of the veteran or the estate of the person who paid the expenses of the veteran’s burial or provided such services. If no executor or administrator has been appointed then by some person acting for such estate who will make distribution of the burial allowance to the person or persons entitled under the laws governing the distribution of interstate estates in the State of the decedent’s personal domicile.
(2) Claims for the plot or interment allowance (except for claims filed by a State or an agency or political subdivision thereof, under §3.1604(d)) may be executed by:

(i) The funeral director, if he or she provided the plot or interment services, or advanced funds to pay for them, and if the entire bill for such or any balance thereof is unpaid (if the unpaid bill or the unpaid balance is less than the statutory plot or interment allowance, only the unpaid amount may be claimed by the funeral director); or

(ii) The person(s) whose personal funds were used to defray the cost of the plot or interment expenses; or

(iii) The person or entity from whom the plot was purchased or who provided interment services if the bill for such is unpaid in whole or in part. An unpaid bill for a plot will take precedence in payment of the plot or interment allowance over an unpaid bill for other interment expenses or a claim for reimbursement for such expenses. Any remaining balance of the plot or interment allowance may then be applied to interment expenses; or

(iv) The executor or administrator of the estate of the veteran or the estate of the person who bore the expense of the plot or interment expenses. If no executor or administrator has been appointed, claim for the plot or interment allowance may then be applied to interment expenses; or

(3) For the purposes of the plot and interment allowance _plot or burial plot_ means the final disposal site of the remains, whether it is a grave, mausoleum vault, columbarium niche, or other similar place. Interment expenses are those costs associated with the final disposition of the remains and are not confined to the acts done within the burial grounds but may include the removal of bodies for burial or interment.

(b) Supporting evidence. Evidence required to complete a claim for the burial allowance and the plot or interment allowance, when payable, (including a reopened claim filed within the 2-year period) must be submitted within 1 year from date of the Department of Veterans Affairs request for such evidence. In addition to the proper claim form the claimant (other than a §3.1604(d) claimant) is required to submit:

(1) Statement of account. Preferably on funeral director’s or cemetery owner’s billhead showing name of the deceased veteran, the plot or interment costs, and the nature and cost of services rendered, and unpaid balance.

(2) Receipted bills. Must show by whom payment was made and show receipt by a person acting for the funeral director or cemetery owner.

(3) Proof of death. In accordance with §3.211.

(4) Waivers from all other distributees. Where expenses of a veteran’s burial, funeral, plot, interment and transportation were paid from funds of the veteran’s estate or some other deceased person’s estate and the identity and right of all persons to share in that estate have been established, payment may be made to one heir upon unconditional written consent of all other heirs.

(5) Entitlement under §3.1600(b)(3). In addition to the other evidentiary requirements of this subparagraph, there must be written certification over the signature of a responsible official of the State (or political subdivision of the State) where the body was held that—

(i) There is no next of kin or other person claiming the body of the deceased veteran, and

(ii) There are not available sufficient resources in the veteran’s estate to cover burial and funeral expenses.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2302(a))

§3.1602 Special conditions governing payments.

(a) Two or more persons expended funds. If two or more persons have paid from their personal funds toward the burial, funeral, plot, interment and transportation expenses, the burial and plot or interment allowance will be divided among such persons in accordance with the proportionate share paid by each, unless waiver is executed in favor of one of such persons by the
other person or persons involved. The person in whose favor payment is waived will not be allowed a sum greater than that which was paid by such person. (See §3.1601(a)(3)).

(b) Person who performed services. A person who performed burial, funeral, and transportation services or furnished the burial plot will have priority over claims of persons whose personal funds were expended.

(c) Partial payment. Where partial payment of the expenses of the burial, funeral and transportation of the body are made from funds of the veteran’s estate and the balance from the personal funds of another person, the claim of the other person has priority.

(d) Escheat. No payment of burial allowance or plot or interment allowance will be made where it would escheat.


§3.1603 Authority for burial of certain unclaimed bodies.

If the body of a deceased veteran is unclaimed, there being no relatives or friends to claim the body, and there is burial allowance entitlement which is not based on §3.1600(b)(3), the amount provided for burial and plot or interment allowance will be available for the burial upon receipt of a claim accompanied by a statement showing what efforts were made to locate relatives or friends. The question of escheat of any part of such deceased veteran’s estate is not a factor in such a claim. Burial allowance may be authorized for cost of disinterment and reburying or of unclaimed remains originally accorded pauper burial but not for initial expenses of a burial in a potter’s field. Burial in a prison cemetery is not considered a pauper burial.

(48 FR 41162, Sept. 14, 1983)

§3.1604 Payments from non-Department of Veterans Affairs sources.

(a) Contributions or payments by public or private organizations. When contributions or payments on the burial expenses have been made by a state, any agency or political subdivision of the United States or of a State or the employer of the deceased veteran only the difference between the entire burial expenses and the amount paid thereon by any of these agencies or organizations, not to exceed the applicable statutory burial allowance, will be authorized. Contributions or payments by any other public or private organization such as a lodge, union, fraternal or beneficial organization, society, burial association or insurance company, will not bar payment of the burial allowance if such allowance would revert to the funds of such organization or would discharge such organization’s obligation without payment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2302; 2307)

(1) A contract or policy which provides for payment at death of a specified amount to a designated beneficiary other than the person rendering burial and funeral services will not bar payment of the burial allowance to the beneficiary even though the organization issuing the contract or policy retains an option to make payment directly to the person rendering burial and funeral services.

(2) The provisions of this paragraph do not apply to contributions or payments on the burial and funeral expenses which are made for humanitarian reasons if the organization making the contribution or payment is under no legal obligation to do so.

(b) Payment by Federal agency. (1) Where a veteran dies while in employment covered by the United States Employees’ Compensation Act, as amended, or other similar laws specifically providing for payment of the expenses of funeral, transportation, and interment out of Federal funds, burial allowance will not be authorized by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) A provision in any Federal law or regulation permitting the application of funds due or accrued to the credit of the deceased toward the expenses of funeral, transportation, and interment out of Federal funds, burial allowance will not be authorized by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(48 FR 41162, Sept. 14, 1983)
exceed the amount specified in 38 U.S.C. 2302, will be authorized.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2302(b))

(3) Burial allowance is not payable for deaths in active service, or during the duty periods set forth in §3.6, or for other deaths where the cost of burial and transportation is paid by the service department.

(c) Payment of plot or interment allowance by public or private organization except as provided for by §3.1604(d). Where any part of the plot or interment expenses has been paid or assumed by a State, any agency or political subdivision of a State, or the employer of the deceased veteran, only the difference between the total amount of such expenses and the amount paid or assumed by any of these agencies or organizations, not to exceed the statutory plot or interment allowance, will be authorized.

(d) Payment of the plot or interment allowance to a State or political subdivision thereof—(1) Conditions warranting payment. All of the following conditions must be met:

(i) The plot or interment allowance is payable based on the deceased veteran’s eligibility for burial in a national cemetery (or, in claims filed prior to December 16, 2003, the deceased veteran’s service). See §38.620 of this chapter.

(ii) The deceased veteran is buried in a cemetery or a section thereof which is owned by the State, or an agency or political subdivision of the State claiming the plot or interment allowance.

(iii) No charge is made by the State, or an agency or political subdivision of the State for the cost of the plot or interment.

(iv) The veteran was buried on or after October 1, 1978.

(2) Claims. A claim for payment under this paragraph shall be executed by a State, or an agency or political subdivision of a State entitled to payment under this paragraph shall be paid the maximum statutory amount as a plot or interment allowance without regard to the actual cost of the plot or interment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2303(b))

(4) Priority of payment. A claim filed under this paragraph shall take precedence in payment of the plot or interment allowance over any claim filed for the plot or interment allowance under §3.1601(a)(2).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2303(b))

(5) A plot or interment allowance may be paid to a state in addition to a burial allowance under §3.1600(a) for claims filed on or after December 16, 2003.

An amount may be paid not to exceed the amount payable under §3.1600 for the funeral, burial, plot, or interment expenses of a person who dies while in a hospital, domiciliary, or nursing home to which he or she was properly admitted under authority of the Department of Veterans Affairs. (See §3.1600(c)). In addition, the cost of transporting the body to the place of burial may be authorized. The amount payable under this section is subject to the limitations set forth in paragraph (b) of this section, and §§3.1604 and 3.1606.
§ 3.1606

(a) Death enroute. When a veteran while traveling under proper prior authorization and at Department of Veterans Affairs expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of:

(1) Examination; or
(2) Treatment; or
(3) Care
dies enroute, burial, funeral, plot, interment, and transportation expenses will be allowed as though death occurred while properly hospitalized by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Hospitalization in the Philippines under 38 U.S.C. 631, 632, and 633 does not meet the requirements of this section.

(b) Transportation. Except for retired persons hospitalized under section 5 of Executive Order 10122 (15 FR 2173; 3 CFR 1950 Supp.) issued pursuant to Pub. L. 351, 81st Congress, and not as Department of Veterans Affairs beneficiaries, the cost of transportation of the body to the place of burial in addition to the burial and plot or interment allowance will be provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs where death occurs:

(1) Within a State or the Canal Zone (38 U.S.C. 101 (20)) while the veteran is hospitalized by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the body is buried in a State or the Canal Zone; or
(2) While hospitalized within but burial is to be outside of a State or the Canal Zone, except that cost of transportation of the body will be authorized only from place of death to port of embarkation, or to border limits of United States where burial is in Canada or Mexico.

(c) Extended entitlement. Entitlement extends to the following persons who die while properly hospitalized by the Department of Veterans Affairs:

(1) Discharged or rejected draftees; or
(2) Members of the National Guard who reported to camp in answer to the President's call for World War I, World War II, or Korean service, but who when medically examined were not finally accepted for active military service; or
(3) A veteran discharged under conditions other than dishonorable from a period of service other than a war period.

(d) Persons properly hospitalized. A person properly hospitalized who dies:

(1) While on authorized absence which has not exceeded 96 hours at time of death;
(2) While in a status of unauthorized absence for a period not in excess of 24 hours; or
(3) While absent from the hospital for a period totaling 24 hours of combined authorized and unauthorized absence (all other cases in which such absence arises at the expiration of an authorized absence are not included); is considered as having died while hospitalized.

(e) Persons not properly hospitalized. Where a deceased person was not properly hospitalized, benefits will not be authorized under this section.

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§ 3.1606 Transportation items.

The transportation costs of those persons who come within the provisions of §§3.1600(g) and 3.1605 (a), (b), (c), and (d) may include the following:

(a) Shipment by common carrier. (1) Charge for pickup of remains from place hospitalized or place of death but not to exceed the usual and customary charge made the general public for the same service.
(2) Procuring permit for shipment.
(3) Shipping case. When a box purchased for interment purposes is also used as the shipping case, the amount payable may not exceed the usual and customary charge for a shipping case. In any such instance any excess amount would be an acceptable item to be included in the burial allowance expenses.
(4) Cost of sealing outside case (tin or galvanized iron), if a vault (steel or concrete) is used as a shipping case and also for burial, an allowance of $30 may be made thereon in lieu of a separate shipping case.
(5) Cost of hearses to point where remains are to be placed on common carrier for shipment.
(6) Cost of transportation by common carrier including amounts paid as Federal taxes.
(7) Cost of one removal by hearse directly from common carrier plus one later removal by hearse to place of burial.

(b) Transferred by hearse. (1) Charge for pickup of remains from place hospitalized, or place of death and

(2) Charge for one later removal by hearse to place of burial. These charges will not exceed those made the general public for the same services.

(3) Payment of hearse charges for transporting the remains over long distances are limited to prevailing common carrier rates when common carrier service is available and can be easily and effectively utilized.

§ 3.1607 Cost of flags.

No reimbursement will be authorized for the cost of a burial flag privately purchased by relatives, friends, or other parties but such cost may be included in a claim for the burial allowance.

[26 FR 1622, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.1608 Nonallowable expenses.

No reimbursement will be allowed for:

(a) Accessory items. Such as items of food and drink.

(b) Duplicate items. Any item or cost of any item or service, such as casket, clothing, etc., previously provided or paid for by any Federal agency (including the Department of Veterans Affairs).

[26 FR 1622, Feb. 24, 1961]

§ 3.1609 Forfeiture.

(a) Forfeiture of benefits for fraud by a veteran during his lifetime will not preclude payment of burial and plot or interment allowance if otherwise in order. No benefits will be paid to a claimant who participated in the offense which caused the forfeiture by the veteran.

(b) Burial and plot or interment allowance is not payable based on a period of service commencing prior to the date of commission of the offense where either the veteran or claimant has forfeited the right to gratuitous benefits under § 3.902 or § 3.903 by reason of a treasonable act or subversive activities, unless the offense was pardoned by the President of the United States prior to the date of the veteran’s death.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5904(c)(2), 5905(a))

Cross Reference: Effect of forfeiture after veteran’s death. See § 3.904.


§ 3.1610 Burial in national cemeteries; burial of unclaimed bodies.

The statutory burial allowance and permissible transportation charges as provided in §§ 3.1600 through 3.1611 are also payable under the following conditions:

(a) Where burial of a deceased veteran is in a national cemetery, provided that burial in a national cemetery is desired by the person or persons entitled to the custody of the remains for interment and permission for burial has been received from the officers having jurisdiction over burials in national cemeteries; or

(b) Where the body of a deceased veteran is unclaimed by relatives or friends (see § 3.1603), the Director of the regional office in the area in which the veteran died will immediately complete arrangements for burial in a national cemetery or, at his or her option, in a cemetery or cemetery section meeting the requirements of § 3.1604(d)(1)(ii)–(iv), provided that the total amount payable for burial and transportation expenses (including the plot allowance, if entitlement is established) does not exceed the total amount payable had burial been in a national cemetery.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1501(a))

[57 FR 29025, June 30, 1992; 57 FR 40944, Sept. 8, 1992]

§ 3.1611 Official Department of Veterans Affairs representation at funeral.

When requested by the person entitled to the custody of the body of a deceased beneficiary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, official representation at the funeral will be granted provided an employee is available for the
§ 3.1612 Monetary allowance in lieu of a Government-furnished headstone or marker.

(a) Purpose. This section provides for the payment of a monetary allowance in lieu of furnishing a headstone or marker at Government expense under the provisions of § 1.631(a)(2) and (b) of this chapter to the person entitled to request such a headstone or marker.

(b) Eligibility for the allowance. All of the following conditions shall be met:

(1) The deceased veteran was eligible for burial in a National cemetery (See § 1.620(a), (b), (c) and (d) of this chapter); or died under circumstances precluding the recovery or identification of the veteran’s remains or the veteran’s remains were buried at sea.

(2) The veteran was buried on or after October 18, 1978.

(3) The headstone or marker was purchased to mark the otherwise unmarked grave of the deceased veteran or, if death occurred prior to December 18, 1989, the veteran’s identifying information was added to an existing headstone or marker.

(c) Person entitled to request a Government-furnished headstone or marker. For purposes of this monetary allowance, the term “person entitled to request a headstone or marker” includes, but is not limited to, the person who purchased the headstone or marker (or if death occurred prior to December 18, 1989, the person who paid for adding the veteran’s identifying information to an existing headstone or marker), or the executor, administrator or person representing the deceased’s estate.

(d) Receipted bill. A receipted bill describing the headstone or marker (or the services rendered in adding the veteran’s identifying information to an existing headstone or marker) date of purchase, purchase price, the amount of payment and the name of the person who made such payment, shall accompany a claim for this monetary allowance.

(e) Payment and amount of the allowance. (1) The monetary allowance is payable as reimbursement to the person entitled to request a Government-furnished headstone or marker. If funds of the deceased’s estate were used to purchase the headstone or marker or, if death occurred prior to December 18, 1989, to have the deceased’s identifying information added to an existing headstone or marker, and no executor or administrator has been appointed, payment may be made to a person who will make a distribution of this monetary allowance to the person or persons entitled under the laws governing the distribution of intestate estates in the State of the decedent’s domicile.

(2) The amount of the allowance payable is the lesser of the following:

(i) Actual cost of acquiring a non-Government headstone or marker or, if death occurred prior to December 18, 1989, the actual cost of adding the veteran’s identifying information to an existing headstone or marker;

(ii) The average actual cost, as determined by VA, of headstones and markers furnished at Government expense for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which the non-Government marker was purchased or the services for adding the veteran’s identifying information on an existing headstone or marker were purchased.

(3) The average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones and markers during any fiscal year is determined by dividing the sum of VA’s costs during that fiscal year for procurement, transportation, Office of Memorial Programs and miscellaneous administration, inspection and support staff by the total number of headstones.

[26 FR 1622, Feb. 24, 1961]

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2306(d)
and markers procured by VA during that fiscal year and rounding to the nearest whole dollar amount. The resulting average actual cost is published at the end of each fiscal year in the “Notices” section of the Federal Register.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2306(d))

(4) The following applies to joint or multiple headstones or markers:

(i) When a joint or multiple non-Government headstone or marker is purchased subsequent to the veteran’s death, the amount set forth in paragraph (e)(2)(ii) of this section shall be available as reimbursement for the cost of the veteran’s portion of the joint or multiple headstone or marker.

(ii) When a joint or multiple non-Government headstone or marker is existent at the time of the veteran’s death, the allowance payable as reimbursement under paragraph (e)(2) of this section shall be determined based on the cost of the services for adding the veteran’s identifying information.

(5) Payment of allowance prohibited. This monetary allowance shall not be paid when a Government headstone or marker has been requested or issued under the provisions of §1.631 (a)(2) and (b) of this chapter.

(g) Claims. There is no time limit for filing claims for monetary allowance in lieu of a Government-furnished headstone or marker.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2306(d))

(h) The monetary allowance in lieu of a Government-furnished headstone or marker is not payable if death occurred on or after November 1, 1990.

(Authority: Pub. L. 101–508)

disagreement in the Notice of Disagreement. The reviewer will consider all evidence of record and applicable law, and will give no deference to the decision being reviewed.

(b) Unless the claimant has requested review under this section with his or her Notice of Disagreement, VA will, upon receipt of the Notice of Disagreement, notify the claimant in writing of his or her right to a review under this section. To obtain such a review, the claimant must request it not later than 60 days after the date VA mails the notice. This 60-day time limit may not be extended. If the claimant fails to request review under this section not later than 60 days after the date VA mails the notice, VA will proceed with the traditional appellate process by issuing a Statement of the Case.

(c) The reviewer may conduct whatever development he or she considers necessary to resolve any disagreements in the Notice of Disagreement, consistent with applicable law. This may include an attempt to obtain additional evidence or the holding of an informal conference with the claimant. Upon the request of the claimant, the reviewer will conduct a hearing under §3.103(c).

(d) The reviewer may grant a benefit sought in the claim notwithstanding §3.105(b), but, except as provided in paragraph (e) of this section, may not revise the decision in a manner that is less advantageous to the claimant than the decision under review. A review decision made under this section will include a summary of the evidence, a citation to pertinent laws, a discussion of how those laws affect the decision, and a summary of the reasons for the decision.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the reviewer may reverse or revise (even if disadvantageous to the claimant) prior decisions of an agency of original jurisdiction (including the decision being reviewed or any prior decision that has become final due to failure to timely appeal) on the grounds of clear and unmistakable error (see §3.105(a)).

(f) Review under this section does not limit the appeal rights of a claimant. Unless a claimant withdraws his or her Notice of Disagreement as a result of this review process, VA will proceed with the traditional appellate process by issuing a Statement of the Case.

(g) This section applies to all claims in which a Notice of Disagreement is filed on or after June 1, 2001.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5109A and 7105(d))

§38 CFR Ch. 1 (7–1–11 Edition)

PART 4—SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES

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§ 4.1 Essentials of evaluative rating.

This rating schedule is primarily a guide in the evaluation of disability resulting from all types of diseases and injuries encountered as a result of or incident to military service. The percentage ratings represent as far as can practically be determined the average impairment in earning capacity resulting from such diseases and injuries and their residual conditions in civil occupations. Generally, the degrees of disability specified are considered adequate to compensate for considerable loss of working time from exacerbations or illnesses proportionate to the severity of the several grades of disability. For the application of this schedule, accurate and fully descriptive medical examinations are required, with emphasis upon the limitation of activity imposed by the disabling condition. Over a period of many years, a veteran’s disability claim may require reratings in accordance with changes in laws, medical knowledge and his or her physical or mental condition. It is thus essential, both in the examination and in the evaluation of disability, that each disability be viewed in relation to its history.

§ 4.2 Interpretation of examination reports.

Different examiners, at different times, will not describe the same disability in the same language. Features of the disability which must have persisted unchanged may be overlooked or a change for the better or worse may not be accurately appreciated or described. It is the responsibility of the rating specialist to interpret reports of examination in the light of the whole recorded history, reconciling the various reports into a consistent picture so that the current rating may accurately reflect the elements of disability present. Each disability must be considered from the point of view of the veteran working or seeking work. If a diagnosis is not supported by the findings on the examination report or if the report does not contain sufficient detail, it is incumbent upon the rating board to return the report as inadequate for evaluation purposes.

§ 4.3 Resolution of reasonable doubt.

It is the defined and consistently applied policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the law under a broad interpretation, consistent, however, with the facts shown in every case. When after careful consideration of all procurable and assembled data, a reasonable doubt arises regarding the degree of disability such doubt will be resolved in favor of the claimant. See § 3.102 of this chapter.

§ 4.6 Evaluation of evidence.

The element of the weight to be accorded the character of the veteran’s service is but one factor entering into the considerations of the rating boards in arriving at determinations of the evaluation of disability. Every element in any way affecting the probative value to be assigned to the evidence in each individual claim must be thoroughly and conscientiously studied by each member of the rating board in the light of the established policies of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the end that decisions will be equitable and just as contemplated by the requirements of the law.

§ 4.7 Higher of two evaluations.

Where there is a question as to which of two evaluations shall be applied, the higher evaluation will be assigned if the disability picture more nearly approximates the criteria required for that rating. Otherwise, the lower rating will be assigned.
§ 4.9 Congenital or developmental defects.

Mere congenital or developmental defects, absent, displaced or supernumerary parts, refractive error of the eye, personality disorder and mental deficiency are not diseases or injuries in the meaning of applicable legislation for disability compensation purposes.

[41 FR 11292, Mar. 18, 1976]

§ 4.10 Functional impairment.

The basis of disability evaluations is the ability of the body as a whole, or of the psyche, or of a system or organ of the body to function under the ordinary conditions of daily life including employment. Whether the upper or lower extremities, the back or abdominal wall, the eyes or ears, or the cardiovascular, digestive, or other system, or psyche are affected, evaluations are based upon lack of usefulness, of these parts or systems, especially in self-support. This imposes upon the medical examiner the responsibility of furnishing, in addition to the etiological, anatomical, pathological, laboratory and prognostic data required for ordinary medical classification, full description of the effects of disability upon the person’s ordinary activity. In this connection, it will be remembered that a person may be too disabled to engage in employment although he or she is up and about and fairly comfortable at home or upon limited activity.

[41 FR 11292, Mar. 18, 1976]

§ 4.13 Effect of change of diagnosis.

The repercussion upon a current rating of service connection when change is made of a previously assigned diagnosis or etiology must be kept in mind. The aim should be the reconciliation and continuance of the diagnosis or etiology upon which service connection for the disability had been granted. The relevant principle enunciated in § 4.125, entitled “Diagnosis of mental disorders,” should have careful attention in this connection. When any change in evaluation is to be made, the rating agency should assure itself that there has been an actual change in the conditions, for better or worse, and not merely a difference in thoroughness of the examination or in use of descriptive terms. This will not, of course, preclude the correction of erroneous ratings, nor will it preclude assignment of a rating in conformity with § 4.7.


§ 4.14 Avoidance of pyramiding.

The evaluation of the same disability under various diagnoses is to be avoided. Disability from injuries to the muscles, nerves, and joints of an extremity may overlap to a great extent, so that special rules are included in the appropriate bodily system for their evaluation. Dyspnea, tachycardia, nervousness, fatigability, etc., may result from many causes; some may be service connected, others, not. Both the use of manifestations not resulting from service-connected disease or injury in establishing the service-connected evaluation, and the evaluation of the same manifestation under different diagnoses are to be avoided.

§ 4.15 Total disability ratings.

The ability to overcome the handicap of disability varies widely among individuals. The rating, however, is based primarily upon the average impairment in earning capacity, that is, upon the economic or industrial handicap which must be overcome and not from individual success in overcoming it. However, full consideration must be given to unusual physical or mental effects in individual cases, to peculiar effects of occupational activities, to defects in physical or mental endowment preventing the usual amount of success in overcoming the handicap of disability and to the effect of combinations of disability. Total disability will be considered to exist when there is present any impairment of mind or body which is sufficient to render it impossible for the average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation; Provided, That permanent total disability shall be taken to exist when the impairment is reasonably certain to continue throughout the life of the disabled person. The following will be considered to be permanent total disability: the permanent loss of the use of both hands, or of both feet, or of one
§ 4.16 Total disability ratings for compensation based on unemployability of the individual.

(a) Total disability ratings for compensation may be assigned, where the schedular rating is less than total, when the disabled person is, in the judgment of the rating agency, unable to secure or follow a substantially gainful occupation as a result of service-connected disabilities: Provided That, if there is only one such disability, this disability shall be ratable at 60 percent or more, and that, if there are two or more disabilities, there shall be at least one disability ratable at 40 percent or more, and sufficient additional disability to bring the combined rating to 70 percent or more. For the above purpose of one 60 percent disability, or one 40 percent disability in combination, the following will be considered as one disability: (1) Disabilities of one or both upper extremities, or of one or both lower extremities, including the bilateral factor, if applicable, (2) disabilities resulting from common etiology or a single accident, (3) disabilities affecting a single body system, e.g. orthopedic, digestive, respiratory, cardiovascular-renal, neuropsychiatric, (4) multiple injuries incurred in action, or (5) multiple disabilities incurred as a prisoner of war. It is provided further that the existence or degree of nonservice-connected disabilities or previous unemployability status will be disregarded where the percentages referred to in this paragraph for the service-connected disability or disabilities are met and in the judgment of the rating agency such service-connected disabilities render the veteran unemployable. Marginal employment shall not be considered substantially gainful employment. For purposes of this section, marginal employment generally shall be deemed to exist when a veteran’s earned annual income does not exceed the amount established by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, as the poverty threshold for one person. Marginal employment may also be held to exist, on a facts found basis (includes but is not limited to employment in a protected environment such as a family business or sheltered workshop), when earned annual income exceeds the poverty threshold. Consideration shall be given in all claims to the nature of the employment and the reason for termination.

(b) It is the established policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs that all veterans who are unable to secure and follow a substantially gainful occupation by reason of service-connected disabilities shall be rated totally disabled. Therefore, rating boards should submit to the Director, Compensation and Pension Service, for extra-schedular consideration all cases of veterans who are unemployable by reason of service-connected disabilities, but who fail to meet the percentage standards set forth in paragraph (a) of this section. The rating board will include a full statement as to the veteran’s service-connected disabilities, employment history, educational and vocational attainment and all other factors having a bearing on the issue.


§ 4.17 Total disability ratings for pension based on unemployability and age of the individual.

All veterans who are basically eligible and who are unable to secure and follow a substantially gainful occupation by reason of disabilities which are likely to be permanent shall be rated as permanently and totally disabled. For the purpose of pension, the permanence of the percentage requirements of § 4.16 is a requisite. When the percentage requirements are met, and the disabilities involved are of a permanent nature, a rating of permanent and total disability will be assigned if the veteran is found to be unable to secure and follow substantially gainful employment by reason of such disability. Prior employment or unemployability status is immaterial if in the judgment
of the rating board the veteran’s disabilities render him or her unemployable. In making such determinations, the following guidelines will be used:

(a) Marginal employment, for example, as a self-employed farmer or other person, while employed in his or her own business, or at odd jobs or while employed at less than half the usual remuneration will not be considered incompatible with a determination of unemployability, if the restriction, as to securing or retaining better employment, is due to disability.

(b) Claims of all veterans who fail to meet the percentage standards but who meet the basic entitlement criteria and are unemployable, will be referred by the rating board to the Veterans Service Center Manager or the Pension Management Center Manager under §3.321(b)(2) of this chapter.


§ 4.17a Misconduct etiology.

A permanent and total disability rating under the provisions of §§4.15, 4.16 and 4.17 will not be precluded by reason of the coexistence of misconduct disability when:

(a) A veteran, regardless of employment status, also has innocently acquired 100 percent disability, or

(b) Where unemployable, the veteran has other disabilities innocently acquired which meet the percentage requirements of §§4.16 and 4.17 and would render, in the judgment of the rating agency, the average person unable to secure or follow a substantially gainful occupation.


§ 4.17b Unemployability.

A veteran may be considered as unemployable upon termination of employment which was provided on account of disability, or in which special consideration was given on account of the same, when it is satisfactorily shown that he or she is unable to secure further employment. With amputations, sequelae of fractures and other residuals of traumatism shown to be of static character, a showing of continuous unemployability from date of incurrence, or the date the condition reached the stabilized level, is a general requirement in order to establish the fact that present unemployability is the result of the disability. However, consideration is to be given to the circumstances of employment in individual claims, and, if the employment was only occasional, intermittent, tryout or unsuccessful, or eventually terminated on account of the disability, present unemployability may be attributed to the static disability. Where unemployability for pension previously has been established on the basis of combined service-connected and non-service-connected disabilities and the service-connected disability or disabilities have increased in severity, §4.16 is for consideration.


§ 4.18 Age in service-connected claims.

Age may not be considered as a factor in evaluating service-connected disability; and unemployability, in service-connected claims, associated with advancing age or intercurrent disability, may not be used as a basis for a total disability rating. Age, as such, is a factor only in evaluations of disability not resulting from service, i.e., for the purposes of pension.


§ 4.19 Analogous ratings.

When an unlisted condition is encountered it will be permissible to rate under a closely related disease or injury in which not only the functions affected, but the anatomical localization and symptomatology are closely analogous. Conjectural analogies will be avoided, as will the use of analogous ratings for conditions of doubtful diagnosis, or for those not fully supported by clinical and laboratory findings. Nor will ratings assigned to organic diseases and injuries be assigned by analogy to conditions of functional origin.

§ 4.21 Application of rating schedule.

In view of the number of atypical instances it is not expected, especially
§ 4.22 Rating of disabilities aggravated by active service.

In cases involving aggravation by active service, the rating will reflect only the degree of disability over and above the degree existing at the time of entrance into the active service, whether the particular condition was noted at the time of entrance into the active service, or it is determined upon the evidence of record to have existed at that time. It is necessary therefore, in all cases of this character to deduct from the present degree of disability the degree, if ascertainable, of the disability existing at the time of entrance into active service, in terms of the rating schedule, except that if the disability is total (100 percent) no deduction will be made. The resulting difference will be recorded on the rating sheet. If the degree of disability at the time of entrance into the service is not ascertainable in terms of the schedule, no deduction will be made.

§ 4.23 Attitude of rating officers.

It is to be remembered that the majority of applicants are disabled persons who are seeking benefits of law to which they believe themselves entitled. In the exercise of his or her functions, rating officers must not allow their personal feelings to intrude; an antagonistic, critical, or even abusive attitude on the part of a claimant should not in any instance influence the officers in the handling of the case. Fairness and courtesy must at all times be shown to applicants by all employees whose duties bring them in contact, directly or indirectly, with the Department’s claimants.

§ 4.24 Correspondence.

All correspondence relative to the interpretation of the schedule for rating disabilities, requests for advisory opinions, questions regarding lack of clarity or application to individual cases involving unusual difficulties, will be addressed to the Director, Compensation and Pension Service. A clear statement will be made of the point or points upon which information is desired, and the complete case file will be simultaneously forwarded to Central Office. Rating agencies will assure themselves that the recent report of physical examination presents an adequate picture of the claimant’s condition. Claims in regard to which the schedule evaluations are considered inadequate or excessive, and errors in the schedule will be similarly brought to attention.

§ 4.25 Combined ratings table.

Table I, Combined Ratings Table, results from the consideration of the efficiency of the individual as affected first by the most disabling condition, then by the less disabling condition, then by other less disabling conditions, if any, in the order of severity. Thus, a person having a 60 percent disability is considered 40 percent efficient. Proceeding from this 40 percent efficiency, the effect of a further 30 percent disability is to leave only 70 percent of the efficiency remaining after consideration of the first disability, or 28 percent efficiency altogether. The individual is thus 72 percent disabled, as shown in table I opposite 60 percent and under 30 percent.

(a) To use table I, the disabilities will first be arranged in the exact order of their severity, beginning with the greatest disability and then combined with use of table I as hereinafter indicated. For example, if there are two disabilities, the degree of one disability will be read in the left column and the degree of the other in the top row, whichever is appropriate. The figures appearing in the space where the column and row intersect will represent the combined value of the two. This combined value will then be converted to the nearest number divisible by 10, and combined values ending in 5 will be adjusted upward. Thus, with a 50 percent disability and a 30 percent disability, the combined value will be
Department of Veterans Affairs § 4.25

found to be 65 percent, but the 65 percent must be converted to 70 percent to represent the final degree of disability. Similarly, with a disability of 40 percent, and another disability of 20 percent, the combined value is found to be 52 percent, but the 52 percent must be converted to the nearest degree divisible by 10, which is 50 percent. If there are more than two disabilities, the disabilities will also be arranged in the exact order of their severity and the combined value for the first two will be found as previously described for two disabilities. The combined value, exactly as found in table I, will be combined with the degree of the third disability (in order of severity). The combined value for the three disabilities will be found in the space where the column and row intersect, and if there are only three disabilities will be converted to the nearest degree divisible by 10, adjusting final 5’s upward. Thus, if there are three disabilities ratable at 60 percent, 40 percent, and 20 percent, respectively, the combined value for the first two will be found opposite 60 and under 40 and is 76 percent. This 76 will be combined with 20 and the combined value for the three is 81 percent. This combined value will be converted to the nearest degree divisible by 10 which is 80 percent. The same procedure will be employed when there are four or more disabilities. (See table I).

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this schedule, the disabilities arising from a single disease entity, e.g., arthritis, multiple sclerosis, cerebrovascular accident, etc., are to be rated separately as are all other disabling conditions, if any. All disabilities are then to be combined as described in paragraph (a) of this section. The conversion to the nearest degree divisible by 10 will be done only once per rating decision, will follow the combining of all disabilities, and will be the last procedure in determining the combined degree of disability.

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§ 4.26 Bilateral factor.

When a partial disability results from disease or injury of both arms, or of both legs, or of paired skeletal muscles, the ratings for the disabilities of the right and left sides will be combined as usual, and 10 percent of this value will be added (i.e., not combined) before proceeding with further combinations, or converting to degree of disability. The bilateral factor will be applied to such bilateral disabilities before other combinations are carried out and the rating for such disabilities including the bilateral factor in this section will be treated as 1 disability for the purpose of arranging in order of severity and for all further combinations. For example, with disabilities evaluated at 60 percent, 20 percent, 10 percent and 10 percent (the two 10's representing bilateral disabilities), the order of severity would be 60, 21 and 20. The 60 and 21 combine to 68 percent and the 68 and 20 to 74 percent, converted to 70 percent as the final degree of disability.

(a) The use of the terms “arms” and “legs” is not intended to distinguish between the arm, forearm, and hand, or the thigh, leg, and foot, but relates to the upper extremities and lower extremities as a whole. Thus with a compensable disability of the right thigh, for example, amputation, and one of the left foot, for example, pes planus,

### TABLE I—COMBINED RATINGS TABLE—Continued

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(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

the bilateral factor applies, and similarly whenever there are compensable disabilities affecting use of paired extremities regardless of location or specified type of impairment.

(b) The correct procedure when applying the bilateral factor to disabilities affecting both upper extremities and both lower extremities is to combine the ratings of the disabilities affecting the 4 extremities in the order of their individual severity and apply the bilateral factor by adding, not combining, 10 percent of the combined value thus attained.

(c) The bilateral factor is not applicable unless there is partial disability of compensable degree in each of 2 paired extremities, or paired skeletal muscles.

§ 4.27 Use of diagnostic code numbers.

The diagnostic code numbers appearing opposite the listed ratable disabilities are arbitrary numbers for the purpose of showing the basis of the evaluation assigned and for statistical analysis in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and as will be observed, extend from 5000 to a possible 9999. Great care will be exercised in the selection of the applicable code number and in its citation on the rating sheet. No other numbers than those listed or hereafter furnished are to be employed for rating purposes, with an exception as described in this section, as to unlisted conditions. When an unlisted injury, disability, or residual condition is encountered, requiring rating by analogy, the diagnostic code number will be “built-up” as follows: The first 2 digits will be selected from that part of the schedule most closely identifying the part, or system, of the body involved; the last 2 digits will be “99” for all unlisted conditions. This procedure will facilitate a close check of new and unlisted conditions, rated by analogy. In the selection of code numbers, injuries will generally be represented by the number assigned to the residual condition on the basis of which the rating is determined. With diseases, preference is to be given to the number assigned to the disease itself; if the rating is determined on the basis of residual conditions, the number appropriate to the residual condition will be added, preceded by a hyphen. Thus, rheumatoid (atrophic) arthritis rated as ankylosis of the lumbar spine should be coded “5002–5240.” In this way, the exact source of each rating can be easily identified. In the citation of disabilities on rating sheets, the diagnostic terminology will be that of the medical examiner, with no attempt to translate the terms into schedule nomenclature. Residuals of diseases or therapeutic procedures will not be cited without reference to the basic disease.

[41 FR 11293, Mar. 18, 1976, as amended at 70 FR 75399, Dec. 20, 2005]

§ 4.28 Prestabilization rating from date of discharge from service.

The following ratings may be assigned, in lieu of ratings prescribed elsewhere, under the conditions stated for disability from any disease or injury. The prestabilization rating is not to be assigned in any case in which a total rating is immediately assignable under the regular provisions of the schedule or on the basis of individual unemployability. The prestabilization 50-percent rating is not to be used in any case in which a rating of 50 percent or more is immediately assignable under the regular provisions.

Unstabilized condition with severe disability—
Substantially gainful employment is not feasible or advisable ...................................... 100

Unhealed or incompletely healed wounds or injuries—
Material impairment of employability likely ................................. 50

NOTE (1): Department of Veterans Affairs examination is not required prior to assignment of prestabilization ratings; however, the fact that examination was accomplished will not preclude assignment of these benefits. Prestabilization ratings are for assignment in the immediate postdischarge period. They will continue for a 12-month period following discharge from service. However, prestabilization ratings may be changed to a regular schedular total rating or one authorizing a greater benefit at any time. In each prestabilization rating an examination will be requested to be accomplished not earlier than 6 months nor more than 12 months following discharge. In those prestabilization ratings in which following examination reduction in evaluation is found to be warranted, the higher evaluation will be continued to the end of the 12th month following.
discharge or to the end of the period provided under §3.105(e) of this chapter, whichever is later. Special monthly compensation should be assigned concurrently in these cases whenever records are adequate to establish entitlement.

Note (2): Diagnosis of disease, injury, or residuals will be cited, with diagnostic code number assigned from this rating schedule for conditions listed therein.

(35 FR 11906, July 24, 1970)

§ 4.29 Ratings for service-connected disabilities requiring hospital treatment or observation.

A total disability rating (100 percent) will be assigned without regard to other provisions of the rating schedule when it is established that a service-connected disability has required hospital treatment in a Department of Veterans Affairs or an approved hospital for a period in excess of 21 days or hospital observation at Department of Veterans Affairs expense for a service-connected disability for a period in excess of 21 days.

(a) Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (d), (e), and (f) of this section this increased rating will be effective the first day of continuous hospitalization and will be terminated effective the last day of the month of hospital discharge (regular discharge or release to non-bed care) or effective the last day of the month of termination of treatment or observation for the service-connected disability. A temporary release which is approved by an attending Department of Veterans Affairs physician as part of the treatment plan will not be considered an absence.

(1) An authorized absence in excess of 4 days which begins during the first 21 days of hospitalization will be regarded as the equivalent of hospital discharge effective the first day of such authorized absence. An authorized absence of 4 days or less which results in a total of more than 8 days of authorized absence during the first 21 days of hospitalization will be regarded as the equivalent of hospital discharge effective the ninth day of authorized absence.

(2) Following a period of hospitalization in excess of 21 days, an authorized absence in excess of 14 days or a third consecutive authorized absence of 14 days will be regarded as the equivalent of hospital discharge and will interrupt hospitalization effective on the last day of the month in which either the authorized absence in excess of 14 days or the third 14 day period begins, except where there is a finding that convalescence is required as provided by paragraph (e) or (f) of this section. The termination of these total ratings will not be subject to §3.105(e) of this chapter.

(b) Notwithstanding that hospital admission was for disability not connected with service, if during such hospitalization, hospital treatment for a service-connected disability is instituted and continued for a period in excess of 21 days, the increase to a total rating will be granted from the first day of such treatment. If service connection for the disability under treatment is granted after hospital admission, the rating will be from the first day of hospitalization if otherwise in order.

(c) The assignment of a total disability rating on the basis of hospital treatment or observation will not preclude the assignment of a total disability rating otherwise in order under other provisions of the rating schedule, and consideration will be given to the propriety of such a rating in all instances and to the propriety of its continuance after discharge. Particular attention, with a view to proper rating under the rating schedule, is to be given to the claims of veterans discharged from hospital, regardless of length of hospitalization, with indications on the final summary of expected confinement to bed or house, or to inability to work with requirement of frequent care of physician or nurse at home.

(d) On these total ratings Department of Veterans Affairs regulations governing effective dates for increased benefits will control.

(e) The total hospital rating if convalescence is required may be continued for periods of 1, 2, or 3 months in addition to the period provided in paragraph (a) of this section.

(f) Extension of periods of 1, 2 or 3 months beyond the initial 3 months may be made upon approval of the Veterans Service Center Manager.

(g) Meritorious claims of veterans who are discharged from the hospital.
with less than the required number of days but need post-hospital care and a prolonged period of convalescence will be referred to the Director, Compensation and Pension Service, under §3.321(b)(1) of this chapter.

§ 4.30 Convalescent ratings.

A total disability rating (100 percent) will be assigned without regard to other provisions of the rating schedule when it is established by report at hospital discharge (regular discharge or release to non-bed care) or outpatient release that entitlement is warranted under paragraph (a) (1), (2) or (3) of this section effective the date of hospital admission or outpatient treatment and continuing for a period of 1, 2, or 3 months from the first day of the month following such hospital discharge or outpatient release. The termination of these total ratings will not be subject to §3.105(e) of this chapter. Such total rating will be followed by appropriate schedular evaluations. When the evidence is inadequate to assign the schedular evaluation, a physical examination will be scheduled prior to the termination of a total rating under this section.

(a) Total ratings will be assigned under this section if treatment of a service-connected disability resulted in:

(1) Surgery necessitating at least one month of convalescence (Effective as to outpatient surgery March 1, 1989.)

(2) Surgery with severe postoperative residuals such as incompletely healed surgical wounds, stumps of recent amputations, therapeutic immobilization of one major joint or more, application of a body cast, or the necessity for house confinement, or the necessity for continued use of a wheelchair or crutches (regular weight-bearing prohibited). (Effective as to outpatient surgery March 1, 1989.)

(3) Immobilization by cast, without surgery, of one major joint or more. (Effective as to outpatient treatment March 10, 1976.)

A reduction in the total rating will not be subject to §3.105(e) of this chapter. The total rating will be followed by an open rating reflecting the appropriate schedular evaluation; where the evidence is inadequate to assign the schedular evaluation, a physical examination will be scheduled prior to the end of the total rating period.

(b) A total rating under this section will require full justification on the rating sheet and may be extended as follows:

(1) Extensions of 1, 2 or 3 months beyond the initial 3 months may be made under paragraph (a) (1), (2) or (3) of this section.

(2) Extensions of 1 or more months up to 6 months beyond the initial 6 months period may be made under paragraph (a) (2) or (3) of this section upon approval of the Veterans Service Center Manager.

§ 4.31 Zero percent evaluations.

In every instance where the schedule does not provide a zero percent evaluation for a diagnostic code, a zero percent evaluation shall be assigned when the requirements for a compensable evaluation are not met.

[58 FR 52018, Oct. 6, 1993]

Subpart B—Disability Ratings

THE MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM

§ 4.40 Functional loss.

Disability of the musculoskeletal system is primarily the inability, due to damage or infection in parts of the body with normal excursion, strength, speed, coordination and endurance. It is essential that the examination on which ratings are based adequately portray the anatomical damage, and the functional loss, with respect to all these elements. The functional loss may be due to absence of part, or all, of the necessary bones, joints and muscles, or associated structures, or to deformity, adhesions, defective innervation, or other pathology, or it may be due to pain, supported by adequate pathology and evidenced by the visible behavior of the...
claimant undertaking the motion. Weakness is as important as limitation of motion, and a part which becomes painful on use must be regarded as seriously disabled. A little used part of the musculoskeletal system may be expected to show evidence of disuse, either through atrophy, the condition of the skin, absence of normal callosity or the like.

§ 4.41 History of injury.

In considering the residuals of injury, it is essential to trace the medical-industrial history of the disabled person from the original injury, considering the nature of the injury and the attendant circumstances, and the requirements for, and the effect of, treatment over past periods, and the course of the recovery to date. The duration of the initial, and any subsequent, period of total incapacity, especially periods reflecting delayed union, inflammation, swelling, drainage, or operative intervention, should be given close attention. This consideration, or the absence of clear cut evidence of injury, may result in classifying the disability as not of traumatic origin, either reflecting congenital or developmental etiology, or the effects of healed disease.

§ 4.42 Complete medical examination of injury cases.

The importance of complete medical examination of injury cases at the time of first medical examination by the Department of Veterans Affairs cannot be overemphasized. When possible, this should include complete neurological and psychiatric examination, and other special examinations indicated by the physical condition, in addition to the required general and orthopedic or surgical examinations. When complete examinations are not conducted covering all systems of the body affected by disease or injury, it is impossible to visualize the nature and extent of the service connected disability. Incomplete examination is a common cause of incorrect diagnosis, especially in the neurological and psychiatric fields, and frequently leaves the Department of Veterans Affairs in doubt as to the presence or absence of disabling conditions at the time of the examination.

§ 4.43 Osteomyelitis.

Chronic, or recurring, suppurative osteomyelitis, once clinically identified, including chronic inflammation of bone marrow, cortex, or periosteum, should be considered as a continuously disabling process, whether or not an actively discharging sinus or other obvious evidence of infection is manifest from time to time, and unless the focus is entirely removed by amputation will entitle to a permanent rating to be combined with other ratings for residual conditions, however, not exceeding amputation ratings at the site of election.

§ 4.44 The bones.

The osseous abnormalities incident to trauma or disease, such as malunion with deformity throwing abnormal stress upon, and causing malalignment of joint surfaces, should be depicted from study and observation of all available data, beginning with inception of injury or disease, its nature, degree of prostration, treatment and duration of convalescence, and progress of recovery with development of permanent residuals. With shortening of a long bone, some degree of angulation is to be expected; the extent and direction should be brought out by X-ray and observation. The direction of angulation and extent of deformity should be carefully related to strain on the neighboring joints, especially those connected with weight-bearing.

§ 4.45 The joints.

As regards the joints the factors of disability reside in reductions of their normal excursion of movements in different planes. Inquiry will be directed to these considerations:

(a) Less movement than normal (due to ankylosis, limitation or blocking, adhesions, tendon-tie-up, contracted scars, etc.).

(b) More movement than normal (from flail joint, resections, nonunion of fracture, relaxation of ligaments, etc.).

(c) Weakened movement (due to muscle injury, disease or injury of peripheral nerves, divided or lengthened tendons, etc.).

(d) Excess fatigability.
§ 4.56 Evaluation of muscle disabilities.

(a) An open comminuted fracture with muscle or tendon damage will be rated as a severe injury of the muscle group involved unless, for locations such as in the wrist or over the tibia, evidence establishes that the muscle damage is minimal.

(b) A through-and-through injury with muscle damage shall be evaluated as no less than a moderate injury for each group of muscles damaged.
§ 4.56  

(c) For VA rating purposes, the cardinal signs and symptoms of muscle disability are loss of power, weakness, lowered threshold of fatigue, fatigue-pain, impairment of coordination and uncertainty of movement.

(d) Under diagnostic codes 5301 through 5323, disabilities resulting from muscle injuries shall be classified as slight, moderate, moderately severe or severe as follows:

(1) Slight disability of muscles—(i) Type of injury. Simple wound of muscle without debridement or infection.

(ii) History and complaint. Service department record of superficial wound with brief treatment and return to duty. Healing with good functional results. No cardinal signs or symptoms of muscle disability as defined in paragraph (c) of this section.

(iii) Objective findings. Minimal scar. No evidence of fascial defect, atrophy, or impaired tonus. No impairment of function or metallic fragments retained in muscle tissue.

(2) Moderate disability of muscles—(i) Type of injury. Through and through or deep penetrating wound of short track from a single bullet, small shell or shrapnel fragment, without explosive effect of high velocity missile, residuals of debridement, or prolonged infection.

(ii) History and complaint. Service department record or other evidence of in-service treatment for the wound. Record of consistent complaint of one or more of the cardinal signs and symptoms of muscle disability as defined in paragraph (c) of this section, particularly lowered threshold of fatigue after average use, affecting the particular functions controlled by the injured muscles.

(iii) Objective findings. Entrance and (if present) exit scars, small or linear, indicating short track of missile through muscle tissue. Some loss of deep fascia or muscle substance or impairment of muscle tonus and loss of power or lowered threshold of fatigue when compared to the sound side.

(3) Moderately severe disability of muscles—(i) Type of injury. Through and through or deep penetrating wound by small high velocity missile or large low-velocity missile, with debridement, prolonged infection, or sloughing of soft parts, and intermuscular scarring.

(ii) History and complaint. Service department record or other evidence showing hospitalization for a prolonged period for treatment of wound. Record of consistent complaint of cardinal signs and symptoms of muscle disability as defined in paragraph (c) of this section and, if present, evidence of inability to keep up with work requirements.

(iii) Objective findings. Entrance and (if present) exit scars indicating track of missile through one or more muscle groups. Indications on palpation of loss of deep fascia, muscle substance, or normal firm resistance of muscles compared with sound side. Tests of strength and endurance compared with sound side demonstrate positive evidence of impairment.

(4) Severe disability of muscles—(i) Type of injury. Through and through or deep penetrating wound due to high-velocity missile, or large or multiple low velocity missiles, or with shattering bone fracture or open comminuted fracture with extensive debridement, prolonged infection, or sloughing of soft parts, intermuscular binding and scarring.

(ii) History and complaint. Service department record or other evidence showing hospitalization for a prolonged period for treatment of wound. Record of consistent complaint of cardinal signs and symptoms of muscle disability as defined in paragraph (c) of this section, worse than those shown for moderately severe muscle injuries, and, if present, evidence of inability to keep up with work requirements.

(iii) Objective findings. Ragged, depressed and adherent scars indicating wide damage to muscle groups in missile track. Palpation shows loss of deep fascia or muscle substance, or soft flabby muscles in wound area. Muscles swell and harden abnormally in contraction. Tests of strength, endurance, or coordinated movements compared with the corresponding muscles of the uninjured side indicate severe impairment of function. If present, the following are also signs of severe muscle disability:
(A) X-ray evidence of minute multiple scattered foreign bodies indicating intermuscular trauma and explosive effect of the missile.

(B) Adhesion of scar to one of the long bones, scapula, pelvic bones, sacrum or vertebrae, with epithelial sealing over the bone rather than true skin covering in an area where bone is normally protected by muscle.

(C) Diminished muscle excitability to pulsed electrical current in electrodiagnostic tests.

(D) Visible or measurable atrophy.

(E) Adaptive contraction of an opposing group of muscles.

(F) Atrophy of muscle groups not in the track of the missile, particularly of the trapezius and serratus in wounds of the shoulder girdle.

(G) Induration or atrophy of an entire muscle following simple piercing by a projectile.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155
§ 4.57 Static foot deformities.

It is essential to make an initial distinction between bilateral flatfoot as a congenital or as an acquired condition. The congenital condition, with depression of the arch, but no evidence of abnormal callosities, areas of pressure, strain or demonstrable tenderness, is a congenital abnormality which is not compensable or pensionable. In the acquired condition, it is to be remembered that depression of the longitudinal arch, or the degree of depression, is not the essential feature. The attention should be given to anatomical changes, as compared to normal, in the relationship of the foot and leg, particularly to the inward rotation of the superior portion of the os calcis, medial deviation of the insertion of the Achilles tendon, the medial tilting of the upper border of the astragalus. This is an unfavorable mechanical relationship of the parts. A plumb line dropped from the middle of the patella falls inside of the normal point. The forepart of the foot is abducted, and the foot everted. The plantar surface of the foot is painful and shows demonstrable tenderness, and manipulation of the foot produces spasm of the Achilles tendon, peroneal spasm due to adhesion about the peroneal sheaths, and other evidence of pain and limited motion. The symptoms should be apparent without regard to exercise. In severe cases there is gaping of bones on the inner border of the foot, and rigid valgus position with loss of the power of inversion and adduction. Exercise with undeveloped or unbalanced musculature, producing chronic irritation, can be an aggravating factor. In the absence of trauma or other definite evidence of aggravation, service connection is not in order for pes cavus which is a typically congenital or juvenile disease.

§ 4.58 Arthritis due to strain.

With service incurred lower extremity amputation or shortening, a disabling arthritis, developing in the same extremity, or in both lower extremities, with indications of earlier, or more severe, arthritis in the injured extremity, including also arthritis of the lumbosacral joints and lumbar spine, if associated with the leg amputation or shortening, will be considered as service incurred, provided, however, that arthritis affecting joints not directly subject to strain as a result of the service incurred amputation will not be granted service connection. This will generally require separate evaluation of the arthritis in the joints directly subject to strain. Amputation, or injury to an upper extremity, is not considered as a causative factor with subsequently developing arthritis, except in joints subject to direct strain or actually injured.

§ 4.59 Painful motion.

With any form of arthritis, painful motion is an important factor of disability, the facial expression, wincing, etc., on pressure or manipulation, should be carefully noted and definitely related to affected joints. Muscle spasm will greatly assist the identification. Sciatic neuritis is not uncommonly caused by arthritis of the spine. The intent of the schedule is to recognize painful motion with joint or periarticular pathology as productive of disability. It is the intention to recognize actually painful, unstable, or malaligned joints, due to healed injury, as entitled to at least the minimum
§ 4.60 Compensable rating for the joint. Crepitation either in the soft tissues such as the tendons or ligaments, or crepitation within the joint structures should be noted carefully as points of contact which are diseased. Flexion elicits such manifestations. The joints involved should be tested for pain on both active and passive motion, in weight-bearing and nonweight-bearing and, if possible, with the range of the opposite undamaged joint.

§ 4.61 Examination.

With any form of arthritis (except traumatic arthritis) it is essential that the examination for rating purposes cover all major joints, with especial reference to Heberden’s or Haygarth’s nodes.

§ 4.62 Circulatory disturbances.

The circulatory disturbances, especially of the lower extremity following injury in the popliteal space, must not be overlooked, and require rating generally as phlebitis.

§ 4.63 Loss of use of hand or foot.

Loss of use of a hand or a foot, for the purpose of special monthly compensation, will be held to exist when no effective function remains other than that which would be equally well served by an amputation stump at the site of election below elbow or knee with use of a suitable prosthetic appliance. The determination will be made on the basis of the actual remaining function of the hand or foot, whether the acts of grasping, manipulation, etc., in the case of the hand, or of balance and propulsion, etc., in the case of the foot, could be accomplished equally well by an amputation stump with prosthesis.

(a) Extremely unfavorable complete ankylosis of the knee, or complete ankylosis of 2 major joints of an extremity, or shortening of the lower extremity of 3½ inches (8.9 cms.) or more, will be taken as loss of use of the hand or foot involved.

(b) Complete paralysis of the external popliteal nerve (common peroneal) and consequent, footdrop, accompanied by characteristic organic changes including trophic and circulatory disturbances and other concomitants confirmatory of complete paralysis of this nerve, will be taken as loss of use of the foot.


§ 4.64 Loss of use of both buttocks.

Loss of use of both buttocks shall be deemed to exist when there is severe damage to muscle Group XVII, bilateral (diagnostic code number 5317) and additional disability rendering it impossible for the disabled person, without assistance, to rise from a seated position and from a stooped position (fingers to toes position) and to maintain postural stability (the pelvis upon head of femur). The assistance may be rendered by the person’s own hands or arms, and, in the matter of postural stability, by a special appliance.

§ 4.65 [Reserved]

§ 4.66 Sacroiliac joint.

The common cause of disability in this region is arthritis, to be identified in the usual manner. The lumbosacral and sacroiliac joints should be considered as one anatomical segment for rating purposes. X-ray changes from arthritis in this location are decrease or obliteration of the joint space, with the appearance of increased bone density of the sacrum and ilium and sharpening of the margins of the joint. Disability is manifest from erector spinae spasm (not accounted for by other pathology), tenderness on deep palpation and percussion over these joints, loss of normal quickness of motion and resiliency, and postural defects often accompanied by limitation of flexion and extension of the hip. Traumatism is a rare cause of disability in this connection, except when superimposed upon congenital defect or upon an existent arthritis; to permit assumption of pure traumatic origin, objective evidence of damage to the joint, and history of trauma sufficiently severe to injure this extremely strong and practically immovable joint is required. There should be careful consideration of lumbosacral sprain, and the various
symptoms of pain and paralysis attributable to disease affecting the lumbar vertebrae and the intervertebral disc.

§ 4.67 Pelvic bones.

The variability of residuals following these fractures necessitates rating on specific residuals, faulty posture, limitation of motion, muscle injury, painful motion of the lumbar spine, manifest by muscle spasm, mild to moderate sciatic neuritis, peripheral nerve injury, or limitation of hip motion.

§ 4.68 Amputation rule.

The combined rating for disabilities of an extremity shall not exceed the rating for the amputation at the elective level, were amputation to be performed. For example, the combined evaluations for disabilities below the knee shall not exceed the 40 percent evaluation, diagnostic code 5165. This 40 percent rating may be further combined with evaluation for disabilities above the knee but not to exceed the above the knee amputation elective level. Painful neuroma of a stump after amputation shall be assigned the evaluation for the elective site of re-amputation.

§ 4.69 Dominant hand.

Handedness for the purpose of a dominant rating will be determined by the evidence of record, or by testing on VA examination. Only one hand shall be considered dominant. The injured hand, or the most severely injured hand, of an ambidextrous individual will be considered the dominant hand for rating purposes.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)


§ 4.70 Inadequate examinations.

If the report of examination is inadequate as a basis for the required consideration of service connection and evaluation, the rating agency may request a supplementary report from the examiner giving further details as to the limitations of the disabled person’s ordinary activity imposed by the disease, injury, or residual condition, the prognosis for return to, or continuance of, useful work. When the best interests of the service will be advanced by personal conference with the examiner, such conference may be arranged through channels.

§ 4.71 Measurement of ankylosis and joint motion.

Plates I and II provide a standardized description of ankylosis and joint motion measurement. The anatomical position is considered as 0°, with two major exceptions: (a) Shoulder rotation—arm abducted to 90°, elbow flexed to 90° with the position of the forearm reflecting the midpoint 0° between internal and external rotation of the shoulder; and (b) supination and pronation—the arm next to the body, elbow flexed to 90°, and the forearm in midposition 0° between supination and pronation. Motion of the thumb and fingers should be described by appropriate reference to the joints (See Plate III) whose movement is limited, with a statement as to how near, in centimeters, the tip of the thumb can approximate the fingers, or how near the tips of the fingers can approximate the proximal transverse crease of palm.
§ 4.71a Schedule of ratings—musculoskeletal system.

**continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Note (1): A rating of 10 percent, as an exception to the amputation rule, is to be assigned in any case of acute osteomyelitis where the amputation rating for the affected part is no percent. This 10 percent rating and the other partial ratings of 30 percent or less are to be combined with ratings for ankylosis, limited motion, nonunion or malunion, shortening, etc., subject, of course, to the amputation rule. The 60 percent rating, as it is based on constitutional symptoms, is not subject to the amputation rule. A rating for osteomyelitis will not be applied following cure by removal or radical resection of the affected bone.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5000</td>
<td>Osteomyelitis, acute, subacute, or chronic: Of the pelvis, vertebrae, or extending into major joints, or with multiple localization or with long history of intractability and debility, anemia, amyloid liver changes, or other continuous constitutional symptoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequent episodes, with constitutional symptoms With definite involucrum or sequestrum, with or without discharging sinus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With discharging sinus or other evidence of active infection within the past 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inactive, following repeated episodes, without evidence of active infection in past 5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### §4.71a

#### ACUTE, SUBACUTE, OR CHRONIC DISEASES—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5019</td>
<td>Bursitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5020</td>
<td>Synovitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5021</td>
<td>Myositis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5022</td>
<td>Periostitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5023</td>
<td>Myositis ossificans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5024</td>
<td>Tenosynovitis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### ACUTE, SUBACUTE, OR CHRONIC DISEASES—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5001</td>
<td>Bones and joints, tuberculosis of, active or inactive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5002</td>
<td>Arthritis rheumatoid (atrophic) As an active process:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than criteria for 100% but with weight loss and anemia productive of severe impairment of health or severely incapacitating exacerbations occurring 4 or more times a year or a lesser number over prolonged periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symptom combinations productive of definite impairment of health objectively supported by examination findings or incapacitating exacerbations occurring 3 or more times a year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One or two exacerbations a year in a well-established diagnosis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### For chronic residuals:

For residuals such as limitation of motion or ankylosis, favorable or unfavorable, rate under the appropriate diagnostic codes for the specific joints involved. Where, however, the limitation of motion of the specific joint or joints involved is noncompensable under the codes a rating of 10 percent is for application for each such major joint or group of minor joints affected by limitation of motion, to be combined, not added under diagnostic code 5002. Limitation of motion must be objectively confirmed by findings such as swelling, muscle spasm, or satisfactory evidence of painful motion.

#### 38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5013</td>
<td>Osteoporosis, with joint manifestations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5014</td>
<td>Osteomalacia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5015</td>
<td>Bones, new growths of, benign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5016</td>
<td>Osteitis deformans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5017</td>
<td>Gout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5018</td>
<td>Hydrarthrosis, intermittent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5019</td>
<td>Bursitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5020</td>
<td>Synovitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5021</td>
<td>Myositis.</td>
</tr>
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<td>5022</td>
<td>Periostitis.</td>
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<td>Myositis ossificans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5024</td>
<td>Tenosynovitis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The diseases under diagnostic codes 5013 through 5024 will be rated on limitation of motion of affected parts, as arthritis, degenerative, except gout which will be rated under diagnostic code 5002.

#### Fibromyalgia (fibrositis, primary fibromyalgia syndrome)

With widespread musculoskeletal pain and tender points, with or without associated fatigue, sleep disturbance, stiffness, paresthesias, headache, irritable bowel symptoms, depression, anxiety, or Raynaud's-like symptoms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That are constant, or nearly so, and refractory to therapy</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That are episodic, with exacerbations often precipitated by environmental or emotional stress, or by overexertion, but that are present more than one-third of the time</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That require continuous medication for control</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Acute, Subacute, or Chronic Diseases—Continued

#### Prosthetic Implants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5051 Shoulder replacement (prosthesis).</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5052 Elbow replacement (prosthesis).</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5053 Wrist replacement (prosthesis).</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5054 Hip replacement (prosthesis).</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Combinations of Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5104 Anatomical loss of one hand and loss of use of one foot</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5105 Anatomical loss of one foot and loss of use of one hand</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5106 Anatomical loss of both hands</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5107 Anatomical loss of both feet</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5108 Anatomical loss of one hand and one foot</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5109 Loss of use of both hands</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5110 Loss of use of both feet</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5111 Loss of use of one hand and one foot</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Also entitled to special monthly compensation.*
Table II—Ratings for Multiple Losses of Extremities With Dictator's Rating Code and 38 CFR Citation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impairment of one extremity</th>
<th>Anatomical loss or loss of use below elbow</th>
<th>Anatomical loss or loss of use above elbow (preventing use of prosthesis)</th>
<th>Anatomical loss or loss of use below knee</th>
<th>Anatomical loss or loss of use above knee (preventing use of prosthesis)</th>
<th>Anatomical loss near shoulder (preventing use of prosthesis)</th>
<th>Anatomical loss near hip (preventing use of prosthesis)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

NOTE.—Need for aid attendance or permanently bedridden qualifies for subpar. L. Code L–1 h, i (38 CFR 3.350(b)). Para-
Of ................................................................ 1 70 1 60
Venting use of prosthesis).

At least a one third extremity

Three digits of one hand, amputation of:

5126 Five digits of one hand, amputation of: 1 70 1 60
Four digits of one hand, amputation of:

5127 Thumb, index, long and little 1 70 1 60
5128 Thumb, index, long and ring 1 70 1 60
5129 Thumb, index, ring and little 1 70 1 60
5130 Thumb, long, ring and little 1 70 1 60
5131 Index, long, ring and little 60 50
Three digits of one hand, amputation of:

5132 Thumb, index and long 60 50
5133 Thumb, index and ring 60 50
5134 Thumb, index and little 60 50
5135 Thumb, long and ring 60 50
5136 Thumb, long and little 60 50

(For Notification of Rating

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1115)

5137 Thumb, ring and little 60 50
5138 Index, long and ring 50 40
5139 Index, long and little 50 40
5140 Index, ring and little 50 40
5141 Long, ring and little 40 30

Two digits of one hand, amputation of:

5142 Thumb and index 50 40
5143 Thumb and long 50 40
5144 Thumb and little 50 40
5145 Ring and little 50 40
5146 Index and long 40 30
5147 Index and ring 40 30
5148 Index and little 40 30
5149 Long and ring 30 20
5150 Long and little 30 20
5151 Ring and little 30 20

(a) The ratings for multiple finger amputations apply to amputations at the proximal interphalangeal joints or through proximal phalanges.

(b) Amputation through middle phalanges will be rated as prescribed for unfavorable ankylosis of the fingers.

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### AMPUTATIONS: UPPER EXTREMITY—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(c) Amputations at distal joints, or through distal phalanges, other than negligible losses, will be rated as prescribed for favorable ankylosis of the fingers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Amputation or resection of metacarpal bones (more than one-half the bone lost) in multiple fingers injuries will require a rating of 10 percent added to (not combined with) the ratings, multiple finger amputations, subject to the amputation rule applied to the forearm.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Combinations of finger amputations at various levels, or finger amputations with ankylosis or limitation of motion of the fingers will be rated on the basis of the grade of disability; i.e., amputation, unfavorable ankylosis, most representative of the levels or combinations. With an even number of fingers involved, and adjacent grades of disability, select the higher of the two grades.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Loss of use of the hand will be held to exist when no effective function remains other than that which would be equally well served by an amputation stump with a suitable prosthetic appliance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SINGLE FINGER AMPUTATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5152 Thumb, amputation of:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With metacarpal resection</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At metacarpophalangeal joint or through proximal phalanx</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At distal joint or through distal phalanx</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5153 Index finger, amputation of:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With metacarpal resection (more than one-half the bone lost)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without metacarpal resection, at proximal interphalangeal joint or proximal thereto</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through middle phalanx or at distal joint</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5154 Long finger, amputation of:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With metacarpal resection (more than one-half the bone lost)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without metacarpal resection, at proximal interphalangeal joint or proximal thereto</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5155 Ring finger, amputation of:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With metacarpal resection (more than one-half the bone lost)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without metacarpal resection, at proximal interphalangeal joint or proximal thereto</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5156 Little finger, amputation of:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With metacarpal resection (more than one-half the bone lost)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without metacarpal resection, at proximal interphalangeal joint or proximal thereto</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: The single finger amputation ratings are the only applicable ratings for amputations of whole or part of single fingers.*

1 Entitled to special monthly compensation.
### AMPUTATIONS: LOWER EXTREMITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thigh, amputation of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5160 Disarticulation, with loss of extrinsic pelvic girdle muscles</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5161 Upper third, one-third of the distance from perineum to knee joint measured from perineum</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5162 Middle or lower thirds</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg, amputation of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5163 With defective stump, thigh amputation recommended</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5164 Amputation not improvable by prosthesis controlled by natural knee action</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5165 At a lower level, permitting prosthesis</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5166 Forefoot, amputation proximal to metatarsal bones (more than one-half of metatarsal loss)</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5167 Foot, loss of use of</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AMPUTATIONS: LOWER EXTREMITY—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5170 Toes, all, amputation of, without metatarsal loss</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5171 Toe, great, amputation of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With removal of metatarsal head</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without metatarsal involvement</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5172 Toes, other than great, amputation of, with removal of metatarsal head</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or two</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without metatarsal involvement</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5173 Toes, three or four, amputation of, without metatarsal involvement:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including great toe</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not including great toe</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Also entitled to special monthly compensation.*
### The Shoulder and Arm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5200 Scapulohumeral Articulation, Ankylosis of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: The scapula and humerus move as one piece.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable, abduction limited to 25° from side</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate between favorable and unfavorable</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable, abduction to 60°, can reach mouth and head</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5201 Arm, limitation of motion of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To 25° from side</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At shoulder level</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5202 Humerus, Other Impairment of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of head of (flail shoulder)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonunion of (false flail joint)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibrous union of</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent dislocation of at scapulohumeral joint</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With frequent episodes and guarding of all arm movements</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With infrequent episodes, and guarding of movement only at shoulder level</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malunion of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marked deformity</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate deformity</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5203 Clavicle or Scapula, Impairment of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislocation of</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonunion of</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without loose movement</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malunion of</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or rate on impairment of function of contiguous joint</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Elbow and Forearm—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5205 Elbow, Ankylosis of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable, at an angle of less than 50° or with complete loss of supination or pronation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate, at an angle of more than 90°, or between 70° and 50°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable, at an angle between 90° and 70°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5206 Forearm, Limitation of Flexion of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 45°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 55°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 70°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 90°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 100°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 110°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5207 Forearm, Limitation of Extension of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 110°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 100°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 90°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 75°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 60°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 45°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5208 Forearm, Flexion Limited to 100° and Extension to 45°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5209 Elbow, Other Impairment of Flail Joint</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Wrist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5214 Wrist, Ankylosis of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable, in any degree of palmar flexion, or with ulnar or radial deviation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other position, except favorable</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable in 20° to 30° dorsiflexion</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: Extremely unfavorable ankylosis will be rated as loss of use of hands under diagnostic code 5125.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5215 Wrist, Limitation of Motion of:</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorsiflexion less than 15°</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmar flexion limited in line with forearm</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## §4.71a

**EVALUATION OF ANKYLOSIS OR LIMITATION OF MOTION OF SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DIGITS OF THE HAND**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. **For the index, long, ring, and little fingers (digits II, III, IV, and V), zero degrees of flexion represents the fingers fully extended, making a straight line with the rest of the hand. The position of function of the hand is with the wrist dorsiflexed 20 to 30 degrees, the metacarpophalangeal and proximal interphalangeal joints flexed to 30 degrees, and the thumb (digit I) abducted and rotated so that the thumb pad faces the finger pads. Only joints in these positions are considered to be in favorable position. For digits II through V, the metacarpophalangeal joint has a range of zero to 90 degrees of flexion, the proximal interphalangeal joint has a range of zero to 100 degrees of flexion, and the distal (terminal) interphalangeal joint has a range of zero to 70 or 80 degrees of flexion.**

2. **When two or more digits of the same hand are affected by any combination of amputation, ankylosis, or limitation of motion that is not otherwise specified in the rating schedule, the evaluation level assigned will be that which best represents the overall disability (i.e., amputation, unfavorable or favorable ankylosis, or limitation of motion), assigning the higher level of evaluation when the level of disability is equally balanced between one level and the next higher level.**

3. **Evaluation of ankylosis of the index, long, ring, and little fingers:**
   - (i) If both the metacarpophalangeal and proximal interphalangeal joints of a digit are ankylosed, and either is in extension or full flexion, or there is rotation or angulation of a bone, evaluate as amputation without metacarpal resection, at proximal interphalangeal joint or proximal thereto.
   - (ii) If both the metacarpophalangeal and proximal interphalangeal joints of a digit are ankylosed, evaluate as unfavorable ankylosis, even if each joint is individually fixed in a favorable position.
   - (iii) If only the carpometacarpal or metacarpophalangeal joint is ankylosed, and there is a gap of more than two inches (5.1 cm.) between the thumb pad and the fingers, with the thumb attempting to oppose the fingers, evaluate as unfavorable ankylosis.
   - (iv) If only the metacarpophalangeal or proximal interphalangeal joint is ankylosed, and there is a gap of two inches (5.1 cm.) or less between the finger(s) and the proximal transverse crease of the palm, with the finger(s) flexed to the extent possible, evaluate as favorable ankylosis.

4. **Evaluation of ankylosis of the thumb:**
   - (i) If both the carpometacarpal and interphalangeal joints are ankylosed, and either is in extension or full flexion, or there is rotation or angulation of a bone, evaluate as amputation at metacarpophalangeal joint or through proximal phalanx.
   - (ii) If both the carpometacarpal and interphalangeal joints are ankylosed, evaluate as unfavorable ankylosis, even if each joint is individually fixed in a favorable position.
   - (iii) If only the carpometacarpal or interphalangeal joint is ankylosed, and there is a gap of more than two inches (5.1 cm.) between the thumb pad and the fingers, with the thumb attempting to oppose the fingers, evaluate as unfavorable ankylosis.
   - (iv) If only the carpometacarpal or interphalangeal joint is ankylosed, and there is a gap of two inches (5.1 cm.) or less between the thumb pad and the fingers, with the thumb attempting to oppose the fingers, evaluate as favorable ankylosis.

5. **If there is limitation of motion of two or more digits, evaluate each digit separately and combine the evaluations.**

### I. Multiple Digits: Unfavorable Ankylosis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5216</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>Also consider whether evaluation as amputation is warranted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5217</td>
<td>Four digits of one hand, unfavorable ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumb and any three fingers</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index, long, and ring, and little fingers</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>Also consider whether evaluation as amputation is warranted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5218</td>
<td>Three digits of one hand, unfavorable ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumb and any two fingers</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index, long, and ring; index, long, and little; or index, ring, and little fingers</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long, ring, and little fingers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>Also consider whether evaluation as amputation is warranted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5219</td>
<td>Two digits of one hand, unfavorable ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumb and any finger</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
§ 4.71a

EVALUATION OF ANKYLOSIS OR LIMITATION OF MOTION OF SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DIGITS OF THE HAND—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index and long; index and ring; or index and little fingers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long and ring; long and little; or ring and little fingers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Also consider whether evaluation as amputation is warranted.

II. Multiple Digits: Favorable Ankylosis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5220</td>
<td>Five digits of one hand, favorable ankylosis of</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5221</td>
<td>Four digits of one hand, favorable ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thumb and any three fingers</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index, long, ring, and little fingers</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5222</td>
<td>Three digits of one hand, favorable ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thumb and any two fingers</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index, long, and ring; index, long, and little; or index, ring, and little fingers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long, ring and little fingers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5223</td>
<td>Two digits of one hand, favorable ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thumb and any finger</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index and long; index and ring; or index and little fingers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long and ring; long and little; or ring and little fingers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Ankylosis of Individual Digits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5224</td>
<td>Thumb, ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Also consider whether evaluation as amputation is warranted and whether an additional evaluation is warranted for resulting limitation of motion of other digits or interference with overall function of the hand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5225</td>
<td>Index finger, ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfavorable or favorable</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Also consider whether evaluation as amputation is warranted and whether an additional evaluation is warranted for resulting limitation of motion of other digits or interference with overall function of the hand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5226</td>
<td>Long finger, ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfavorable or favorable</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Also consider whether evaluation as amputation is warranted and whether an additional evaluation is warranted for resulting limitation of motion of other digits or interference with overall function of the hand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5227</td>
<td>Ring or little finger, ankylosis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfavorable or favorable</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Limitation of Motion of Individual Digits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5228</td>
<td>Thumb, limitation of motion:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With a gap of more than two inches (5.1 cm.) between the thumb pad and the fingers, with the thumb attempting to oppose the fingers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With a gap of one to two inches (2.5 to 5.1 cm.) between the thumb pad and the fingers, with the thumb attempting to oppose the fingers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With a gap of less than one inch (2.5 cm.) between the thumb pad and the fingers, with the thumb attempting to oppose the fingers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5229</td>
<td>Index or long finger, limitation of motion:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With a gap of one inch (2.5 cm.) or more between the fingertip and the proximal transverse crease of the palm, with the finger flexed to the extent possible, or; with extension limited by more than 30 degrees</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With a gap of less than one inch (2.5 cm.) between the fingertip and the proximal transverse crease of the palm, with the finger flexed to the extent possible, and; extension is limited by no more than 30 degrees</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5230</td>
<td>Ring or little finger, limitation of motion:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any limitation of motion</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE SPINE

General Rating Formula for Diseases and Injuries of the Spine

(For diagnostic codes 5235 to 5243 unless 5243 is evaluated under the Formula for Rating Intervertebral Disc Syndrome Based on Incapacitating Episodes):

With or without symptoms such as pain (whether or not it radiates), stiffness, or aching in the area of the spine affected by residuals of injury or disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable ankylosis of the entire spine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable ankylosis of the entire thoracolumbar spine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### §4.71a

**THE SPINE—Continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Unfavorable ankylosis of the entire thoracolumbar spine greater than 30 degrees but not greater than 45 degrees; or, forward flexion of the cervical spine greater than 15 degrees but not greater than 30 degrees; or, the combined range of motion of the thoracolumbar spine not greater than 120 degrees; or, the combined range of motion of the cervical spine not greater than 170 degrees; or, muscle spasm or guarding severe enough to result in an abnormal gait or abnormal spinal contour such as scoliosis, reversed lordosis, or abnormal kyphosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Favorable ankylosis of the entire thoracolumbar spine 15 degrees or less; or, favorable ankylosis of the entire cervical spine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Forward flexion of the thoracolumbar spine greater than 60 degrees but not greater than 85 degrees; or, forward flexion of the cervical spine greater than 30 degrees but not greater than 45 degrees; or, combined range of motion of the thoracolumbar spine greater than 120 degrees but not greater than 235 degrees; or, combined range of motion of the cervical spine greater than 170 degrees but not greater than 335 degrees; or, muscle spasm, guarding, or localized tenderness not resulting in abnormal gait or abnormal spinal contour; or, vertebral body fracture with loss of 50 percent or more of the height.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Separately evaluate disability of the thoracic and cervical spine segments, except when there is unfavorable ankylosis of both segments, which will be rated as a single disability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note (1):** Evaluate any associated objective neurologic abnormalities, including, but not limited to, bowel or bladder impairment, separately, under an appropriate diagnostic code.

**Note (2):** (See also Plate V.) For VA compensation purposes, normal forward flexion of the cervical spine is zero to 45 degrees, extension is zero to 45 degrees, left and right lateral flexion are zero to 45 degrees, and left and right rotation rotation are zero to 80 degrees. Normal forward flexion of the thoracic spine is zero to 90 degrees, extension is zero to 30 degrees, left and right lateral flexion are zero to 30 degrees, and left and right rotation are zero to 30 degrees. The combined range of motion refers to the sum of the range of forward flexion, extension, left and right lateral flexion, and left and right rotation. The normal combined range of motion of the cervical spine is 340 degrees and of the thoracic spine is 240 degrees. The normal ranges of motion for each component of spinal motion provided in this note are the maximum that can be used for calculation of the combined range of motion.

**Note (3):** In exceptional cases, an examiner may state that because of age, body habitus, neurologic disease, or other factors not the result of disease or injury of the spine, the range of motion of the spine in a particular individual should be considered normal for that individual, even though it does not conform to the normal range of motion stated in Note (2). Provided that the examiner supplies an explanation, the examiner's assessment that the range of motion is normal for that individual will be accepted.

**Note (4):** Round each range of motion measurement to the nearest five degrees.

**Note (5):** For VA compensation purposes, unfavorable ankylosis is a condition in which the entire cervical spine, the entire thoracolumbar spine, or the entire spine is fixed in flexion or extension, and the ankylosis results in one or more of the following: difficulty walking because of a limited line of vision; restricted opening of the mouth and chewing; breathing limited to diaphragmatic respiration; gastrointestinal symptoms due to pressure of the costal margin on the abdomen; dyspnea or dysphagia; atlantoaxial or cervical subluxation or dislocation; or neurologic symptoms due to nerve root stretching. Fixation of a spinal segment in neutral position (zero degrees) always represents favorable ankylosis.

**Note (6):** Separately evaluate disability of the thoracic and cervical spine segments, except when there is unfavorable ankylosis of both segments, which will be rated as a single disability.

- 5235 Vertebral fracture or dislocation
- 5236 Sacroiliac injury and weakness
- 5237 Lumbar or cervical strain
- 5238 Spinal stenosis
- 5239 Spondylolisthesis or segmental instability
- 5240 Ankylosing spondylitis
- 5241 Spinal fusion
- 5242 Degenerative arthritis of the spine (see also diagnostic code 5003)
- 5243 Intervertebral disc syndrome

Evaluate intervertebral disc syndrome (preoperatively or postoperatively) either under the General Rating Formula for Diseases and Injuries of the Spine or under the Formula for Rating Intervertebral Disc Syndrome Based on Incapacitating Episodes, whichever method results in the higher evaluation when all disabilities are combined under §4.25.

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### Department of Veterans Affairs

**§4.71a**

**THE SPINE—Continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 6 weeks during the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 4 weeks but less than 6 weeks during the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 2 weeks but less than 4 weeks during the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least one week but less than 2 weeks during the past 12 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note (1):** For purposes of evaluations under diagnostic code 5243, an incapacitating episode is a period of acute signs and symptoms due to intervertebral disc syndrome that requires bed rest prescribed by a physician and treatment by a physician.

**Note (2):** If intervertebral disc syndrome is present in more than one spinal segment, provided that the effects in each spinal segment are clearly distinct, evaluate each segment on the basis of incapacitating episodes or under the General Rating Formula for Diseases and Injuries of the Spine, whichever method results in a higher evaluation for that segment.
PLATE V
RANGE OF MOTION OF CERVICAL AND THORACOLUMBAR SPINE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE HIP AND THIGH</th>
<th>THE KNEE AND LEG</th>
<th>THE ANKLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5250 Hip, ankylosis of:</td>
<td>5250 Hip, ankylosis of:</td>
<td>5270 Ankle, ankylosis of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable, extremely unfavorable ankylosis, the foot not reaching ground, crutches necessitated</td>
<td>Unfavorable, extremely unfavorable ankylosis, the foot not reaching ground, crutches necessitated</td>
<td>In planter flexion at more than 40°, or in dorsiflexion at more than 10° or with abduction, adduction, inversion or eversion deformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Favorable, in flexion at an angle between 20° and 40°, and slight adduction or abduction</td>
<td>In planter flexion, between 30° and 40°, or in dorsiflexion, between 0° and 10°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5251 Thigh, limitation of extension of:</td>
<td>5251 Thigh, limitation of flexion of:</td>
<td>In planter flexion, less than 30°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 5°</td>
<td>Flexion limited to 10°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5252 Thigh, limitation of flexion of:</td>
<td>Flexion limited to 20°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 20°</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5253 Thigh, impairment of:</td>
<td>Flexion limited to 45°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitation of abduction of, motion lost beyond 10°</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitation of adduction of, cannot cross legs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitation of rotation of, cannot toe-out more than 15°, affected leg</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5254 Hip, ilial joint</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5255 Femur, impairment of:</td>
<td>5255 Femur, impairment of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fracture of shaft or anatomical neck of:</td>
<td>Fracture of shaft or anatomical neck of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With nonunion, with loose motion (spiral or oblique fracture)</td>
<td>With nonunion, with loose motion (spiral or oblique fracture)</td>
<td>In plantar flexion, between 30° and 40°, or in dorsiflexion, between 0° and 10°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With nonunion, without loose motion, weight-bearing preserved with aid of brace</td>
<td>With nonunion, without loose motion, weight-bearing preserved with aid of brace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fracture of surgical neck of, with false joint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malunion of:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With marked knee or hip disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With moderate knee or hip disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With slight knee or hip disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Entitled to special monthly compensation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE KNEE AND LEG</th>
<th>THE KNEE AND LEG—Continued</th>
<th>THE KNEE AND LEG—Continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5256 Knee, ankylosis of:</td>
<td>5256 Knee, ankylosis of:</td>
<td>5271 Ankle, limited motion of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorably, in flexion at an angle of 45° or more</td>
<td>Unfavorable, in flexion at an angle of 45° or more</td>
<td>Marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In flexion between 20° and 45°</td>
<td>In flexion between 20° and 45°</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In flexion between 10° and 20°</td>
<td>Favorable angle in full extension, or in slight flexion between 0° and 10°.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5257 Knee, other impairment of:</td>
<td>5257 Knee, other impairment of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>In poor weight-bearing position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5258 Cartilage, semilunar, dislocated, with frequent episodes of &quot;locking,&quot; pain, and effusion into the joint</td>
<td>5258 Cartilage, semilunar, dislocated, with frequent episodes of &quot;locking,&quot; pain, and effusion into the joint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5259 Cartilage, semilunar, removal of, symptomatic</td>
<td>5259 Cartilage, semilunar, removal of, symptomatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5260 Leg, limitation of flexion of:</td>
<td>5260 Leg, limitation of flexion of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 15°</td>
<td>Flexion limited to 15°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 30°</td>
<td>Flexion limited to 30°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexion limited to 45°</td>
<td>Flexion limited to 45°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5261 Leg, limitation of extension of:</td>
<td>5261 Leg, limitation of extension of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 45°</td>
<td>Extension limited to 45°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 30°</td>
<td>Extension limited to 30°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 20°</td>
<td>Extension limited to 20°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 10°</td>
<td>Extension limited to 10°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension limited to 5°</td>
<td>Extension limited to 5°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5262 Tibia and fibula, impairment of:</td>
<td>5262 Tibia and fibula, impairment of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonunion of, with loose motion, requiring brace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malunion of:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With marked knee or ankle disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With slight knee or ankle disability</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHORTENING OF THE LOWER EXTREMITY</th>
<th>SHORTENING OF THE LOWER EXTREMITY</th>
<th>SHORTENING OF THE LOWER EXTREMITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5275 Bones, of the lower extremity, shortening of:</td>
<td>5275 Bones, of the lower extremity, shortening of:</td>
<td>5276 Flatfoot, acquired:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 4 inches (10.2 cms.)</td>
<td>Over 4 inches (10.2 cms.)</td>
<td>Pronounced; marked pronation, extreme tenderness of plantar surfaces of the feet, marked inward displacement and severe spasm of the tendo achillis on manipulation, not improved by orthopedic shoes or appliances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 4 inches (7.6 cms. to 9.8 cms.)</td>
<td>3 to 4 inches (7.6 cms. to 9.8 cms.)</td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 3 inches (6.4 cms. to 7.6 cms.)</td>
<td>2 to 3 inches (6.4 cms. to 7.6 cms.)</td>
<td>Unilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 inches (3.2 cms. to 5.1 cms.)</td>
<td>1 to 2 inches (3.2 cms. to 5.1 cms.)</td>
<td>Moderate deformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 3 1/2 inches (7.6 cms. to 8.9 cms.)</td>
<td>3 to 3 1/2 inches (7.6 cms. to 8.9 cms.)</td>
<td>Marked deformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 4 inches (10.2 cms.)</td>
<td>Over 4 inches (10.2 cms.)</td>
<td>Astelegiectomyl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Entitled to special monthly compensation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE FOOT</th>
<th>THE FOOT</th>
<th>THE FOOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5276 Flatfoot, acquired:</td>
<td>5276 Flatfoot, acquired:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronounced; marked pronation, extreme tenderness of plantar surfaces of the feet, marked inward displacement and severe spasm of the tendo achillis on manipulation, not improved by orthopedic shoes or appliances.</td>
<td>Pronounced; marked pronation, extreme tenderness of plantar surfaces of the feet, marked inward displacement and severe spasm of the tendo achillis on manipulation, not improved by orthopedic shoes or appliances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral</td>
<td>Unilateral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| NOTE: Measure both lower extremities from anterior superior spine of the ilium to the internal malleolus of the tibia. Not to be combined with other ratings for fracture or faulty union in the same extremity. |

| 3 Also entitled to special monthly compensation. |
### THE FOOT—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5278</td>
<td>Claw foot (pes cavus), acquired:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5279</td>
<td>Hallux rigidus, unilateral:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5280</td>
<td>Great toe dorsiflexed, some limitation of dorsiflexion at ankle,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>severe, definite tenderness under metatarsal heads:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5281</td>
<td>Hallux valgus, unilateral:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5282</td>
<td>Hammer toe: All toes, unilateral without claw foot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5283</td>
<td>Tarsal, or metatarsal bones, malunion of, or nonunion of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately severe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5284</td>
<td>Foot injuries, other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately severe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE: With actual loss of use of the foot, rate 40 percent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THE SKULL—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5296</td>
<td>Skull, loss of part of, both inner and outer tables:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With brain hernia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without brain hernia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area larger than size of a 50-cent piece or 1.140 in² (7.355 cm²)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area intermediate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area smaller than the size of a 25-cent piece or 0.716 in² (4.619 cm²)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THE RIBS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5297</td>
<td>Ribs, removal of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than six</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five or six</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three or four</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One or resection of two or more ribs without regeneration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE (1): The rating for rib resection or removal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>is not to be applied with ratings for purulent pleurisy, lobectomy,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pneumonectomy or injuries of pleural cavity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE (2): However, rib resection will be considered as rib removal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in thoracoplasty performed for collapse therapy or to accomplish obliteration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of space and will be combined with the rating for lung collapse, or with the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rating for lobectomy, pneumonectomy or the graduated ratings for pulmonary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tuberculosis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THE COCCXY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5298</td>
<td>Coccyx, removal of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partial or complete, with painful residuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without painful residuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### §4.72 [Reserved]

### §4.73 Schedule of ratings—muscle injuries.

Note: When evaluating any claim involving muscle injuries resulting in loss of use of any extremity or loss of use of both buttocks (diagnostic code 5317, Muscle Group XVII), refer to §3.350 of this chapter to determine whether the veteran may be entitled to special monthly compensation.
§ 4.73

THE SHOULDER GIRDLE AND ARM

Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Non-dominant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5301</td>
<td>Group I: Function: Upward rotation of scapula; elevation of arm above shoulder level. Extrinsic muscles of shoulder girdle: (1) Trapezius; (2) levator scapulae; (3) serratus magnus.</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5302</td>
<td>Group II: Function: Depression of arm from vertical position to swinging at side (1, 2); downward rotation of scapula (3, 4); 1 and 2 act with Group III in forward and backward swing of arm. Intrinsic muscles of shoulder girdle: (1) Pectoralis major I (costosternal); (2) latissimus dorsi and teres major (teres major, although technically an intrinsic muscle, is included with latissimus dorsi); (3) pectoralis minor; (4) rhomboids.</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5303</td>
<td>Group III: Function: Elevation and abduction of arm to level of shoulder; act with 1 and 2 of Group II in forward and backward swing of arm. Intrinsic muscles of shoulder girdle: (1) Supraspinatus; (2) infraspinatus; (3) subscapularis; (4) coracobrachialis.</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5304</td>
<td>Group IV: Function: Stabilization of shoulder against injury in strong movements, holding head of humerus in socket; abduction; outward rotation and inward rotation of arm. Intrinsic muscles of shoulder girdle: (1) Pectoralis major I (clavicular); (2) deltoid.</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5305</td>
<td>Group V: Function: Elbow supination (1) (long head of biceps is stabilizer of shoulder joint); (2) flexion of elbow (1, 2, 3).</td>
<td>Flexor muscles of elbow: (1) Biceps: (2) brachialis; (3) brachioradialis.</td>
<td>Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5306</td>
<td>Group VI: Function: Extension of elbow (long head of triceps is stabilizer of shoulder joint). Extensor muscles of the elbow: (1) Triceps; (2) anconeus.</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE FOREARM AND HAND

Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Non-dominant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5307</td>
<td>Group VII: Function: Flexion of wrist and fingers. Muscles arising from internal condyle of humerus: Flexors of the carpus and long flexors of fingers and thumb; pronator.</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5308</td>
<td>Group VIII: Function: Extension of wrist, fingers, and thumb; abduction of thumb. Muscles arising mainly from external condyle of humerus: Extensors of carpals, fingers, and thumb; supinator.</td>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5309</td>
<td>Group IX: Function: The forearm muscles act in strong grasping movements and are supplemented by the intrinsic muscles in delicate manipulative movements. Intrinsic muscles of hand: Thenar eminence; short flexor, opponens, abductor and adductor of thumb; hypothenar eminence; short flexor, opponens and abductor of little finger; 4 lumbricales; 4 dorsal and 3 palmar interossei.</td>
<td>NOTE: The hand is so compact a structure that isolated muscle injuries are rare, being nearly always complicated with injuries of bones, joints, tendons, etc. Rate on limitation of motion, minimum 10 percent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE FOOT AND LEG

Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5310</td>
<td>Group X: Function: Movements of foot and toes; propulsion in walking. Intrinsic muscles of the foot: Plantar: (1) Flexor digitorum brevis; (2) abductor hallucis; (3) adductor hallucis; (4) quadratus plantae; (5) lumbricales; (6) flexor hallucis brevis; (7) adductor hallucis; (8) flexor hallucis longus; (9) dorsal and plantar interossei. Other important plantar structures: Planatar aponeurosis, long plantar and calcaneonavicular ligament, tendons of posterior tibial, peroneal longus, and long flexors of great and little toes.</td>
<td>Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5305</td>
<td>Group V: Function: Elbow supination (1) (long head of biceps is stabilizer of shoulder joint); (2) flexion of elbow (1, 2, 3).</td>
<td>Flexor muscles of elbow: (1) Biceps: (2) brachialis; (3) brachioradialis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slight</td>
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</table>

403
### THE FOOT AND LEG—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5311 Group XI. Function: Propulsion, plantar flexion of foot (1); stabilization of arch (2, 3); flexion of toes (4, 5); flexion of knee (6). Posterior and lateral crural muscles, and muscles of the calf: (1) Triceps surae (gastrocnemius and soleus); (2) tibialis posterior; (3) peroneus longus; (4) peroneus brevis; (5) flexor hallucis longus; (6) flexor digitorum longus; (7) popliteus; (8) plantaris.</td>
<td>Slight 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5312 Group XII. Function: Dorsiflexion (1); extension of toes (2); stabilization of arch (3). Anterior muscles of the leg: (1) Tibialis anterior; (2) extensor digitorum longus; (3) extensor hallucis longus; (4) peroneus tertius.</td>
<td>Slight 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THE PELVIC GIRDLE AND THIGH—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5313 Group XIII. Function: Extension of hip and flexion of knee; outward and inward rotation of flexed knee; acting with rectus femoris and sartorius (see XIV, 1, 2) synchronizing simultaneous flexion of hip and knee and extension of hip and knee by belt-over-pulley action at knee joint. Posterior thigh group, Hamstring complex of 2-joint muscles: (1) Biceps femoris; (2) semimembranosus; (3) semitendinosus.</td>
<td>Slight 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5314 Group XIV. Function: Extension of knee (2, 3, 4, 5); simultaneous flexion of hip and flexion of knee (1); tension of fascia lata and iliotibial (Maissiat’s) band, acting with XVII (1) in postural support of body (6); acting with hamstrings in synchronizing hip and knee (1, 2). Anterior thigh group: (1) Adductor longus; (2) adductor brevis; (3) adductor magnus; (4) gracilis.</td>
<td>Slight 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THE PELVIS AND NECK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5317 Group XVII. Function: Extension of hip (1); abduction of thigh; elevation of opposite side of pelvis (2, 3); tension of fascia lata and iliotibial (Maissiat’s) band, acting with XIV (6) in postural support of body steadying pelvis upon head of femur and condyles of femur on tibia (1). Pelvic girdle group 2: (1) Gluteus maximus; (2) gluteus medius; (3) gluteus minimus.</td>
<td>Slight 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If bilateral, see §3.350(a)(3) of this chapter to determine whether the veteran may be entitled to special monthly compensation.
§ 4.75 General considerations for evaluating visual impairment.

(a) Visual impairment. The evaluation of visual impairment is based on impairment of visual acuity (excluding developmental errors of refraction), visual field, and muscle function.

(b) Examination for visual impairment. The examination must be conducted by a licensed optometrist or by a licensed ophthalmologist. The examiner must identify the disease, injury, or other pathologic process responsible for any visual impairment found. Examinations of visual fields or muscle function will be conducted only when there is a medical indication of disease or injury that may be associated with visual field defect or impaired muscle function. Unless medically contraindicated, the fundus must be examined with the claimant’s pupils dilated.

(c) Service-connected visual impairment of only one eye. Subject to the provisions of 38 CFR 3.383(a), if visual impairment of only one eye is service-connected, the visual acuity of the other eye will be considered to be 20/40 for purposes of evaluating the service-connected visual impairment.

(d) Maximum evaluation for visual impairment of one eye. The evaluation for visual impairment of one eye must not exceed 30 percent unless there is anatomical loss of the eye. Combine the evaluation for visual impairment of one eye with evaluations for other disabilities of the same eye that are not based on visual impairment (e.g., disfigurement under diagnostic code 7800).

(e) Anatomical loss of one eye with inability to wear a prosthesis. When the claimant has anatomical loss of one eye and is unable to wear a prosthesis, increase the evaluation for visual acuity under diagnostic code 6063 by 10 percent, but the maximum evaluation for visual impairment of both eyes must not exceed 100 percent. A 10-percent increase under this paragraph precludes an evaluation under diagnostic code 7800 based on gross distortion or asymmetry of the eye but not an evaluation under diagnostic code 7800 based on other characteristics of disfigurement.

(f) Special monthly compensation. When evaluating visual impairment, refer to 38 CFR 3.350 to determine whether the claimant may be entitled to special monthly compensation. Footnotes in the schedule indicate levels of visual impairment that potentially establish entitlement to special monthly compensation; however, other levels of visual impairment combined

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5323</td>
<td>Group XXIII. Function: Movements of the head; fixation of shoulder movements. Muscles of the side and back of the neck; Suboccipital; lateral vertebral and anterior vertebral muscles. Severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5325</td>
<td>Muscle injury, facial muscles. Evaluate functional impairment as seventh (facial) cranial nerve neuropathy (diagnostic code 8207), disfiguring scar (diagnostic code 7805), etc. Minimum, if interfering to any extent with mastication—10.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5326</td>
<td>Muscle hernia, extensive. Without other injury to the muscle—10.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5327</td>
<td>Muscle, neoplasm of, malignant (excluding soft tissue sarcoma)—100.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5328</td>
<td>Muscle, neoplasm of, benign, postoperative. Rate on impairment of function, i.e., limitation of motion, or scars, diagnostic code 7805, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5329</td>
<td>Sarcoma, soft tissue (of muscle, fat, or fibrous connective tissue)—100.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)
with disabilities of other body systems may also establish entitlement.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114 and 1155)

(73 FR 66549, Nov. 10, 2008)

§ 4.76 Visual acuity.

(a) Examination of visual acuity. Examination of visual acuity must include the central uncorrected and corrected visual acuity for distance and near vision using Snellen’s test type or its equivalent.

(b) Evaluation of visual acuity. (1) Evaluate central visual acuity on the basis of corrected distance vision with central fixation, even if a central scotoma is present. However, when the lens required to correct distance vision in the poorer eye differs by more than three diopters from the lens required to correct distance vision in the better eye (and the difference is not due to congenital or developmental refractive error), and either the poorer eye or both eyes are service connected, evaluate the visual acuity of the poorer eye using either its uncorrected or corrected visual acuity, whichever results in better combined visual acuity.

(2) Provided that he or she customarily wears contact lenses, evaluate the visual acuity of any individual affected by a corneal disorder that results in severe irregular astigmatism that can be improved more by contact lenses than by eyeglass lenses, as corrected by contact lenses.

(3) In any case where the examiner reports that there is a difference equal to two or more scheduled steps between near and distance corrected vision, with the near vision being worse, the examination report must include at least two recordings of near and distance corrected vision and an explanation of the reason for the difference. In these cases, evaluate based on corrected distance vision adjusted to one step poorer than measured.

(4) To evaluate the impairment of visual acuity where a claimant has a reported visual acuity that is between two sequentially listed visual acuities, use the visual acuity which permits the higher evaluation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

(73 FR 66549, Nov. 10, 2008)

§ 4.76a Computation of average concentric contraction of visual fields.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Meridians</th>
<th>Normal degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporally</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down temporally</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down nasally</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasally</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up nasally</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up temporally</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example of computation of concentric contraction under the schedule with abnormal findings taken from Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loss</th>
<th>Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporally</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down temporally</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
§ 4.77 Visual fields.

(a) Examination of visual fields. Examiners must use either Goldmann kinetic perimetry or automated perimetry using Humphrey Model 750, Octopus Model 101, or later versions of these perimetric devices with simulated kinetic Goldmann testing capability. For phakic (normal) individuals, as well as for pseudophakic or aphakic individuals who are well adapted to intraocular lens implant or contact lens correction, visual field examinations must be conducted using a standard target size and luminance, which is Goldmann’s equivalent III/4e. For aphakic individuals not well adapted to contact lens correction or pseudophakic individuals not well adapted to intraocular lens implant, visual field examinations must be conducted using Goldmann’s equivalent IV/4e. In all cases, the results must be recorded on a standard Goldmann chart (see Figure 2), and the Goldmann chart must be included with the examination report. The examiner must chart at least 16 meridians 22½ degrees apart for each eye and indicate the Goldmann equivalent used. See Table III for the normal extent (in degrees) of the visual fields at the 8 principal meridians (45 degrees apart). When the examiner indicates that additional testing is necessary to evaluate visual fields, the additional testing must be conducted using either a tangent screen or a 30-degree threshold visual field with the Goldmann III stimulus size. The examination report must then include the tracing of either the tangent screen or of the 30-degree threshold visual field with the Goldmann III stimulus size.

(b) Evaluation of visual fields. Determine the average concentric contraction of the visual field of each eye by measuring the remaining visual field (in degrees) at each of eight principal meridians 45 degrees apart, adding them, and dividing the sum by eight.

(c) Combination of visual field defect and decreased visual acuity. To determine the evaluation for visual impairment when both decreased visual acuity and visual field defect are present in one or both eyes and are service connected, separately evaluate the visual acuity and visual field defect (expressed as a level of visual acuity), and combine them under the provisions of §4.25.
§ 4.78 Muscle function.

(a) Examination of muscle function. The examiner must use a Goldmann perimeter chart that identifies the four major quadrants (upward, downward, left and right lateral) and the central field (20 degrees or less) (see Figure 2). The examiner must chart the areas of diplopia and include the plotted chart with the examination report.

(b) Evaluation of muscle function. (1) An evaluation for diplopia will be assigned to only one eye. When a claimant has both diplopia and decreased visual acuity or visual field defect, assign a level of corrected visual acuity for the poorer eye (or the affected eye, if disability of only one eye is service-connected) that is: one step poorer than it would otherwise warrant if the evaluation for diplopia under diagnostic code 6090 is 20/70 or 20/100; two steps poorer if the evaluation under diagnostic code 6090 is 20/200 or 15/200; or three steps poorer if the evaluation under diagnostic code 6090 is 5/200. This adjusted level of corrected visual acuity, however, must not exceed a level of 5/200. Use the adjusted visual acuity for the poorer eye (or the affected eye, if disability of only one eye is service-connected), and the corrected visual acuity for the better eye for the purposes of any rating (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)
§ 4.79  Schedule of ratings—eye.

38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)

DISEASES OF THE EYE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6000</td>
<td>Choroidopathy, including uveitis, iritis, cyclitis, and choroiditis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6001</td>
<td>Keratopathy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6002</td>
<td>Scleritis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6006</td>
<td>Retinopathy or maculopathy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6007</td>
<td>Intraocular hemorrhage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6008</td>
<td>Detachment of retina.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6009</td>
<td>Unhealed eye injury.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Rating Formula for Diagnostic Codes 6000 through 6009

Evaluate on the basis of either visual impairment due to the particular condition or on incapacitating episodes, whichever results in a higher evaluation.

With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 6 weeks during the past 12 months ................................................................. 60
With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 4 weeks, but less than 6 weeks, during the past 12 months ........................................... 40
With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 2 weeks, but less than 4 weeks, during the past 12 months ............................................. 20
With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 1 week, but less than 2 weeks, during the past 12 months ........................................... 10

Note: For VA purposes, an incapacitating episode is a period of acute symptoms severe enough to require prescribed bed rest and treatment by a physician or other healthcare provider.

6100 Tuberculosis of eye:

Active: Evaluate under §4.88c or §4.89 of this part, whichever is appropriate. 100

Inactive: Evaluate under §4.88c or §4.89 of this part, whichever is appropriate. 10

6111 Retinal scars, atrophy, or irregularities:

Localized scars, atrophy, or irregularities of the retina, unilateral or bilateral, that are centrally located and that result in an irregular, duplicated, enlarged, or diminished image ......................................................... 10
Alternatively, evaluate based on visual impairment due to retinal scars, atrophy, or irregularities, if this would result in a higher evaluation.

6112 Angle-closure glaucoma:

Evaluate on the basis of either visual impairment due to angle-closure glaucoma or incapacitating episodes, whichever results in a higher evaluation.

With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 6 weeks during the past 12 months ................................................................. 60
With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 4 weeks, but less than 6 weeks, during the past 12 months ........................................... 40
With incapacitating episodes having a total duration of at least 2 weeks, but less than 4 weeks, during the past 12 months ............................................. 20
Minimum evaluation if continuous medication is required ................................................. 10

Note: For VA purposes, an incapacitating episode is a period of acute symptoms severe enough to require prescribed bed rest and treatment by a physician or other healthcare provider.

6103 Open-angle glaucoma:

Evaluate based on visual impairment due to open-angle glaucoma.
Minimum evaluation if continuous medication is required ................................................................. 10

6104 Malignant neoplasms (eye only):

Malignant neoplasm of the eyeball that requires therapy that is comparable to that used for systemic malignancies, i.e., systemic chemotherapy, X-ray therapy more extensive than to the area of the eye, or surgery more extensive than enucleation ................................................................. 100

Note: Continue the 100-percent rating beyond the cessation of any surgical, X-ray, antineoplastic chemotherapy or other therapeutic procedure. Six months after discontinuance of such treatment, the appropriate disability rating will be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination will be subject to the provisions of §3.351 of this chapter. If there has been no local recurrence or metastasis, evaluate based on residuals.

Malignant neoplasm of the eyelid that does not require therapy comparable to that for systemic malignancies:
Separately evaluate visual impairment and nonvisual impairment, e.g., disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800), and combine the evaluations.

6105 Benign neoplasms (of eyeball and adnexa):
Department of Veterans Affairs § 4.79

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISEASES OF THE EYE—Continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impairment of Central Visual Acuity</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Separately evaluate visual impairment and nonvisual impairment, e.g., disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800), and combine the evaluations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No more than light perception in one eye ¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 5/200 (1.5/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 10/200 (3/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 15/200 (4.5/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/200 (6/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/100 (6/30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/70 (6/21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/50 (6/15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/40 (6/12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No more than light perception in one eye ¹</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/200 (6/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/100 (6/30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/70 (6/21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No more than light perception in one eye ¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>In the other eye 5/200 (1.5/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 10/200 (3/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 15/200 (4.5/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/200 (6/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/100 (6/30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the other eye 20/70 (6/21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rating</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nystagmus, central</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trichomatic conjunctivitis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active: Evaluate based on visual impairment, minimum</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive: Evaluate based on residuals, such as visual impairment and disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic conjunctivitis (nontrichomatic):</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active (with objective findings, such as red, thick conjunctiva, mucous secretion, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive: Evaluate based on residuals, such as visual impairment and disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positis, unilateral or bilateral:</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate based on visual impairment or, in the absence of visual impairment, on disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ectropion:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entropion:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagophthalmos:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of eyebrows, complete, unilateral or bilateral</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of eyelashes, complete, unilateral or bilateral</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorders of the lacrimal apparatus (epiphora, dacyrocystitis, etc.):</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optic neuropathy:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate based on visual impairment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cataract of any type:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoperative:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate based on visual impairment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postoperative:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a replacement lens is present (pseudophakia), evaluate based on visual impairment. If there is no replacement lens, evaluate based on aphakia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aphakia or dislocation of crystalline lens:</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate based on visual impairment, and elevate the resulting level of visual impairment one step.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum (unilateral or bilateral)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralysis of accommodation (due to neuropathy of the Oculomotor Nerve (cranial nerve III)).</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of eyelids, partial or complete:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separately evaluate both visual impairment due to eyelid loss and nonvisual impairment, e.g., disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800), and combine the evaluations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pterygium:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate based on visual impairment, disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800), conjunctivitis (diagnostic code 6018), etc., depending on the particular findings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keratoconus:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate based on impairment of visual acuity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status post corneal transplant:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate based on visual impairment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum, if there is pain, photophobia, and glare sensitivity</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinguecula:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate based on disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive: Evaluate based on residuals, such as visual impairment and disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separately evaluate both visual impairment due to eyelid loss and nonvisual impairment, e.g., disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800), and combine the evaluations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

¹ Separate impairment of visual acuity is rated in each eye.
### RATINGS FOR IMPAIRMENT OF VISUAL FIELDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loss of vision in one eye</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20/50 (6/15)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/70 (6/21)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/100 (6/30)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/200 (6/60)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/200 (4.5/60)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/200 (3/60)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/200 (1.5/60)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loss of vision in the other eye</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20/50 (6/15)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/70 (6/21)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/100 (6/30)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/200 (6/60)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/200 (4.5/60)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/200 (3/60)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/200 (1.5/60)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Review for entitlement to special monthly compensation under 38 CFR 3.350.
### RATINGS FOR IMPAIRMENT OF VISUAL FIELDS—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concentric contraction of visual field:</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With remaining field of 5 degrees:</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilateral</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or evaluate each affected eye as 5/200 (1.5/60).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unilateral</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With remaining field of 6 to 15 degrees:</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilateral</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or evaluate each affected eye as 20/200 (6/60).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unilateral</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With remaining field of 16 to 30 degrees:</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilateral</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or evaluate each affected eye as 20/100 (6/30).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unilateral</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With remaining field of 31 to 45 degrees:</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilateral</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or evaluate each affected eye as 20/70 (6/21).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unilateral</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With remaining field of 46 to 60 degrees:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilateral</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or evaluate each affected eye as 20/50 (6/15).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6081 Scotoma, unilateral:
- Minimum, with scotoma affecting at least one-quarter of the visual field (quadrantanopsia) or with centrally located scotoma of any size: 10
- Alternatively, evaluate based on visual impairment due to scotoma, if that would result in a higher evaluation.

1 Review for entitlement to special monthly compensation under 38 CFR 3.350.

### RATINGS FOR IMPAIRMENT OF MUSCLE FUNCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of diplopia</th>
<th>Equivalent visual acuity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6090 Diplopia (double vision):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Central 20 degrees</td>
<td>5/200 (1.5/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 21 degrees to 30 degrees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Down</td>
<td>15/200 (4.5/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Lateral</td>
<td>20/100 (6/30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Up</td>
<td>20/70 (6/21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 31 degrees to 40 degrees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Down</td>
<td>20/200 (6/60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Lateral</td>
<td>20/70 (6/21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Up</td>
<td>20/40 (6/12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** In accordance with 38 CFR 4.31, diplopia that is occasional or that is correctable with spectacles is evaluated at 0 percent.

6091 Symblepharon:
- Evaluate based on visual impairment, lagophthalmos (diagnostic code 6022), disfigurement (diagnostic code 7800), etc., depending on the particular findings.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

[73 FR 66550, Nov. 10, 2008]

### IMPAIRMENT OF AUDITORY ACUITY

#### §4.85 Evaluation of hearing impairment.

(a) An examination for hearing impairment for VA purposes must be conducted by a state-licensed audiologist and must include a controlled speech discrimination test (Maryland CNC) and a puretone audiometry test. Examinations will be conducted without the use of hearing aids.

(b) Table VI, “Numeric Designation of Hearing Impairment Based on Puretone Threshold Average and Speech Discrimination,” is used to determine a Roman numeral designation (I through XI) for hearing impairment based on a combination of the percent of speech discrimination (horizontal
rows) and the puretone threshold average (vertical columns). The Roman numeral designation is located at the point where the percentage of speech discrimination and puretone threshold average intersect.

(c) Table VIa, “Numeric Designation of Hearing Impairment Based Only on Puretone Threshold Average,” is used to determine a Roman numeral designation (I through XI) for hearing impairment based only on the puretone threshold average. Table VIa will be used when the examiner certifies that use of the speech discrimination test is not appropriate because of language difficulties, inconsistent speech discrimination scores, etc., or when indicated under the provisions of §4.86.

(d) “Puretone threshold average,” as used in Tables VI and VIa, is the sum of the puretone thresholds at 1000, 2000, 3000 and 4000 Hertz, divided by four. This average is used in all cases (including those in §4.86) to determine the Roman numeral designation for hearing impairment from Table VI or VIa.

(e) Table VII, “Percentage Evaluations for Hearing Impairment,” is used to determine the percentage evaluation by combining the Roman numeral designations for hearing impairment of each ear. The horizontal rows represent the ear having the better hearing and the vertical columns the ear having the poorer hearing. The percentage evaluation is located at the point where the row and column intersect.

(f) If impaired hearing is service-connected in only one ear, in order to determine the percentage evaluation from Table VII, the non-service-connected ear will be assigned a Roman Numeral designation for hearing impairment of I, subject to the provisions of §3.383 of this chapter.

(g) When evaluating any claim for impaired hearing, refer to §3.350 of this chapter to determine whether the veteran may be entitled to special monthly compensation due either to deafness, or to deafness in combination with other specified disabilities.

(h) Numeric tables VI, VIa*, and VII.
### TABLE VI
NUMERIC DESIGNATION OF HEARING IMPAIRMENT BASED ON PURETONE THRESHOLD AVERAGE AND SPEECH DISCRIMINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of discrimination</th>
<th>0-41</th>
<th>42-49</th>
<th>50-57</th>
<th>58-65</th>
<th>66-73</th>
<th>74-81</th>
<th>82-89</th>
<th>90-97</th>
<th>98+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92-100</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-90</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-82</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68-74</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-66</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52-58</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44-50</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-42</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-34</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>XI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE VIA*
NUMERIC DESIGNATION OF HEARING IMPAIRMENT BASED ONLY ON PURETONE THRESHOLD AVERAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Puretone Threshold Average</th>
<th>0-41</th>
<th>42-48</th>
<th>49-55</th>
<th>56-62</th>
<th>63-69</th>
<th>70-76</th>
<th>77-83</th>
<th>84-90</th>
<th>91-97</th>
<th>98-104</th>
<th>105+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This table is for use only as specified in §§ 4.85 and 4.86.
§ 4.86 Exceptional patterns of hearing impairment.

(a) When the puretone threshold at each of the four specified frequencies (1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hertz) is 55 decibels or more, the rating specialist will determine the Roman numeral designation for hearing impairment from either Table VI or Table VIa, whichever results in the higher numeral. Each ear will be evaluated separately.

(b) When the puretone threshold is 30 decibels or less at 1000 Hertz, and 70 decibels or more at 2000 Hertz, the rating specialist will determine the Roman numeral designation for hearing impairment from either Table VI or Table VIa,

---

### TABLE VII

**PERCENTAGE EVALUATION FOR HEARING IMPAIRMENT**  
**DIAGNOSTIC CODE 6100**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Better Ear</th>
<th>XI</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>100*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Review for entitlement to special monthly compensation under §3.350 of this chapter.

[64 FR 25206, May 11, 1999]
whichever results in the higher numeral. That numeral will then be elevated to the next higher Roman numeral. Each ear will be evaluated separately.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)
[64 FR 25209, May 11, 1999]

§ 4.87 Schedule of ratings—ear.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISEASES OF THE EAR</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6200 Chronic suppurative otitis media, mastoiditis, or cholesteatoma (or any combination):</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During suppuration, or with aural polyps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: Evaluate hearing impairment, and complications such as labyrinthitis, tinnitus, facial nerve paralysis, or bone loss of skull, separately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6201 Chronic nonsuppurative otitis media with effusion (serous otitis media):</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate hearing impairment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6202 Otosclerosis:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate hearing impairment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6204 Peripheral vestibular disorders:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dizziness and occasional staggering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional dizziness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: Objective findings supporting the diagnosis of vestibular disequilibrium are required before a compensable evaluation can be assigned under this code. Hearing impairment or suppuration shall be separately rated and combined.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6205 Meniere’s syndrome (endolymphatic hydrops):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment with attacks of vertigo and cerebellar gait occurring more than once weekly, with or without tinnitus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment with attacks of vertigo and cerebellar gait occurring from one to four times a month, with or without tinnitus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment with vertigo less than once a month, with or without tinnitus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: Evaluate Meniere’s syndrome either under these criteria or by separately evaluating vertigo (as a peripheral vestibular disorder), hearing impairment, and tinnitus, whichever method results in a higher overall evaluation. But do not combine an evaluation for hearing impairment, tinnitus, or vertigo with an evaluation under diagnostic code 6205.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6207 Loss of auricle:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete loss of both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete loss of one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

§ 4.87a Schedule of ratings—other sense organs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISEASES OF THE EAR—Continued</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deformity of one, with loss of one-third or more of the substance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6208 Malignant neoplasm of the ear (other than skin only)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: A rating of 100 percent shall continue beyond the cessation of any surgical, radiation treatment, antineoplastic chemotherapy or other therapeutic procedure. Six months after discontinuance of such treatment, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based on that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter. If there has been no local recurrence or metastasis, rate on residuals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6209 Benign neoplasms of the ear (other than skin only):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate on impairment of function.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6210 Chronic otitis externa:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swelling, dry and scaly or serous discharge, and itching requiring frequent and prolonged treatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6211 Tympanic membrane, perforation of</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6260 Tinnitus, recurrent</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE (1): A separate evaluation for tinnitus may be combined with an evaluation under diagnostic codes 6100, 6200, 6204, or other diagnostic code, except when tinnitus supports an evaluation under one of those diagnostic codes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE (2): Assign only a single evaluation for recurrent tinnitus, whether the sound is perceived in one ear, both ears, or in the head.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE (3): Do not evaluate objective tinnitus (in which the sound is audible to other people and has a definable cause that may or may not be pathologic) under this diagnostic code, but evaluate it as part of any underlying condition causing it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

§ 4.87a Schedule of ratings—other sense organs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6275 Sense of smell, complete loss</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6276 Sense of taste, complete loss</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: Evaluation will be assigned under diagnostic codes 6275 or 6276 only if there is an anatomical or pathological basis for the condition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
§ 4.88a Chronic fatigue syndrome.
(a) For VA purposes, the diagnosis of chronic fatigue syndrome requires:
(1) new onset of debilitating fatigue severe enough to reduce daily activity to
less than 50 percent of the usual level for at least six months; and
(2) the exclusion, by history, physical examination, and laboratory tests, of all
other clinical conditions that may produce similar symptoms; and
(3) six or more of the following:
   (i) acute onset of the condition,
   (ii) low grade fever,
   (iii) nonexudative pharyngitis,
   (iv) palpable or tender cervical or axillary lymph nodes,
   (v) generalized muscle aches or weakness,
   (vi) fatigue lasting 24 hours or longer after exercise,
   (vii) headaches (of a type, severity, or pattern that is different from headaches
in the pre-morbid state),
   (viii) migratory joint pains,
   (ix) neuropsychologic symptoms,
   (x) sleep disturbance.
(b) [Reserved]

§ 4.88b Schedule of ratings—Infectious diseases, immune disorders and nutritional deficiencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Infectious Disease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6300</td>
<td>Cholera, Asiatic: As active disease, and for 3 months convalescence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thereafter rate residuals such as renal necrosis under the appropriate system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6301</td>
<td>Visceral Leishmaniasis: During treatment for active disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE: A 100 percent evaluation shall continue beyond the cessation of treatment for active disease. Six months after discontinuance of such treatment, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of § 3.105(e) of this chapter. Rate residuals such as liver damage or lymphadenopathy under the appropriate system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6302</td>
<td>Leprosy (Hansen’s Disease): As active disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE: A 100 percent evaluation shall continue beyond the date that an examining physician has determined that this has become inactive. Six months after the date of inactivity, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of § 3.105(e) of this chapter. Rate residuals such as skin lesions or peripheral neuropathy under the appropriate system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6304</td>
<td>Malaria: As active disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE: The diagnosis of malaria depends on the identification of the malarial parasites in blood smears. If the veteran served in an endemic area and presents signs and symptoms compatible with malaria, the diagnosis may be based on clinical grounds alone. Relapses must be confirmed by the presence of malarial parasites in blood smears. Thereafter rate residuals such as liver or spleen damage under the appropriate system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6305</td>
<td>Lympatic Filariasis: As active disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thereafter rate residuals such as epididymitis or lymphangitis under the appropriate system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6306</td>
<td>Bartonellosis: As active disease, and for 3 months convalescence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thereafter rate residuals such as skin lesions under the appropriate system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6307</td>
<td>Plague: As active disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thereafter rate residuals such as lymphadenopathy under the appropriate system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6308</td>
<td>Relapsing Fever: As active disease</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thereafter rate residuals such as liver or spleen damage or central nervous system involvement under the appropriate system.

6309  Rheumatic fever:
  As active disease .................................................................................................................. 100
  Thereafter rate residuals as heart damage under the appropriate system

6310  Syphilis, and other treponemal infections:
  Rate the complications of nervous system, vascular system, eyes or ears. (See DC 7004, syphilitic heart disease, DC 8013, cerebrospinal syphilis, DC 8014, meningo-vascular syphilis, DC 8015, lues dorsi, and DC 9301, dementia associated with central nervous system syphilis)

6311  Tuberculosis, military:
  As active disease .................................................................................................................. 100
  Inactive: See §§4.88c and 4.89.

6313  Avitaminosis:
  Marked mental changes, moist dermatitis, inability to retain adequate nourishment, exhaustion, and cachexia ............................................................ 100
  With all of the symptoms listed below, plus mental symptoms and impaired bodily vigor ................. 60
  With stomatitis, diarrhea, and symmetrical dermatitis ................................................................. 40
  With stomatitis, or achlorhydria, or diarrhea ............................................................................. 20
  Confirmed diagnosis with nonspecific symptoms such as: decreased appetite, weight loss, abdominal discomfort, weakness, inability to concentrate and irritability .................................................. 10

6314  Benetton:
  As active disease:
  With congestive heart failure, anasarca, or Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome .................................. 100
  With cardiomegaly, or, with peripheral neuropathy with footdrop or atrophy of thigh or calf muscles .... 60
  With peripheral neuropathy with absent knee or ankle jerks and loss of sensation, or, with symptoms such as weakness, fatigue, anorexia, dizziness, heaviness and stiffness of legs, headache or sleep disturbance ................................................................. 30

6315  Pella:  
  Marked mental changes, moist dermatitis, inability to retain adequate nourishment, exhaustion, and cachexia ............................................................ 100
  With all of the symptoms listed below, plus mental symptoms and impaired bodily vigor ................. 60
  With stomatitis, diarrhea, and symmetrical dermatitis ................................................................. 40
  With stomatitis, or achlorhydria, or diarrhea ............................................................................. 20
  Confirmed diagnosis with nonspecific symptoms such as: decreased appetite, weight loss, abdominal discomfort, weakness, inability to concentrate and irritability .................................................. 10

6316  Brucellosis:
  As active disease .................................................................................................................. 100
  Thereafter rate residuals such as liver or spleen damage or meningitis under the appropriate system

6317  Typhus, scrub:
  As active disease, and for 3 months convalescence ...................................................................... 100
  Thereafter rate residuals such as spleen damage or skin conditions under the appropriate system

6318  Melioidosis:
  As active disease .................................................................................................................. 100
  Thereafter rate residuals such as arthritis, lung lesions or meningitis under the appropriate system

6319  Lyme Disease:
  As active disease .................................................................................................................. 100
  Thereafter rate residuals such as arthritis under the appropriate system

6320  Parasitic diseases otherwise not specified:
  As active disease .................................................................................................................. 100
  Thereafter rate residuals such as liver or spleen damage under the appropriate system

6350  Lupus erythematosus, systemic (disseminated):
  Not to be combined with ratings under DC 7809 Acute, with frequent exacerbations, producing severe impairment of health ........................................................................................................... 100
  Exacerbations lasting a week or more, 2 or 3 times per year ......................................................... 60
  Exacerbations once or twice a year or symptomatic during the past 2 years ................................ 10

NOTE: Evaluate this condition either by combining the evaluations for residuals under the appropriate system, or by evaluating DC 6350, whichever method results in a higher evaluation.

6351  HIV-Related Illness:
  AIDS with recurrent opportunistic infections or with secondary diseases afflicting multiple body systems:
    HIV-related illness with debility and progressive weight loss, without remission, or few or brief remis-
    sions ........................................................................................................................................ 100
  Refractory constitutional symptoms, diarrhea, and pathological weight loss, or; minimum rating following development of AIDS-related opportunistic infection or neoplasm ......................................................... 60
  Recurrent constitutional symptoms, intermittent diarrhea, and on approved medication(s), or; minimum rating with T4 cell count less than 200, or hairy cell leukoplakia, or Oral Candidiasis ................................................................. 30
  Following development of definite medical symptoms, T4 cell count of 200 or more and less than 500, and on approved medication(s), or; with evidence of depression or memory loss with employment limitations ........................................... 10
  Asymptomatic, following initial diagnosis of HIV infection, with or without lymphadenopathy or decreased T4 cell count ........................................................................................................................................ 0
§ 4.88c Ratings for inactive nonpulmonary tuberculosis initially entitled after August 19, 1968.

For 1 year after date of inactivity, following active tuberculosis ................................................................. 100

Thereafter: Rate residuals under the specific body system or systems affected.

Following the total rating for the 1 year period after date of inactivity, the scheduler evaluation for residuals of nonpulmonary tuberculosis, i.e., arthritis, surgical removal of a part, etc., will be assigned under the appropriate diagnostic code for the residual preceded by the diagnostic code for tuberculosis of the body part affected. For example, tuberculosis of the hip joint with residual arthritis would be coded 5250–5250. Where there are existing residuals of pulmonary and nonpulmonary conditions, the evaluations for residual separate functional impairment may be combined.

Where there are existing pulmonary and nonpulmonary conditions, the total rating for the 1 year, after attainment of inactivity, may not be applied to both conditions during the same period. However, the total rating during the 1-year period for the pulmonary or for the nonpulmonary condition will be utilized, combined with evaluation for residuals of the condition not covered by the 1-year total evaluation, so as to allow any additional benefit provided during such period.

§ 4.89 Ratings for inactive nonpulmonary tuberculosis in effect on August 19, 1968.

Public Law 90–493 repealed section 356 of title 38, United States Code which provided graduated ratings for inactive tuberculosis. The repealed section, however, still applies to the case of any veteran who on August 19, 1968, was receiving or entitled to receive compensation for tuberculosis. The use of the protective provisions of Pub. L. 90–493 should be mentioned in the discussion portion of all ratings in which these provisions are applied. For use in rating cases in which the protective provisions of Pub. L. 90–493 apply, the former evaluations are retained in this section.

For 2 years after date of inactivity, following active tuberculosis, which was clinically identified during service or subsequently .................................................. 100

Thereafter, for 4 years, or in any event, to 6 years after date of inactivity .................................................. 50
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Thereafter, for 5 years, or to 11 years after date of inactivity ........................................ 30
Thereafter, in the absence of a schedular compensable permanent residual .......... 0
Following the total rating for the 2-year period after date of inactivity, the schedular evaluation for residuals of nonpulmonary tuberculosis, i.e., ankylosis, surgical removal of a part, etc., if in excess of 50 percent or 30 percent will be assigned under the appropriate diagnostic code for the specific residual preceded by the diagnostic code for tuberculosis of the body part affected. For example, tuberculosis of the hip joint with residual ankylosis would be coded 5001–5250.

The graduated ratings for nonpulmonary tuberculosis will not be combined with residuals of nonpulmonary tuberculosis unless the graduated rating and the rating for residual disability cover separate functional losses, e.g., graduated ratings for tuberculosis of the kidney and residuals of tuberculosis of the spine. Where there are existing pulmonary and nonpulmonary conditions, the graduated evaluation for the pulmonary, or for the nonpulmonary, condition will be utilized, combined with evaluations for residuals of the condition not covered by the graduated evaluation utilized, so as to provide the higher evaluation over such period.
The ending dates of all graduated ratings of nonpulmonary tuberculosis will be controlled by the date of attainment of inactivity.

These ratings are applicable only to veterans with nonpulmonary tuberculosis active on or after October 10, 1949.


THE Respiratory System

§ 4.96 Special provisions regarding evaluation of respiratory conditions.

(a) Rating coexisting respiratory conditions. Ratings under diagnostic codes 6600 through 6817 and 6822 through 6847 will not be combined with each other. Where there is lung or pleural involvement, ratings under diagnostic codes 6819 and 6820 will not be combined with each other or with diagnostic codes 6600 through 6817 or 6822 through 6847. A single rating will be assigned under the diagnostic code which reflects the predominant disability with elevation to the next higher evaluation where the severity of the overall disability warrants such elevation. However, in cases protected by the provisions of Pub. L. 90–493, the graduated ratings of 50 and 30 percent for inactive tuberculosis will not be elevated.

(b) Rating “protected” tuberculosis cases. Public Law 90–493 repealed section 356 of title 38, United States Code which had provided graduated ratings for inactive tuberculosis. The repealed section, however, still applies to the case of any veteran who on August 19, 1968, was receiving or entitled to receive compensation for tuberculosis. The use of the protective provisions of Pub. L. 90–493 should be mentioned in the discussion portion of all ratings in which these provisions are applied. For application in rating cases in which the protective provisions of Pub. L. 90–493 apply the former evaluations pertaining to pulmonary tuberculosis are retained in § 4.97.

(c) Special monthly compensation. When evaluating any claim involving complete organic aphonia, refer to § 3.350 of this chapter to determine whether the veteran may be entitled to special monthly compensation. Footnotes in the schedule indicate conditions which potentially establish entitlement to special monthly compensation; however, there are other conditions in this section which under certain circumstances also establish entitlement to special monthly compensation.

(d) Special provisions for the application of evaluation criteria for diagnostic codes 6600, 6603, 6604, 6825–6833, and 6840–6845. (1) Pulmonary function tests (PFT’s) are required to evaluate these conditions except:

(i) When the results of a maximum exercise capacity test are of record and are 20 ml/kg/min or less. If a maximum exercise capacity test is not of record, evaluate based on alternative criteria.

(ii) When pulmonary hypertension (documented by an echocardiogram or cardiac catheterization), cor pulmonale, or right ventricular hypertrophy has been diagnosed.

(iii) When there have been one or more episodes of acute respiratory failure.

(iv) When outpatient oxygen therapy is required.
§ 4.97

(2) If the DLCO (SB) (Diffusion Capacity of the Lung for Carbon Monoxide by the Single Breath Method) test is not of record, evaluate based on alternative criteria as long as the examiner states why the test would not be useful or valid in a particular case.

(3) When the PFT’s are not consistent with clinical findings, evaluate based on the PFT’s unless the examiner states why they are not a valid indication of respiratory functional impairment in a particular case.

(4) Post-bronchodilator studies are required when PFT’s are done for disability evaluation purposes except when the results of pre-bronchodilator pulmonary function tests are normal or when the examiner determines that post-bronchodilator studies should not be done and states why.

(5) When evaluating based on PFT’s, use post-bronchodilator results in applying the evaluation criteria in the rating schedule unless the post-bronchodilator results were poorer than the pre-bronchodilator results. In those cases, use the pre-bronchodilator values for rating purposes.

(6) When there is a disparity between the results of different PFT’s (FEV–1 (Forced Expiratory Volume in one second), FVC (Forced Vital Capacity), etc.), so that the level of evaluation would differ depending on which test result is used, use the test result that the examiner states most accurately reflects the level of disability.

(7) If the FEV–1 and the FVC are both greater than 100 percent, do not assign a compensable evaluation based on a decreased FEV–1/FVC ratio.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

[34 FR 5062, Mar. 11, 1969, as amended at 61 FR 46727, Sept. 5, 1996; 71 FR 52459, Sept. 6, 2006]

§ 4.97 Schedule of ratings—respiratory system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>DISEASES OF THE NOSE AND THROAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6502</td>
<td>Septum, nasal, deviation of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traumatic only,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With 50-percent obstruction of the nasal passage on both sides or complete obstruction on one side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6504</td>
<td>Nose, loss of part of, or scar:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exposing both nasal passages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of part of one ala, or other obvious disfigurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Or evaluate as DC 7800, scars, disfiguring, head, face, or neck.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6510</td>
<td>Sinusitis, pansinusitis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6511</td>
<td>Sinusitis, ethmoid, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6512</td>
<td>Sinusitis, frontal, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6513</td>
<td>Sinusitis, maxillary, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6514</td>
<td>Sinusitis, sphenoid, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Rating Formula for Sinusitis (DC’s 6510 through 6514):</strong> Following radical surgery with chronic osteomyelitis, or; near constant sinusitis characterized by headaches, pain and tenderness of affected sinus, and purulent discharge or crusting after repeated surgeries</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three or more incapacitating episodes per year of sinusitis requiring prolonged (lasting four to six weeks) antibiotic treatment, or; more than six non-incapacitating episodes per year of sinusitis characterized by headaches, pain, and purulent discharge or crusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One or two incapacitating episodes per year of sinusitis requiring prolonged (lasting four to six weeks) antibiotic treatment, or; three to six non-incapacitating episodes per year of sinusitis characterized by headaches, pain, and purulent discharge or crusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detected by X-ray only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> An incapacitating episode of sinusitis means one that requires bed rest and treatment by a physician.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6515</td>
<td>Laryngitis, tuberculous, active or inactive. Rate under §§4.88c or 4.89, whichever is appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6516</td>
<td>Laryngitis, chronic: Hoarseness, with thickening or nodules of cords, polyps, submucous infiltration, or pre-malignant changes on biopsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hoarseness, with inflammation of cords or mucous membrane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6518</td>
<td>Laryngectomy, total. Rate the residuals of partial laryngectomy as laryngitis (DC 6516), aphony (DC 6519), or stenosis of larynx (DC 6520).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6519</td>
<td>Aphony, complete organic: Constant inability to communicate by speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constant inability to speak above a whisper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Department of Veterans Affairs § 4.97

Note: Evaluate incomplete aphony as laryngitis, chronic (DC 6516).

6520  Larynx, stenosis of, including residuals of laryngeal trauma (unilateral or bilateral):

   Forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV–1) less than 40 percent of predicted value, with Flow-Volume
   Loop compatible with upper airway obstruction, or; permanent tracheostomy ........................................... 100
   FEV–1 of 40- to 55-percent predicted, with Flow-Volume Loop compatible with upper airway obstruction ...... 60
   FEV–1 of 56- to 70-percent predicted, with Flow-Volume Loop compatible with upper airway obstruction .... 30
   FEV–1 of 71- to 80-percent predicted, with Flow-Volume Loop compatible with upper airway obstruction .... 10
   Note: Or evaluate as aphony (DC 6519).

6521  Pharynx, injuries to:

   Stricture or obstruction of pharynx or nasopharynx, or; absence of soft palate secondary to trauma, chemical
   burn, or granulomatous disease, or; paralysis of soft palate with swallowing difficulty (nasal regurgitation)
   and speech impairment ................................................................................................................................. 50
   With polyps ................................................................................................................................................. 30
   Without polyps, but with greater than 50-percent obstruction of nasal passage on both sides or complete ob-
   struction on one side .......................................................................................................................... 10
   Bacterial rhinitis: ........................................................................................................................................... 20
   Rhinoscleroma ................................................................................................................................................ 50
   With permanent hypertrophy of turbinates and with greater than 50-percent obstruction of nasal passage on
   both sides or complete obstruction on one side ......................................................................................... 10
   Granulomatous rhinitis: .............................................................................................................................. 20
   Wegener’s granulomatosis, lethal midline granuloma .................................................................................. 100
   Other types of granulomatous infection ................................................................................................. 20

6600  Bronchitis, chronic:

   FEV–1 less than 40 percent of predicted value, or; the ratio of Forced Expiratory Volume in one second to
   Forced Vital Capacity (FEV–1/FVC) less than 40 percent, or; Diffusion Capacity of the Lung for Carbon
   Monoxide by the Single Breath Method (DLCO (SB)) less than 40 percent predicted, or; maximum exercise
   capacity less than 15 ml/kg/min oxygen consumption (with cardiac or respiratory limitation), or; cor
   pulmonale (right heart failure), or; right ventricular hypertrophy, or; pulmonary hypertension (shown by Echo
   or cardiac catheterization), or; episode(s) of acute respiratory failure, or; requires outpatient oxygen therapy
   FEV–1 of 40- to 55-percent predicted, or; FEV–1/FVC of 40 to 55 percent, or; DLCO (SB) of 40- to 55-per-
   cent predicted, or; maximum oxygen consumption of 15 to 20 ml/kg/min (with cardiorespiratory limit) .......... 100
   FEV–1 of 56- to 70-percent predicted, or; FEV–1/FVC of 56 to 70 percent, or; DLCO (SB) 56- to 65-percent
   predicted ......................................................................................................................................................... 60
   FEV–1 of 71- to 80-percent predicted, or; FEV–1/FVC of 71 to 80 percent, or; DLCO (SB) 66- to 80-percent
   predicted ......................................................................................................................................................... 30

6601  Bronchiectasis:

   With incapacitating episodes of infection of at least six weeks total duration per year ................................. 100
   With incapacitating episodes of infection of four to six weeks total duration per year, or; near constant findings
   of cough with purulent sputum associated with anoxia, weight loss, and frank hemoptysis and requiring
   antibiotic usage almost continuously ........................................................................................................... 60
   With incapacitating episodes of infection of two to four weeks total duration per year, or; daily productive
   cough with sputum that is at times purulent or blood-tinged and that requires prolonged (lasting four to six
   weeks) antibiotic usage more than twice a year .................................................................................. 30
   Intermittent productive cough with acute infection requiring a course of antibiotics at least twice a year .... 10
   Or rate according to pulmonary impairment as for chronic bronchitis (DC 6600).

   Note: An incapacitating episode is one that requires bedrest and treatment by a physician.

6602  Asthma, bronchial:

   FEV–1 less than 40 percent predicted, or; FEV–1/FVC less than 40 percent, or; more than one attack per
   week with episodes of respiratory failure, or; requires daily use of systemic (oral or parenteral) high dose
   corticosteroids or immuno-suppressive medications ......................................................................................... 100
   FEV–1 of 40- to 55-percent predicted, or; FEV–1/FVC of 40 to 55 percent, or; at least monthly visits to a phy-
   sician for regular care of exacerbations, or; intermittent (at least three per year) courses of systemic (oral
   or parenteral) corticosteroids ......................................................................................................................... 60
   FEV–1 of 56- to 70-percent predicted, or; FEV–1/FVC of 56 to 70 percent, or; daily inhalational or oral bron-
   chodiator therapy, or; inhalational anti-inflammatory medication .................................................................. 30
   FEV–1 of 71- to 80-percent predicted, or; FEV–1/FVC of 71 to 80 percent, or; intermittent inhalational or oral
   bronchodilator therapy .......................................................................................................................... 10
   Note: In the absence of clinical findings of asthma at time of examination, a verified history of asthmatic at-
   tacks must be of record.

6603  Emphysema, pulmonary:

   FEV–1 less than 40 percent of predicted value, or; the ratio of Forced Expiratory Volume in one second to
   Forced Vital Capacity (FEV–1/FVC) less than 40 percent, or; Diffusion Capacity of the Lung for Carbon
   Monoxide by the Single Breath Method (DLCO (SB)) less than 40 percent predicted, or; maximum exercise
   capacity less than 15 ml/kg/min oxygen consumption (with cardiac or respiratory limitation), or; cor
   pulmonale (right heart failure), or; right ventricular hypertrophy, or; pulmonary hypertension (shown by Echo
   or cardiac catheterization), or; episode(s) of acute respiratory failure, or; requires outpatient oxygen therapy
   FEV–1 of 40- to 55-percent predicted, or; FEV–1/FVC of 40 to 55 percent, or; DLCO (SB) of 40- to 55-per-
   cent predicted, or; maximum oxygen consumption of 15 to 20 ml/kg/min (with cardiorespiratory limit) .......... 100
   FEV–1 of 56- to 70-percent predicted, or; FEV–1/FVC of 56 to 70 percent, or; DLCO (SB) 56- to 65-percent
   predicted, or; maximum oxygen consumption of 15 to 20 ml/kg/min (with cardiorespiratory limit) ............... 60
### DISEASES OF THE LUNGS AND PLEURA—TUBERCULOSIS

#### Ratings for Pulmonary Tuberculosis Entitled on August 19, 1968

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6701</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, far advanced, active</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6702</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, moderately advanced, active</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6703</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, minimal, active</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6704</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, active, advancement unspecified</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6721</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, far advanced, inactive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6722</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, moderately advanced, inactive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6723</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, minimal, inactive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6724</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, inactive, advancement unspecified.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Rating Formula for Inactive Pulmonary Tuberculosis: For two years after date of inactivity, following active tuberculosis, which was clinically identified during service or subsequently</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thereafter for four years, or in any event, to six years after date of inactivity</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thereafter, for five years, or to eleven years after date of inactivity</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following far advanced lesions diagnosed at any time while the disease process was active, minimum</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Otherwise</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Note (1): The 100-percent rating under codes 6701 through 6724 is not subject to a requirement of precedent hospital treatment. It will be reduced to 50 percent for failure to submit to examination or to follow prescribed treatment upon report to that effect from the medical authorities. When a veteran is placed on the 100-percent rating for inactive tuberculosis, the medical authorities will be appropriately notified of the fact, and of the necessity, as given in footnote 1 to 38 U.S.C. 1156 (and formerly in 38 U.S.C. 356, which has been repealed by Public Law 90–490), to notify the Veterans Service Center in the event of failure to submit to examination or to follow treatment.

#### Note (2): The graduated 50-percent and 30-percent ratings and the permanent 30 percent and 20 percent ratings for inactive pulmonary tuberculosis are not to be combined with ratings for other respiratory disabilities. Following thoracoplasty the rating will be for removal of ribs combined with the rating for collapsed lung. Resection of the ribs incident to thoracoplasty will be rated as removal.

#### Ratings for Pulmonary Tuberculosis Initially Evaluated After August 19, 1968

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6730</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, active</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Active pulmonary tuberculosis will be considered permanently and totally disabling for non-service-connected pension purposes in the following circumstances:

(a) Associated with active tuberculosis involving other than the respiratory system.
(b) With severe associated symptoms or with extensive cavity formation.
(c) Reactivated cases, generally.
(d) With advancement of lesions on successive examinations or while under treatment.
(e) Without retrogression of lesions or other evidence of material improvement at the end of six months hospitalization or without change of diagnosis from "active" at the end of 12 months hospitalization. Material improvement means lessening or absence of clinical symptoms, and X-ray findings of a stationary or retrogressive lesion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6731</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, inactive:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Depending on the specific findings, rate residuals as interstitial lung disease, restrictive lung disease, or, when obstructive lung disease is the major residual, as chronic bronchitis (DC 6600). Rate thoracoplasty as removal of ribs under DC 5297.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** A mandatory examination will be requested immediately following notification that active tuberculosis evaluated under DC 6730 has become inactive. Any change in evaluation will be carried out under the provisions of §3.105(a).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6732</td>
<td>Pleurisy, tuberculous, active or inactive:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

#### FEV–1 and FVC Calculations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEV–1</th>
<th>FVC</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56–70% predicted</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71–80% predicted</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### DLCO Calculations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEV–1</th>
<th>FVC</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40–55% predicted</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56–70% predicted</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71–80% predicted</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Note:** Depending on the specific findings, rate residuals as interstitial lung disease, restrictive lung disease, or, when obstructive lung disease is the major residual, as chronic bronchitis (DC 6600). Rate thoracoplasty as removal of ribs under DC 5297.

---

**Note:** A mandatory examination will be requested immediately following notification that active tuberculosis evaluated under DC 6730 has become inactive. Any change in evaluation will be carried out under the provisions of §3.105(a).
### NONTUBERCULOUS DISEASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6817</td>
<td>Pulmonary Vascular Disease: Primary pulmonary hypertension, or; chronic pulmonary thromboembolism with evidence of pulmonary hypertension, right ventricular hypertrophy, or cor pulmonale</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chronic pulmonary thromboembolism requiring anticoagulant therapy, or; following inferior vena cava surgery without evidence of pulmonary hypertension or right ventricular dysfunction</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symptomatic, following resolution of acute pulmonary embolism</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asymptomatic, following resolution of pulmonary thrombembolism</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Evaluate other residuals following pulmonary embolism under the most appropriate diagnostic code, such as chronic bronchitis (DC 6600) or chronic pleural effusion or fibrosis (DC 6844), but do not combine that evaluation with any of the above evaluations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6819</td>
<td>Neoplasms, malignant, any specified part of respiratory system exclusive of skin growths</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> A rating of 100 percent shall continue beyond the cessation of any surgical, X-ray, antineoplastic chemotherapy or other therapeutic procedure. Six months after discontinuation of such treatment, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of § 3.105(e) of this chapter. If there has been no local recurrence or metastasis, rate on residuals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6820</td>
<td>Neoplasms, benign, any specified part of respiratory system. Evaluate using an appropriate respiratory analogy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bacterial Infections of the Lung

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6822</td>
<td>Actinomycosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6823</td>
<td>Nocardiosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6824</td>
<td>Chronic lung abscess.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Rating Formula for Bacterial Infections of the Lung (diagnostic codes 6822 through 6824):

- Active infection with systemic symptoms such as fever, night sweats, weight loss, or hemoptysis: 100

Depending on the specific findings, rate residuals as interstitial lung disease, restrictive lung disease, or, when obstructive lung disease is the major residual, as chronic bronchitis (DC 6600).

### Interstitial Lung Disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6825</td>
<td>Diffuse interstitial fibrosis (interstitial pneumonitis, fibrosing alveolitis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6826</td>
<td>Desquamative interstitial pneumonitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6827</td>
<td>Pulmonary alveolar proteinosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6828</td>
<td>Eosinophilic granuloma of lung.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6829</td>
<td>Drug-induced pulmonary pneumonitis and fibrosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6830</td>
<td>Radiation-induced pulmonary pneumonitis and fibrosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6831</td>
<td>Hypersensitivity pneumonitis (extrinsic allergic alveolitis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6832</td>
<td>Pneumoconiosis (silicosis, anthracosis, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6833</td>
<td>Asbestosis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Rating Formula for Interstitial Lung Disease (diagnostic codes 6825 through 6833):

- Forced Vital Capacity (FVC) less than 50-percent predicted, or; Diffusion Capacity of the Lung for Carbon Monoxide by the Single Breath Method (DLCO (SB)) less than 40-percent predicted, or; maximum exercise capacity less than 15 ml/kg/min oxygen consumption with cardiorespiratory limitation, or; cor pulmonale or pulmonary hypertension, or; requires outpatient oxygen therapy: 100
- FVC of 50- to 64-percent predicted, or; DLCO (SB) of 40- to 55-percent predicted, or; maximum exercise capacity of 15 to 20 ml/kg/min oxygen consumption with cardiorespiratory limitation: 60
- FVC of 65- to 74-percent predicted, or; DLCO (SB) of 56- to 65-percent predicted: 30
- FVC of 75- to 80-percent predicted, or; DLCO (SB) of 66- to 80-percent predicted: 10

### Mycotic Lung Disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6834</td>
<td>Histoplasmosis of lung.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6835</td>
<td>Coccidioidomycosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6836</td>
<td>Blastomycosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6837</td>
<td>Cryptococcosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6838</td>
<td>Aspergillosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6839</td>
<td>Mucormycosis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Rating Formula for Mycotic Lung Disease (diagnostic codes 6834 through 6839):

- Chronic pulmonary mycosis requiring suppressive therapy with no more than minimal symptoms such as occasional minor hemoptysis or productive cough: 50
- Healed and inactive mycotic lesions, asymptomatic: 0
### § 4.100 Application of the evaluation criteria for diagnostic codes 7000–7007, 7011, and 7015–7020.

(a) Whether or not cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation (documented by electrocardiogram, echocardiogram, or X-ray) is present and whether or not there is a need for continuous medication must be ascertained in all cases.

(b) Even if the requirement for a 10% rating is not met, the review for entitlement to special monthly compensation under § 3.350 of this chapter shall be separately rated and combined with ratings for respiratory involvement. Involvement of Muscle Group XXI (DC 5321), however, will not be separately rated.

### THE CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

#### § 4.100 Application of the evaluation criteria for diagnostic codes 7000–7007, 7011, and 7015–7020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Asymptomatic but with documented sleep disorder breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Persistent day-time hypersomnolence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Chronic respiratory failure with carbon dioxide retention or cor pulmonale, or requires tracheostomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Requires use of breathing assistance device such as continuous airway pressure (CPAP) machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Pulmonary involvement with persistent symptoms requiring chronic low dose (maintenance) or intermittent corticosteroids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Pulmonary involvement requiring systemic high dose (therapeutic) corticosteroids for control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Note:
Coccidioidomycosis has an incubation period up to 21 days, and the disseminated phase is ordinarily manifest within six months of the primary phase. However, there are instances of dissemination delayed up to many years after the initial infection which may have been unrecognized. Accordingly, when service connection is under consideration in the absence of record or other evidence of the disease in service, service in southwestern United States where the disease is endemic and absence of prolonged residence in this locality before or after service will be the deciding factor.

#### Restrictive Lung Disease

General Rating Formula for Restrictive Lung Disease (diagnostic codes 6840 through 6845):

- FEV–1 less than 40 percent of predicted value, or; the ratio of Forced Expiratory Volume in one second to Forced Vital Capacity (FEV–1/FVC) less than 40 percent, or; Diffusion Capacity of the Lung for Carbon Monoxide by the Single Breath Method (DLCO (SB)) less than 40 percent of predicted
- Maximum exercise capacity less than 15 ml/kg/min oxygen consumption (with cardiac or respiratory limitation), or; cor pulmonale (right heart failure), or; right ventricular hypertrophy, or; pulmonary hypertension (shown by Echo or cardiac catheterization), or; episode(s) of acute respiratory failure, or; requires outpatient oxygen therapy

#### Note:
- A 100-percent rating shall be assigned for pleurisy with empyema, with or without pleurocutaneous fistula, until resolved.
- A 100 percent rating shall be assigned as of the date of hospital admission and shall continue for three months from the first day of the month after hospital discharge.
- A 100 percent rating shall be assigned if the requirement for a 10% rating is not met.

#### Sarcoïdosis:

- Cor pulmonale, or; cardiac involvement with congestive heart failure, or; progressive pulmonary disease with fever, night sweats, and weight loss despite treatment
- Pulmonary involvement requiring systemic high dose (therapeutic) corticosteroids for control
- Pulmonary involvement with persistent symptoms requiring chronic low dose (maintenance) or intermittent corticosteroids
- Chronic hilar adenopathy or stable lung infiltrates without symptoms or physiologic impairment
- Or rate active disease or residuals as chronic bronchitis (DC 6600) and extra-pulmonary involvement under specific body system involved.

#### Sleep Apnea Syndromes (Obstructive, Central, Mixed):

- Chronic respiratory failure with carbon dioxide retention or cor pulmonale, or; requires tracheostomy
- Requires use of breathing assistance device such as continuous airway pressure (CPAP) machine
- Persistent day-time hypersomnolence
- Asymptomatic but with documented sleep disorder breathing
medication) or 30% (based on the presence of cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation) evaluation is met, METs testing is required in all cases except:

1. When there is a medical contraindication.
2. When the left ventricular ejection fraction has been measured and is 50% or less.
3. When chronic congestive heart failure is present or there has been more than one episode of congestive heart failure within the past year.
4. When a 100% evaluation can be assigned on another basis.

(c) If left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) testing is not of record, evaluate based on the alternative criteria unless the examiner states that the LVEF test is needed in a particular case because the available medical information does not sufficiently reflect the severity of the veteran’s cardiovascular disability.

[71 FR 52460, Sept. 6, 2006]

§ 4.104 Schedule of ratings—cardiovascular system.

DISEASES OF THE HEART—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload of greater than 5 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or; evidence of cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation on electrocardiogram, echocardiogram, or X-ray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 10 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or; continuous medication required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7001 Endocarditis:

For three months following cessation of therapy for active infection with cardiac involvement .......................................................... 100

Thereafter, with endocarditis (documented by findings on physical examination and either echocardiogram, Doppler echocardiogram, or cardiac catheterization) resulting in:

Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent | 100 |

More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent | 60 |

Workload of greater than 5 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or; evidence of cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation on electrocardiogram, echocardiogram, or X-ray | 30 |

Workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 10 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or; continuous medication required | 10 |

7002 Pericarditis:

For three months following cessation of therapy for active infection with cardiac involvement .......................................................... 100

Thereafter, with documented pericarditis resulting in:

Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent | 100 |

More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent | 60 |
### DISEASES OF THE HEART—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workload of greater than 5 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; evidence of cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation on electro-cardiogram, echocardiogram, or X-ray</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7003 Pericardial adhesions:
- Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent
- Workload of greater than 5 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; evidence of cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation on electro-cardiogram, echocardiogram, or X-ray
- Workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 10 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; continuous medication required

### 7004 Syphilitic heart disease:
- Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent
- More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent

### 7005 Arteriosclerotic heart disease (Coronary artery disease):
- With documented coronary artery disease resulting in:
  - Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent

### DISEASES OF THE HEART—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; evidence of cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation on electro-cardiogram, echocardiogram, or X-ray</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload of greater than 5 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; evidence of cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation on electro-cardiogram, echocardiogram, or X-ray</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 10 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; continuous medication required</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7006 Myocardial infarction:
- During and for three months following myocardial infarction, documented by laboratory tests
- Thereafter:
  - With history of documented myocardial infarction, resulting in:
    - Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent
    - More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent
  - Workload of greater than 5 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent
  - Workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 10 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; continuous medication required

### 7007 Hypertensive heart disease:
- Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent
- More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent

### NOTE:
- Evaluate syphilitic aortic aneurysm under DC 7110 (aortic aneurysm).
## DISEASES OF THE HEART—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>DISEASES OF THE HEART—Continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7008</td>
<td>Hyperthyroid heart disease:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include as part of the overall evaluation for hyperthyroidism under DC 7900. However, when atrial fibrillation is present, hyperthyroidism may be evaluated either under DC 7900 or under DC 7010 (supraventricular arrhythmias), whichever results in a higher evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7010</td>
<td>Supraventricular arrhythmias:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paroxysmal atrial fibrillation or other supraventricular tachycardia, with more than four episodes per year documented by ECG or Holter monitor. Permanent atrial fibrillation ( Lone atrial fibrillation), or; one to four episodes per year of paroxysmal atrial fibrillation or other supraventricular tachycardia documented by ECG or Holter monitor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7011</td>
<td>Ventricular arrhythmias (sustained):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For indefinite period from date of hospital admission for initial evaluation and medical therapy for a sustained ventricular arrhythmia, or; for indefinite period from date of hospital admission for ventricular aneurysmectomy, or; with an automatic implantable Cardioverter-Defibrillator (AICD) in place. Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent. More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent. Workload of greater than 5 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; evidence of cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation on electrocardiogram, echocardiogram, or X-ray. Workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 10 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; continuous medication required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** A rating of 100 percent shall be assigned from the date of hospital admission for initial evaluation and medical therapy for a sustained ventricular arrhythmia or for ventricular aneurysmectomy. Six months following discharge, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>DISEASES OF THE HEART—Continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7015</td>
<td>Atrioventricular block:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** A rating of 100 percent shall be assigned as of the date of hospital admission for valve replacement. Six months following discharge, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>DISEASES OF THE HEART—Continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7017</td>
<td>Coronary bypass surgery:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For three months following hospital admission for surgery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thereafter: Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope, or; left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** A rating of 100 percent shall be assigned as of the date of hospital admission for valve replacement. Six months following discharge, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter.
§ 4.104 38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)

DISEASES OF THE HEART—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Workload of greater than 5 METs but not greater than 7 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or, evidence of cardiac hypertrophy or dilatation on electrocardiogram, echocardiogram, or X-ray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Workload of greater than 7 METs but not greater than 10 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or, continuous medication required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diseases of the Arteries and Veins

7110 Aortic aneurysm:
- If five centimeters or larger in diameter, or; if symptomatic, or; for indefinite period from date of hospital admission for surgical correction (including any type of graft insertion) 100
- Precluding exertion 60
- Evaluate residuals of surgical correction according to organ systems affected.

NOTE: A rating of 100 percent shall be assigned as of the date of admission for surgical correction. Six months following discharge, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of § 3.105(e) of this chapter.

7111 Aneurysm, any large artery:
- If symptomatic, or; for indefinite period from date of hospital admission for surgical correction 100
- Following surgery: ischemic limb pain at rest, and; either deep ischemic ulcers or ankle/brachial index of 0.4 or less 100

NOTE: Hypertension or isolated systolic hypertension must be confirmed by readings taken two or more times on at least three different days. For purposes of this section, the term hypertension means that the diastolic blood pressure is predominantly 90mm. or greater, and isolated systolic hypertension means that the systolic blood pressure is predominantly 160mm. or greater with a diastolic blood pressure of less than 90mm.

NOTE (2): Evaluate hypertension due to aortic insufficiency or hyperthyroidism, which is usually the isolated systolic type, as part of the condition causing it rather than by a separate evaluation.

NOTE (3): Evaluate hypertension separately from hypertensive heart disease and other types of heart disease.

7018 Implantable cardiac pacemakers:
- For two months following hospital admission for implantation or reimplantation
- Thereafter:
  - Evaluate as supraventricular arrhythmias (DC 7010), ventricular arrhythmias (DC 7011), or atrioventricular block (DC 7015).
- Minimum 60

NOTE: Evaluate implantable Cardioverter-Defibrillators (AICD's) under DC 7011.

7019 Cardiac transplantation:
- For a indefinite period from date of hospital admission for cardiac transplantation
- Thereafter:
  - Chronic congestive heart failure, or; workload of more than 3 METs or less results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or, left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of less than 30 percent
  - More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or, left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent

NOTE: A rating of 100 percent shall be assigned as of the date of hospital admission for cardiac transplantation according to organ systems affected.

NOTE: More than one episode of acute congestive heart failure in the past year, or; workload of greater than 3 METs but not greater than 5 METs results in dyspnea, fatigue, angina, dizziness, or syncope; or, left ventricular dysfunction with an ejection fraction of 30 to 50 percent.
DISEASES OF THE HEART—Continued

Claudication on walking less than 25 yards on a level grade at 2 miles per hour, and persistent coldness of the extremity, one or more deep ischemic ulcers, or ankle/brachial index of 0.5 or less ...........................................

Claudication on walking between 25 and 100 yards on a level grade at 2 miles per hour, and; trophic changes (thin skin, absence of hair, dystrophic nails) or ankle/brachial index of 0.7 or less .............

Claudication on walking more than 100 yards, and; diminished peripheral pulses or ankle/brachial index of 0.9 or less .............

NOTE (1): The ankle/brachial index is the ratio of the systolic blood pressure at the ankle (determined by Doppler study) divided by the simultaneous brachial artery systolic blood pressure. The normal index is 1.0 or greater.

NOTE (2): These evaluations are for involvement of a single extremity. If more than one extremity is affected, evaluate each extremity separately and combine (under § 4.25), using the bilateral factor, if applicable.

NOTE (3): A rating of 100 percent shall be assigned as of the date of hospital admission for surgical correction. Six months following discharge, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of § 3.105(e) of this chapter.

7112 Aneurysm, any small artery:

Asymptomatic ..............................................

NOTE: If symptomatic, evaluate according to body system affected.

NOTE: If aneurysm of the carotid, vertebral, or coronary arteries, evaluate separately.

7113 Arteriovenous fistula, traumatic:

With high output heart failure ........................

Without heart failure but with enlarged heart, wide pulse pressure, and tachycardia ........

Without cardiac involvement but with edema, stasis dermatitis, and either ulceration or cellulitis:

Lower extremity ..................................................

Upper extremity ..................................................

With edema or stasis dermatitis:

Lower extremity ..................................................

Upper extremity ..................................................

7114 Aneurysm of the iliac arteries:

Ischemic limb pain at rest, and; either deep ischemic ulcers or ankle/brachial index of 0.4 or less .............................................................

Claudication on walking less than 25 yards on a level grade at 2 miles per hour, and; either persistent coldness of the extremity or ankle/brachial index of 0.5 or less .............

Claudication on walking between 25 and 100 yards on a level grade at 2 miles per hour, and; trophic changes (thin skin, absence of hair, dystrophic nails) or ankle/brachial index of 0.7 or less .............

Claudication on walking more than 100 yards, and; diminished peripheral pulses or ankle/brachial index of 0.9 or less .............

NOTE (1): The ankle/brachial index is the ratio of the systolic blood pressure at the ankle (determined by Doppler study) divided by the simultaneous brachial artery systolic blood pressure. The normal index is 1.0 or greater.

NOTE (2): Evaluate residuals of aortic and large arterial bypass surgery or arterial graft as arteriosclerosis obliterans.

NOTE (3): These evaluations are for involvement of a single extremity. If more than one extremity is affected, evaluate each extremity separately and combine (under § 4.25), using the bilateral factor (§ 4.26), if applicable.

Claudication on walking less than 25 yards on a level grade at 2 miles per hour, and; either persistent coldness of the extremity or ankle/brachial index of 0.5 or less .............

Claudication on walking between 25 and 100 yards on a level grade at 2 miles per hour, and; trophic changes (thin skin, absence of hair, dystrophic nails) or ankle/brachial index of 0.7 or less .............

Claudication on walking more than 100 yards, and; diminished peripheral pulses or ankle/brachial index of 0.9 or less .............

NOTE (1): The ankle/brachial index is the ratio of the systolic blood pressure at the ankle (determined by Doppler study) divided by the simultaneous brachial artery systolic blood pressure. The normal index is 1.0 or greater.

NOTE (2): These evaluations are for involvement of a single extremity. If more than one extremity is affected, evaluate each extremity separately and combine (under § 4.25), using the bilateral factor (§ 4.26), if applicable.

Claudication on walking less than 25 yards on a level grade at 2 miles per hour, and; either persistent coldness of the extremity or ankle/brachial index of 0.5 or less .............

Claudication on walking between 25 and 100 yards on a level grade at 2 miles per hour, and; trophic changes (thin skin, absence of hair, dystrophic nails) or ankle/brachial index of 0.7 or less .............

Claudication on walking more than 100 yards, and; diminished peripheral pulses or ankle/brachial index of 0.9 or less .............
### §4.110  Ulcers.

Experience has shown that the term “peptic ulcer” is not sufficiently specific for rating purposes. Manifest differences in ulcers of the stomach or duodenum in comparison with those at an
§ 4.113 Coexisting abdominal conditions.

There are diseases of the digestive system, particularly within the abdomen, which, while differing in the site of pathology, produce a common disability picture characterized in the main by varying degrees of abdominal distress or pain, anemia and disturbances in nutrition. Consequently, certain coexisting diseases in this area, as indicated in the instruction under the title “Diseases of the Digestive System,” do not lend themselves to distinct and separate disability evaluations without violating the fundamental principle relating to pyramiding as outlined in § 4.14.

Table: Schedule of ratings—digestive system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mouth, injuries of</td>
<td>Rate as for disfigurement and impairment of function of mastication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lips, injuries of</td>
<td>Rate as for disfigurement of face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongue, loss of whole or part</td>
<td>Rate as for disfigurement of face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esophagus, stricture of</td>
<td>Rate as for disfigurement and impairment of function of mastication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esophagus, spasm of (cardiospasm)</td>
<td>Rate as for disfigurement and impairment of general health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esophagus, diverticulum of, acquired</td>
<td>Rate as for disfigurement of face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esophagus, diverticulum of, acquired</td>
<td>Rate as for obstruction (stricture).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peritoneum, adhesions of</td>
<td>Rate as for disfigurement and impairment of general health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esophagus, diverticulum of, acquired</td>
<td>Rate as for obstruction (stricture).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulcer, duodenal</td>
<td>Rate as for disfigurement and impairment of general health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulcer, gastric</td>
<td>Rate as for disfigurement and impairment of general health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Ratings for adhesions will be considered when there is history of operative or other traumatic or infectious (intraabdominal) process, and at least two of the following: disturbance of motility, actual partial obstruction, reflex disturbances, presence of pain.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7309</td>
<td>Portal hypertension and splenomegaly, with weakness, anorexia, abdominal pain, malaise, and at least minor weight loss</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7310</td>
<td>Symptoms such as weakness, anorexia, abdominal pain, and malaise</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note</td>
<td>For evaluation under diagnostic code 7312, documentation of cirrhosis (by biopsy or imaging) and abnormal liver function tests must be present.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7313</td>
<td>Cholecystitis, chronic ..........................................................................</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7314</td>
<td>Severe; frequent attacks of gall bladder colic</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7315</td>
<td>Moderate; gall bladder dyspepsia, confirmed by X-ray technique, and with infrequent attacks (not over two or three a year) of gall bladder colic, with or without jaundice</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7316</td>
<td>Spleen, disease or injury of ...................................................................</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7317</td>
<td>Rate as for chronic cholecystitis.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7318</td>
<td>Rate as for chronic cholecystitis.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7319</td>
<td>Gall bladder, injury of.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7320</td>
<td>Rate as for peritoneal adhesions.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7321</td>
<td>Gall bladder, removal of.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7322</td>
<td>Rate as for chronic cholecystitis.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7323</td>
<td>Gall bladder, injury of.</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7324</td>
<td>Rate as for chronic cholecystitis.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7325</td>
<td>Rate as for chronic cholecystitis.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7326</td>
<td>Rate as for chronic cholecystitis.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7327</td>
<td>Rate as for chronic cholecystitis.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7328</td>
<td>Rate as for chronic cholecystitis.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rating**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7306</td>
<td>Ulcer, marginal (gastric):</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7307</td>
<td>Gastritis, hypertrophic (identified by gastroscope):</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7308</td>
<td>Gastritis, atrophic.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7309</td>
<td>Stomal, stenosis of.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7310</td>
<td>Stomal, injury of.</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7311</td>
<td>Residual of injury of the liver:</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7312</td>
<td>Cirrhosis of the liver, primary biliary cirrhosis, or cirrhotic phase of sclerosing cholangitis</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7313</td>
<td>Generalized weakness, substantial weight loss, and persistent jaundice, or, with one of the following refractory to treatment: ascites, hepatic encephalopathy, hemorrhage from varices or portal gastropathy (erosive gastritis)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7314</td>
<td>History of two or more episodes of ascites, hepatic encephalopathy, or hemorrhage from varices or portal gastropathy (erosive gastritis), but with periods of remission between attacks</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7315</td>
<td>History of one episode of ascites, hepatic encephalopathy, or hemorrhage from varices or portal gastropathy (erosive gastritis)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7316</td>
<td>Enteritis, chronic.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7317</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7318</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7319</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7320</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7321</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7322</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7323</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7324</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7325</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7326</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7327</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7328</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7329</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7330</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7331</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7332</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7333</td>
<td>Enterocolitis, chronic.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note**

For evaluation under diagnostic code 7301, cirrhosis of liver (diagnostic code 7303), and chronic liver disease without cirrhosis (diagnostic code 7304).
### §4.114

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hernia, inguinal:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With severe symptoms, objectively supported by examination findings</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With moderate symptoms</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With slight symptoms</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE: Where residual adhesions constitute the predominant disability, rate under diagnostic code 7301.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernia, femoral:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate for the underlying condition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernia, ventral, postoperative:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate as for inguinal hernia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benign neoplasms, exclusive of skin growths:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate as for skin growths exclusive of code 7301.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malignant neoplasms of the digestive system, exclusive of skin growths:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate as for skin growths exclusive of code 7301.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernia, femoral:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate for the underlying condition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:
- Add 10 percent for bilateral involvement, provided the second hernia is compensable. This means that the more severely disabling hernia is to be evaluated, and 10 percent, only, added for the second hernia, if the latter is of compensable degree.
- Rate as for inguinal hernia.
- Evaluate under an appropriate diagnostic code, depending on the predominant disability or the specific residuals after treatment.
- Rate as for impairment of sphincter control.
- Rate for the underlying condition.
### § 4.114

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily fatigue, malaise, and anorexia (without weight loss or hepatomegaly), requiring dietary restriction or continuous medication, or; incapacitating episodes (with symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain) having a total duration of at least two weeks, but less than four weeks, during the past 12-month period</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermittent fatigue, malaise, and anorexia, or; incapacitating episodes (with symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain) having a total duration of at least one week, but less than two weeks, during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonsymptomatic</td>
<td>( 0 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** (1): Evaluate sequelae, such as cirrhosis or malignancy of the liver, under an appropriate diagnostic code, but do not use the same signs and symptoms as the basis for evaluation under DC 7354 and under a diagnostic code for sequelae. (See § 4.14.)

**NOTE:** (2): For purposes of evaluating conditions under diagnostic code 7345, “incapacitating episode” means a period of acute signs and symptoms severe enough to require bed rest and treatment by a physician.

**NOTE:** (3): Hepatitis B infection must be confirmed by serologic testing in order to evaluate it under diagnostic code 7345.

#### 7346 Hernia hiatal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms of pain, vomiting, material weight loss and hematemesis or melena with moderate anemia; or other symptom combinations productive of severe impairment of health</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persistently recurrent epigastric distress with dysphagia, pyrosis, and regurgitation, accompanied by substernal or arm or shoulder pain, productive of considerable impairment of health</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With two or more of the symptoms for the 30 percent evaluation of less severity</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7347 Pancreatitis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With frequently recurrent disabling attacks of abdominal pain with few pain free intermissions and with steatorrhea, malabsorption, diarrhea and severe malnutrition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With frequent attacks of abdominal pain, loss of normal body weight and other findings showing continuing pancreatic insufficiency between acute attacks</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately severe; with at least 4–7 typical attacks of abdominal pain per year with good remission between attacks</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With at least one recurring attack of typical severe abdominal pain in the past year</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE 1:** Abdominal pain in this condition must be confirmed as resulting from pancreatitis by appropriate laboratory and clinical studies.

**NOTE 2:** Following total or partial pancreatectomy, rate under above, symptoms, minimum rating 30 percent.

#### 7348 Vagotomy with pyloroplasty or gastroenterostomy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Followed by demonstrably confirmative post-operative complications of stricture or continuing gastric retention</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With symptoms and confirmed diagnosis of alkaline gastritis, or of confirmed persisting diarrhea</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent ulcer with incomplete vagotomy</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Rate recurrent ulcer following complete vagotomy under diagnostic code 7305, minimum rating 20 percent; and rate dumping syndrome under diagnostic code 7308.

#### 7351 Liver transplant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For an indefinite period from the date of hospital admission for transplant surgery</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** A rating of 100 percent shall be assigned as of the date of hospital admission for transplant surgery and shall continue. One year following discharge, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of § 4.105(e) of this chapter.

#### 7354 Hepatitis C (or non-A, non-B hepatitis):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With serologic evidence of hepatitis C infection and the following signs and symptoms due to hepatitis C infection:</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Near-constant debilitating symptoms (such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain)</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily fatigue, malaise, and anorexia, with substantial weight loss (or other indication of malnutrition), and hepatomegaly, or; incapacitating episodes (with symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain) having a total duration of at least four weeks, but less than six weeks, during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily fatigue, malaise, and anorexia, with minor weight loss and hepatomegaly, or; incapacitating episodes (with symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain) having a total duration of at least two weeks, but less than four weeks, during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7355 Hepatitis B (or non-A, non-B hepatitis):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With serologic evidence of hepatitis B infection and the following signs and symptoms due to hepatitis B infection:</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Near-constant debilitating symptoms (such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain)</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily fatigue, malaise, and anorexia, with minor weight loss and hepatomegaly, or; incapacitating episodes (with symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain) having a total duration of at least two weeks, but less than four weeks, during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near-constant debilitating symptoms (such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain)</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily fatigue, malaise, and anorexia, with substantial weight loss (or other indication of malnutrition), and hepatomegaly, or; incapacitating episodes (with symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain) having a total duration of at least four weeks, but less than six weeks, during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily fatigue, malaise, and anorexia, with minor weight loss and hepatomegaly, or; incapacitating episodes (with symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain) having a total duration of at least two weeks, but less than four weeks, during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** A rating of 100 percent shall be assigned as of the date of hospital admission for transplant surgery and shall continue. One year following discharge, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of § 4.105(e) of this chapter.

#### 7356 Chronic hepatitis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With serologic evidence of hepatitis C infection and the following signs and symptoms due to hepatitis C infection:</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Near-constant debilitating symptoms (such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain)</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily fatigue, malaise, and anorexia, with substantial weight loss (or other indication of malnutrition), and hepatomegaly, or; incapacitating episodes (with symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain) having a total duration of at least four weeks, but less than six weeks, during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near-constant debilitating symptoms (such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain)</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily fatigue, malaise, and anorexia, with minor weight loss and hepatomegaly, or; incapacitating episodes (with symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, nausea, vomiting, anorexia, arthralgia, and right upper quadrant pain) having a total duration of at least two weeks, but less than four weeks, during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** A rating of 100 percent shall be assigned as of the date of hospital admission for transplant surgery and shall continue. One year following discharge, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of § 4.105(e) of this chapter.
§ 4.115a Ratings of the genitourinary system—dysfunctions.

Diseases of the genitourinary system generally result in disabilities related to renal or voiding dysfunctions, infections, or a combination of these. The following section provides descriptions of various levels of disability in each of these symptom areas. Where diagnostic codes refer the decisionmaker to these specific areas dysfunction, only the predominant area of dysfunction shall be considered for rating purposes. Since the areas of dysfunction described below do not cover all symptoms resulting from genitourinary diseases, specific diagnoses may include a description of symptoms assigned to that diagnosis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renal dysfunction:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiring regular dialysis, or precluding more than sedentary activity from one of the following: persistent edema and albuminuria; or, BUN more than 80mg%; or, creatinine more than 8mg%; or, markedly decreased function of kidney or other organ systems, especially cardiovascular</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistent edema and albuminuria with BUN 40 to 80mg%; or, creatinine 4 to 8mg%; or, generalized poor health characterized by lethargy, weakness, anorexia, weight loss, or limitation of exertion</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant albuminuria with some edema; or, definite decrease in kidney function; or, hypertension at least 40 percent disabling under diagnostic code 7101</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albumin constant or recurring with hyaline and granular casts or red blood cells; or, transient or slight edema or hypertension at least 10 percent disabling under diagnostic code 7101</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albumin and casts with history of acute nephritis; or, hypertension non-compensable under diagnostic code 7101</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiding dysfunction:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate particular condition as urine leakage, frequency, or obstructed voiding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continual Urine Leakage, Post Surgical Urinary Diversion, Urinary Incontinence, or Stress Incontinence:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiring the use of an appliance or the wearing of absorbent materials which must be changed more than 4 times per day</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiring the wearing of absorbent materials which must be changed 2 to 4 times per day</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiring the wearing of absorbent materials which must be changed less than 2 times per day</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary frequency:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime voiding interval less than one hour, or; awakening to void five or more times per night</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime voiding interval between one and two hours, or; awakening to void three to four times per night</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime voiding interval between two and three hours, or; awakening to void two times per night</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstructed voiding:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary retention requiring intermittent or continuous catheterization</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marked obstructive symptomatology (hesitancy, slow or weak stream, decreased force of stream) with any one or combination of the following:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Post void residuals greater than 150 cc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Uroflowmetry: markedly diminished peak flow rate (less than 10 cc/sec).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Recurrent urinary tract infections secondary to obstruction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Stricture disease requiring periodic dilatation every 2 to 3 months</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstructive symptomatology with or without stricture disease requiring dilation 1 to 2 times per year</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary tract infection:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor renal function: Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent symptomatic infection requiring drainage/frequent hospitalization (greater than two times/year), and/or requiring continuous intensive management</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
§ 4.115b Ratings of the genitourinary system—diagnoses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7500</td>
<td>Kidney, removal of one: Minimum evaluation ........................... 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7501</td>
<td>Kidney, abscess of: Rate as urinary tract infection ................ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7502</td>
<td>Nephritis, chronic: Rate as renal dysfunction ........................ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7504</td>
<td>Pyelonephritis, chronic: Rate as renal dysfunction or urinary tract infection, whichever is predominant ........................ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7505</td>
<td>Kidney, tuberculosis of: Rate in accordance with §§4.88b or 4.89, whichever is appropriate ........................ 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7507</td>
<td>Nephrosclerosis, arteriosclerotic: Rate according to predominant symptoms as renal dysfunction, hypertension or heart disease. If rated under the cardiovascular schedule, however, the percentage rating which would otherwise be assigned will be elevated to the next higher evaluation ........................ 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7508</td>
<td>Nephrolithiasis: Rate as hydronephrosis, except for recurrent stone formation requiring one or more of the following: 1. diet therapy 2. drug therapy 3. invasive or non-invasive procedures more than two times/year ........................ 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7509</td>
<td>Hydronephrosis: Severe; Rate as renal dysfunction. Frequent attacks of colic with infection (pyonephrosis), kidney function impaired ..................................................... 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7510</td>
<td>Ureterolithiasis: Rate as hydronephrosis, except for recurrent stone formation requiring one or more of the following: 1. diet therapy 2. drug therapy 3. invasive or non-invasive procedures more than two times/year ........................ 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7511</td>
<td>Ureter, stricture of: Rate as hydronephrosis, except for recurrent stone formation requiring one or more of the following: 1. diet therapy 2. drug therapy 3. invasive or non-invasive procedures more than two times/year ........................ 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7512</td>
<td>Cystitis, chronic, includes interstitial and all etiologies, infectious and non-infectious: Rate as voiding dysfunction ........................ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7513</td>
<td>Bladder, calculus in, with symptoms interfering with function: Rate as voiding dysfunction ........................ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7515</td>
<td>Bladder, calculus in, with symptoms interfering with function: Rate as voiding dysfunction ........................ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7516</td>
<td>Bladder, fistula of: Rate as voiding dysfunction or urinary tract infection, whichever is predominant. Postoperative, suprapubic cystotomy ........................ 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7517</td>
<td>Bladder, injury of: Rate as voiding dysfunction ........................ 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7518</td>
<td>Urethra, stricture of: Rate as voiding dysfunction ........................ 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7519</td>
<td>Urethra, fistula of: Rate as voiding dysfunction. Multiple urethral fistulae ........................................... 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7520</td>
<td>Penis, removal of half or more ............... Or rate as voiding dysfunction. ........................ 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7521</td>
<td>Penis removal of glans ....................... Or rate as voiding dysfunction. ........................ 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7522</td>
<td>Penis, deformity, with loss of erectile power—0 ........................ 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7523</td>
<td>Testis, atrophy complete: Both—0 1 One—0 1 ........................ 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7524</td>
<td>Testis, removal: ........................ 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(59 FR 2327, Jan. 18, 1994; 59 FR 10676, Mar. 7, 1994)*
### Department of Veterans Affairs

#### §4.115b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7525</td>
<td>Epididymo-orchitis, chronic only: Rate as urinary tract infection. For tubercular infections: Rate in accordance with §§4.88b or 4.89, whichever is appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7527</td>
<td>Prostate gland injuries, infections, hypertrophy, postoperative residuals: Rate as voiding dysfunction or urinary tract infection, whichever is predominant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7528</td>
<td>Malignant neoplasms of the genito-urinary system. Note—Following the cessation of surgical, X-ray, antineoplastic chemotherapy or other therapeutic procedure, the rating of 100 percent shall continue with a mandatory VA examination at the expiration of six months. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter. If there has been no local reoccurrence or metastasis, rate on residuals as voiding dysfunction or renal dysfunction, whichever is predominant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7529</td>
<td>Benign neoplasms of the genito-urinary system. Rate as voiding dysfunction or renal dysfunction, whichever is predominant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7530</td>
<td>Chronic renal disease requiring regular dialysis. Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7531</td>
<td>Kidney transplant: Following transplant surgery. Thereafter: Rate on residuals as renal dysfunction, minimum rating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note**—The 100 percent evaluation shall be assigned as of the date of hospital admission for transplant surgery and shall continue with a mandatory VA examination one year following hospital discharge. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7532</td>
<td>Renal tubular disorders (such as renal glycosurias, aminoacidurias, renal tubular acidosis, Fanconi’s syndrome, Bartter’s syndrome, related disorders of Henle’s loop and proximal or distal nephron function, etc.): Minimum rating for symptomatic condition Or rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7533</td>
<td>Cystic diseases of the kidneys (polycystic disease, uremic medullary cystic disease, Medullary sponge kidney, and similar conditions): Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7534</td>
<td>Atherosclerotic renal disease (renal artery stenosis or atheroembolic renal disease): Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7535</td>
<td>Toxic nephropathy (antibiotics, radiocontrast agents, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory agents, heavy metals, and similar agents): Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7536</td>
<td>Glomerulonephritis: Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7537</td>
<td>Interstitial nephritis: Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7538</td>
<td>Papillary necrosis: Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7539</td>
<td>Renal amyloid disease: Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7540</td>
<td>Disseminated intravascular coagulation with renal cortical necrosis: Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7541</td>
<td>Renal involvement in diabetes mellitus, sickle cell anemia, systemic lupus erythematosus, vasculitis, or other systemic disease processes. Rate as renal dysfunction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7542</td>
<td>Neurogenic bladder: Rate as voiding dysfunction.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Review for entitlement to special monthly compensation under §3.350 of this chapter.

§ 4.116 Schedule of ratings—gynecological conditions and disorders of the breast.

Note 1: Natural menopause, primary amenorrhea, and pregnancy and childbirth are not disabilities for rating purposes. Chronic residuals of medical or surgical complications of pregnancy may be disabilities for rating purposes.

Note 2: When evaluating any claim involving loss or loss of use of one or more creative organs or anatomical loss of one or both breasts, refer to §3.350 of this chapter to determine whether the veteran may be entitled to special monthly compensation. Footnotes in the schedule indicate conditions which potentially establish entitlement to special monthly compensation; however, almost any condition in this section might, under certain circumstances, establish entitlement to special monthly compensation.

7610 Vulva, disease or injury of (including vulvovaginitis).

7612 Uterus, disease or injury of.

7613 Uterus, disease, injury, or adhesions of.

7614 Fallopian tube, disease, injury, or adhesions of (including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)).

7615 Ovary, disease, injury, or adhesions of.

7616 Ovary, removal of:

7620 Ovaries, atrophy of both, complete ............... 0

7621 Ovaries, prolapse:

7622 Uterus, displacement of:

7623 Pregnancy, surgical complications of:

Vaginal fecal leakage one to three times per week requiring wearing of pad ............... 30
Vaginal fecal leakage less than once a week ........................................... 10
Without leakage .................................................. 0

Fistula, rectovaginal:

Vaginal fecal leakage four or more times per week, but less than daily, requiring wearing of pad ............... 60
Vaginal fecal leakage two to three times per day ........................................... 40
Vaginal fecal leakage one to two times per day ........................................... 20

Fistula, urethrovaginal:

Multiple urethrovaginal fistulae .......................................................... 100
Requiring the use of an appliance or the wearing of absorbent materials which must be changed more than four times per day ........................................... 60
Requiring the wearing of absorbent materials which must be changed two to four times per day ........................................... 40
Requiring the wearing of absorbent materials which must be changed less than two times per day ........................................... 20

Breast, surgery of:

Following radical mastectomy:

Both ............................................... 180
One ............................................... 150

Following modified radical mastectomy:

Both ............................................... 160
One ............................................... 140

Following simple mastectomy or wide local excision with significant alteration of size or form:

Both ............................................... 150
One ............................................... 130

Following wide local excision without significant alteration of size or form:

Both or one .................................. 0

Note: For VA purposes:

(1) Radical mastectomy means removal of the entire breast, underlying pectoral muscles, and regional lymph nodes up to the coracoclavicular ligament.

(2) Modified radical mastectomy means removal of the entire breast and axillary lymph nodes (in continuity with the breast). Pectoral muscles are left intact.

(3) Simple (or total) mastectomy means removal of all of the breast tissue, nipple, and a small portion of the overlying skin, but lymph nodes and muscles are left intact.

(4) Wide local excision (including partial mastectomy, lumpectomy, hylectomy, segmentectomy, and quadrantectomy) means removal of a portion of the breast tissue.

7627 Malignant neoplasms of gynecological system or breast .............................................................................. 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vulva, disease or injury of</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uterus, disease or injury of</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uterus, disease, injury, or adhesions of</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fallopian tube, disease, injury, or adhesions of (including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID))</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovary, disease, injury, or adhesions of</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovary, removal of</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovaries, atrophy of both, complete</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovaries, prolapse</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uterus, displacement of</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy, surgical complications of</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fistula, rectovaginal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fistula, urethrovaginal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical mastectomy</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified radical mastectomy</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple (or total) mastectomy</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide local excision (including partial mastectomy, lumpectomy, hylectomy, segmentectomy, and quadrantectomy)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)
### §4.117 Schedule of ratings—hemic and lymphatic systems.

**7700 Anemia, hypochromic-microcytic and megaloblastic, such as iron-deficiency and pernicious anemia:**

| Hemoglobin 5gm/100ml or less, with findings such as high output congestive heart failure or dyspnea at rest | 100 |
| Hemoglobin 7gm/100ml or less, with findings such as dyspnea on mild exertion, cardiomegaly, tachycardia (100 to 120 beats per minute) or syncope (three episodes in the last six months) | 70 |
| Hemoglobin 8gm/100ml or less, with findings such as weakness, easy fatigability, headaches, lightheadedness, or shortness of breath | 70 |
| Hemoglobin 10gm/100ml or less with findings such as weakness, easy fatigability or headaches | 70 |
| Hemoglobin 10gm/100ml or less, asymptomatic | 0 |

**Note:** Evaluate complications of pernicious anemia, such as dementia or peripheral neuropathy, separately.

### 7702 Agranulocytosis, acute:

| Requiring bone marrow transplant, or requiring transfusion of platelets or red cells at least once every six weeks, or infections recurring at least once every six weeks | 100 |

### 7703 Leukemia:

| With active disease or during a treatment phase | 100 |
| Otherwise rate as anemia (code 7700) or aplastic anemia (code 7716), whichever would result in the greater benefit | 10 |

**Note:** The 100 percent rating shall continue beyond the cessation of any surgical, radiation, antineoplastic chemotherapy or other therapeutic procedures. Six months after discontinuance of such treatment, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter. If there has been no recurrence, rate on residuals.

### 7704 Polycythemia vera:

| During periods of treatment with myelosuppressants and for three months following cessation of myelosuppressant therapy | 100 |
| Requiring phlebotomy | 40 |
| Stable, with or without continuous medication | 10 |

**Note:** Rate complications such as hypertension, gout, stroke or thrombotic disease separately.

### 7705 Thrombocytopenia, primary, idiopathic or immune:

| Platelet count of less than 20,000, with active bleeding, requiring treatment with medication and transfusions | 100 |
| Platelet count between 20,000 and 70,000, not requiring treatment, without bleeding | 70 |
| Stable platelet count between 70,000 and 100,000, without bleeding | 30 |
| Stable platelet count of 100,000 or more, without bleeding | 0 |

### 7706 Splenectomy

| 20 |

**Note:** Rate complications such as systemic infections with encapsulated bacteria separately.

### 7707 Spleen, injury of, healed.

| Rate for any residuals | 30 |

### 7709 Hodgkin's disease:

| With active disease or during a treatment phase | 100 |

**Note:** The 100 percent rating shall continue beyond the cessation of any surgical, radiation, antineoplastic chemotherapy or other therapeutic procedures. Six months after discontinuance of such treatment, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter. If there has been no local recurrence or metastasis, rate on residuals.
§ 4.118 Schedule of ratings—skin.

A veteran who VA rated under diagnostic codes 7800, 7801, 7802, 7804, or 7805 before October 23, 2008 can request review under diagnostic codes 7800, 7801, 7802, 7804, and 7805, irrespec-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>With painful crises several times a year or with symptoms precluding even light manual labor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Following repeated hemolytic sickling crises with continuing impairment of health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Asymptomatic, established case in remission, but with identifiable organ impairment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Sickle cell trait alone, without a history of directly attributable pathological findings, is not a ratable disability. Cases of symptomatic sickle cell trait will be forwarded to the Director, Compensation and Pension Service, for consideration under §3.321(b)(1) of this chapter.

§ 3.105(e) of this chapter. If there has been no local recurrence or metastasis, rate on residuals.

§ 4.118, are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Burn scar(s) of the head, face, or neck; scar(s) of the head, face, or neck due to other causes; or other disfigurement of the head, face, or neck:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With visible or palpable tissue loss and either gross distortion or asymmetry of three or more features or paired sets of features (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, lips), or; with six or more characteristics of disfigurement...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 50     | With visible or palpable tissue loss and either gross distortion or asymmetry of two features or paired sets of features (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, lips), or; with four or five characteristics of disfigurement...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 30     | With visible or palpable tissue loss and either gross distortion or asymmetry of one feature or paired set of features (nose, chin, forehead, eyes (including eyelids), ears (auricles), cheeks, lips), or; with two or three characteristics of disfigurement...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10     | With one characteristic of disfigurement...

Note (1): The 8 characteristics of disfigurement, for purposes of evaluation under §4.118, are:

Scar 5 or more inches (13 or more cm.) in length.

Scar at least one-quarter inch (0.6 cm.) wide at widest part.

Surface contour of scar elevated or depressed on palpation.

Scar adherent to underlying tissue.

Skin hypo- or hyper-pigmented in an area exceeding six square inches (39 sq. cm.).

Skin texture abnormal (irregular, atrophic, shiny, scaly, etc.) in an area exceeding six square inches (39 sq. cm.).

Underlying soft tissue missing in an area exceeding six square inches (39 sq. cm.).

Skin indurated and inflexible in an area exceeding six square inches (39 sq. cm.).
### §4.118

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Note (1): A superficial scar is one not associated with underlying soft tissue damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Note (2): If multiple qualifying scars are present, or if a single qualifying scar affects more than one extremity, or a single qualifying scar affects one or more extremities and either the anterior portion or posterior portion of the trunk, or both, or a single qualifying scar affects both the anterior portion and the posterior portion of the trunk, assign a separate evaluation based on the total area of the qualifying scars that affect that extremity, assign a separate evaluation based on the total area of the qualifying scars that affect the anterior portion of the trunk, and assign a separate evaluation based on the total area of the qualifying scars that affect the posterior portion of the trunk. The midaxillary line on each side separates the anterior and posterior portions of the trunk. Combine the separate evaluations under §4.25. Qualifying scars are scars that are nonlinear, superficial, and are not located on the head, face, or neck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Note (3): The characteristic(s) of disfigurement may be caused by one scar or by multiple scars; the characteristic(s) required to assign a particular evaluation need not be caused by a single scar in order to assign that evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Note (4): Separately evaluate disabling effects other than disfigurement that are associated with individual scar(s) of the head, face, or neck, such as pain, instability, and residuals of associated muscle or nerve injury, under the appropriate diagnostic code(s) and apply §4.25 to combine the evaluation(s) with the evaluation assigned under this diagnostic code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Note (5): A deep scar is one associated with underlying soft tissue damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Note (6): An unstable scar is one where, for any reason, there is frequent loss of covering of skin over the scar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Note (7): An unstable scar is one where, for any reason, there is frequent loss of covering of skin over the scar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Note (8): A superficial scar is one not associated with underlying soft tissue damage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Note (1): A superficial scar is one not associated with underlying soft tissue damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Note (2): If multiple qualifying scars are present, or if a single qualifying scar affects more than one extremity, or a single qualifying scar affects one or more extremities and either the anterior portion or posterior portion of the trunk, or both, or a single qualifying scar affects both the anterior portion and the posterior portion of the trunk, assign a separate evaluation based on the total area of the qualifying scars that affect that extremity, assign a separate evaluation based on the total area of the qualifying scars that affect the anterior portion of the trunk, and assign a separate evaluation based on the total area of the qualifying scars that affect the posterior portion of the trunk. The midaxillary line on each side separates the anterior and posterior portions of the trunk. Combine the separate evaluations under §4.25. Qualifying scars are scars that are nonlinear, superficial, and are not located on the head, face, or neck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Note (3): Scars evaluated under diagnostic codes 7800, 7801, 7802, or 7805 may also receive an evaluation under this diagnostic code, when applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Note (4): If multiple qualifying scars are present, or if a single qualifying scar affects more than one extremity, or a single qualifying scar affects one or more extremities and either the anterior portion or posterior portion of the trunk, or both, or a single qualifying scar affects both the anterior portion and the posterior portion of the trunk, assign a separate evaluation based on the total area of the qualifying scars that affect the anterior portion of the trunk, and assign a separate evaluation based on the total area of the qualifying scars that affect the posterior portion of the trunk. The midaxillary line on each side separates the anterior and posterior portions of the trunk. Combine the separate evaluations under §4.25. Qualifying scars are scars that are nonlinear, deep, and are not located on the head, face, or neck.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7801 Burn scar(s) or scar(s) due to other causes, not of the head, face, or neck. That are deep and nonlinear:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area or areas of 144 square inches (929 sq. cm.) or greater</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area or areas of at least 2 square inches (465 sq. cm.) but less than 144 square inches (929 sq. cm.)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area or areas of at least 12 square inches (77 sq. cm.) but less than 72 square inches (465 sq. cm.)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area or areas of at least 6 square inches (39 sq. cm.) but less than 12 square inches (77 sq. cm.)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7802 Burn scar(s) or scar(s) due to other causes, not of the head, face, or neck. That are superficial and nonlinear:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area or areas of 144 square inches (929 sq. cm.) or greater</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area or areas of at least 12 square inches (77 sq. cm.) but less than 72 square inches (465 sq. cm.)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7803 Scar(s), unstable or painful:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five or more scars that are unstable or painful</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three or four scars that are unstable or painful</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or two scars that are unstable or painful</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7804 Scars, other (including linear scars) and other effects of scars evaluated under diagnostic codes 7800, 7801, 7802, and 7805:

Evaluate any disabling effect(s) not considered in a rating provided under diagnostic codes 7800-04 under an appropriate diagnostic code.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratings</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Less than 5 percent of the entire body or less than 5 percent of exposed areas affected, and; no more than topical therapy required during the past 12-month period. Or rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800) or scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), depending upon the predominant disability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7807 American (New World) leishmaniasis (mucocutaneous, espundia):
Rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800); scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), or dermatitis (DC 7806), depending upon the predominant disability.

**Note:** Evaluate non-cutaneous (visceral) leishmaniasis under DC 6301 (visceral leishmaniasis).

7808 Old World leishmaniasis (cutaneous, Oriental sore):
Rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800); scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), or dermatitis (DC 7806), depending upon the predominant disability.

**Note:** Evaluate non-cutaneous (visceral) leishmaniasis under DC 6301 (visceral leishmaniasis).

7809 Discoid lupus erythematosus or subacute cutaneous lupus erythematosus:
Rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800); scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), or dermatitis (DC 7806), depending upon the predominant disability. Do not combine with ratings under DC 6350.

7811 Tuberculosis luposa (lupus vulgaris), active or inactive:
Rate under §§ 4.88c or 4.89, whichever is appropriate.

7813 Dermatophytosis (ringworm): of body, tinea corporis; of head, tinea capitis; of feet, tinea pedis; of beard area, tinea barbae; of nails, tinea unguium; of inguinal area (jock itch), tinea cruris:
Rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800); scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), or dermatitis (DC 7806), depending upon the predominant disability.

7815 Bullous disorders (including pemphigus vulgaris, pemphigus foliaceus, bullous pemphigoid, dermatitis herpetiformis, epidermolysis bullosa acquisita, benign chronic familial pemphigus (Hailey-Hailey), and porphyria cutanea tarda):
More than 40 percent of the entire body or more than 40 percent of exposed areas affected, or; constant or near-constant systemic therapy such as corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs required during the past 12-month period. 20 to 40 percent of the entire body or 20 to 40 percent of exposed areas affected, or; systemic therapy such as corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs required for a total duration of six weeks or more, but not constantly, during the past 12-month period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratings</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>At least 5 percent, but less than 20 percent, of the entire body, or at least 5 percent, but less than 20 percent, of exposed areas affected, or; intermittent systemic therapy such as corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs required for a total duration of less than six weeks during the past 12-month period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less than 5 percent of the entire body or exposed areas affected, and; no more than topical therapy required during the past 12-month period. Or rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800) or scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), depending upon the predominant disability.

7816 Psoriasis:
More than 40 percent of the entire body or more than 40 percent of exposed areas affected, or; constant or near-constant systemic therapy such as corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs required during the past 12-month period. 20 to 40 percent of the entire body or 20 to 40 percent of exposed areas affected, or; systemic therapy such as corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs required for a total duration of six weeks or more, but not constantly, during the past 12-month period.

At least 5 percent, but less than 20 percent, of the entire body, or at least 5 percent, but less than 20 percent, of exposed areas affected, or; intermittent systemic therapy such as corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs required for a total duration of less than six weeks during the past 12-month period. Or rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800) or scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), depending upon the predominant disability.

7817 Exfoliative dermatitis (erythroderma):
Generalized involvement of the skin, plus systemic manifestations (such as fever, weight loss, and hypoproteinemia), and; constant or near-constant systemic therapy such as therapeutic doses of corticosteroids, immunosuppressive retinoids, PUVA (psoralen with long-wave ultraviolet-A light) or UVB (ultraviolet-B light) treatments, or electron beam therapy required during the past 12-month period.

Generalized involvement of the skin without systemic manifestations, and; constant or near-constant systemic therapy such as therapeutic doses of corticosteroids, immunosuppressive retinoids, PUVA (psoralen with long-wave ultraviolet-A light) or UVB (ultraviolet-B light) treatments, or electron beam therapy required during the past 12-month period.
### Department of Veterans Affairs

#### §4.118

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any extent of involvement of the skin, and; systemic therapy such as therapeutic doses of corticosteroids, immunosuppressive retinoids, PUVA (psoralen with long-wave ultraviolet-A light) or UVB (ultraviolet-B light) treatments, or electron beam therapy required for a total duration of six weeks or more, but not constantly, during the past 12-month period</th>
<th>20 to 40 percent of the entire body or 20 to 40 percent of exposed areas affected, or; systemic therapy such as corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs required for a total duration of six weeks or more, but not constantly, during the past 12-month period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any extent of involvement of the skin, and; systemic therapy such as therapeutic doses of corticosteroids, immunosuppressive retinoids, PUVA (psoralen with long-wave ultraviolet-A light) or UVB (ultraviolet-B light) treatments, or electron beam therapy required for a total duration of six weeks or more, but not constantly, during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>At least 5 percent, but less than 20 percent, of the entire body, or at least 5 percent, but less than 20 percent, of exposed areas affected, or; intermittent systemic therapy such as corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs required for a total duration of less than six weeks during the past 12-month period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note:</td>
<td>Less than 5 percent of the entire body or exposed areas affected, or; no more than topical therapy required during the past 12-month period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any extent of involvement of the skin, and; no more than topical therapy required during the past 12-month period</td>
<td>Or rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800), scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), depending upon the predominant disability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 7818 Malignant skin neoplasms (other than malignant melanoma): | 7822 Papulosquamous disorders not listed elsewhere (including lichen planus, large or small plaque parapsoriasis, pityriasis lichenoides et varioliformis acuta (PLEVA), lymphomatoid papulosis, and pityriasis rubra pilaris (PRP)): |
| Rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800), scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), or impairment of function. | More than 40 percent of the entire body or more than 40 percent of exposed areas affected, and; constant or near-constant systemic medications or intensive light therapy required during the past 12-month period |

| 7819 Benign skin neoplasms: | 7824 Diseases of keratinization (including ichthyoses, Darier’s disease, and palmoplantar keratodermia): |
| Rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800), scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), or impairment of function. | With either generalized cutaneous involvement or systemic manifestations, and; constant or near-constant systemic medication, such as immunosuppressive retinoids, required for a total duration of six weeks or more, but not constantly, during the past 12-month period |

| 7820 Infections of the skin not listed elsewhere (including bacterial, fungal, viral, treponemal and parasitic diseases): | With either generalized cutaneous involvement or systemic manifestations, and; intermittent systemic medication, such as immunosuppressive retinoids, required for a total duration of six weeks or more, but not constantly, during the past 12-month period |
| Rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800), scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), or dermatitis (DC 7806), depending upon the predominant disability. | With either generalized cutaneous involvement or systemic manifestations, and; intermittent systemic medication, such as immunosuppressive retinoids, required for a total duration of six weeks or more, but not constantly, during the past 12-month period |

| 7821 Cutaneous manifestations of collagen-vascular diseases not listed elsewhere (including scleroderma, calcinosis cutis, and dermatomyositis): | 7823 Vitiligo: |
| More than 40 percent of the entire body or more than 40 percent of exposed areas affected, or; constant or near-constant systemic therapy such as corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs required during the past 12-month period | With exposed areas affected |
| | With no exposed areas affected |

<p>| 7824 Diseases of keratinization (including ichthyoses, Darier’s disease, and palmoplantar keratodermia): | With either generalized cutaneous involvement or systemic manifestations, and; constant or near-constant systemic medication, such as immunosuppressive retinoids, required for a total duration of six weeks or more, but not constantly, during the past 12-month period |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DC</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7829</td>
<td>Chloracne: Deep acne (deep inflamed nodules and pustules) affecting more than</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>than on the face and neck .....................................................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deep acne (deep inflamed nodules and pustules) affecting less than 40 percent</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of the face and neck, or; deep acne other than on the face and neck ..........</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superficial acne (comedones, papules, pustules, superficial cysts) of any extent</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800) or scars (DC's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), depending upon the predominant disability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7830</td>
<td>Scarring alopecia: Affecting more than 40 percent of the scalp ............</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affecting 20 to 40 percent of the scalp ..........................................</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affecting less than 20 percent of the scalp .......................................</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7831</td>
<td>Alopecia areata: With loss of all body hair ........................................</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With loss of hair limited to scalp and face .......................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7832</td>
<td>Hyperhidrosis: Unable to handle paper or tools because of moisture, and unresponsive to therapy ......................................................</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Able to handle paper or tools after therapy .......................................</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7833</td>
<td>Malignant melanoma: Rate as scars (DC’s 7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800), or impairment of function (under the appropriate body system).</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or rate as disfigurement of the head, face, or neck (DC 7800) or scars (DC's</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7801, 7802, 7803, 7804, or 7805), depending upon the predominant disability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7828</td>
<td>Acne: Deep acne (deep inflamed nodules and pustules) affecting 40 percent or</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>more of the face and neck .....................................................................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deep acne (deep inflamed nodules and pustules) affecting less than 40 percent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of the face and neck, or; deep acne other than on the face and neck ..........</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superficial acne (comedones, papules, pustules, superficial cysts) of any extent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Endocrine System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DC</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7900</td>
<td>Hyperthyroidism</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thyroid enlargement, tachycardia (more than 100 beats per minute), eye involvement, muscular weakness, loss of weight, and sympathetic nervous system, cardiovascular, or gastrointestinal symptoms</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional instability, tachycardia, fatigability, and increased pulse pressure or blood pressure</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tachycardia, tremor, and increased pulse pressure or blood pressure</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tachycardia, which may be intermittent, and tremor, or continuous medication required for control</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE (1): If disease of the heart is the predominant finding, evaluate as hyperthyroid heart disease (DC 7008) if doing so would result in a higher evaluation than using the criteria above.

NOTE (2): If ophthalmopathy is the sole finding, evaluate as field vision, impairment of (DC 6080); diplopia (DC 6090); or impairment of central visual acuity (DC 6001–6079).

7901 Thyroid gland, toxic adenoma of

Thyroid enlargement, tachycardia (more than 100 beats per minute), eye involvement, muscular weakness, loss of weight, and sympathetic nervous system, cardiovascular, or gastrointestinal symptoms

Emotional instability, tachycardia, fatigability, and increased pulse pressure or blood pressure

Tachycardia, tremor, and increased pulse pressure or blood pressure

Tachycardia, which may be intermittent, and tremor, or continuous medication required for control

NOTE (1): If disease of the heart is the predominant finding, evaluate as hyperthyroid heart disease (DC 7008) if doing so would result in a higher evaluation than using the criteria above.

NOTE (2): If ophthalmopathy is the sole finding, evaluate as field vision, impairment of (DC 6080); diplopia (DC 6090); or impairment of central visual acuity (DC 6001–6079).

7902 Thyroid gland, nontoxic adenoma of

With disfigurement of the head or neck

Without disfigurement of the head or neck

NOTE: If there are symptoms due to pressure on adjacent organs such as the trachea, larynx, or esophagus, evaluate under the diagnostic code for disability of that organ, if doing so would result in a higher evaluation than using this diagnostic code.

7903 Hypothyroidism

Cold intolerance, muscular weakness, cardiovascular involvement, mental disturbance (dementia, slowing of thought, depression), bradycardia (less than 60 beats per minute), and sleepiness

Muscular weakness, mental disturbance, and weight gain

Fatigability, constipation, and mental sluggishness

Fatigability, or continuous medication required for control

7904 Hyperparathyroidism

Generalized decalcification of bones, kidney stones, gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, anorexia, constipation, weight loss, or peptic ulcer), and weakness

Gastrointestinal symptoms and weakness

Continuous medication required for control

NOTE: Following surgery or treatment, evaluate as digestive, skeletal, renal, or cardiovascular residuals or as endocrine dysfunction.

7905 Hypoparathyroidism

Marked neuromuscular excitation (such as convulsions, muscular spasms (tetany), or laryngeal stridor) plus either cataract or evidence of increased intracranial pressure (such as papilledema)

Marked neuromuscular excitation, or paraparesis (of arms, legs, or circumoral area) plus either cataract or evidence of increased intracranial pressure

Continuous medication required for control

7907 Cushing's syndrome

As active, progressive disease including loss of muscle strength, areas of osteoporosis, hypertension, weakness, and enlargement of pituitary or adrenal gland

Loss of muscle strength and enlargement of pituitary or adrenal gland

With striae, obesity, moon face, glucose intolerance, and vascular fragility

NOTE: With recovery or control, evaluate as residuals of adrenal insufficiency or cardiovascular, psychiatric, skin, or skeletal complications under appropriate diagnostic code.

7908 Acromegaly

Evidence of increased intracranial pressure (such as visual field defect), arthropathy, glucose intolerance, and either hypertension or cardiovascular involvement, muscular weakness, loss of weight, and sympathetic nervous system

Arthropathy, glucose intolerance, and hypertension

Enlargement of acral parts or overgrowth of long bones, and enlarged sella turcica

7909 Diabetes insipidus

Polyuria with near-continuous thirst, and more than two documented episodes of dehydration requiring parenteral hydration in the past year

Polyuria with near-continuous thirst, and one or two documented episodes of dehydration requiring parenteral hydration in the past year

Polyuria with near-continuous thirst, and one or more episodes of dehydration in the past year requiring parenteral hydration

Polyuria with near-continuous thirst

7911 Addison's disease (Adrenal Cortical Hypofunction)

Four or more crises during the past year

Three crises during the past year, or five or more episodes during the past year

One or two crises during the past year, or two to four episodes during the past year, or weakness and fatigability, or corticosteroid therapy required for control
### § 4.120 Evaluations by comparison.

Disability in this field is ordinarily to be rated in proportion to the impairment of motor, sensory or mental function. Consider especially psychotic manifestations, complete or partial loss of use of one or more extremities, speech disturbances, impairment of vision, disturbances of gait, tremors, visceral manifestations, injury to the skull, etc. In rating disability from the conditions in the preceding sentence refer to the appropriate schedule. In rating peripheral nerve injuries and their residuals, attention should be given to the site and character of the injury, the relative impairment in motor function, trophic changes, or sensory disturbances.

### § 4.121 Identification of epilepsy.

When there is doubt as to the true nature of epileptiform attacks, neurological observation in a hospital adequate to make such a study is necessary. To warrant a rating for epilepsy, the seizures must be witnessed or verified at some time by a physician. As to frequency, competent, consistent lay testimony emphasizing convulsive and immediate post-convulsive characteristics may be accepted. The frequency of seizures should be ascertained under the ordinary conditions of life (while not hospitalized).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7916</td>
<td>Hyperpituitarism (prolactin secreting pituitary dysfunction)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7917</td>
<td>Hyperaldosteronism (benign or malignant)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7918</td>
<td>Pheochromocytoma (benign or malignant)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7919</td>
<td>C-cell hyperplasia of the thyroid</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** A rating of 100 percent shall continue beyond the cessation of any surgical, X-ray, antineoplastic chemotherapy or other therapeutic procedure. Six months after discontinuance of such treatment, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter, if there has been no local recurrence or metastasis, rate on residuals.

**NOTE (1):** An Addissonian "crisis" consists of the rapid onset of peripheral vascular collapse (with acute hypotension and shock), with findings that may include: anorexia; nausea; vomiting; dehydration; profound weakness; pain in abdomen, legs, and back; fever; apathy, and depressed mentation with possible progression to coma, renal shutdown, and death.

**NOTE (2):** An Addissonian "episode," for VA purposes, is a less acute and less severe event than an Addissonian crisis and may consist of anorexia; nausea; vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, weakness, malaise, orthostatic hypotension, or hypoglycemia, but no peripheral vascular collapse.

**NOTE (3):** Tuberculous Addison’s disease will be evaluated as active or inactive tuberculosis. If inactive, these evaluations are not to be combined with the graduated ratings of 50 percent or 30 percent for non-pulmonary tuberculosis specified under §4.88b. Assign the higher rating.

7912 Pluri glandular syndrome
Evaluate according to major manifestations.

7913 Diabetes mellitus
Requiring more than one daily injection of insulin, restricted diet, and regulation of activities (avoidance of strenuous occupational and recreational activities) with episodes of ketoacidosis or hypoglycemic reactions requiring at least three hospitalizations per year or weekly visits to a diabetic care provider, plus either progressive loss of weight and strength or complications that would be compensable if separately evaluated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Requiring insulin, restricted diet, and regulation of activities with episodes of ketoacidosis or hypoglycemic reactions requiring one or two hospitalizations per year or twice a month visits to a diabetic care provider, plus complications that would not be compensable if separately evaluated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Requiring insulin, restricted diet, and regulation of activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Requiring insulin and restricted diet, or; oral hypoglycemic agent and restricted diet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noncompensable by restricted diet only

**NOTE (1):** Evaluate diagnostic codes 7916, 7917, and 7918 as malignant or benign neoplasm as appropriate.

7919 C-cell hyperplasia of the thyroid

**NOTE:** A rating of 100 percent shall continue beyond the cessation of any surgical, X-ray, antineoplastic chemotherapy or other therapeutic procedure. Six months after discontinuance of such treatment, the appropriate disability rating shall be determined by mandatory VA examination. Any change in evaluation based upon that or any subsequent examination shall be subject to the provisions of §3.105(e) of this chapter, if there has been no local recurrence or metastasis, rate on residuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS AND CONVULSIVE DISORDERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>§ 4.120</td>
<td>38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[61 FR 20446, May 7, 1996]
§ 4.122 Psychomotor epilepsy.

The term psychomotor epilepsy refers to a condition that is characterized by seizures and not uncommonly by a chronic psychiatric disturbance as well.

(a) Psychomotor seizures consist of episodic alterations in conscious control that may be associated with automatic states, generalized convulsions, random motor movements (chewing, lip smacking, fumbling), hallucinatory phenomena (involving taste, smell, sound, vision), perceptual illusions (deja vu, feelings of loneliness, strangeness, macropsia, micropsia, dreamy states), alterations in thinking (not open to reason), alterations in memory, abnormalities of mood or affect (fear, alarm, terror, anger, dread, wellbeing), and autonomic disturbances (sweating, pallor, flushing of the face, visceral phenomena such as nausea, vomiting, defecation, a rising feeling of warmth in the abdomen). Automatic states or automatisms are characterized by episodes of irrational, irrelevant, disjointed, unconventional, asocial, purposeless though seemingly coordinated and purposeful, confused or inappropriate activity of one to several minutes (or, infrequently, hours) duration with subsequent amnesia for the seizure. Examples: A person of high social standing remained seated, muttered angrily, and rubbed the arms of his chair while the National Anthem was being played; an apparently normal person suddenly disrobed in public; a man traded an expensive automobile for an antiquated automobile in poor mechanical condition and after regaining conscious control, discovered that he had signed an agreement to pay an additional sum of money in the trade.

(b) A chronic mental disorder is not uncommon as an interseizure manifestation of psychomotor epilepsy and may include psychiatric disturbances extending from minimal anxiety to severe personality disorder (as distinguished from developmental) or almost complete personality disintegration (psychosis). The manifestations of a chronic mental disorder associated with psychomotor epilepsy, like those of the seizures, are protean in character.

§ 4.123 Neuritis, cranial or peripheral.

Neuritis, cranial or peripheral, characterized by loss of reflexes, muscle atrophy, sensory disturbances, and constant pain, at times excruciating, is to be rated on the scale provided for injury of the nerve involved, with a maximum equal to severe, incomplete, paralysis. See nerve involved for diagnostic code number and rating. The maximum rating which may be assigned for neuritis not characterized by organic changes referred to in this section will be that for moderate, or with sciatic nerve involvement, for moderately severe, incomplete paralysis.

§ 4.124 Neuralgia, cranial or peripheral.

Neuralgia, cranial or peripheral, characterized usually by a dull and intermittent pain, of typical distribution so as to identify the nerve, is to be rated on the same scale, with a maximum equal to moderate incomplete paralysis. Tic douloureux, or trifacial neuralgia, may be rated up to complete paralysis of the affected nerve.

§ 4.124a Schedule of ratings—neurological conditions and convulsive disorders.

[With the exceptions noted, disability from the following diseases and their residuals may be rated from 10 percent to 100 percent in proportion to the impairment of motor, sensory, or mental function. Consider especially psychotic manifestations, complete or partial loss of use of one or more extremities, speech disturbances, impairment of vision, disturbances of gait, tremors, visceral manifestations, etc., referring to the appropriate bodily system of the schedule. With partial loss of use of one or more extremities from neurological lesions, rate by comparison with the mild, moderate, severe, or complete paralysis of peripheral nerves]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organic Diseases of the Central Nervous System</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encephalitis, epidemic, chronic: As active febrile disease</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

449
### ORGANIC DISEASES OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8002</td>
<td>Malignant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8004</td>
<td>Paralysis agitans: Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8005</td>
<td>Bulbar palsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8007</td>
<td>Brain, vessels, embolism of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8008</td>
<td>Brain, vessels, thrombosis of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8009</td>
<td>Brain, vessels, hemorrhage from:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8011</td>
<td>Poliomyelitis, anterior: Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8012</td>
<td>Hematomyelia: For 6 months Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8013</td>
<td>Syphilis, cerebrospinal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8014</td>
<td>Syphilis, meningovascular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8015</td>
<td>Tabes dorsalis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8017</td>
<td>Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8018</td>
<td>Multiple sclerosis: Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8019</td>
<td>Meningitis, cerebrospinal, epidemic: As active febrile disease Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8020</td>
<td>Brain, abscess of: Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8021</td>
<td>Spinal cord, new growths of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8022</td>
<td>Benign, minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8023</td>
<td>Progressive muscular atrophy: Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8024</td>
<td>Syringomyelia: Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8025</td>
<td>Myasthenia gravis: Minimum rating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** It is required for the minimum ratings for residuals under diagnostic codes 8000–8025, that there be ascertainable residuals. Determinations as to the presence of residuals not capable of objective verification, i.e., headaches, dizziness, fatigability, must be approached on the basis of the diagnosis recorded; subjective residuals will be accepted when consistent with the disease and not more likely attributable to other disease or no disease. It is of exceptional importance that when ratings in excess of the prescribed minimum ratings are assigned, the diagnostic codes utilized as bases of evaluation be cited, in addition to the codes identifying the diagnoses.

8045 Residuals of traumatic brain injury (TBI):

There are three main areas of dysfunction that may result from TBI and have profound effects on functioning: cognitive (which is common in varying degrees after TBI), emotional/behavioral, and physical. Each of these areas of dysfunction may require evaluation.

Cognitive impairment is defined as decreased memory, concentration, attention, and executive functions of the brain. Executive functions are goal setting, speed of information processing, planning, organizing, prioritizing, self-monitoring, problem solving, judgment, decision making, spontaneity, and flexibility in changing actions when they are not productive. Not all of these brain functions may be affected in a given individual with cognitive impairment, and some functions may be affected more severely than others. In a given individual, symptoms may fluctuate in severity from day to day. Evaluate cognitive impairment under the table titled “Evaluation of Cognitive Impairment and Other Residuals of TBI Not Otherwise Classified.”

Subjective symptoms may be the only residual of TBI or may be associated with cognitive impairment or other areas of dysfunction. Evaluate subjective symptoms that are residuals of TBI, whether or not they are part of cognitive impairment, under the subjective symptoms facet in the table titled “Evaluation of Cognitive Impairment and Other Residuals of TBI Not Otherwise Classified.” However, separately evaluate any residual with a distinct diagnosis that may be evaluated under another diagnostic code, such as migraine headache or Meniere's disease, even if that diagnosis is based on subjective symptoms, rather than under the “Evaluation of Cognitive Impairment and Other Residuals of TBI Not Otherwise Classified” table.
Evaluate emotional/behavioral dysfunction under § 4.130 (Schedule of ratings—mental disorders) when there is a diagnosis of a mental disorder. When there is no diagnosis of a mental disorder, evaluate emotional/behavioral symptoms under the criteria in the table titled “Evaluation of Cognitive Impairment and Other Residuals of TBI Not Otherwise Classified.”.

Evaluate physical (including neurological) dysfunction based on the following list, under an appropriate diagnostic code: Motor and sensory dysfunction, including pain, of the extremities and face; visual impairment; hearing loss and tinnitus; loss of sense of smell and taste; seizures; gait, coordination, and balance problems; speech and other communication difficulties, including aphasia and related disorders, and dysarthria; neurogenic bladder; neurogenic bowel; cranial nerve dysfunctions; autonomic nerve dysfunctions; and endocrine dysfunctions.

The preceding list of types of physical dysfunction does not encompass all possible residuals of TBI. For residuals not listed here that are reported on an examination, evaluate under the most appropriate diagnostic code. Evaluate each condition separately, as long as the same signs and symptoms are not used to support more than one evaluation, and combine under § 4.25 the evaluations for each separately rated condition. The evaluation assigned based on the “Evaluation of Cognitive Impairment and Other Residuals of TBI Not Otherwise Classified” table will be considered the evaluation for a single condition for purposes of combining with other disability evaluations.

Consider the need for special monthly compensation for such problems as loss of use of an extremity, certain sensory impairments, erectile dysfunction, the need for aid and attendance (including for protection from hazards or dangers incident to the daily environment due to cognitive impairment), being housebound, etc.

### Table: Evaluation of Cognitive Impairment and Subjective Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facet</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Symptoms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table titled “Evaluation of Cognitive Impairment and Other Residuals of TBI Not Otherwise Classified” contains 10 important facets of TBI related to cognitive impairment and subjective symptoms. It provides criteria for levels of impairment for each facet, as appropriate, ranging from 0 to 3, and a 5th level, the highest level of impairment, labeled “total.” However, not every facet has every level of severity. The Consciousness facet, for example, does not provide for an impairment level other than “total,” since any level of impaired consciousness would be totally disabling. Assign a 100-percent evaluation if “total” is the level of evaluation for one or more facets. If no facet is evaluated as “total,” assign the overall percentage evaluation based on the level of the highest facet as follows: 0 = 0 percent; 1 = 10 percent; 2 = 40 percent; and 3 = 70 percent. For example, assign a 70 percent evaluation if 3 is the highest level of evaluation for any facet.

**Note (1):** There may be an overlap of manifestations of conditions evaluated under the table titled “Evaluation of Cognitive Impairment and Other Residuals of TBI Not Otherwise Classified” with manifestations of a comorbid mental or neurologic or other physical disorder that can be separately evaluated under another diagnostic code. In such cases, do not assign more than one evaluation based on the same manifestations. If the manifestations of two or more conditions cannot be clearly separated, assign a single evaluation under whichever set of diagnostic criteria allows the better assessment of overall impaired functioning due to both conditions. However, if the manifestations are clearly separable, assign a separate evaluation for each condition.

**Note (2):** Symptoms listed as examples at certain evaluation levels in the table are only examples and are not symptoms that must be present in order to assign a particular evaluation.

**Note (3):** “Instrumental activities of daily living” refers to activities other than self-care that are needed for independent living, such as meal preparation, doing housework and other chores, shopping, traveling, doing laundry, being responsible for one’s own medications, and using a telephone. These activities are distinguished from “Activities of daily living,” which refers to basic self-care and includes bathing or showering, dressing, eating, getting in or out of bed or a chair, and using the toilet.

**Note (4):** The terms “mild,” “moderate,” and “severe” TBI, which may appear in medical records, refer to a classification of TBI made at, or close to, the time of injury rather than to the current level of functioning. This classification does not affect the rating assigned under diagnostic code 8045.
Note (§): A veteran whose residuals of TBI are rated under a version of § 4.124a, diagnostic code 8045, in effect before October 23, 2008 may request review under diagnostic code 8045. A request for review pursuant to this note will be treated as a claim for an increased rating for purposes of determining the effective date of an increased rating awarded as a result of such review; however, in no case will the award be effective before October 23, 2008. For the purposes of determining the effective date of an increased rating awarded as a result of such review, VA will apply 38 CFR 3.114, if applicable.

8046 Cerebral arteriosclerosis:

Purely neurological disabilities, such as hemiplegia, cranial nerve paralysis, etc., due to cerebral arteriosclerosis will be rated under the diagnostic codes dealing with such specific disabilities, with citation of a hyphenated diagnostic code (e.g., 8046–8207).

Purely subjective complaints such as headache, dizziness, tinnitus, insomnia and irritability, recognized as symptomatic of a properly diagnosed cerebral arteriosclerosis, will be rated 10 percent and no more under diagnostic code 9305. This 10 percent rating will not be combined with any other rating for a disability due to cerebral or generalized arteriosclerosis. Ratings in excess of 10 percent for cerebral arteriosclerosis under diagnostic code 9305 are not assignable in the absence of a diagnosis of multi-infarct dementia with cerebral arteriosclerosis.

NOTE: The ratings under code 8046 apply only when the diagnosis of cerebral arteriosclerosis is substantiated by the entire clinical picture and not solely on findings of retinal arteriosclerosis.

Evaluation of Cognitive Impairment and Other Residuals of TBI Not Otherwise Classified—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facets of cognitive impairment and other residuals of TBI not otherwise classified</th>
<th>Level of impairment</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory, attention, concentration, executive functions.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No complaints of impairment of memory, attention, concentration, or executive functions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EVALUATION OF COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT AND OTHER RESIDUALS OF TBI NOT OTHERWISE CLASSIFIED—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of impairment</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A complaint of mild loss of memory (such as having difficulty following a conversation, recalling recent conversations, remembering names of new acquaintances, or finding words, or often misplacing items), attention, concentration, or executive functions, but without objective evidence on testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Objective evidence on testing of mild impairment of memory, attention, concentration, or executive functions resulting in mild functional impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Objective evidence on testing of moderate impairment of memory, attention, concentration, or executive functions resulting in moderate functional impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Objective evidence on testing of severe impairment of memory, attention, concentration, or executive functions resulting in severe functional impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Normal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mildly impaired judgment. For complex or unfamiliar decisions, occasionally unable to identify, understand, and weigh the alternatives, understand the consequences of choices, and make a reasonable decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Moderately impaired judgment. For complex or unfamiliar decisions, usually unable to identify, understand, and weigh the alternatives, understand the consequences of choices, and make a reasonable decision, although has little difficulty with simple decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facets of cognitive impairment and other residuals of TBI not otherwise classified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of impairment</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Moderately severely impaired judgment. For even routine and familiar decisions, occasionally unable to identify, understand, and weigh the alternatives, understand the consequences of choices, and make a reasonable decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>0 Always oriented to person, time, place, and situation. 1 Occasionally disoriented to one of the four aspects (person, time, place, situation) of orientation. 2 Occasionally disoriented to two of the four aspects (person, time, place, situation) of orientation or often disoriented to one aspect of orientation. 3 Often disoriented to two or more of the four aspects (person, time, place, situation) of orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Visual spatial orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor activity (with intact motor and sensory system)</td>
<td>0 Motor activity normal. 1 Motor activity normal most of the time, but mildly slowed at times due to apraxia (inability to perform previously learned motor activities, despite normal motor function). 2 Motor activity mildly decreased or with moderate slowing due to apraxia. 3 Motor activity moderately decreased due to apraxia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Motor activity severely decreased due to apraxia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### EVALUATION OF COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT AND OTHER RESIDUALS OF TBI NOT OTHERWISE CLASSIFIED—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facets of cognitive impairment and other residuals of TBI not otherwise classified</th>
<th>Level of impairment</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective symptoms</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Subjective symptoms that do not interfere with work, instrumental activities of daily living; or work, family, or other close relationships. Examples are: mild or occasional headaches, mild anxiety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Three or more subjective symptoms that mildly interfere with work; instrumental activities of daily living; or work, family, or other close relationships. Examples of findings that might be seen at this level of impairment are: intermittent dizziness, daily mild to moderate headaches, tinnitus, frequent insomnia, hypersensitivity to sound, hypersensitivity to light.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Three or more subjective symptoms that moderately interfere with work; instrumental activities of daily living; or work, family, or other close relationships. Examples of findings that might be seen at this level of impairment are: marked fatigueability, blurred or double vision, headaches requiring rest periods during most days.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facets of cognitive impairment and other residuals of TBI not otherwise classified</th>
<th>Level of impairment</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Able to communicate by spoken and written language (expressive communication), and to comprehend spoken and written language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### EVALUATION OF COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT AND OTHER RESIDUALS OF TBI NOT OTHERWISE CLASSIFIED—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of impairment</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Comprehension or expression, or both, of either spoken language or written language is only occasionally impaired. Can communicate complex ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inability to communicate either by spoken language, written language, or both, more than occasionally but less than half of the time, or to comprehend spoken language, written language, or both, more than occasionally but less than half of the time. Can generally communicate complex ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Inability to communicate either by spoken language, written language, or both, at least half of the time but not all of the time. May rely on gestures or other alternative modes of communication. Able to communicate basic needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Total

**Consciousness**

- Persistently altered state of consciousness, such as vegetative state, minimally responsive state, coma.

### MISCELLANEOUS DISEASES—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With characteristic prostrating attacks occurring on an average once a month over last several months</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With characteristic prostrating attacks averaging one in 2 months over last several months</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With less frequent attacks</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tic, convulsive:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorea, Sydenham's:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronounced, progressive grave types</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately severe</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorea, Huntington's.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate as Sydenham's chorea. This, though a familial disease, has its onset in late adult life, and is considered a ratable disability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorea, Sydenham's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronounced, progressive grave types</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately severe</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Consider rheumatic etiology and complications.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorea, Huntington's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate as Sydenham's chorea. This, though a familial disease, has its onset in late adult life, and is considered a ratable disability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athetosis, acquired.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate as chorea.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcolepsy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate as for epilepsy, petit mal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DISEASES OF THE CRANIAL NERVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fifth (trigeminal) cranial nerve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralysis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete, severe</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete, moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Dependent upon relative degree of sensory manifestation or motor loss.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth (glossopharyngeal) cranial nerve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralysis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete, severe</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete, moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Dependent upon relative loss of innervation of facial muscles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth (facial) cranial nerve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralysis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete, severe</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete, moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Dependent upon relative loss of innervation of facial muscles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh (facial) cranial nerve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralysis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete, severe</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete, moderate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Dependent upon relative loss of innervation of facial muscles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuritis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuralgia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Tic douloureux may be rated in accordance with severity, up to complete paralysis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
§ 4.124a 38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)  

DISEASES OF THE CRANIAL NERVES—Continued

DISEASES OF THE PERIPHERAL NERVES—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule of ratings</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper radicular group (fifth and sixth cervicals)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8510 Paralysis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete; all shoulder and elbow movements lost or severely affected, hand and wrist movements not affected</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Dependent upon relative loss of ordinary sensation in mucous membrane of the pharynx, fauces, and tonsils.

Rat.

NOTE: Dependent upon extent of sensory and motor loss to organs of voice, respiration, pharynx, stomach and heart.

8310 Neuritis.
8410 Neuralgia.
Eleventh (spinal accessory, external branch) cranial nerve.
8211 Paralysis of:
Complete | 30 |
Incomplete, severe | 20 |
Incomplete, moderate | 10 |
NOTE: Dependent upon loss of motor function of sternomastoid and trapezius muscles.

8311 Neuritis.
8411 Neuralgia.
Twelfth (hypoglossal) cranial nerve.
8212 Paralysis of:
Complete | 50 |
Incomplete, severe | 30 |
Incomplete, moderate | 10 |
NOTE: Dependent upon loss of motor function of tongue.

8312 Neuritis.
8412 Neuralgia.

DISEASES OF THE PERIPHERAL NERVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule of ratings</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle radicular group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8511 Paralysis of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete; adduction, abstraction and rotation of arm, flexion of elbow, and extension of wrist lost or severely affected</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8611 Neuritis.
8711 Neuralgia.

Lower radicular group

8512 Paralysis of:
Complete; all intrinsic muscles of hand, and some or all of flexors of wrist and fingers, paralyzed (substantial loss of use of hand) | 70 | 60 |

8612 Neuritis.
8712 Neuralgia.

All radicular groups

8513 Paralysis of:
Complete | 90 | 80 |

8613 Neuritis.
8713 Neuralgia.

The musculospiral nerve (radial nerve)

8514 Paralysis of:
Complete; drop of hand and fingers, wrist and fingers perpetually flexed, the thumb adducted falling within the line of the outer border of the index finger; can not extend hand at wrist, extend proximal phalanges of fingers, extend thumb, or make lateral movement of wrist; supination of hand, extension and flexion of elbow weakened, the loss of synergic motion of extensors impairs the hand grip seriously; total paralysis of the triceps occurs only as the greatest rarity | 70 | 60 |

8614 Paralysis of:
Complete; all shoulder and elbow movements lost or severely affected, hand and wrist movements not affected | 70 | 60 |

Incomplete: |        |       |
| Severe | 50 | 40 |
| Moderate | 40 | 30 |
| Mild | 20 | 20 |

The term “incomplete paralysis,” with this and other peripheral nerve injuries, indicates a degree of lost or impaired function substantially less than the type picture for complete paralysis given with each nerve, whether due to varied level of the nerve lesion or to partial regeneration. When the involvement is wholly sensory, the rating should be for the mild, or at most, the moderate degree. The ratings for the peripheral nerves are for unilateral involvement; when bilateral, combine with application of the bilateral factor.
## Diseases of the Peripheral Nerves—Continued

### Schedule of Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paralysis of the Median Nerve

8515  
**The median nerve**

- Complete: the hand inclined to the ulnar side, the index and middle fingers more extended than normally, considerable atrophy of the muscles of the thenar eminence, the thumb in the plane of the hand (ape hand); pronation incomplete and defective, absence of flexion of index finger and feeble flexion of middle finger, cannot make a fist, index and middle fingers remain extended; cannot flex distal phalanges of thumb, defective opposition and abduction of the thumb, at right angles to palm; flexion of wrist weakened; pain with trophic disturbances...

<p>| Incomplete: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Mild</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paralysis of the Ulnar Nerve

8516  
**The ulnar nerve**

- Complete: the "griffin claw" deformity, due to flexor contraction of ring and little fingers, atrophy very marked in dorsal interspace and thenar and hypothenar eminences; loss of extension of ring and little fingers cannot spread the fingers (or reverse), cannot adduct the thumb; flexion of wrist weakened...

<p>| Incomplete: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Mild</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paralysis of the Musculocutaneous Nerve

8517  
**Musculocutaneous nerve**

- Complete: weakness but not loss of flexion of elbow and supination of forearm

<p>| Incomplete: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Mild</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paralysis of the Circumflex Nerve

8518  
**Circumflex nerve**

- Complete: abduction of arm is impossible, outward rotation is weakened; muscles supplied are deltoid and teres minor

<p>| Incomplete: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paralysis of the Long Thoracic Nerve

8519  
**Long thoracic nerve**

- Complete: inability to raise arm above shoulder level, winged scapula deformity...

<p>| Incomplete: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Mild</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paralysis of the Sciatic Nerve

8520  
**Sciatic nerve**

- Complete: the foot dangles and drops, no active movement possible of muscles below the knee, flexion of knee weakened or (very rarely) lost...

<p>| Incomplete: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severe, with marked muscular atrophy</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Mild</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paralysis of the External Popliteal Nerve (Common Peroneal)

8521  
**External popliteal nerve (common peroneal)**

- Complete: foot drop and slight drop of first phalanges of all toes, cannot dorsiflex the foot, extension (dorsal flexion) of proximal phalanges of toes lost; abduction of foot lost, adduction weakened; anesthesia covers entire dorsum of foot and toes...

<p>| Incomplete: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Mild</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paralysis of the Musculocutaneous Nerve (Superficial Peroneal)

8522  
**Musculocutaneous nerve (superficial peroneal)**

- Complete: eversion of foot weakened...

<p>| Incomplete: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severe</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Mild</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

NOTE: Combined nerve injuries should be rated by reference to the major involvement, or if sufficient in extent, consider radicular group ratings.
§ 4.124a

8622 Neuritis.
8722 Neuralgia.

Anterior tibial nerve (deep peroneal)
8523 Paralysis of:
   Complete; dorsal flexion of foot lost .......... 30
   Incomplete:
      Severe ........................................... 20
      Moderate ....................................... 10
      Mild ............................................. 0
8623 Neuritis.
8723 Neuralgia.

Internal popliteal nerve (tibial)
8524 Paralysis of:
   Complete; plantar flexion lost, frank adduction of foot impossible, flexion and separation of toes abolished; no muscle in sole can move; in lesions of the nerve high in popliteal fossa, plantar flexion of foot is lost .......... 40
   Incomplete:
      Severe ........................................... 30
      Moderate ....................................... 20
      Mild ............................................. 10
8624 Neuritis.
8724 Neuralgia.

Posterior tibial nerve
8525 Paralysis of:
   Complete; paralysis of all muscles of sole of foot, frequently with painful paralysis of a causalgic nature; toes cannot be flexed; adduction is weakened; plantar flexion is impaired .......... 30
   Incomplete:
      Severe ........................................... 20
      Moderate ....................................... 10
      Mild ............................................. 10
8625 Neuritis.
8725 Neuralgia.

Anterior crural nerve (femoral)
8526 Paralysis of:
   Complete; paralysis of quadriceps extensor muscles .......... 40
   Incomplete:
      Severe ........................................... 30
      Moderate ....................................... 20
      Mild ............................................. 10
8626 Neuritis.
8726 Neuralgia.

Internal saphenous nerve
8527 Paralysis of:
   Severe to complete .......... 10
   Mild to moderate ................. 0
8627 Neuritis.
8727 Neuralgia.

Obturator nerve
8528 Paralysis of:
   Severe to complete .......... 10
   Mild or moderate ................. 0
8628 Neuritis.
8728 Neuralgia.

External cutaneous nerve of thigh
8529 Paralysis of:
   Severe to complete .......... 10
   Mild or moderate ................. 0
8629 Neuritis.
8729 Neuralgia.

Ilio-inguinal nerve
8530 Paralysis of:
   Severe to complete .......... 10
   Mild or moderate ................. 0
8630 Neuritis.
8730 Neuralgia.

8540 Soft-tissue sarcoma (of neurogenic origin) .......... 100

NOTE: The 100 percent rating will be continued for 6 months following the cessation of surgical, X-ray, antineoplastic chemotherapy or other therapeutic procedure. At this point, if there has been no local recurrence or metastases, the rating will be made on residuals.

THE EPILEPSIES

A thorough study of all material in §§4.121 and 4.122 of the preface and under the ratings for epilepsy is necessary prior to any rating action.

8910 Epilepsy, grand mal.
   Rate under the general rating formula for major seizures.
8911 Epilepsy, petit mal.
   Rate under the general rating formula for minor seizures.

NOTE (1): A major seizure is characterized by the generalized tonic-clonic convolution with unconsciousness.

NOTE (2): A minor seizure consists of a brief interruption in consciousness or conscious control associated with staring or rhythmic blinking of the eyes or nodding of the head (“pure” petit mal), or sudden jerking movements of the arms, trunk, or head (myoclonic type) or sudden loss of postural control (akinetic type).

General Rating Formula for Major and Minor Epileptic Seizures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Averaging at least 1 major seizure per month over the last year</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averaging at least 1 major seizure in 3 months over the last year; or more than 10 minor seizures weekly</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averaging at least 1 major seizure in 4 months over the last year; or 9–10 minor seizures per week</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 1 major seizure in the last 6 months or 2 in the last year; or averaging at least 5 to 8 minor seizures weekly</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 1 major seizure in the last 2 years; or at least 2 minor seizures in the last 6 months</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A confirmed diagnosis of epilepsy with a history of seizures .......... 10
Mental Disorders in Epilepsies: A nonpsychotic organic brain syndrome will be rated separately under the appropriate diagnostic code (e.g., 9304 or 9326). In the absence of a diagnosis of nonpsychotic organic psychiatric disturbance (psychotic, psychoneurotic or personality disorder) if diagnosed and shown to be secondary to or directly associated with epilepsy, it will be rated separately. The psychotic or psychoneurotic disorder will be rated under the appropriate diagnostic code (e.g., 9304 or 9326).

Minor seizures:
Psychomotor seizures will be rated as minor seizures under the general rating formula when characterized by brief transient episodes of random motor movements, hallucinations, perceptual illusions, abnormalities of thinking, memory or mood, or autonomic disturbances.

Mental Disorders
§4.125 Diagnosis of mental disorders.
(a) If the diagnosis of a mental disorder does not conform to DSM-IV or is not supported by the findings on the examination report, the rating agency shall return the report to the examiner to substantiate the diagnosis.
(b) If the diagnosis of a mental disorder is changed, the rating agency shall determine whether the new diagnosis represents progression of the prior diagnosis, correction of an error in the prior diagnosis, or development of a new and separate condition. If it is not clear from the available records what the change of diagnosis represents, the rating agency shall return the report to the examiner for a determination.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)
[61 FR 52700, Oct. 8, 1996]

§4.126 Evaluation of disability from mental disorders.
(a) When evaluating a mental disorder, the rating agency shall consider the frequency, severity, and duration of psychiatric symptoms, the length of remissions, and the veteran’s capacity for adjustment during periods of remission. The rating agency shall assign an evaluation based on all the evidence of record that bears on occupational and social impairment rather than solely on the examiner’s assessment of the level of disability at the moment of the examination.

(b) When evaluating the level of disability from a mental disorder, the rating agency will consider the extent of social impairment, but shall not assign an evaluation solely on the basis of social impairment.

(c) Delirium, dementia, and amnestic and other cognitive disorders shall be evaluated under the general rating formula for mental disorders; neurologic
§ 4.127 Mental retardation and personality disorders.

Mental retardation and personality disorders are not diseases or injuries for compensation purposes, and, except as provided in §3.310(a) of this chapter, disability resulting from them may not be service-connected. However, disability resulting from a mental disorder that is superimposed upon mental retardation or a personality disorder may be service-connected.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)
[61 FR 52700, Oct. 8, 1996]

§ 4.129 Mental disorders due to traumatic stress.

When a mental disorder that develops in service as a result of a highly stressful event is severe enough to bring about the veteran’s release from active military service, the rating agency shall assign an evaluation of not less than 50 percent and schedule an examination within the six month period following the veteran’s discharge to determine whether a change in evaluation is warranted.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)
[61 FR 52700, Oct. 8, 1996]

§ 4.130 Schedule of ratings—mental disorders.

The nomenclature employed in this portion of the rating schedule is based upon the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-IV). Rating agencies must be thoroughly familiar with this manual to properly implement the directives in §4.125 through §4.129 and to apply the general rating formula for mental disorders in §4.130. The schedule for rating for mental disorders is set forth as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9201 Schizophrenia, disorganized type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9202 Schizophrenia, catatonic type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9203 Schizophrenia, paranoid type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9204 Schizophrenia, undifferentiated type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9205 Schizophrenia, residual type; other and unspecified types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9208 Delusional disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9210 Psychotic disorder, not otherwise specified (atypical psychosis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9211 Schizoaffective disorder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delirium, Dementia, and Amnestic and Other Cognitive Disorders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9300 Delirium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9301 Dementia due to infection (HIV infection, syphilis, or other systemic or intracranial infections)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9304 Dementia due to head trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9305 Vascular dementia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9310 Dementia of unknown etiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9312 Dementia of the Alzheimer’s type</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Department of Veterans Affairs § 4.130

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9326</td>
<td>Dementia due to other neurologic or general medical conditions (endocrine disorders, metabolic disorders, Pick's disease, brain tumors, etc.) or that are substance-induced (drugs, alcohol, poisons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9327</td>
<td>Organic mental disorder, other (including personality change due to a general medical condition)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Anxiety Disorders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9400</td>
<td>Generalized anxiety disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9403</td>
<td>Specific (simple) phobia; social phobia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9404</td>
<td>Obsessive compulsive disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9410</td>
<td>Other and unspecified neurosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9411</td>
<td>Posttraumatic stress disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9412</td>
<td>Panic disorder and/or agoraphobia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9413</td>
<td>Anxiety disorder, not otherwise specified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Dissociative Disorders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9416</td>
<td>Dissociative amnesia; dissociative fugue; dissociative identity disorder (multiple personality disorder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9417</td>
<td>Depersonalization disorder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Somatoform Disorders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9421</td>
<td>Somatization disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9422</td>
<td>Pain disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9423</td>
<td>Undifferentiated somatoform disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9424</td>
<td>Conversion disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9425</td>
<td>Hypochondriasis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Mood Disorders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9431</td>
<td>Cyclothymic disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9432</td>
<td>Bipolar disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9433</td>
<td>Dysthymic disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9434</td>
<td>Major depressive disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9435</td>
<td>Mood disorder, not otherwise specified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Chronic Adjustment Disorder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9440</td>
<td>Chronic adjustment disorder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Rating Formula for Mental Disorders:**

Total occupational and social impairment, due to such symptoms as: gross impairment in thought processes or communication; persistent delusions or hallucinations; grossly inappropriate behavior; persistent danger of hurting self or others; intermittent inabiilty to perform activities of daily living (including maintenance of minimal personal hygiene); disorientation to time or place; memory loss for names of close relatives, own occupation, or own name ……… 100

Occupational and social impairment, with deficiencies in most areas, such as work, school, family relations, judgment, thinking, or mood, due to such symptoms as: suicidal ideation; obsessional rituals which interfere with routine activities; speech intermittently illogical, obscene, or irrelevant; near-continuous panic or depression affecting the ability to function independently, appropriately and effectively; impaired impulse control (such as unprovoked irritability with periods of violence); spatial disorientation; neglect of personal appearance and hygiene; difficulty in adapting to stressful circumstances (including work or a worklike setting); inability to establish and maintain effective relationships …………… 70

Occupational and social impairment with reduced reliability and productivity due to such symptoms as: flattened affect; circumstantial, circumlocutory, or stereotyped speech; panic attacks more than once a week; difficulty in understanding complex commands; impairment of short- and long-term memory (e.g., retention of only highly learned material, forgetting to complete tasks); impaired judgment; impaired abstract thinking; disturbances of motivation and mood; difficulty in establishing and maintaining effective work and social relationships ………… 50

Occupational and social impairment with occasional decrease in work efficiency and intermittent periods of inability to perform occupational tasks (although generally functioning satisfactorily, with routine behavior, self-care, and conversation normal), due to such symptoms as: depressed mood, anxiety, suspiciousness, panic attacks (weekly or less often), chronic sleep impairment, mild memory loss (such as forgetting names, directions, recent events) ………………… 30

Occupational and social impairment due to mild or transient symptoms which decrease work efficiency and ability to perform occupational tasks only during periods of significant stress, or; symptoms controlled by continuous medication …………………………………………………………… 10

A mental condition has been formally diagnosed, but symptoms are not severe enough either to interfere with occupational and social functioning or to require continuous medication ………… 0

#### Eating Disorders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9520</td>
<td>Anorexia nervosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9521</td>
<td>Bulimia nervosa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DENTAL AND ORAL CONDITIONS

#### § 4.149 Reserved

#### § 4.150 Schedule of ratings—dental and oral conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9900</td>
<td>Maxilla or mandible, chronic osteomyelitis or osteoradionecrosis of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9902</td>
<td>Mandible, loss of approximately one-half:</td>
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<td>Ramus, loss of whole or part of:</td>
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**Rating Formula for Eating Disorders:**

- Self-induced weight loss to less than 80 percent of expected minimum weight, with incapacitating episodes of at least six weeks total duration per year, and requiring hospitalization more than twice a year for parenteral nutrition or tube feeding ................................. 100
- Self-induced weight loss to less than 85 percent of expected minimum weight with incapacitating episodes of six or more weeks total duration per year ................................................. 60
- Binge eating followed by self-induced vomiting or other measures to prevent weight gain, or resistance to weight gain even when below expected minimum weight, with diagnosis of an eating disorder and incapacitating episodes of up to two weeks total duration per year ........................................ 30
- Binge eating followed by self-induced vomiting or other measures to prevent weight gain, or resistance to weight gain even when below expected minimum weight, with diagnosis of an eating disorder but without incapacitating episodes ................................. 0

**NOTE:** An incapacitating episode is a period during which bed rest and treatment by a physician are required.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

[61 FR 57200, Oct. 8, 1996, as amended at 74 FR 18467, Apr. 23, 2009]
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Pt. 4, App. A

Rating  

Severe displacement .......................... 30  
Moderate displacement ........................ 10  
Slight displacement ............................ 0

[50 FR 2530, Jan. 18, 1994]

APPENDIX A TO PART 4—TABLE OF AMENDMENTS AND EFFECTIVE DATES SINCE 1946

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4.114 Introduction paragraph revised March 10, 1976. |

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7306 | Evaluation April 8, 1959. |
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<td>9410</td>
<td>Added March 10, 1976; criterion February 3, 1988; criterion November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9412</td>
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<tr>
<td>9413</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9414</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9415</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9416</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
</tr>
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<td>9417</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9418</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9419</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9420</td>
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<td>9421</td>
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</tr>
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<td>9422</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9423</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9424</td>
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</tr>
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<td>9425</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9426</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9427</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9428</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9429</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9430</td>
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<td>9431</td>
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<tr>
<td>9432</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9433</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9434</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9435</td>
<td>Added November 7, 1996.</td>
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<td>9440</td>
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<tr>
<td>9503</td>
<td>Removed March 10, 1976.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9504</td>
<td>Criterion September 9, 1975; removed March 10, 1976.</td>
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</table>
### Diagnostic Code No.

**THE MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM**

*Acute, Subacute, or Chronic Diseases*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sec.</th>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5000</td>
<td>Osteomyelitis, acute, subacute, or chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5001</td>
<td>Bones and Joints, tuberculosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5002</td>
<td>Arthritis, rheumatoid (atrophic).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5003</td>
<td>Arthritis, degenerative (hypertrophic or osteoarthritis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5004</td>
<td>Arthritis, gonorrheal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5005</td>
<td>Arthritis, pneumococcic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5006</td>
<td>Arthritis, typhoid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5007</td>
<td>Arthritis, syphilitic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5008</td>
<td>Arthritis, streptococcic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5009</td>
<td>Arthritis, other types (specify).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5010</td>
<td>Arthritis, due to trauma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5011</td>
<td>Bones, caisson disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5012</td>
<td>Bones, new growths, malignant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5013</td>
<td>Osteoporosis, with joint manifestations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5014</td>
<td>Osteomalacia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5015</td>
<td>Bones, new growths, benign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5016</td>
<td>Osteitis deformans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5017</td>
<td>Gout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5018</td>
<td>Hydrolarthrosis, intermittent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5019</td>
<td>Bursitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5020</td>
<td>Synovitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5021</td>
<td>Myositis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5022</td>
<td>Periostitis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5023</td>
<td>Myositis ossificans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5024</td>
<td>Tenosynovitis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5025</td>
<td>Fibromyalgia.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Prosthetic Implants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sec.</th>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5051</td>
<td>Shoulder replacement (prosthesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5052</td>
<td>Elbow replacement (prosthesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5053</td>
<td>Wrist replacement (prosthesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5054</td>
<td>Hip replacement (prosthesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5055</td>
<td>Knee replacement (prosthesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5056</td>
<td>Ankle replacement (prosthesis).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Combination of Disabilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sec.</th>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5104</td>
<td>Anatomical loss of one hand and loss of use of one foot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5105</td>
<td>Anatomical loss of one foot and loss of use of one hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5106</td>
<td>Anatomical loss of both hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5107</td>
<td>Anatomical loss of both feet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5108</td>
<td>Anatomical loss of one hand and one foot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5109</td>
<td>Loss of use of both hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5110</td>
<td>Loss of use of both feet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Diagnostic Code No.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5111</td>
<td>Loss of use of one hand and one foot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Amputations: Upper Extremity

**Arm amputation of:**
- 5120: Disarticulation.
- 5121: Above insertion of deltoid.
- 5122: Below insertion of deltoid.

**Forearm amputation of:**
- 5123: Above insertion of pronator teres.
- 5124: Below insertion of pronator teres.
- 5125: Hand, loss of use of.

### Multiple Finger Amputations

**Five digits of one hand:**
- 5126

**Four digits of one hand:**
- 5127: Thumb, index, long and ring.
- 5128: Thumb, index, long and little.
- 5129: Thumb, index, ring and little.
- 5130: Thumb, long, ring and little.
- 5131: Index, long, ring and little.

**Three digits of one hand:**
- 5132
- 5133: Thumb, index and ring.
- 5134: Thumb, index and little.
- 5135: Thumb, long and ring.
- 5136: Thumb, long and little.
- 5137: Thumb, ring and little.
- 5138: Index, long and ring.
- 5139: Index, long and little.
- 5140: Index, ring and little.
- 5141: Long, ring and little.

**Two digits of one hand:**
- 5142: Thumb and index.
- 5143: Thumb and long.
- 5144: Thumb and ring.
- 5145: Thumb and little.
- 5146: Index and long.
- 5147: Index and ring.
- 5148: Index and little.
- 5149: Long and ring.
- 5150: Long and little.
- 5151: Ring and little.

**Single finger:**
- 5152: Thumb.
- 5153: Index finger.
- 5154: Long finger.
- 5155: Ring finger.
- 5156: Little finger.

### Amputations: Lower Extremity

**Thigh amputation of:**
- 5160: Disarticulation.
- 5161: Upper third.
- 5162: Middle or lower thirds.

**Leg amputation of:**
- 5163: With defective stump.
- 5164: Not improvable by prosthesis controlled by natural knee action.
- 5165: At a lower level, permitting prosthesis.
- 5166: Forefoot, proximal to metatarsal bones.
- 5167: Foot, loss of use of.
- 5170: Toes, all, without metatarsal loss.
- 5171: Toe, great.
- 5172: Toes, other than great, with removal of metatarsal head.
- 5173: Toes, three or more, without metatarsal involvement.
### Shoulder and Arm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5200</td>
<td>Scapulohumeral articulation, ankylosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5201</td>
<td>Arm, limitation of motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5202</td>
<td>Humerus, other impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5203</td>
<td>Clavicle or scapula, impairment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Elbow and Forearm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5205</td>
<td>Elbow, ankylosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5206</td>
<td>Forearm, limitation of flexion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5207</td>
<td>Forearm, limitation of extension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5208</td>
<td>Forearm, flexion limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5209</td>
<td>Elbow, other impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5210</td>
<td>Radius and ulna, nonunion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5211</td>
<td>Ulna, impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5212</td>
<td>Radius, impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5213</td>
<td>Supination and pronation, impairment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Wrist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5214</td>
<td>Wrist, ankylosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5215</td>
<td>Wrist, limitation of motion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Limitation of Motion

#### Multiple Digits: Unfavorable Ankylosis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5216</td>
<td>Five digits of one hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5217</td>
<td>Four digits of one hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5218</td>
<td>Three digits of one hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5219</td>
<td>Two digits of one hand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Multiple Digits: Favorable Ankylosis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5220</td>
<td>Five digits of one hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5221</td>
<td>Four digits of one hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5222</td>
<td>Three digits of one hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5223</td>
<td>Two digits of one hand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Ankylosis of Individual Digits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5224</td>
<td>Thumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5225</td>
<td>Index finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5226</td>
<td>Long finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5227</td>
<td>Ring or little finger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Limitation of Motion of Individual Digits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5228</td>
<td>Thumb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5229</td>
<td>Index or long finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5230</td>
<td>Ring or little finger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Spine

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5235</td>
<td>Vertebral fracture or dislocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5236</td>
<td>Sacrolilac injury and weakness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5237</td>
<td>Lumbosacral or cervical strain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5238</td>
<td>Spinal stenosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5239</td>
<td>Spondylolisthesis or segmental instability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5240</td>
<td>Ankylosing spondylitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5241</td>
<td>Spinal fusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5242</td>
<td>Degenerative arthritis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5243</td>
<td>Intervertebral disc syndrome.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hip and Thigh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5250</td>
<td>Hip, ankylosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5251</td>
<td>Thigh, limitation of extension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5252</td>
<td>Thigh, limitation of flexion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5253</td>
<td>Thigh, impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5254</td>
<td>Hip, flexion joint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5255</td>
<td>Femur, impairment.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Knee and Leg

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5256</td>
<td>Knee, ankylosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5257</td>
<td>Knee, other impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Code No.</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5258</td>
<td>Cartilage, semilunar, dislocated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5259</td>
<td>Cartilage, semilunar, removal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5260</td>
<td>Leg, limitation of flexion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5261</td>
<td>Leg, limitation of extension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5262</td>
<td>Tibia and fibula, impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5263</td>
<td>Genu recurvatum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5270</td>
<td>Ankle, ankylosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5271</td>
<td>Ankle, limited motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5272</td>
<td>Subastragalar or tarsal joint, ankylosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5273</td>
<td>Os calcis or astragalus, malunion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5274</td>
<td>Astragalectomy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5275</td>
<td>Bones of the lower extremity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5276</td>
<td>Flatfoot, acquired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5277</td>
<td>Weak foot, bilateral.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5278</td>
<td>Claw foot (pes cavus), acquired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5279</td>
<td>Metatarsalgia, anterior (Morton’s disease).</td>
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<tr>
<td>5280</td>
<td>Hallux valgus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5281</td>
<td>Hallux rigidus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5282</td>
<td>Hammer toe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5283</td>
<td>Tarsal or metatarsal bones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5284</td>
<td>Foot injuries, other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5296</td>
<td>Loss of part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5297</td>
<td>Removal of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5298</td>
<td>Removal of.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### MUSCLE INJURIES

#### Shoulder Girdle and Arm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5301</td>
<td>Group I Function: Upward rotation of scapula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5302</td>
<td>Group II Function: Depression of arm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5303</td>
<td>Group III Function: Elevation and abduction of arm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5304</td>
<td>Group IV Function: Stabilization of shoulder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5305</td>
<td>Group V Function: Elbow supination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5306</td>
<td>Group VI Function: Extension of elbow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Forearm and Hand
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5307</td>
<td>Group VII Function: Flexion of wrist and fingers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5308</td>
<td>Group VIII Function: Extension of wrist, fingers, thumb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5309</td>
<td>Group IX Function: Forearm muscles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Foot and Leg
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5310</td>
<td>Group X Function: Movement of forefoot and toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5311</td>
<td>Group XI Function: Propulsion of foot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5312</td>
<td>Group XII Function: Dorsiflexion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pelvic Girdle and Thigh
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5313</td>
<td>Group XIII Function: Extension of hip and flexion of knee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5314</td>
<td>Group XIV Function: Extension of knee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5315</td>
<td>Group XV Function: Adduction of hip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5316</td>
<td>Group XVI Function: Flexion of hip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5317</td>
<td>Group XVII Function: Extension of hip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5318</td>
<td>Group XVIII Function: Outward rotation of thigh.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Department of Veterans Affairs

#### Pt. 4, App. B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Torso and Neck</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5319</td>
<td>Group XIX Function: Abdominal wall and lower thorax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5320</td>
<td>Group XX Function: Postural support of body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5321</td>
<td>Group XXII Function: Respiration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5322</td>
<td>Group XXII Function: Rotary and forward movements, head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5323</td>
<td>Group XXIII Function: Movements of head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5324</td>
<td>Diaphragm, rupture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5325</td>
<td>Muscle injury, facial muscles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5326</td>
<td>Muscle hernia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5327</td>
<td>Muscle, neoplasm of, malignant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5328</td>
<td>Muscle, neoplasm of, benign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5329</td>
<td>Sarcoma, soft tissue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE EYE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Diseases of the Eye

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6000</td>
<td>Uveitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6001</td>
<td>Keratitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6002</td>
<td>Scleritis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6003</td>
<td>Iritis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6004</td>
<td>Cyclitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6005</td>
<td>Chorioiditis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6006</td>
<td>Retinitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6007</td>
<td>Hemorrhage, intra-ocular, recent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6008</td>
<td>Retina, detachment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6009</td>
<td>Eye, injury of, unhealed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6010</td>
<td>Eye, tuberculosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6011</td>
<td>Retina, localized scars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6012</td>
<td>Glaucoma, congestive or inflammatory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6013</td>
<td>Glaucoma, simple, primary, noncongestive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6014</td>
<td>New growths, malignant, eyeball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6015</td>
<td>New growths, benign, eyeball and adnexa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6016</td>
<td>Nystagmus, central.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6017</td>
<td>Conjunctivitis, trachomatous, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6018</td>
<td>Conjunctivitis, other, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6019</td>
<td>Ptosis unilateral or bilateral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6020</td>
<td>Ectropion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6021</td>
<td>Entropion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6022</td>
<td>Lagophthalmos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6023</td>
<td>Eyebrows, loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6024</td>
<td>Eyelashes, loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6025</td>
<td>Epiphora.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6026</td>
<td>Neuritis, optic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6027</td>
<td>Cataract, traumatic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6028</td>
<td>Cataract, senile, and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6029</td>
<td>Aphaia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6030</td>
<td>Accommodation, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6031</td>
<td>Dacryocystitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6032</td>
<td>Eyelids, loss of portion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6033</td>
<td>Lens, crystalline, dislocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6034</td>
<td>Pharygium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6035</td>
<td>Keratoconus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Impairment of Central Visual Acuity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6061</td>
<td>Anatomical loss both eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6062</td>
<td>Blindness, both eyes, only light perception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anatomical loss of 1 eye:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6063</td>
<td>Other eye 5/200 (1.5/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6064</td>
<td>Other eye 10/200 (3/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6065</td>
<td>Other eye 15/200 (4.5/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6066</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6067</td>
<td>Other eye 20/100 (6/30).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6068</td>
<td>Other eye 20/70 (6/21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6069</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6070</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blindness in 1 eye, only light perception:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6071</td>
<td>Other eye 5/200 (1.5/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6072</td>
<td>Other eye 10/200 (3/60).</td>
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### Diagnostic Code No.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6068</td>
<td>Other eye 15/200 (4.5/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6069</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6070</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6071</td>
<td>Other eye 20/100 (6/30).</td>
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<tr>
<td>6072</td>
<td>Other eye 20/70 (6/21).</td>
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<tr>
<td>6073</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6074</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6075</td>
<td>Other eye 20/100 (6/30).</td>
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<tr>
<td>6076</td>
<td>Other eye 20/70 (6/21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6077</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Vision in 1 eye 5/200 (1.5/60):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6078</td>
<td>Other eye 5/200 (1.5/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6079</td>
<td>Other eye 10/200 (3/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6080</td>
<td>Other eye 15/200 (4.5/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6081</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
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<tr>
<td>6082</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6083</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6084</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6085</td>
<td>Other eye 20/100 (6/30).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6086</td>
<td>Other eye 20/70 (6/21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6087</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6088</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
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</table>

### Vision in 1 eye 10/200 (3/60):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6089</td>
<td>Other eye 15/200 (4.5/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6090</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6091</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6092</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6093</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6094</td>
<td>Other eye 20/100 (6/30).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6095</td>
<td>Other eye 20/70 (6/21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6096</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6097</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vision in 1 eye 15/200 (4.5/60):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6098</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6099</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6100</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6101</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6102</td>
<td>Other eye 20/100 (6/30).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6103</td>
<td>Other eye 20/70 (6/21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6104</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6105</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vision in 1 eye 20/200 (6/60):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6106</td>
<td>Other eye 20/100 (6/30).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6107</td>
<td>Other eye 20/70 (6/21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6108</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6109</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vision in 1 eye 20/100 (6/30):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6110</td>
<td>Other eye 20/70 (6/21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6111</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6112</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vision in 1 eye 20/70 (6/21):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6113</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6114</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vision in 1 eye 20/50 (6/15):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6115</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vision in 1 eye 20/40 (6/12):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6116</td>
<td>Other eye 20/200 (6/60).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6117</td>
<td>Other eye 20/100 (6/30).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6118</td>
<td>Other eye 20/70 (6/21).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6119</td>
<td>Other eye 20/50 (6/15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6120</td>
<td>Other eye 20/40 (6/12).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Impairment of Field Vision:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6121</td>
<td>Field vision, impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6122</td>
<td>Scotoma.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Impairment of Muscle Function:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6123</td>
<td>Diplopia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6124</td>
<td>Symblepharon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6125</td>
<td>Diplopia, limited muscle function.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THE EAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6126</td>
<td>Chronic suppurative otitis media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6127</td>
<td>Chronic nonsuppurative otitis media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6128</td>
<td>Otosclerosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6129</td>
<td>Peripheral vestibular disorders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6130</td>
<td>Meniere's syndrome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6131</td>
<td>Loss of auricle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6132</td>
<td>Malignant neoplasm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6133</td>
<td>Benign neoplasm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Pt. 4, App. B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6210</td>
<td>Chronic otitis externa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6211</td>
<td>Tympanic membrane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6260</td>
<td>Tinnitus, recurrent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER SENSE ORGANS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6275</td>
<td>Smell, complete loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6276</td>
<td>Taste, complete loss.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INFECTION DISEASES, IMMUNE DISORDERS AND NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6300</td>
<td>Cholera, Asiatic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6301</td>
<td>Visceral Leishmaniasis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6302</td>
<td>Leprosy (Hansen's Disease).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6304</td>
<td>Malaria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6305</td>
<td>Lymphatic Filariasis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6306</td>
<td>Bartinellosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6307</td>
<td>P赎回.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6308</td>
<td>Relapsing fever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6309</td>
<td>Rheumatic fever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6310</td>
<td>Syphilis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6311</td>
<td>Tuberculosis, miliary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6313</td>
<td>Avitaminosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6314</td>
<td>Beriberi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6315</td>
<td>Pellagra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6316</td>
<td>Brucellosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6317</td>
<td>Typhus, scrub.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6318</td>
<td>Meliodosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6319</td>
<td>Lyme disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6320</td>
<td>Parasitic diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6350</td>
<td>Avitaminosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6351</td>
<td>HIV-Related Illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6354</td>
<td>Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM**

**Nose and Throat**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6502</td>
<td>Septum, nasal, deviation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6504</td>
<td>Nose, loss of part of, or scars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6510</td>
<td>Sinusitis, pan sinusitis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6511</td>
<td>Sinusitis, ethmoid, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6512</td>
<td>Sinusitis, frontal, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6513</td>
<td>Sinusitis, maxillary, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6514</td>
<td>Sinusitis, sphenoid, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6515</td>
<td>Laryngitis, tuberculosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6516</td>
<td>Laryngitis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6518</td>
<td>Laryngectomy, total.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6519</td>
<td>Aphonia, complete organic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6520</td>
<td>Larynx, stenosis of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6521</td>
<td>Pharynx, injuries to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6522</td>
<td>Allergic or vasomotor rhinitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6523</td>
<td>Bacterial rhinitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6524</td>
<td>Granulomatous rhinitis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trachea and Bronchi**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6600</td>
<td>Bronchitis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6601</td>
<td>Bronchoceleiosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6602</td>
<td>Asthma, bronchial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6603</td>
<td>Emphysema, pulmonary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6604</td>
<td>Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lungs and Pleura Tuberculosis**

Ratings for Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Chronic) Entitled on August 19, 1968:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6701</td>
<td>Active, far advanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6702</td>
<td>Active, moderately advanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6703</td>
<td>Active, minimal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6704</td>
<td>Active, advancement unspecified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6721</td>
<td>Inactive, far advanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6722</td>
<td>Inactive, moderately advanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6723</td>
<td>Inactive, minimal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6724</td>
<td>Inactive, advancement unspecified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ratings for Pulmonary Tuberculosis Initially Evaluated After August 19, 1968:
### Nontuberculous Diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6817</td>
<td>Pulmonary Vascular Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6820</td>
<td>Neoplasms, benign.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bacterial Infections of the Lung

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6822</td>
<td>Actinomycosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6823</td>
<td>Nocardiosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6824</td>
<td>Chronic lung abscess</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Interstitial Lung Disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6825</td>
<td>Fibrosis of lung, diffuse interstitial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6826</td>
<td>Desquamative interstitial pneumonitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6827</td>
<td>Pulmonary alveolar proteinosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6828</td>
<td>Eosinophilic granuloma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6829</td>
<td>Drug-induced, pneumonitis &amp; fibrosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6830</td>
<td>Radiation-induced, pneumonitis &amp; fibrosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6831</td>
<td>Hypersensitivity pneumonitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6832</td>
<td>Pneumococcosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6833</td>
<td>Asbestosis</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Mycotic Lung Disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6834</td>
<td>Histoplasmosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6835</td>
<td>Coccidioidomycosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6836</td>
<td>Blastomycosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6837</td>
<td>Cryptococcosis</td>
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<td>6838</td>
<td>Aspergillosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6839</td>
<td>Mucormycosis</td>
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</table>

### Restrictive Lung Disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6840</td>
<td>Diaphragm paralysis or paresis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6841</td>
<td>Spinal cord injury with respiratory insufficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6842</td>
<td>Kyphoscoliosis, pectus excavatum/carinatum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6843</td>
<td>Traumatic chest wall defect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6844</td>
<td>Post-surgical residual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6845</td>
<td>Pleural effusion or fibrosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6846</td>
<td>Sarcoïdosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6847</td>
<td>Sleep Apnea Syndromes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Diseases of the Heart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7000</td>
<td>Valvular heart disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7001</td>
<td>Endocarditis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7002</td>
<td>Pericarditis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7003</td>
<td>Pericardial adhesions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7004</td>
<td>Syphilitic heart disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7005</td>
<td>Arteriosclerotic heart disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7006</td>
<td>Myocardial infarction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7007</td>
<td>Hypertensive heart disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7008</td>
<td>Hyperthyroid heart disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7010</td>
<td>Supraventricular arrhythmias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7011</td>
<td>Ventricular arrhythmias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7015</td>
<td>Atrialventricular block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7016</td>
<td>Heart valve replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7017</td>
<td>Coronary bypass surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7018</td>
<td>Implantable cardiac pacemakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7019</td>
<td>Cardiac transplantation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7020</td>
<td>Cardiomyopathy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Diseases of the Arteries and Veins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7101</td>
<td>Hypertensive vascular disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7110</td>
<td>Aortic aneurysm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7111</td>
<td>Aneurysm, large artery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7112</td>
<td>Aneurysm, small artery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Code No.</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7113</td>
<td>Arteriovenous fistula, traumatic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7114</td>
<td>Arteriosclerosis obliterans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7115</td>
<td>Thrombo-angiitis obliterans (Buerger’s Disease).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7117</td>
<td>Raynaud’s syndrome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7118</td>
<td>Angioneurotic edema.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7119</td>
<td>Erythromelalgia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7120</td>
<td>Varicose veins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7121</td>
<td>Post-phlebitic syndrome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7122</td>
<td>Cold injury residuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7123</td>
<td>Soft tissue sarcoma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7200</td>
<td>Mouth, injuries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7201</td>
<td>Lips, injuries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7202</td>
<td>Tongue, loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7203</td>
<td>Esophagus, stricture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7204</td>
<td>Esophagus, spasm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7205</td>
<td>Esophagus, diverticulum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7301</td>
<td>Peritoneum, adhesions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7304</td>
<td>Ulcer, gastric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7306</td>
<td>Ulcer, duodenal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7308</td>
<td>Gastritis, hypertrophic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7309</td>
<td>Stomach, stenosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7310</td>
<td>Stomach, injury of, residuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7311</td>
<td>Liver, injury of, residuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7312</td>
<td>Liver, cirrhosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7314</td>
<td>Cholecystitis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7315</td>
<td>Choledolithiasis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7316</td>
<td>Cholangitis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7317</td>
<td>Gall bladder, injury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7318</td>
<td>Gall bladder, removal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7319</td>
<td>Colon, irritable syndrome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7321</td>
<td>Amebiasis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7322</td>
<td>Dysentery, bacillary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7323</td>
<td>Colitis, ulcerative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7324</td>
<td>Distomiasis, intestinal or hepatic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7325</td>
<td>Enteritis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7326</td>
<td>Enterococcal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7327</td>
<td>Diverticulitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7328</td>
<td>Intestine, small, resection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7329</td>
<td>Intestine, large, resection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7330</td>
<td>Intestine, fistula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7331</td>
<td>Peritonitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7332</td>
<td>Rectum &amp; anus, impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7333</td>
<td>Rectum &amp; anus, stricture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7334</td>
<td>Rectum, prolapse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7335</td>
<td>Ano, fistula in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7336</td>
<td>Hemorrhoids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7337</td>
<td>Pruritus ani.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7338</td>
<td>Hernia, inguinal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7340</td>
<td>Hernia, ventral, postoperative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7342</td>
<td>Visceroptosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7343</td>
<td>Neoplasms, malignant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7344</td>
<td>Neoplasms, benign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7345</td>
<td>Liver disease, chronic, without cirrhosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7346</td>
<td>Hernia, hiatal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7347</td>
<td>Pancreatitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7348</td>
<td>Vagotomy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7351</td>
<td>Liver transplant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7354</td>
<td>Hepatitis C.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

THE GENITOURINARY SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7500</td>
<td>Kidney, removal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7501</td>
<td>Kidney, abscess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7502</td>
<td>Nephritis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7504</td>
<td>Pyelonephritis, chronic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7505</td>
<td>Kidney, tuberculosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7507</td>
<td>Nephrosclerosis, arteriolar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7508</td>
<td>Nephrolithiasis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagnostic Code No. | Description
--- | ---
7509 | Hydronephrosis.
7510 | Ureterolithiasis.
7511 | Ureter, stricture.
7512 | Bladder, calculus.
7516 | Bladder, fistula.
7517 | Bladder, injury.
7518 | Urethra, stricture.
7519 | Urethra, fistula.
7520 | Penis, removal of half or more.
7521 | Penis, removal of glans.
7522 | Penis, deformity, with loss of erectile power.
7523 | Testis, atrophy, complete.
7524 | Testis, removal.
7525 | Epididymo-orchitis, chronic only.
7527 | Prostate gland.
7528 | Malignant neoplasms.
7529 | Benign neoplasms.
7530 | Renal disease, chronic.
7531 | Kidney transplant.
7532 | Renal tubular disorders.
7533 | Kidneys, cystic diseases.
7534 | Atherosclerotic renal disease.
7535 | Toxic nephropathy.
7536 | Glomerulonephritis.
7537 | Interstitial nephritis.
7538 | Papillary necrosis.
7539 | Renal amyloid disease.
7540 | Disseminated intravascular coagulation.
7541 | Renal involvement in systemic diseases.
7542 | Neurogenic bladder.

GYNECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS AND DISORDERS OF THE BREAST

7610 | Vulva, disease or injury.
7611 | Vagina, disease or injury.
7612 | Cervix, disease or injury.
7613 | Uterus, disease or injury.
7614 | Fallopian tube, disease or injury.
7615 | Ovary, disease or injury.
7617 | Uterus and both ovaries, removal.
7618 | Uterus, removal.
7619 | Ovary, removal.
7620 | Ovaries, atrophy of both.
7621 | Uterus, prolapse.
7622 | Uterus, displacement.
7623 | Pregnancy, surgical complications.
7624 | Fistula, rectovaginal.
7625 | Fistula, urethrovaginal.
7626 | Breast, surgery.
7627 | Malignant neoplasms.
7628 | Benign neoplasms.
7629 | Endometriosis.

THE HEMIC AND LYMPHATIC SYSTEMS

7700 | Anemia.
7702 | Agranulocytosis, acute.
7703 | Leukemia.
7704 | Polycythemia vera.
7705 | Thrombocytopenia.
7706 | Splenectomy.
7707 | Spleen, injury of, healed.
7709 | Hodgkin’s disease.
7710 | Adenitis, tuberculous.
7714 | Sickle cell anemia.
7715 | Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.
7716 | Aplastic anemia.

THE SKIN

7800 | Burn scar(s) of the head, face, or neck; scar(s) of the head, face, or neck due to other causes; or other disfigurement of the head, face, or neck.
7801 | Burn scar(s) or scar(s) due to other causes, not of the head, face, or neck, that are deep and nonlinear.
### Department of Veterans Affairs

**Pt. 4, App. B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7802</td>
<td>Burn scar(s) or scar(s) due to other causes, not of the head, face, or neck, that are superficial and nonlinear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7804</td>
<td>Scar(s), unstable or painful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7805</td>
<td>Scars, other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7806</td>
<td>Dermatitis or eczema.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7807</td>
<td>Leishmaniasis, American (New World).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7808</td>
<td>Leishmaniasis, Old World.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7809</td>
<td>Lupus erythematosus, discoid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7811</td>
<td>Tuberculosis luposa (lupus vulgaris).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7813</td>
<td>Dermatophytosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7815</td>
<td>Bullous disorders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7816</td>
<td>Psoriasis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7817</td>
<td>Exfoliative dermatitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7818</td>
<td>Malignant skin neoplasms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7819</td>
<td>Benign skin neoplasms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7820</td>
<td>Infections of the skin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7821</td>
<td>Cutaneous manifestations of collagen-vascular diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7822</td>
<td>Papulosquamous disorders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7823</td>
<td>Vitiligo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7824</td>
<td>Keratinization, diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7825</td>
<td>Urticaria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7826</td>
<td>Vasculitis, primary cutaneous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7827</td>
<td>Erythema multiforme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7828</td>
<td>Acne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7829</td>
<td>Chloracne.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7830</td>
<td>Scarring alopecia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7831</td>
<td>Alopecia areata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7832</td>
<td>Hyperhidrosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7833</td>
<td>Malignant melanoma.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7900</td>
<td>Hyperthyroidism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7901</td>
<td>Thyroid gland, toxic adenoma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7902</td>
<td>Thyroid gland, nontoxic adenoma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7903</td>
<td>Hyperthyroidism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7904</td>
<td>Hypoparathyroidism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7905</td>
<td>Hyperparathyroidism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7907</td>
<td>Cushing's syndrome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7908</td>
<td>Acromegaly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7909</td>
<td>Diabetes insipidus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7911</td>
<td>Addison's disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7912</td>
<td>Pluriandular syndrome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7913</td>
<td>Diabetes mellitus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7914</td>
<td>Malignant neoplasm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7915</td>
<td>Benign neoplasm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7916</td>
<td>Hyperparathyroidism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7917</td>
<td>Hyperplasia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7918</td>
<td>Pheochromocytoma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7919</td>
<td>C-cell hyperplasia, thyroid.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS AND CONVULSIVE DISORDERS

**Organic Diseases of the Central Nervous System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8000</td>
<td>Encephalitis, epidemic, chronic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Brain, New Growth of**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Code No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8002</td>
<td>Malignant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8003</td>
<td>Benign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8004</td>
<td>Paralysis agitans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8005</td>
<td>Bulbar palsy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8007</td>
<td>Brain, vessels, embolism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8008</td>
<td>Brain, vessels, thrombosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8009</td>
<td>Brain, vessels, hemorrhage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8010</td>
<td>Myelitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8011</td>
<td>Poliomyelitis, anterior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8012</td>
<td>Hematomyelia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8013</td>
<td>Syphilis, cerebrospinal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8014</td>
<td>Syphilis, meningovascular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8015</td>
<td>Tabes dorsalis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8017</td>
<td>Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8018</td>
<td>Multiple sclerosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8019</td>
<td>Meningitis, cerebrospinal, epidemic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Diagnostic Code No.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>480</td>
<td>Brain, abscess.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Spinal Cord, New Growths

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8021</td>
<td>Malignant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8022</td>
<td>Benign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8023</td>
<td>Progressive muscular atrophy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8024</td>
<td>Syringomyelia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8025</td>
<td>Myasthenia gravis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8045</td>
<td>Residuals of traumatic brain injury (TBI).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8046</td>
<td>Cerebral arteriosclerosis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Miscellaneous Diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8100</td>
<td>Migraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8103</td>
<td>Tic, convulsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8104</td>
<td>Paramyoclonus multiplex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8105</td>
<td>Chorea, Sydenham's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8106</td>
<td>Chorea, Huntington's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8107</td>
<td>Athetosis, acquired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8108</td>
<td>Narcolepsy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### The Cranial Nerves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8205</td>
<td>Fifth (trigeminal), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8207</td>
<td>Seventh (facial), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8209</td>
<td>Ninth (glossopharyngeal), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8210</td>
<td>Tenth (pneumogastric, vagus), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8211</td>
<td>Eleventh (spinal accessory, external branch), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8212</td>
<td>Twelfth (hypoglossal), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8305</td>
<td>Neuritis, fifth cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8307</td>
<td>Neuritis, seventh cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8309</td>
<td>Neuritis, ninth cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8310</td>
<td>Neuritis, tenth cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8311</td>
<td>Neuritis, eleventh cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8312</td>
<td>Neuritis, twelfth cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8405</td>
<td>Neuralgia, fifth cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8407</td>
<td>Neuralgia, seventh cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8409</td>
<td>Neuralgia, ninth cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8410</td>
<td>Neuralgia, tenth cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8411</td>
<td>Neuralgia, eleventh cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8412</td>
<td>Neuralgia, twelfth cranial nerve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Peripheral Nerves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8510</td>
<td>Upper radicular group, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8511</td>
<td>Middle radicular group, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8512</td>
<td>Lower radicular group, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8513</td>
<td>All radicular groups, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8514</td>
<td>Musculospinal nerve (radial), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8515</td>
<td>Median nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8516</td>
<td>Ulnar nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8517</td>
<td>Musculocutaneous nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8518</td>
<td>Circumflex nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8519</td>
<td>Long thoracic nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8520</td>
<td>Sciatic nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8521</td>
<td>External popliteal nerve (common peroneal), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8522</td>
<td>Musculocutaneous nerve (superficial peroneal), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8523</td>
<td>Anterior tibial nerve (deep peroneal), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8524</td>
<td>Internal popliteal nerve (tibial), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8525</td>
<td>Posterior tibial nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8526</td>
<td>Anterior crural nerve (femoral), paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8527</td>
<td>Internal saphenous nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8528</td>
<td>Obturator nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8529</td>
<td>External cutaneous nerve of thigh, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8530</td>
<td>Ilio-inguinal nerve, paralysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8540</td>
<td>Soft-tissue sarcoma (Neurogenic origin).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8610</td>
<td>Neuritis, upper radicular group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8611</td>
<td>Neuritis, middle radicular group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8612</td>
<td>Neuritis, lower radicular group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8613</td>
<td>Neuritis, all radicular group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8614</td>
<td>Neuritis, musculospinal (radial) nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8615</td>
<td>Neuritis, median nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8616</td>
<td>Neuritis, ulnar nerve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8617</td>
<td>Neuritis, musculocutaneous nerve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagnostic Code No. | Condition
--- | ---
8618 | Neuritis, circumflex nerve.
8619 | Neuritis, long thoracic nerve.
8620 | Neuritis, sciatric nerve.
8621 | Neuritis, external popliteal (common peroneal) nerve.
8622 | Neuritis, musculocutaneous (superficial peroneal) nerve.
8623 | Neuritis, anterior tibial (deep peroneal) nerve.
8624 | Neuritis, internal popliteal (tibial) nerve.
8625 | Neuritis, posterior tibial nerve.
8626 | Neuritis, anterior crural (femoral) nerve.
8627 | Neuritis, internal saphenous nerve.
8628 | Neuritis, obturator nerve.
8629 | Neuritis, external cutaneous nerve of thigh.
8630 | Neuritis, ilio-inguinal nerve.
8710 | Neuralgia, upper radicular group.
8711 | Neuralgia, middle radicular group.
8712 | Neuralgia, lower radicular group.
8713 | Neuralgia, all radicular groups.
8714 | Neuralgia, musculospinal nerve (radial).
8715 | Neuralgia, median nerve.
8716 | Neuralgia, ulnar nerve.
8717 | Neuralgia, musculocutaneous nerve.
8718 | Neuralgia, circumflex nerve.
8719 | Neuralgia, long thoracic nerve.
8720 | Neuralgia, sciatric nerve.
8721 | Neuralgia, external popliteal nerve (common peroneal).
8722 | Neuralgia, musculocutaneous nerve (superficial peroneal).
8723 | Neuralgia, anterior tibial nerve (deep peroneal).
8724 | Neuralgia, internal popliteal nerve (tibial).
8725 | Neuralgia, posterior tibial nerve.
8726 | Neuralgia, anterior crural nerve (femoral).
8727 | Neuralgia, internal saphenous nerve.
8728 | Neuralgia, obturator nerve.
8729 | Neuralgia, external cutaneous nerve of thigh.
8730 | Neuralgia, ilio-inguinal nerve.

The Epilepsies

8910 | Grand mal.
8911 | Petit mal.
8912 | Jacksonian and focal motor or sensory.
8913 | Diencephalic.
8914 | Psychomotor.

Mental Disorders

9201 | Schizophrenia, disorganized type.
9202 | Schizophrenia, catatonic type.
9203 | Schizophrenia, paranoid type.
9204 | Schizophrenia, undifferentiated type.
9205 | Schizophrenia, residual type.
9208 | Delusional disorder.
9210 | Psychotic disorder.
9211 | Schizoaffective disorder.

Delirium, Dementia, Amnestic and Other Cognitive Disorders

9300 | Delirium.
9301 | Dementia due to infection.
9304 | Dementia due to head trauma.
9305 | Vascular dementia.
9310 | Dementia of unknown etiology.
9312 | Dementia of Alzheimer’s type.
9326 | Dementia due to other medical conditions.
9327 | Organic mental disorder.

Anxiety Disorders

9400 | Generalized anxiety disorder.
9403 | Specific (simple) phobia.
9404 | Obsessive compulsive disorder.
9410 | Other and unspecified neurosis.
9411 | Posttraumatic stress disorder.
9412 | Panic disorder.
9413 | Anxiety disorder, not otherwise specified.
### Diagnostic Codes

#### Dissociative Disorder
- **9416**: Amnesia, fugue, identity disorder.
- **9417**: Depersonalization disorder.

#### Somatoform Disorders
- **9421**: Somatization disorder.
- **9422**: Pain disorder.
- **9423**: Undifferentiated somatoform disorder.
- **9424**: Conversion disorder.
- **9425**: Hypochondriasis.

#### Mood Disorders
- **9431**: Cyclothymic disorder.
- **9432**: Bipolar disorder.
- **9433**: Dysthymic disorder.
- **9434**: Major depressive disorder.
- **9435**: Mood disorder not otherwise specified.

#### Chronic Adjustment Disorder
- **9440**: Chronic adjustment disorder.

#### Eating Disorders
- **9520**: Anorexia nervosa.
- **9521**: Bulimia nervosa.

#### DENTAL AND ORAL CONDITIONS
- **9900**: Maxilla or mandible, chronic.
- **9901**: Mandible, loss of, complete.
- **9902**: Mandible, loss of approximately one-half.
- **9903**: Mandible, nonunion.
- **9904**: Mandible, malunion.
- **9905**: Temporomandibular articulation, limited motion.
- **9906**: Ramus, loss of whole or part.
- **9907**: Ramus, loss of less than one-half.
- **9908**: Condylid process.
- **9909**: Coronoid process.
- **9911**: Hard palate, loss of half or more.
- **9912**: Hard palate, loss of less than half.
- **9913**: Teeth, loss of.
- **9914**: Maxilla, loss of more than half.
- **9915**: Maxilla, loss of half or less.
- **9916**: Maxilla, malunion or nonunion of.

---

**APPENDIX C TO PART 4—ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF DISABILITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Code</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abscess:</td>
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<td>Brain</td>
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<td>Kidney</td>
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<td>Lung</td>
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<td>Acne</td>
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<td>Acromegaly</td>
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<td>Actinomycosis</td>
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<td>Addison’s disease</td>
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<td>Agranulocytosis</td>
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<td>Alopecia areata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amebiasis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amputation:</td>
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<td>Arm:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disarticulation</td>
<td>5120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above insertion of deltoid</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below insertion of deltoid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digits, five of one hand</td>
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<td>Condition</td>
<td>Diagnostic code No.</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Digits, four of one hand:</td>
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<td>Thumb, index, long and ring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thumb, index, long and little</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thumb, index, ring and little</td>
<td>5129</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thumb, long, ring and little</td>
<td>5130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index, long, ring and little</td>
<td>5131</td>
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<td>Digits, three of one hand:</td>
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<td>Thumb, index and long</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thumb, index and ring</td>
<td>5133</td>
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<td>Thumb, index and little</td>
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<td>Thumb, long and ring</td>
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<td>Thumb, long and little</td>
<td>5136</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thumb, ring and little</td>
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<td>Index, long and ring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index, ring and little</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long, ring and little</td>
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<td>Digits, two of one hand:</td>
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<td>Thumb and index</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Thumb and ring</td>
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<td>Thumb and little</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index and long</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index and ring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index and little</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long and ring</td>
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<td>Long and little</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ring and little</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single finger:</td>
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<td>Thumb</td>
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<td>Index finger</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ring finger</td>
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<td>Little finger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forearm:</td>
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<td>Above insertion of pronator teres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below insertion of pronator teres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leg:</td>
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<tr>
<td>With defective stump</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not improvable by prosthesis controlled by natural knee action</td>
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<tr>
<td>At a lower level, permitting prosthesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forefoot, proximal to metatarsal bones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toes, all, without metatarsal loss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toe, great</td>
<td>5171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toes, other than great, with removal of metatarsal head</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toes, three or more, without metatarsal involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thigh:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disarticulation</td>
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<td>Upper third</td>
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<td>Middle or lower thirds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anatomical loss of:</td>
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<tr>
<td>One eye, with visual acuity of other eye:</td>
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<td>Both eyes</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/200 (1.5/60)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/200 (3/60); 15/200 (4.5/60); 20/200 (6/60)</td>
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<td>20/40 (6/12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Both feet</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both hands</td>
<td>5106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One hand and one foot</td>
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<tr>
<td>One foot and loss of use of one hand</td>
<td>5105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One hand and loss of use of one foot</td>
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<td>Anemia</td>
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<td>Aneurysm:</td>
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<td>Aortic</td>
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<td>Large artery</td>
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<td>Small artery</td>
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<td>Angioneurotic edema</td>
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<td>Ankle</td>
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<td>Digits, individual:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thumb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bronchitis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bronchiectasis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bones:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beriberi</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Athetosis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Atherosclerotic renal disease</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Asthma, bronchial</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aspergillosis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Asbestosis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Arthritis:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Degenerative (hypertrophic or osteoarthritic)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Due to trauma</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gonorrheal</strong></td>
<td>5004</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other types</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pneumococcic</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rheumatoid (atrophic)</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Arteriosclerosis obliterans</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Arteritis</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Arrhythmia:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Supraventricular</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ventricular</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anterior or tarsal joint</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New growths, malignant</strong></td>
<td>5012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neurogenic</strong></td>
<td>7542</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Injury of</strong></td>
<td>7517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fistula in</strong></td>
<td>7516</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Four digits of one hand</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>5216</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shortening of the lower extremity</strong></td>
<td>5217</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aphakia</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aphonia, organic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aplastic anemia</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>5240</td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Due to trauma</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bone:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Caisson disease</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Shortening of the lower extremity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brain:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Abscess</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Breast surgery</strong></td>
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<td>Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>6316</td>
<td>Brucellosis</td>
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<td>7115</td>
<td>Buerger's disease</td>
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<td>Bulbar palsy</td>
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<td>Bulbus disorders</td>
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<td>5019</td>
<td>Burstis</td>
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<td>Cardiac: Pacemakers, implantable</td>
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<tr>
<td>7019</td>
<td>Cardiomyopathy</td>
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<td>C-cell hyperplasia, thyroid</td>
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<td>7919</td>
<td>Cataract:</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senile and others</td>
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<td>Cerebral arteriosclerosis</td>
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<td>Cervix disease or injury</td>
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<td>Chorea: Huntington's</td>
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<td>8105</td>
<td>Sydenham's</td>
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<td>Chloracne</td>
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<td>7316</td>
<td>Cholangitis, chronic</td>
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<td>Choleoeytis, chronic</td>
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Department of Veterans Affairs
Pt. 4, App. C

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### Department of Veterans Affairs

**Pt. 4, App. C**

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### New growths:

- Neuritis:
  - Nephritis, chronic: 7507
  - Nephrolithiasis: 7508
  - Nephrosclerosis, arteriolar: 7507

### Neuralgia:

#### Cranial Nerves

- Fifth (trigeminal): 8405
- Seventh (facial): 8407
- Ninth (glossopharyngeal): 8409
- Tenth (pneumogastric, vagus): 8410
- Eleventh (spinal accessory, external branch): 8411
- Twelfth (hypoglossal): 8412

#### Peripheral Nerves

- Upper radicular group: 8710
- Middle radicular group: 8711
- Lower radicular group: 8712
- All radicular groups: 8713
- Musculospinal (radial): 8714
- Median: 8715
- Ulnar: 8716
- Musculocutaneous: 8717
- Circumflex: 8718
- Long thoracic: 8719
- Scapic: 8720
- External popliteal (common peroneal): 8721
- Musculocutaneous (superficial peroneal): 8722
- Anterior tibial (deep peroneal): 8723
- Internal popliteal (tibial): 8724
- Posterior tibial: 8725
- Anterior crural (temoral): 8726
- Internal saphenous: 8727
- Obturator: 8728
- External cutaneous nerve of thigh: 8729
- Ilio-inguinal: 8730

### Neuritic:

#### Cranial nerves

- Fifth (trigeminal): 8305
- Seventh (facial): 8307
- Ninth (glossopharyngeal): 8309
- Tenth (pneumogastric, vagus): 8310
- Eleventh (spinal accessory, external branch): 8311
- Twelfth (hypoglossal): 8312

#### Optic

- Ulnar: 8313
- Musculocutaneous: 8617
- Circumflex: 8618
- Long thoracic: 8619
- Scapic: 8620
- External popliteal (common peroneal): 8621
- Musculocutaneous (superficial peroneal): 8622
- Anterior tibial (deep peroneal): 8623
- Internal popliteal (tibial): 8624
- Posterior tibial: 8625
- Anterior crural (temoral): 8626
- Internal saphenous: 8627
- Obturator: 8628
- External cutaneous nerve of thigh: 8629
- Ilio-inguinal: 8630

### Neurogenic bladder: 7542

### Neurogenic bladder:

#### New growths:

- Benign: 5015
### Department of Veterans Affairs

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**Vision:** see also Blindness and Loss of

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<td>20/50 (6/15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Each eye 20/40 (6/12)</td>
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<td>Vulva disease or injury of</td>
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<td>Weak foot</td>
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§ 6.3

Age

§ 6.1 Misstatement of age.

If the age of the insured under a United States Government life insurance policy has been understated, the amount of the insurance payable under the policy shall be such exact amount as the premium paid would have purchased at the correct age; if overstated, the excess of premiums paid shall be refunded without interest. Guaranteed surrender and loan values will be modified accordingly. The age of the insured will be admitted by the Department of Veterans Affairs at any time upon satisfactory proof.

[13 FR 7089, Nov. 27, 1948. Redesignated at 61 FR 29024, June 7, 1996]

Premiums

§ 6.2 Premium rate.

Effective January 1, 1983, United States Government Life Insurance policies, and total disability income provisions, on a premium paying status are paid-up and no premiums are required to maintain such policies and provisions in force.

§ 6.4 Beneficiary of United States Government Life Insurance

§ 6.4 Proof of age, relationship and marriage.

Whenever it is necessary for a claimant to prove age, relationship or marriage, the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 103(c) and Part 3 this chapter will be followed.


§ 6.5 Conditional designation of beneficiary.

If the insured by notice in writing to the Department of Veterans Affairs during his or her lifetime has provided that a designated beneficiary shall be entitled to the proceeds of United States Government life insurance only if such beneficiary shall survive him or her for such period (not more than 30 days), as specified by the insured, no right to the insurance shall vest as to such beneficiary during that period. In the event such beneficiary fails to survive the specified period, payment of the proceeds of United States Government life insurance will be made as if the beneficiary had predeceased the insured.


§ 6.6 Change of beneficiary.

The insured under United States Government life insurance shall have the right at any time and from time to time and without the consent or knowledge of the beneficiary to change the beneficiary. A change of beneficiary must be made by written notice to the Department of Veterans Affairs over the signature of the insured and shall not be binding on the United States unless received by the Department of Veterans Affairs. A change of beneficiary must be forwarded to the Department of Veterans Affairs, a change of beneficiary shall be deemed effective as of the date the insured signed the written notice. The United States shall be protected in all payments made to the beneficiary last of record and before receipt of notice of a change of beneficiary, and no payments so made shall be paid again to the changed beneficiary. The insured may exercise any right or privilege given under the provisions of a United States Government life insurance policy without the consent of the beneficiary. An original designation of a beneficiary may be made by the last will and testament, but no change of beneficiary may be made by the last will and testament. The provisions of the “beneficiary” clause in United States Government life insurance policies are hereby amended accordingly.


§ 6.7 Claims of creditors, taxation.

(a) Effective January 1, 1958, payments of insurance to a beneficiary under a United States Government life insurance policy shall be subject to levy for taxes due the United States by such beneficiary.

(b) The provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5301(b) which entitle the United States to collect by setoff out of benefits payable to any beneficiary under a United States Government life insurance policy do not apply to dividends being held to the credit of the insured for the payment of premiums under the provisions of section 1946 of title 38 U.S.C.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5301)


Optional Settlement

§ 6.8 Selection, revocation and election.

The insured under a United States Government Life Insurance policy may, upon written notice, select an optional settlement. Such optional settlement may be revoked by written notice. If the insured does not select one of the optional settlements, as set out under the provisions of the policy, the insurance shall be payable in 240
monthly installments unless the beneficiary elects in writing a different option.

[61 FR 29025, June 7, 1996]

§ 6.9 Election of optional settlement by beneficiary.

If the insured has selected an optional settlement then at the death of the insured the designated beneficiary may elect to receive the proceeds of insurance in installments spread over a greater period of time than that selected by the insured and in accordance with the following provisions.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1952)

(a) If the insured has selected Option 1, the beneficiary may elect to receive payment under Option 2, 3, or 4.

(b) If the insured has selected Option 2 with monthly installments not in excess of 120, the beneficiary may elect to receive payment in a greater number of installments under Option 2, or may elect to receive payment under Option 3 or 4.

(c) If the insured has selected Option 2 with monthly installments in excess of 120, the beneficiary may elect to receive payment in a greater number of installments under Option 2, or may elect to receive payment under Option 3.

(d) If the insured has selected Option 3, and named no contingent beneficiary, the beneficiary may elect to receive payment under Option 4.

(e) If the insured has selected Option 4, the beneficiary may elect to receive payment under Option 3.

If the insured has selected settlement under Option 1, a beneficiary who has elected to receive payment under Option 2, 3, or 4 may elect to receive the commuted value of any remaining unpaid installments certain (240 less the number paid in case of Option 3, or 120 less the number paid in the case of Option 4); Provided, That where the commutation is elected under Option 3 or 4 after payment under such option has commenced, and the beneficiary survives the period certain, such beneficiary shall be entitled to the resumption of monthly installments payable for life in accordance with the monthly income option previously selected by such beneficiary. The entitlement to the resumption of monthly installments will be effective as of the monthly payment date next following the expiration of the period certain. Settlement under any one of the options or payment to the beneficiary of said commuted value under Option 2 or payment of said commuted value under Options 3 and 4 to the beneficiary who does not survive the period certain shall be in full and complete discharge of all liability under the contract. Any other change in the mode of settlement may, within the limitations set forth in paragraphs (a) through (e) of this section, be made by a beneficiary after payment has commenced, provided the change is made within 1 year of the original election and in those instances where Option 3 is changed to Option 1 or 2; or Option 4 is changed to Option 1, 2, or 3, satisfactory proof is submitted to establish that the beneficiary’s state of health is the same as it was at time of original election. The effective date of the original election for this purpose will be the date it was delivered to the Department of Veterans Affairs. If such election was forwarded by mail, properly addressed to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the postmark date will be taken as the date of delivery. Such change will be made on the premise that the new election was made initially, and the account will be adjusted accordingly. A condition precedent to any such change will be the repayment of any amount received by the beneficiary in excess of that which would have been due had the new election been made initially.


§ 6.10 Options.

Insurance will be payable in one sum only when selected by the insured during his or her lifetime or by his or her last will and testament.

[61 FR 29025, June 7, 1996]

DIVIDENDS

§ 6.11 How dividends are paid.

(a) Regular annual dividends becoming payable on or after December 31,
§ 6.12 Special dividends.

Any special U.S. Government Life Insurance dividend that may be declared shall be paid in cash. Such special dividends shall not be accepted to accumulate on deposit or as a dividend credit.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1944)


§ 6.13 Policy loans.

At any time after the first policy year and upon the execution of a loan agreement satisfactory to the Secretary the United States will lend to the insured on the sole security of his/her United States Government Life Insurance policy any amount which shall not exceed 94 percent of the cash value, and any indebtedness shall be deducted from the amount advanced on such loan. The loan shall bear interest at a rate not to exceed 5 percent per annum, payable annually, and the loan may be repaid in full or in amounts of $5 or more. Failure to pay either the amount of the loan or the interest thereon shall not void the policy unless the total indebtedness shall equal or exceed the cash value thereof. When the amount of the indebtedness equals or exceeds the cash value, the policy shall cease and become void.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1944)


§ 6.14 Cash value; other than special endowment at age 96 plan policy.

Provisions for cash value shall become effective at the completion of the first policy year on any plan of United States Government Life Insurance other than the special endowment at age 96 plan policy; all values, reserves, and net single premiums being based on the American Experience Table of Mortality, with interest at the rate of 3½ percent per annum. The cash value shall be the reserve together with any dividend accumulations. For each month after the first policy year the reserve at the end of the preceding policy year shall be increased by one-twelfth of the increase in reserve for the current policy year. Upon written request therefor and upon complete...
surrender of the insurance with all claims thereunder made by the insured the United States will pay to the insured the cash value of the policy less any indebtedness. Unless otherwise requested by the insured, a surrender will be deemed completed as of the end of the month in which the application for cash surrender is delivered to the Department of Veterans Affairs, or as of the date of the check for the cash value, whichever is later. If the application is forwarded by mail, properly addressed, the postmark date will be taken as the date of delivery.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1944)


§ 6.15 Cash value; special endowment at age 96 plan policy.

Provisions for cash value shall become effective at the completion of the first policy year; all values and net single premiums are as prescribed by the Secretary and published in VA Pamphlet 90–2A. The cash value at the end of the first policy year and at the end of any policy year thereafter shall be the reserve as set forth in the policy together with any dividend accumulations. For each month after the first policy year the reserve at the end of the preceding policy year shall be increased by one-twelfth of the increase in reserve for the current policy year. Upon written request therefor and upon complete surrender of the insurance with all claims thereunder made by the insured, the United States will pay to the insured the cash value of the policy less any indebtedness, provided the policy has been in force for at least 1 year. Unless otherwise requested by the insured, a surrender will be deemed completed as of the end of the month in which the application for cash surrender is delivered to the Department of Veterans Affairs, or as of the date of the check for the cash value, whichever is later. If the application is forwarded by mail, properly addressed, the postmark date will be taken as the date of delivery. If it is forwarded through military channels, the date the application is placed in military channels will be taken as the date of delivery.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1944)


§ 6.16 Payment of cash value in monthly installments.

Effective January 1, 1971, in lieu of payment of cash value in one sum, the insured may elect to receive payment in monthly installments under option 2 as set forth in the insurance contract or as a refund life income option. If the insured dies before the agreed number of monthly installments have been paid, the remaining unpaid monthly installments will be payable to the designated beneficiary in one sum, unless the insured or such beneficiary has elected to continue the installments under the option selected by the insured. If no designated beneficiary survives, the present value of any remaining unpaid installments shall be paid to the estate of the insured, provided such payment would not escheat.

[61 FR 29025, June 7, 1996]

INDEBTEDNESS

§ 6.17 Collection of any indebtedness.

At the maturity of a United States Government life insurance policy by total permanent disability or death, any indebtedness, unless paid off in cash, shall be liquidated by reducing the amount of each monthly installment in the proportion which the indebtedness bears to the commuted value of monthly installments as may then be payable under the policy, excluding dividend accumulations. If the policy is payable in one sum at death, any indebtedness shall be deducted from the amount payable under the policy.

[13 FR 7096, Nov. 27, 1948. Redesignated at 61 FR 29025, June 7, 1996]

TOTAL PERMANENT DISABILITY BENEFITS

§ 6.18 Other disabilities deemed to be total and permanent.

(a) In addition to the conditions specified in 38 U.S.C. 1958, the following
also will be deemed to be total and permanent disabilities: Organic loss of speech; permanently helpless or permanently bedridden.

(b) Organic loss of speech will mean the loss of the ability to express oneself, both by voice and whisper, through the normal organs of speech if such loss is caused by organic changes in such organs. Where such loss exists, the fact that some speech can be produced through the use of an artificial appliance or other organs of the body will be disregarded.

[61 FR 29025, June 7, 1996]

DEATH BENEFITS

§ 6.19 Evidence to establish death of the insured.

Whenever a claim is filed on account of the death of a person insured under yearly renewable term insurance or United States Government life insurance, the proof of death shall be established in accordance with the provisions of Part 3 of this chapter.


DETERMINATION OF LIABILITY UNDER SECTIONS 302 AND 313, WORLD WAR VETERANS’ ACT, 1924, SECTIONS 607 AND 602 (V)(2), NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE ACT, 1940, AS AMENDED, AND SECTIONS 1921 AND 1957 OF TITLE 38 UNITED STATES CODE

§ 6.20 Jurisdiction.

The Insurance Claims Sections are vested with exclusive jurisdiction in determining the liability of the United States and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund for waiver of payment of premiums, payment of total, total permanent disability, and death insurance benefits under United States Government life insurance and to determine the liability of the United States and the National Service Life Insurance Fund for waiver of payment of premiums due to total disability, payment of total disability insurance benefits, and death insurance benefits under National Service life insurance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1944)


APPEALS

§ 6.21 Guardian: definition and authority.

(a) Definition. For the purpose of this section, the term guardian includes any fiduciary certified by the appropriate Veterans Service Center Manager under §13.55 of this title to receive benefits in a fiduciary capacity for an insured or beneficiary.

(b) Authority. For the purpose of this part, a guardian of an insured or beneficiary shall have authority to: Apply for conversion of a policy or change of plan; reinstate a policy; withdraw dividends held on deposit or credit; select or change a dividend option; obtain a policy loan; cash surrender a policy; authorize a deduction from benefits or allotment from military retired pay to pay premiums; apply for and receive payment of the proceeds on a matured policy; select or change the premium payment option; apply for waiver of premiums; select or change the settlement option for beneficiaries; assign a beneficiary’s interest as provided under section 1953 of title 38 U.S.C.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1944)


PART 7—SOLDIERS’ AND SAILORS’ CIVIL RELIEF

SOLDIERS’ AND SAILORS’ CIVIL RELIEF ACT

AMENDMENTS OF 1942

Sec.

7.2 Certification of military service.

7.3 The policy.

7.4 The premium.

7.5 Application.

7.6 Benefits.

7.7 Maturity.

7.8 Beneficiary or assignee.

Authority: 50 U.S.C. app. 511, 540-547, unless otherwise noted.

Source: 13 FR 7103, Nov. 27, 1948, unless otherwise noted.
§ 7.2 Certification of military service.

(a) A statement over the signature of the Commanding Officer or a commissioned officer of equal or higher rank than the insured, on the insured’s application, may be accepted as a certification that the insured is a person in the military service.

(b) If the insured is unavailable because of service, the application may be certified by the person who has custody of the insured’s service record.

(c) If an application is submitted by a person designated by the insured or by the insured’s beneficiary, the Department of Veterans Affairs will obtain from the service department evidence that the insured is a person in the military service.

(Authority 50 U.S.C. app. 547)

(61 FR 29026, June 7, 1996)

§ 7.3 The policy.

(a) Any provision in a policy that may limit or eliminate a benefit other than the primary death benefit will not, because of such provision, place the policy outside the protection of the Act if it is otherwise eligible for protection.

(b) An annuity contract, if it provides payment of a substantial death benefit in the nature of life insurance, may be included within the provisions of the Act if otherwise eligible. Group insurance will not be included unless an individual and separate contract of insurance is completely released to the insured and thereafter comes within the provisions of the Act as a policy.

(c) The phrase Face amount of insurance as used in the regulations in this part will mean the amount of insurance payable as a death benefit; Provided, That any indebtedness, or any accruals (such as paid-up additions, dividend accumulations, etc.) that may be added to or taken from the amount payable as the death benefits will not be used in calculating the face amount of a policy.

(13 FR 7103, Nov. 27, 1948. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 29026, June 7, 1996)

§ 7.4 The premium.

The term premium as defined under 50 U.S.C. app. 540(b) shall include membership dues and assessments in an association.

(a) The premium on a policy will be calculated on an annual basis, and if the annual premium is not stated on the policy, the insurer will make a calculation of the premiums for payment in advance and discounted at not less than 3 1/2 percent, subject to approval by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) Premiums will not be guaranteed for benefits additional to the primary death benefit if, when combined with the amount of the primary death benefit, the total benefit would result in a payment in excess of $10,000 or if liability for such benefits is excluded or restricted by military service or any activity which the insured may be called upon to perform in connection with military service. In the event that premiums for the primary and additional benefits are not separable under the terms of the policy the entire policy will be guaranteed, if the policy is otherwise eligible for protection under the law.

(13 FR 7103, Nov. 27, 1948. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 29026, June 7, 1996)

§ 7.5 Application.

(a) The benefits of the Act are not available except upon application. The insured may designate any person, firm, or corporation to submit an application on his or her behalf. The designation must be in writing, signed by the insured and attached to the application.

(b) When an application for benefits is received by an insurer, a report thereof will be made within 30 days to the Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office and Insurance Center at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The insurer may submit with the report a statement setting forth any additional information deemed necessary to the adjudication of the application, and any facts and reasoning as to why the
§ 7.6 Benefits.

Any policy found to be entitled to protection under the provisions of the Act will not lapse or otherwise terminate or be forfeited for the nonpayment of a premium or the nonpayment of any indebtedness or interest during the period of military service of the insured and two years after the expiration of such service. If the insured reenters military service during the two-year period following separation from such service and the policy is under the protection of the Act on the date of reentry, such reentrance shall be deemed to be a continuation of the previous military service. In such case, in the absence of written instruction from the insured to the contrary, the protection under the Act will continue during the period of military service of the insured and two years after the expiration of such service, but the guarantee will not extend for more than two years after the date when the Act ceases to be in force.

(a) For the period during which a policy is protected by the provisions of the Act, any dividends, return of premiums, or other such monetary benefits arising out of the contract or by reason thereof, will be held subject to disposal or to be applied as may be approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) A policy will not be removed from the protection of the Act by reason of a payment made to the insurer by or on behalf of the insured, but any tender of a premium (in whole or in part) shall be applied on the indebtedness established under authority of the Act against the policy: Provided, That nothing herein shall prevent an insured from continuing payment to the insurer of premiums to cover any additional benefits (such as double indemnity, waiver of premium, etc.) where such premiums may not be included in the amount guaranteed by the Government.

§ 7.7 Maturity.

(a) The phrase maturity of a policy as a death claim or otherwise (SSCRA, as amended) will not include a termination or maturity of a policy as a disability claim, and the policy will continue under the provisions of the Act as if there had been no maturity, but the Government shall not be liable for any premiums that the insured would have been relieved of paying under any provisions for payment of premiums in the policy.

(b) Upon the expiration of the period of protection, the insurer will submit to the Department of Veterans Affairs a complete statement of the account on each policy, which will show the amount of indebtedness by reason of the premiums with interest and the credits, if any, then available and will be subject to audit and approval by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The statement of account will include the rate of interest charged on all indebtedness, the date of debit and credit entries, and such other information as may be deemed necessary in making an audit of the account.

§ 7.8 Beneficiary or assignee.

The consent of a beneficiary, assignee, or any other person who may have a right or interest in the proceeds of the policy is not a prerequisite for placing a policy under the protection of the Act.

38 CFR Ch. 1 (7–1–11 Edition)

PART 8—NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE

APPLICATIONS

Sec. 8.0 Definitions of terms used in connection with title 38 CFR, part 8, National Service Life Insurance.
§ 8.0 Definitions of terms used in connection with title 38 CFR, part 8, National Service Life Insurance.

(a) What does the term “good health” mean? The term good health means that the applicant is, from clinical or other evidence, free from any condition that would tend to:

(1) Weakness normal physical or mental functions; or
(2) Shorten life.

Note to paragraph (a): Conditions that would affect “good health” are diseases or injuries or residuals of diseases or injuries. A “residual” is a disability that remains following the original disease or injury.

(b) What does the term “good health criteria” mean? The term good health criteria means the underwriting standards that determine whether a person is in good health. “Good health criteria” are based whenever possible, as
§ 8.1 Effective date for an insurance policy issued under section 1922(a) of title 38 U.S.C. (Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance).

(a) What is the effective date of the policy? The effective date is the date policy coverage begins. Benefits due under the policy are payable any time after the effective date.

(b) How is the effective date established? The effective date is the date you deliver both of the following to VA:

1. A valid application.
2. A premium payment.

Note 1 to Paragraph (b): If your valid application and premium are mailed to VA, the postmark date will be the date of delivery.

Note 2 to Paragraph (b): If a postmark date is not available, the date of delivery will be the date your valid application and premium are received by VA.

(c) Can you have a different effective date? Yes, if you would like an effective date other than the date of delivery as described in paragraph (b) of this section, you may choose one of the following three options as an effective date:

1. The first day of the month in which you deliver your valid application and premium payment to VA. For example, if VA receives your application and premium payment on August 15, you may request an effective date of August 1.

2. The first day of the month following the month in which you deliver your valid application and premium payment. For example, if VA receives your application and premium payment on August 15, you may request an effective date of September 1.

3. The first day of any month up to six months prior to the month in which you deliver your valid application and premium payment. For example, if VA receives your application and premium payment on August 15, you may request an effective date of February 1.

However, you must pay the following:

(i) The insurance reserve amount for the time period for each month starting with the requested effective date up to the first day of the month prior to the month in which you delivered your application to VA; and

(ii) The premium for the month in which you delivered your application to VA.

Note to Paragraph (c): For example, if your postmark date is August 15 and you request an effective date of February 1, you must pay the insurance reserve amount for February 1 through July 31, and also pay the August premium.

[67 FR 54738, Aug. 26, 2002]

§ 8.2 Payment of premiums.

(a) What is a premium? A premium is a payment that a policyholder is required to make for an insurance policy.

(b) How can policyholders pay premiums? Premiums can be paid by:
§ 8.3 Revival of insurance.

(a) If the sole reason death or total disability benefit payments arising from the policyholder’s U.S. Government or National Service life insurance which are equal to or greater in amount than the total of the monthly premiums which have become due from and including the date of lapse to the date of death or date of commencement of total disability.

(b) For purposes of this section amounts under paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section may be combined. In that case, the amount, if any, of dividend accrued under paragraph (a)(1) of this section will first be determined and the amount available under paragraph (a)(2) of this section, if any, will be added thereto for the purpose of determining if the total amount thus available is equal to or greater than the total of monthly premiums which have become due.

(c) In determining the amount of monthly premiums which have become due, other refundable credits or total disability benefit payments arising from the policyholder’s U.S. Government or National Service life insurance which are equal to or greater in amount than the total of the monthly premiums which have become due from and including the date of lapse to the date of death or date of commencement of total disability.

(d) If the sole reason death or total disability benefit payments arising from the policyholder’s U.S. Government or National Service life insurance which are equal to or greater in amount than the total of the monthly premiums which have become due from and including the date of lapse to the date of death or date of commencement of total disability.

(1) Cash, check, or money order directly to VA.

(2) Allotment from service or retirement pay.

(3) Automatic deduction from VA benefits (pension, compensation or insurance dividends (see §8.4)).

(4) Pre-authorized debit from a checking account.

(c) When should policyholders pay premiums?

(1) Unless premiums are paid in advance, policyholders must pay premiums on the effective date shown on the policy and on the same date of each following month. This is called the “due date.”

(2) Policyholders may pay premiums quarterly, semi-annually, or annually in advance.

(d) What happens if a policyholder does not pay a premium on time?

(1) When a policyholder pays a premium within 31 days from the “due date,” the policy remains in force. This 31-day period is called a “grace period.” If the insured dies within the 31-day grace period, VA deducts the unpaid premium from the amount of insurance payable.

(2) If a policyholder pays a premium after the 31-day grace period, VA will not accept the payment and the policy lapses effective the date the premium was due; Except that VA will accept a premium paid after the 31-day grace period as a timely payment if:

(i) The policyholder pays the premium within 61 days of the due date; and

(ii) The policyholder is alive at the time the payment is mailed.

(3) When a policyholder pays the premium by mail, the postmark date is the date of payment.

(4) When a policyholder pays a premium by check or money order which is not honored and it is shown by satisfactory evidence that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error by the bank</th>
<th>The policyholder has an additional 31 days (from the date stamped on VA’s notification letter) to pay the premium and any other premiums due through the current month.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of funds</td>
<td>The premium is considered not paid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[65 FR 7437, Feb. 15, 2000]
due under paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section a shortage of 10 percent per monthly premium may be allowed for a period not to exceed 3 months.

(5) In determining the monthly premiums which have become due for adjustment purposes under paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section, the premium for the monthly due date immediately preceding the date of death or date of commencement of total disability may be omitted because of the coverage provided by the allowable grace period (§8.2(d)) and if the conditions of paragraph (b) of this section are met, the premium for the second due date immediately preceding the date of death or date of commencement of total disability may be omitted.

(6) When a policy is deemed in force under premium-paying conditions by operation of this section, the amount of any shortage included in the calculation and the premium for any monthly due date omitted in the calculation will become a lien against the policy.

(7) The provisions of this section may be applied if, on the date of death, the insurance is in force under the extended term insurance provision (§8.14) and a policy loan was outstanding on the date of lapse or a dividend deposit balance was included in the cash value as determined at time of lapse.

(8) If accrued dividends under paragraph (a)(1) of this section and/or amounts due and payable under paragraph (a)(2) of this section exist in connection with more than one policy of the same veteran and one or more policies lapsed prior to the date of death or date of commencement of total disability, the amounts available will be related first to the policy or policies on which they arose if such policy or policies are lapsed. Any amount available under paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section which is not required to place in force the policy upon which it arose or which is insufficient to place in force the policy upon which it arose, may be combined with similar amounts available on any other policy whenever the total of such amounts is sufficient to place another policy in force.

(9) Where more than one policy is involved and credits are not needed or are insufficient to revive the policy on which the credits arose, the credits will be used insofar as they are sufficient to revive the policy or policies under which the most insurance is payable.

(10) No total disability income provision will be considered in force under this section unless it lapsed at the same time as the life insurance contract and both the life insurance and total disability income provision can be considered in force through the same date and benefits are payable under the total disability income provision. An exception will be a paid-in-full limited pay contract on which total disability income provisions are due and payable to age 65.

(11) When a total disability income provision lapsed at the same time as the life insurance, the premium for the provision will be considered separately in determining if the amounts available are equal to or in excess of the monthly premiums which have become due. In such a case if the amounts available are sufficient, both the life insurance and the provision will be revived. If the amounts are insufficient for that purpose, they will be applied to revive the policy or policies with the greatest amount payable in death cases or the policy or policies providing the greatest life insurance and total disability benefit in total disability cases.

(12) Accrued dividends and/or credits on any policy of National Service or U.S. Government life insurance held by the policyholder may be considered for the purpose of this section.

(b) If the sole reason death or total disability benefits under a policy of National Service life insurance cannot be granted is that the policy had lapsed, the insurance will be considered in force on the date of death or date of commencement of total disability if:

(1) The policyholder died or became totally disabled within 61 days of the due date of the unpaid premiums, and

(2) The policy prior to the lapse had been in force for 5 years or more. In determining in-force status under this subparagraph if the original effective date of the insurance (when necessary, include predecessor contracts involving renewal, conversion or replacement/reinstatement under 38 U.S.C. 1981) is 5 years or more earlier than the date of death or date of total disability and

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during the 5 years immediately preceding the date of lapse the insurance has not been lapsed at any one time in excess of 6 months, the requirement will be satisfied. When insurance is considered in force under this section the amount of the monthly premium due on the date of lapse and the following monthly premium(s) will become a lien against the policy.

(3) The provisions of this section may be applied if, on the date of death, the insurance is in force under the extended term insurance provision (§ 8.14) and a policy loan was outstanding on the date of lapse or a dividend deposit balance was included in the cash value as determined at time of lapse.


§ 8.4 Deduction of insurance premiums from compensation, retirement pay, or pension.

The insured under a National Service life insurance policy which is not lapsed may authorize the monthly deduction of premiums from disability compensation, death compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, retirement pay, disability pension, or death pension that may be due and payable to him under any laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs in accordance with the following provisions.

(a) The authorization may be made by an insured or the insured’s legal representative. If the authorization is made by the insured’s legal representative, it must be in writing over the signature of the representative and forwarded to the Department of Veterans Affairs along with a copy of the document which evidences the individual’s authority to act on behalf of the insured. If an insured is incompetent and has no legal representative and has a spouse to whom benefits are being paid pursuant to Part 13 of this chapter, the spouse may authorize payment of insurance premiums through the deduction system. If an insured is incompetent and has no legal representative and an institutional award has been made in his or her behalf, the authorization may be executed by the Director of the field facility in which the insured is hospitalized or receiving domiciliary care, and in appropriate cases by the chief officers of State hospitals or other institutions to whom similar awards may have been approved.

(b) The monthly disability compensation, death compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, retirement pay, disability pension, or death pension so due and payable must be equal to, or in excess of, the amount of the insurance premium figured on a monthly basis.

(c) The authorization may be cancelled by the insured at any time. Such cancellation will be effective on the first day of the month following the month in which it is received by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(d) If the benefits payable to the insured are apportioned under the regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs now in effect or hereafter issued, the deduction authorized by the insured shall be from that portion awarded to the insured under such regulations.

(e) The deduction authorized by a policyholder issued insurance under 38 U.S.C. 1925 will be automatically adjusted by the Department of Veterans Affairs to take cognizance of any premium adjustment made by the Secretary on such insurance provided the benefit payments due and payable to the insured are of an amount sufficient to pay the monthly insurance premium.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1908)


§ 8.5 Authorization for deduction of premiums from compensation, retirement pay, or pension.

Deductions from benefits for the payment of premiums shall be effective on the month the authorization for such deduction is received by the Department of Veterans Affairs or on any successive month specified by the insured. Such deduction shall be applied to the
§ 8.6 Calculation of time period.

If the last day of a time period specified in §§8.2 or 8.3 or allowed for filing an application for National Service life insurance or for applying for reinstatement thereof, or paying premiums due thereon, falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the time period will be extended to include the following workday.


REINSTATEMENT

§ 8.7 Reinstatement of National Service Life Insurance except insurance issued pursuant to section 1925 of title 38 U.S.C.

(a) Any policy which lapses and which is not surrendered for a cash value or for paid-up insurance, may be reinstated upon written application signed by the applicant, payment of all premiums in arrears, and evidence of good health as required under §8.8 (a) or (b), whichever is applicable. If a policy is not reinstated within 6 months from the due date of the premium in default, interest must be paid in addition to premiums for all months in arrears from their respective due dates at the rate of 5 percent per annum, compounded annually. The payment or reinstatement of any indebtedness against a policy must be made upon application for reinstatement, and any excess of indebtedness and interest over the reserve of the policy must be paid at that time. A lapsed National Service Life Insurance policy which is in force under extended term insurance may be reinstated within 5 years from the date extended insurance would expire upon application and payment of all premiums in arrears with the required interest. In any case in which the extended insurance under an endowment policy provides protection to the end of the endowment period, the policy may be reinstated at any time before maturity upon application and payment of the premiums with the required interest. A policy on the level term premium plan may be reinstated within 5 years of the date of lapse upon written application signed by the insured, evidence of insurability and payment of two monthly premiums, one for the month of the lapse, the other for the month of reinstatement.

(b) Reinstatement of insurance issued under section 1925, title 38 U.S.C. Any policy of insurance issued under 38 U.S.C. 1925 which has been lapsed for not more than 5 years shall be reinstated under the same provisions of paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) Effective date of reinstatements. Reinstatement is effected on the date an acceptable application and the required monetary payments are delivered to the Department of Veterans Affairs. If application for reinstatement is submitted by mail, properly addressed to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the postmark date shall be the date of delivery. The effective date of reinstatement of the insurance shall be the last monthly premium due date prior
to the delivery or postmark date of the application for reinstatement, except where reinstatement is effected on the due date of a premium, then in such case that date shall be the reinstatement date.

(d) Inquiry during the grace period. When the insured makes inquiry prior to the expiration of the grace period disclosing a clear intent to continue insurance protection, such as a request for information concerning premium rates or conversion privileges, etc., an additional reasonable period not exceeding 60 days may be granted for payment of premiums due; but the premiums in any such case must be paid during the lifetime of the insured.

§ 8.8 Health requirements.

National Service life insurance on any plan may be reinstated if application and tender of premiums are made:

(a) Within 6 premium months including the premium month for which the unpaid premium was due, provided the applicant be in as good health on the date of application and tender of premiums as he or she was on the last day of the grace period of the premium in default and furnishes satisfactory evidence thereof.

(b) After expiration of the 6-month period mentioned in paragraph (a) of this section, provided applicant is in good health (§ 8.0) on the date of application and tender of premiums and furnishes satisfactory evidence. If the insurance to be reinstated was issued under 38 U.S.C. 1922(a), 1925(b), or 1925(c) and application is made within 1 year of the date of lapse, any service-connected disability existing at the time the insurance was issued will be waived for the purpose of reinstatement (including natural progression).

§ 8.9 Application and medical evidence.

The applicant for reinstatement of National Service Life Insurance, during his or her lifetime, and within 5 years after the date of lapse if the insurance was issued under 38 U.S.C. 1925, must submit a written application signed by him or her and furnish satisfactory evidence of health as required in § 8.8 at the time of application. Applicant’s own statement of comparative health may be accepted as proof of insurability for the purpose of reinstatement under § 8.8(a), but, whenever deemed necessary in any such case, report of physical examination may be required. Applications for reinstatement submitted after expiration of the applicable period mentioned in § 8.8(a) must be accompanied by satisfactory evidence of good health. If the insurance becomes a claim after the tender of the amount necessary to meet reinstatement requirements but before full compliance with the requirements of this section, and the applicant was in a required state of health at the date that he or she made the tender of the amount necessary to meet reinstatement requirements, and that there is satisfactory reason for his or her noncompliance, the Assistant Director for Insurance, VA Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania may, if the applicant be dead, waive any or all requirements of this section (except payment of the necessary premiums) or, if the applicant be living, allow compliance with this section as of the date the required amount necessary to reinstate was received by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1925)

DIVIDENDS

§ 8.10 How paid.

(a) Except as hereinafter provided in this paragraph, a National Service Life Insurance policy shall participate in and receive such dividends from gains and savings as may be determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Dividends becoming payable after January 1, 1952, shall be payable on the date preceding the anniversary of the policy unless the Secretary shall declare them payable on some other date. Dividends are not payable on insurance:

1. Issued or reinstated under the provisions of section 602(c)(2) of the National Service Life Insurance Act, as amended, where the requirements of good health were waived at the time of such issue or reinstatement;
2. Issued under sections 620 and 621 of the National Service Life Insurance Act, as amended;
3. Issued under sections 1904(c) and 1922(a) of title 38 U.S.C.;

(b) Unless and until VA receives a written request from the insured that National Service Life Insurance dividends be paid in cash, or that they be used to pay an insurance indebtedness, or that they be placed on deposit or be used to pay premiums in advance, or that they be used to pay the premiums on a particular policy or policies, or that they be used to purchase paid-up additions, any such dividends shall be held to the credit of the insured to be applied to pay monthly premiums becoming due and unpaid after the date such dividends are payable on any National Service or United States Government Life Insurance policy or policies held by the insured: Provided, That such dividend credits will be applied as of the due date of any unpaid premium.

Dividend credits will earn interest at such rate and in such manner as the Secretary may determine.

(c) In the event premiums on more than one policy having the same premium due date are unpaid and the dividend credit of the insured for application to payment of premiums is not sufficient to keep all policies in force, in the absence of instructions to the contrary by the insured, such dividend credit will be applied to pay premiums in such manner as will provide the maximum amount of insurance protection.

(d) At the expiration of any term period, dividend credit of the insured held for payment of premiums will be applied to pay the required premium for renewal of term insurance unless the insured requests otherwise in writing prior to the expiration of the term period.

(e) A request for payment of dividends in cash or for other disposition will be effective as of the date the request is delivered to the Department of Veterans Affairs: If forwarded by mail, properly addressed, the postmark date will be taken as the date of delivery: If forwarded through military channels by the insured while in military service, the date the request is placed in military channels will be accepted as the date of delivery. Unless otherwise stipulated by the insured, such request will remain in force until revoked in writing signed by the insured and delivered to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(f) Dividend credit of the insured held for payment of premiums may not be used to satisfy any indebtedness due the United States without the insured’s consent. If the insured requests payment of such dividend credit, or any unused portion thereof, in cash, or requests that such credit be left to accumulate on deposit, as provided in paragraph (g) of this section, then any indebtedness due the United States, such as described in §5301 of title 38 U.S.C. will be recovered therefrom.

(g) At the written request of the insured, National Service life insurance dividends may be left to accumulate on
Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 8.11

Cash value and policy loan.

(a) Provisions for cash value, paid-up insurance, and extended term insurance, except as provided in §§8.14 and 8.15, respectively, Any dividend credit of a person who no longer has insurance in force by payment or waiver of premiums will be paid in cash to such person. If a person has a dividend credit option on a lapsed level premium term policy or a permanent plan policy on which extended term insurance has expired and such person has another policy in force by payment or waiver of premiums, any dividend credit or unpaid dividends on the lapsed policy, in the absence of instructions from the insured to the contrary, will be transferred to the policy which is in force and will be held on such policy as a dividend credit. Such dividend credit will be deemed to have accrued on the policy which is in force. Upon maturity of the policy, any dividend on deposit, any unpaid dividend payable in cash, and any dividend credit accruing from such policy which cannot be used to pay premiums will be paid to the person currently entitled to receive payments under the policy. If the policy is not in force at death, any such unpaid dividends and dividend credits will be paid to the insured’s estate.

(h) Any insured receiving an annual dividend in cash may return such dividend check or an equivalent amount of money in order to have the dividend retained under the deposit or credit option. The return of such dividend must be made during the lifetime of the insured and before the end of the calendar year during which the dividend was paid. Dividends returned under this provision are not available for the payment of premiums, receipt of interest, or calculation of cash value prior to the postmark date of the returned check.


CASH VALUE AND POLICY LOAN

§ 8.11

Cash value and policy loan.

(a) Provisions for cash value, paid-up insurance, and extended term insurance, except as provided in §8.14(b), shall become effective at the completion of the first policy year on any plan of National Service Life Insurance other than the 5-year level premium term plan. The cash value at the end of the first policy year and at the end of any policy year thereafter, for which premiums have been paid in full, shall be the reserve with any dividend accumulations, where applicable.

(b) Upon written request and upon complete surrender of the insurance and all claims thereunder, the United States will pay to the insured the cash value of the policy less any indebtedness, provided the policy has been in force by payment or waiver of the premiums for at least 1 year. Paid-up additions do not have to be in force for 1 year before they have cash values. Unless otherwise requested by the insured, a surrender will be deemed completed as of the end of the premium month in which the application for cash surrender is delivered to the Department of Veterans Affairs, or as of the date of the check for the cash value, whichever is later. If the application is forwarded by mail, properly addressed, the postmark date will be taken as the date of delivery. If it is forwarded through military channels, the date the application is placed in military channels will be taken as the date of delivery.

(c) All values, reserves and net single premium insurance on participating National Service Life Insurance, other than as
provided in paragraph (e) of this section, shall be based on the American Experience Table of Mortality, with interest at the rate of 3 percent per annum. For each month after the first policy year for which a premium has been paid or waived, the reserve at the end of the preceding policy year shall be increased by one-twelfth of the increase in reserve for the current policy year.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1902, 1906)

(d) All values on insurance, reserves, and net single premiums issued under the provisions of section 1922(a) of title 38 U.S.C., and on modified life and ordinary life plans of insurance issued under section 1904(c), (d), and (e), respectively, shall be based on the Commissioners 1941 Standard Ordinary Table of Mortality with interest at the rate of 21/4 percent per annum. Values between policy years shall be proportionally adjusted.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1904, 1906)

(e) All values on insurance, reserves, and net single premiums issued under the provisions of section 1923(b) of title 38 U.S.C., and on modified life and ordinary life plans of such insurance issued under section 1904(c), (d), and (e), respectively, shall be based on table X–18 (1950–54 Intercompany Table of Mortality) with interest at the rate of 21/4 percent per annum. Values between policy years shall be proportionally adjusted.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1904, 1923)

(f) All values, reserves, and net single premiums on nonparticipating insurance on which the requirements of good health were waived under the provisions of section 602(c)(2) of the National Service Life Insurance Act, as amended (“H” Insurance), and on the modified life and ordinary life plans of such “H” insurance issued under section 1904(c), (d), and (e), respectively, of title 38 U.S.C. shall be based on the American Experience Table of Mortality, with interest at the rate of 3 percent per annum. Values between policy years shall be proportionally adjusted. The provisions of the “Net Cash Value” clause in National Service Life Insurance policies are hereby amended accordingly.

(g) All values, reserves, and net single premiums on participating modified life and ordinary life plan insurance issued under section 1904(b), (d), and (e), respectively, of title 38 U.S.C. shall be based on the 1958 Commissioners Standard Ordinary Basic Table of Mortality and interest at the rate of 3 percent per annum. Values between policy years shall be proportionally adjusted.

(h) All values, reserves, and net single premiums on insurance issued under the provisions of section 1925(b) of title 38 U.S.C. and on modified life and ordinary life plans of such insurance issued under section 1904(c), (d), and (e), respectively, shall be based on the 1958 Commissioners Standard Ordinary Basic Mortality Table and interest at the rate of 31/2 percent per annum. Values between policy years shall be proportionally adjusted.

(i) All values, reserves, and net single premiums on participating modified life and ordinary life plan insurance issued under section 1904(b), (d), and (e), respectively, of title 38 U.S.C. shall be based on the 1958 Commissioners Standard Ordinary Basic Mortality Table and interest at the rate of 31/2 percent per annum. Values between policy years shall be proportionally adjusted.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1904, 1923)

§ 8.12 Payment of the cash value of National Service Life Insurance in monthly installments under section 1917(e) of title 38 U.S.C.

(a) Effective January 1, 1971, in lieu of payment of the cash surrender value in one sum the insured may elect to receive payment in monthly installments under option 2 or as a refund life income. If the insured dies before the agreed number of monthly installments have been paid, the remaining unpaid monthly installments will be payable as provided in title 38 U.S.C. 1917. Unless otherwise requested by the insured, a surrender under this section...
will be deemed completed as of the premium month in which the application for cash surrender is delivered to the Department of Veterans Affairs, or as of the date of the first check released thereunder, whichever is later.

(b) [Reserved]


§ 8.13 Policy loans.

(a) At any time after the premiums for the first policy year have been paid and can rate and before default in payment of any subsequent premium, and upon the execution of a loan agreement satisfactory to the Secretary, the United States will lend to the insured on the security of his or her National Service Life Insurance policy, any amount which will not exceed 94 percent of the reserve, and any indebtedness on the policy shall be deducted from the amount advanced on such loan. At any time before default in the payment of the premium, the loan may be repaid in full or in amounts of $5 or more. Failure to pay either the amount of the loan or the interest thereon shall not make the policy voidable unless the total indebtedness shall equal or exceed the cash value. When the amount of the indebtedness equals or exceeds the cash value, the policy shall become voidable. On loans applied for before the effective date of this regulation (November 2, 1987) and not exchanged pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section, the policy loan interest rate in effect when the loan was applied for shall not be increased for the term of the loan.

(b) Loans applied for or exchanged on and after the effective date of this regulation (November 2, 1987) shall bear interest at a rate which may be varied during the term of the loan, not more frequently than once a year, as provided by paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section. After October 1, 1988, the policy loan rate shall not be varied more frequently than once a year. Notification of the initial rate of interest on new loans will be forwarded at the time the loan is made. Policyholders with existing variable rate loans will be forwarded reasonable advance notice of any increase in the rate. Reasonable advance notice of any change in the variable loan rate will be published in the Federal Register. A notice pertaining to variable loans which is sent to the policyholder’s last address of record will constitute sufficient evidence of notice.

(c) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section, loan rates established pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section shall equal the yield on the Ten-Year Constant Maturities Index for U.S. Treasury Securities for the month of June of the year of calculation rounded down to the next whole percentage. Such loan rate shall be effective on the date on or after the first day of October on which the rate change is made in the insurance automatic data processing system, and shall remain in effect for not less than one year after the date of establishment. The prevailing variable loan rate shall apply to all loans granted under paragraph (b) of this section.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the variable loan rate shall not exceed 12 percent or be lower than 5 percent per annum.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1906)


EXTENDED TERM AND PAID-UP INSURANCE

§ 8.14 Provision for extended term insurance—other than 5-year level premium term or limited convertible 5-year level premium term policies.

(a) After the expiration of the first policy year and upon default in the payment of a premium within the grace period, if a permanent plan National Service Life Insurance policy other than the modified life plan has not been surrendered for cash or for paid-up insurance, the policy shall be extended automatically as term insurance. The extended term insurance shall be for an amount of the insurance equal to the face value of the policy less any indebtedness for such time from the due date of the premium in
default as the cash value less any indebtedness and a charge for administrative cost for insurance issued under 38 U.S.C. 1925, will purchase when applied as a net single premium at the attained age of the insured. For this purpose the attained age is the age on the birthday anniversary nearest to the effective date of the policy plus the number of years and months from that date to the date the extended term insurance becomes effective. The extended term insurance shall not have a loan value, but shall have a cash value.

(b) Upon default in payment of a premium within the grace period, if a modified life plan and any plan of insurance issued under 38 U.S.C. 1925, if the policy has been in force by payment or waiver of premiums for not less than 3 months nor more than 11 months, the policy shall be extended automatically as term insurance. The extended term insurance shall be for an amount of insurance equal to the face value of the policy less any indebtedness for such time from the due date of the premium in default as the reserve of the policy less any indebtedness will purchase when applied as a net single premium at the attained age of the insured. For this purpose the attained age is the age on the birthday anniversary nearest to the effective date of the policy plus the number of months from that date to the date extended term insurance becomes effective. Extended term insurance under this provision shall not have a cash or loan value. This paragraph shall be effective from and after August 2, 1948.

(c) Upon default in payment of a premium within the grace period, if a modified life plan of National Service Life Insurance has not been surrendered for cash, upon written request of the insured and complete surrender of the insurance with all claims thereunder, after the expiration of the first policy year and while the policy is in force under premium-paying conditions, the United States

§ 8.15 Provision for paid-up insurance; other than 5-year level premium term or limited convertible 5-year level premium term policies.

If a National Service Life Insurance policy on any plan other than 5-year level premium term or limited convertible 5-year level premium term plan has not been surrendered for cash, upon written request of the insured and complete surrender of the insurance with all claims thereunder, after the expiration of the first policy year and while the policy is in force under premium-paying conditions, the United States
Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 8.17

will issue paid-up insurance for such amount as the cash value less any indebtedness, and a charge for administrative cost for insurance issued under 38 U.S.C. 1925, will purchase when applied as a net single premium at the attained age of the insured. For this purpose the attained age is the age on the birthday anniversary nearest to the effective date of the policy plus the number of years and months from that date to the date the paid-up insurance becomes effective. Such paid-up insurance will be effective as of the expiration of the period for which premiums have been paid and earned; and, any premiums paid in advance for months subsequent to that in which the application for paid-up insurance is made shall be refunded to the insured. The paid-up insurance, if eligible to participate in and to receive dividends, shall be with the right to dividends. The insured may at any time surrender the paid-up policy for its cash value or obtain a loan on such paid-up insurance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1904)

§ 8.16 Conversion of a 5-year level premium term policy as provided for under § 1904 of title 38 U.S.C.

National Service Life Insurance on the level premium term plan which is in force may be exchanged for a permanent plan policy upon written application by the insured and the payment of the current monthly premium at the attained age for the plan of insurance selected (except where premium waiver under 38 U.S.C. 1912 is effective). The reserve (if any) on the policy will be allowed as a credit on the current monthly premium except where premium waiver is effective. Conversion to an endowment plan may not be made while the insured is totally disabled. The conversion will be made without medical examination, except when deemed necessary to determine whether an applicant for conversion to an endowment plan is totally disabled, and upon complete surrender of the term insurance while in force by payment or waiver of premium.

(Premium Waivers and Total Disability)

§ 8.17 Discontinuance of premium waiver.

(a) The Secretary may require proof of continuance of total disability at any time the Secretary may deem same necessary. In the event it is found that an insured is no longer totally disabled, the waiver of premiums shall cease as of the date of such finding, and the insurance may be continued by payment of premiums, the due date of the first premium payable being the next regular monthly due date of the premium under the policy. The insurance shall not lapse prior to the date of expiration of the grace period allowed for the payment of such premium or prior to the expiration of 31 days after date of notice to the insured of the termination of the premium waiver, whichever is the later date. Such notice shall be sent by registered mail or by certified mail and sufficient notice will be deemed to have been given when such letter has been placed in the mails by the Department of Veterans Affairs: Provided, That the Secretary may grant an additional period of not more than 31 days for payment of the premiums in any case in which it is shown that the failure to make payment within 31 days after notice as defined in this paragraph was due to circumstances beyond the insured’s control; but the premiums in any such case must be paid during the lifetime of the insured. The failure of the insured to furnish a correct current address at which mail will reach him or her promptly shall not be grounds for a further extension of time for payment of premiums under this section.

(b) In the event a finding that insured is no longer totally disabled is made at the same time a finding is made of total disability entitling the insured to a waiver of premiums while so disabled, the waiver of premiums shall cease as of the date on which total disability ceased and continuance
of the insurance in such cases shall be subject to the timely payment of the premiums as they become or have become due and payable. The due date of the first premium payable subsequent to the date total disability ceased is the next regular due date of the premium under the policy, and if such premium was not paid within 31 days after the due date, the insurance lapsed.

(c) If the insured shall fail to cooperate with the Secretary in securing any evidence he may require to determine whether total disability has continued, the premium waiver shall cease effective as of the date finding is made of such failure to cooperate, and the insurance may be continued by payment of the premiums within 31 days after notice of termination as provided in paragraph (a) of this section.

§ 8.18 Total disability—speech.

The organic loss of speech shall be deemed to be total disability under National Service Life Insurance.

[67 FR 54738, Aug. 26, 2002]

§ 8.19 Beneficiary and optional settlement changes.

The insured shall have the right at any time, and from time to time, and without the knowledge or consent of the beneficiary to cancel or change a beneficiary and/or optional settlement designation. A change of beneficiary or optional settlement to be effective must be made by notice in writing signed by the insured and forwarded to the Department of Veterans Affairs by the insured or designated agent, and must contain sufficient information to identify the insured. A beneficiary designation and an optional settlement selection, but not a change of beneficiary, may be made by last will and testament duly probated. Upon receipt by the Department of Veterans Affairs, a valid designation or change of beneficiary or option shall be deemed to be effective as of the date of execution. Any payment made before proper notice of designation or change of beneficiary has been received in the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be deemed to have been properly made and to satisfy fully the obligations of the United States under such insurance policy to the extent of such payments.


§ 8.20 Proof of death, age, relationship and marriage.

Whenever it is necessary for a claimant to prove death, age, relationship or marriage, the provisions found in Part 3 of this chapter will be followed.


§ 8.21 Misstatement of age.

If the age of the insured under a National Service life insurance policy has been understated, the amount of the insurance payable under the policy shall be such exact amount as the premium paid would have purchased at the correct age; if overstated, the excess of premiums paid shall be refunded without interest. Guaranteed surrender and loan values will be modified accordingly. The age of the insured will be admitted by the Department of Veterans Affairs at any time upon satisfactory proof.


§ 8.22 Examination of applicants for insurance or reinstatement.

Where physical or mental examination is required of an applicant for National Service Life Insurance or of an applicant for reinstatement of National Service Life Insurance, such examination may be made by a medical officer of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, or Public Health Service, or may be made free of charge to him or her by a full-time or part-time salaried physician or a physician’s assistant at a regional office or medical facility of
§ 8.24 Expenses incident to examinations for insurance purposes.

Except as provided in §8.22, necessary transportation expenses incident to physical or mental examinations for insurance purposes at regional offices or medical facilities shall be furnished when the insured is ordered to report for examination at the specific request of the insurance activity concerned, or the Director of a regional office or of a medical facility. Such expenses will be borne by the United States and will be paid from the applicable appropriation of the Veterans Health Services and Research Administration. Transportation, meal and lodging requests in connection with reporting to and returning from the place of examination may be furnished the applicant, or the applicant may travel at his or her own expense and claim reimbursement for such travel on a mileage basis, provided prior authority has been given for the travel. Travel incident to such an examination by salaried employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs will be in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations. If such an examination is made by a medical examiner on a fee basis, payment will be made at a fee not in excess of the schedule of fees in effect and approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical and professional services in the State in which the examination is made. Where no approved State fee schedule is in effect or where a fee for the type of examination authorized is not listed in the approved State fee schedule in effect, such examinations will be furnished at a fee not in excess of what is reasonable and customarily charged.
§ 8.25 Options.

Insurance will be paid in a lump sum only when selected by the insured during his or her lifetime or by his or her last will and testament.


RENEWAL OF TERM INSURANCE

§ 8.26 Renewal of National Service Life Insurance on the 5-year level premium term plan.

(a) Effective July 23, 1953, all or any part of National Service Life Insurance on the 5-year level premium term plan, in any multiple of $500 and not less than $1,000, which is not lapsed at the expiration of any 5-year term period, shall be automatically renewed without application or medical examination for a successive 5-year period at the applicable level premium term rate for the then attained age of the insured: Provided, That on or after September 1, 1984, National Service Life Insurance “V” 5-year level premium term rates shall not exceed the renewal age 70 “RS” term premium rate, or that on or after (the date the regulation is published as final), Veterans Special Life Insurance “RS” five-year level premium term rates shall not exceed the renewal age 70 “RS” term premium rate: Provided further, That in any case in which the insured is shown by satisfactory evidence to be totally disabled at the expiration of the term period of his or her insurance under conditions which would entitle the insured to continued insurance protection but for such expiration, such insurance, if subject to renewal under this paragraph shall be automatically renewed for an additional period of 5 years at the applicable premium rate. The renewal of insurance for any successive 5-year period will become effective as of the day following the expiration of the preceding term period, and the premium for such renewal will be the applicable level premium term rate on that day: Provided further, That no insurance is subject to renewal if the policyholder has exercised the insured’s right to change to another plan of insurance:

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1905, 1906)

(b) Effective June 25, 1970, a 5-year level premium term policy which lapsed for nonpayment of the premium due and subsequently expired may be renewed subsequently to the expiration of the old term period provided the insured within 5 years of the date of lapse:

(1) Submits written application for reinstatement of the insurance.

(2) Tenders two monthly premiums, one for the month of lapse at the rate for the expired term and the other for the month of reinstatement at the rate for the new term.

(3)(i) If application for reinstatement is submitted and the premiums tendered within 6 premium months after lapse, including the premium month for which the unpaid premium was due, insurance will be reinstated provided the applicant be in as good health on the date of application and tender of premiums as he was on the last day of the grace period of the premium in default and furnishes satisfactory evidence thereof.

(ii) If application for reinstatement is submitted and the premiums tendered after expiration of the 6-month period mentioned in subdivision (i) of this subparagraph, insurance will be reinstated provided applicant is in good health (§8.0) on the date of application and tender of premiums and furnishes satisfactory evidence thereof.

§ 8.27 Conditional designation of beneficiary.

If the insured by notice in writing to the Department of Veterans Affairs during his lifetime has provided that a designated beneficiary shall be entitled to the proceeds of National Service life insurance only if such beneficiary shall survive him for such period (not more than 30 days), as specified by the insured, no right to the insurance shall vest as to such beneficiary during that period. In the event such beneficiary fails to survive the specified period, payment of the proceeds of National Service life insurance will be made as if the beneficiary had predeceased the insured.


§ 8.28 Application for reinstatement of total disability income provision.

A total disability income provision which is lapsed may be reinstated if the insured meets the same requirements as those for reinstatement of the policy to which the total disability income provision is attached; except that in no event shall the requirement of a health statement or other medical evidence be waived in connection with the reinstatement of the total disability income provision.


§ 8.29 Policy provisions.

Contracts of insurance authorized to be made in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the forms and policy plans are subject in all respects to the applicable provisions of title 38 U.S.C., amendments and supplements thereto, and applicable Department of Veterans Affairs regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, all of which together with the insured’s application, required evidence of health, including physical examination, if required, and tender of premium shall constitute the contract.


§ 8.30 Appeal to Board of Veterans Appeals.

(a) The provisions of Part 19 of this chapter will be followed in connection with appeals to the Board of Veterans Appeals involving questions pertaining to the denial of applications for insurance, total disability income provision, or reinstatement; disallowance of claims for insurance benefits; and decisions holding fraud or imposing forfeiture. Notice to the applicant or claimant and his representative, if any, of the right to appeal will be sent by the insurance activity having jurisdiction over the case, at time action of denial, disallowance, or forfeiture is taken.

(b) When an appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals is initiated by a notice of disagreement, any unpaid premiums, normally due under the policy from effective date of issue or reinstatement (as appropriate), will become an interest-bearing lien, enforceable as a legal debt due the United States and subject to all available collection procedures in the event of favorable action by the Board.

(c) Where the adverse action from which appeal is taken involves a change in or addition to insurance currently in force, premium payments must be continued on the existing contract.


§ 8.31 Total disability for twenty years or more.

Where the Disability Insurance Claims activity has made a finding of total disability for insurance purposes and it is found that such disability remained continuously in effect for 20 or more years, the finding will not be discontinued thereafter, except upon a showing that such a determination was based on fraud. The 20-year period will
§ 8.32 Authority of the guardian.

What actions does a guardian have the authority to take for insurance purposes? 
The guardian of an insured or beneficiary has the authority to take the following actions:

(a) Apply for insurance or for conversion of a policy or change of plan;
(b) Reinstate a policy;
(c) Withdraw dividends held on deposit or credit;
(d) Select or change a dividend option;
(e) Obtain a policy loan;
(f) Cash surrender a policy;
(g) Authorize a deduction from benefits or allotment from military retired pay to pay premiums;
(h) Apply for and receive payment of proceeds on a matured policy;
(i) Select or change the premium payment option;
(j) Apply for waiver of premiums and total disability income benefits;
(k) Select or change settlement options for beneficiaries; and
(l) Assign a beneficiary’s interest as provided under section 1918 of title 38 U.S.C.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1906)

§ 8.33 Cash value for term-capped policies.

(a) What is a term-capped policy? A term-capped policy is a National Service Life Insurance policy prefixed with “V” or Veterans Special Life Insurance policy prefixed with “RS,” issued on a 5-year level premium term plan in which premiums have been capped (frozen) at the renewal age 70 rate.

(b) How can a term-capped policy accrue cash value? Normally, a policy issued on a 5-year level premium term plan does not accrue cash value (see section 8.14). However, notwithstanding any other provisions of this part, reserves have been established to provide for cash value for term-capped policies.

(c) On what basis have the reserve values been established? Reserve values have been established based upon the 1980 Commissioners Standard Ordinary Basic Table and interest at five per centum per annum in accordance with accepted actuarial practices.

(d) How much cash value does a term-capped policy have? The cash value for each policy will depend on the age of the insured, the type of policy, and the amount of coverage in force and will be calculated in accordance with accepted actuarial practices. For illustrative purposes, below are some examples of cash values based upon a $10,000 policy at various attained ages for an NSLI “V” policy and a VSLI “RS” policy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Cash value “V”</th>
<th>Cash value “RS”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>$1,494</td>
<td>$1,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>3,212</td>
<td>3,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>4,786</td>
<td>4,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>6,249</td>
<td>6,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>8,887</td>
<td>7,286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(e) What can be done with this cash value? Upon cancellation or lapse of the policy, a policyholder may receive the cash value in a lump sum or may use the cash value to purchase paid-up insurance. If a term-capped policy is kept in force, cash values will continue to grow.

(f) How much paid-up insurance can be obtained for the cash value? The amount of paid-up insurance that can be purchased will depend on the amount of cash value that the policy has accrued and will be calculated in accordance with accepted actuarial practices. For illustrative purposes, below are some examples of paid-up insurance that could be purchased by the cash value of a “V” and an “RS” $10,000 policy at various attained ages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Paid-up “V” insurance</th>
<th>Paid-up “RS” insurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>$2,284</td>
<td>$2,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>4,452</td>
<td>4,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>6,109</td>
<td>6,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>7,421</td>
<td>7,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>9,331</td>
<td>7,650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(g) If the policy lapses due to non-payment of the premium, does the policyholder nonetheless have a choice of receiving the cash value or paid-up insurance? Yes, the policyholder will have that choice, along with the option to reinstate the policy (see section 8.10 for reinstatement of a policy). However, if a policyholder does not make a selection, VA will apply the cash value to purchase paid-up insurance. Paid-up insurance may be surrendered for cash at any time.

(h) If a policyholder elects to receive either the cash surrender or paid-up insurance due to lapse or voluntary cancellation of a term-capped policy, may the original term-capped policy be reinstated? Yes, the term-capped policy may be reinstated but the policyholder, in addition to meeting the reinstatement requirements of term policies, must also pay the current reserve value of the reinstated policy.


PART 8a—VETERANS MORTGAGE LIFE INSURANCE

§ 8a.1 Definitions.

(a) The term housing unit means a family dwelling or unit, together with the necessary land therefor, that has been or will be purchased, constructed, or remodeled with a grant to meet the needs of an eligible veteran and of his or her family, and is or will be owned and occupied by the eligible veteran as his or her home, or a family dwelling or unit, including the necessary land therefor, acquired by an eligible veteran to be used as his or her residence after selling or otherwise disposing of title to the housing unit for which his or her grant was made.

(b) The term Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) means the mortgage protection life insurance authorized for veterans under 38 U.S.C. 2106.

(c) The term initial amount of insurance means the amount of insurance corresponding in amount to the unpaid principal of a mortgage loan outstanding on a housing unit owned or to be acquired by an eligible veteran on August 11, 1971, or on the date of approval of his or her grant made under chapter 21 of title 38 U.S.C., whichever is the later date.

(d) The term mortgage loan means any loan, lien, or other indebtedness incurred by an eligible veteran to buy, build, remodel, or enlarge a housing unit, the payment of which loan, lien, or indebtedness is secured by a mortgage lien, or other equivalent security of record, on the housing unit in the usual legal form employed in the community in which the property is situated. The term also includes refinancing of such an indebtedness to avoid a default, to consolidate liens, to renew or extend the time for payment of the indebtedness, and in cases where the housing unit is being bought, built, remodeled, or enlarged by increasing the amount of such an indebtedness.

(e) The term owned means the eligible veteran has or will acquire an interest in the housing unit which is:

1. A fee simple estate, or
2. A leasehold estate, the unexpired term of which, including renewals at the option of the lessee, is not less than 50 years, or
3. An interest in a residential unit in a cooperative or a condominium type development which in the judgment of the Under Secretary for Benefits or the Director, Loan Guaranty Service, provides a right of occupancy for a period of not less than 50 years: Provided, The title to such estate or interest is or shall be such as is acceptable to prudent lending institutions, informed buyers, title companies, and attorneys, generally, in the community.


§ 8a.2 Maximum amount of insurance.

(a) Each eligible veteran is authorized up to a maximum of $90,000 in VMLI to insure his or her life during periods he or she is obligated under a
mortgage loan, except that, as to an individual housing unit, whenever there is a reduction in the actual amount of insurance in force as provided for in §8a.4(a) the amount of VMLI thereafter available to insure the life of the same veteran on the same housing unit is permanently reduced by a like amount.

(b) The maximum amount of insurance in force on any one life at one time shall not exceed the lesser of the following amounts:

1. $90,000.
2. For insurance issued prior to December 24, 1987, the reduced maximum amount of insurance then available to an eligible veteran.
3. The amount of the unpaid principal of the mortgage loan outstanding on the date of approval of the grant on a housing unit then owned and occupied by the eligible veteran, or on a housing unit being or to be constructed or remodeled for the eligible veteran, and such initial amount of insurance may be adjusted upward, subject to the maximum insurance available to the eligible veteran, or downward, depending upon the amount of the mortgage loans outstanding on the date of full disbursement of the grant, or on the date of final settlement of the purchase, construction, or remodeling agreement, whichever date is the later date.
4. Where an eligible veteran ceases to own the housing unit which was subject to a mortgage loan that resulted in his or her life being insured under VMLI, and becomes obligated under a mortgage loan on another housing unit occupied or to be occupied by the eligible veteran, the amount of the unpaid principal outstanding on the mortgage loan on the newly acquired housing unit on the date insurance hereunder is placed in effect.
5. Where an eligible veteran incurs or refinances a mortgage loan, subject to the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section, the amount of the incurred or refinanced mortgage loan.
6. If title to an undivided interest in a housing unit is or will be vested in a person other than the spouse of an eligible veteran, the amount of VMLI or his or her life shall be computed to be such part of the total of the unpaid principal of the loan outstanding on the housing unit as is proportionate to the undivided interest of the veteran in the entire property.
7. All claims, arising out of the deaths of insured veterans occurring prior to October 1, 1976, shall be subject to the $30,000 lifetime maximum amount of insurance then in effect. All claims, arising out of the deaths of insured veterans occurring on or after October 1, 1976, but prior to December 1, 1992, shall be subject to the $40,000 lifetime maximum amount of insurance then in effect.
8. All claims, arising out of the deaths of insured veterans occurring prior to (date of final publication), shall be subject to the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section then in effect which limited the amount of VMLI coverage to a lifetime maximum per eligible veteran.
(c) Any eligible veteran who prior to October 1, 1976, was covered by $30,000 VMLI and who on that date became eligible to have his or her coverage increased may elect to retain the lesser amount of coverage he or she had in effect prior to that date.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 2106

§8a.3 Effective date.

(a) Where the grant was approved prior to August 11, 1971, VMLI shall be effective August 11, 1971, if on that date, the eligible veteran was obligated under a mortgage loan, and any such eligible veteran is automatically insured, unless he or she elects in writing not to be insured, or fails to respond within 60 days after the date a final request is made or mailed to the eligible veteran for information on which his or her premium can be based.
(b) Where the grant is approved on or after August 11, 1971, VMLI shall be effective on the date of approval of the grant, if on that date the eligible veteran is obligated under a mortgage loan, and any such eligible veteran is automatically insured, unless he or she elects in writing not to be insured, or fails to respond within 60 days after the date a final request is made or mailed to the eligible veteran for information on which his or her premium can be based.
on which his or her premium can be based.

(c) In any case in which a veteran would have been eligible for VMLI on August 11, 1971, or on the date of approval of his or her grant, whichever date is the later date, but such insurance did not become effective because he or she was not obligated under a mortgage loan on that date, or because he or she elected in writing not to be insured, or failed to timely respond to a request for information on which his or her premium could be based, the insurance will be effective on a date agreed upon by the veteran and the Secretary, but only if the veteran files an application in writing with the Department of Veterans Affairs for such insurance, submits evidence that he or she meets the health requirements of the Secretary, together with information on which his or her premium can be based, and is or becomes obligated under a mortgage loan upon the date agreed upon as the effective date of his or her insurance.

(d) In any case in which an eligible veteran disposes of the housing unit purchased, constructed or remodeled in part with a grant, or a subsequently acquired housing unit, and becomes obligated under a mortgage loan on another housing unit occupied or to be occupied by the eligible veteran, the insurance will be effective upon a date requested by the veteran and agreed to by the Secretary, but only if the eligible veteran files an application for such insurance, submits evidence that he or she meets the health requirements of the Secretary, furnishes information on which his or her premium can be based, and is or becomes obligated under a mortgage loan on the date the insurance is to become effective.

(e) In any case where an eligible veteran insured under VMLI, refinances the mortgage loan on which is the basis for such insurance on his or her life, any increase in the amount of insurance or any delay in the rate of reduction of insurance will be effective only if the eligible veteran files an application for insurance, submits evidence that he or she meets the health requirements of the Secretary, and furnishes information on which his or her premium can be based.

PART 9—SERVICEMEMBERS’ GROUP LIFE INSURANCE AND VETERANS’ GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

Sec.  
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SOURCE: 40 FR 4135, Jan. 28, 1975, unless otherwise noted.  

§ 9.1 Definitions.

The following definitions are in addition to those definitions in 38 U.S.C. 101 and 1965:

(a) The term policy means Group Policy No. G–32000, which was effective September 29, 1965, purchased from the insurer pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1966, executed and attested on December 30, 1965, and amended thereafter.

(b) The term administrative office means the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance, located at 80 Livingston Avenue, Roseland, New Jersey 07068.

(c) The term insurer means the commercial life insurance company or companies selected under 38 U.S.C. 1966 to provide insurance coverage specified in the policy.

(d) The term reinsurer means any life insurance company meeting all the criteria set forth in §9.10 which reinsures a portion of the total amount of insurance covered by the policy and issues individual life insurance policies to members under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1968(b) and 1977(e).

(e) The term converter means any life insurance company meeting all the criteria set forth in §9.10 which issues individual life insurance policies to members under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1968(b) and 1977(e).

(f) The term coverage means Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance or Veterans’ Group Life Insurance payable while the member is insured under the policy.

(g) The term termination of duty means (1) In the case of active duty or active duty for training being performed under a call or order that does not specify a period of less than 31 days-discharge, release or separation from such duty.

(2) In the case of other duty—the member’s release from his or her obligation to perform any duty in his or her uniformed service (active duty, or active duty for training or inactive duty training) whether arising from limitations included in a contract of enlistment or similar form of obligation or arising from resignation, retirement or other voluntary action by which the obligation to perform such duty ceases.

(h) The term break in service means the situation(s) in which: (1) A member terminates duty or obligation to perform duty in one service and enters on duty or assumes the obligation to perform duty in another uniformed service, regardless of the length of time intervening.

(2) A member reenters on duty or resumes an obligation to perform duty as a Reserve in the same uniformed service and 1 calendar day or more has elapsed following termination of the prior period of duty or obligation to perform duty.

(i) The term disability means any type of injury or disease whether mental or physical.

(j) The term total disability means any impairment of mind or body which continuously renders it impossible for the insured to follow any substantially gainful occupation. Without prejudice to any other cause of disability, the permanent loss of the use of both feet, of both hands, or of both eyes, or of one foot and one hand, or of one foot and one eye, or of one hand and one eye, or the total loss of hearing of both ears, or the organic loss of speech shall be deemed to be total disability. Organic loss of speech will mean the loss of the ability to express oneself, both by voice.
and whisper, through the normal organs of speech if such loss is caused by organic changes in such organs. Where such loss exists, the fact that some speech can be produced through the use of an artificial appliance or other organs of the body will be disregarded.

(k)(1) The term member’s stillborn child means a member’s natural child—

(i) Whose death occurs before expulsion, extraction, or delivery; and

(ii) Whose—

(A) Fetal weight is 350 grams or more; or

(B) If fetal weight is unknown, duration in utero is 20 completed weeks of gestation or more, calculated from the date the last normal menstrual period began to the date of expulsion, extraction, or delivery.

(2) The term does not include any fetus or child extracted for purposes of an abortion.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1980A)


§ 9.2 Effective date; applications.

(a) The effective date of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance will be in accordance with provisions set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1967.

(b) The effective date of Veterans’ Group Life Insurance will be as follows:

(1) For members whose Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance coverage ceases under 38 U.S.C. 1968(a)(1)(A) and 38 U.S.C. 1968(a)(4), the effective date shall be the 121st day after termination of duty. An application and the initial premium must be received by the administrative office within 120 days following termination of duty.

(2) For members whose Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance coverage was extended because of total disability, the effective date shall be the 121st day after termination of duty. An application and the initial premium must be received by the administrative office within 1 year following termination of duty.

(3) For members who qualify for coverage under 38 U.S.C. 1967(b), the effective date shall be the 121st day after termination of duty. An application, the initial premium, and proof of disability must be received by the administrative office within 120 days following termination of duty.

(4) For members of the Individual Ready Reserve or the Inactive National Guard, the effective date shall be the date an application and the initial premium are received by the administrative office. The application and initial premium must be received by the administrative office within 120 days of becoming a member of either organization.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1977(e))

(c) If either an application or the initial premium has not been received by the administrative office within the time limits set forth above, Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance or Veterans’ Group Life Insurance coverage may still be granted if an application, the initial premium, and evidence of insurability are received by the administrative office within 1 year and 120 days following termination of duty.

(d) The effective date for Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance or Veterans’ Group Life Insurance in any case not otherwise covered under this section or under 38 U.S.C. 1967(a) shall be the date an application and the initial premium are received by the administrative office.

(e) For purposes of this section, an application, an initial premium, and any evidence necessary to effect Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance or Veterans’ Group Life Insurance coverage will be considered to have been received by the administrative office if:

(1) They are properly addressed to the administrative office, and

(2) The proper postage is affixed, and

(3) They are legibly postmarked within the time limit required for receipt by the administrative office.

§ 9.3 Waiver or reduction of coverage.

(a) Full-time coverage which is in effect will terminate or be reduced at midnight of the last day of the month a member’s written notice requesting such termination or reduction is received by his or her uniformed service. In the case of a member paying premiums directly to the administrative office, full-time coverage will terminate or be reduced as of the last day of the month for which the last full premium was paid. Termination or reduction of coverage is effective for the entire remaining period of active duty unless the member reinstates his or her coverage under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1967(c). If, following termination of duty, a member reenters duty (in the same or another uniformed service), a waiver or reduction for the previous period of duty will not apply to the subsequent period of duty.

(b) Part-time coverage will terminate or be reduced at the end of the last day of the period of duty then being performed if the member is on active duty or active duty for training when the waiver or reduction is filed; at the end of the period of inactive duty training then being performed if the member is on inactive duty training when the waiver or reduction is filed; or on the date the waiver or reduction is received by his or her uniformed service if the member is not on active duty, active duty for training; or inactive duty training on the date the waiver or reduction is filed.

(1) When a member insured under part-time coverage waives his or her right to group coverage or elects a reduced amount of insurance, such waiver or election, unless changed, is effective throughout the entire remaining period of active duty unless the member reenters duty. If, following termination of duty, the member reenters duty or resumes the obligation to perform duty (in the same or another uniformed service), the waiver or reduction will not apply to the subsequent period of duty or obligation.

(2) If a reservist insured under part-time coverage is called or ordered to active duty or active duty for training under a call or order that does not specify a period of less than 31 days and is separated or released from such duty and then resumes his or her reserve obligation, any waiver or election of reduced coverage made while eligible for part-time coverage, unless changed, shall be effective throughout the entire period of part-time coverage, the active duty or active duty for training period and 120 days thereafter and the period of immediately resumed reserve obligation.

(3) If a member, other than a member referred to in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, upon termination of duty qualifying him or her for full-time coverage assumes an obligation to perform duty as a reservist, any waiver or election previously made by the member shall not apply to coverage arising from his or her reservist obligation. Furthermore, during the 120 days following termination of such duty the full-time coverage shall not be reduced by any waiver or election made by a member as a reservist.

§ 9.4 Beneficiaries and options.

Any designation of beneficiary or election of settlement options is subject to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1967(c). Any designation of beneficiary or settlement option election made by any member insured under Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance for full-time coverage or part-time coverage will remain in effect until properly changed by the member or canceled automatically for any of the following reasons:

(1) The insurance terminates following separation or release from all duty in a uniformed service.

(2) The member enters on duty in another uniformed service.

(3) The member reenters on duty in the same uniformed service more than 1 calendar day after separation or release from all duty in that uniformed service.

(b) A change of beneficiary may be made at any time and without the knowledge or consent of the previous beneficiary.

(c) Until and unless otherwise changed, a beneficiary designation and
settlement option election of record on the date a statutory increase in coverage takes effect shall be considered to be a beneficiary and optional settlement election for the increased amount as well, and any beneficiary named therein shall be entitled to the same percentage (%) share of the new total coverage amount as that beneficiary was entitled to prior to the statutory increase in coverage.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 9.5 Payment of proceeds.

Proceeds shall be paid in accordance with provisions set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1970 and the following provisions:

(a) If proceeds are to be paid in installments, the first installment will be payable as of the date of death. The amount of each installment will be computed so as to include interest on the unpaid balance at the then effective rate.

(b) If, following the death of an insured member who has designated both principal and contingent beneficiaries and elected to have payment made in 36 equal monthly installments, the principal beneficiary dies before all 36 installments have been paid, the remaining installments will be paid as they fall due to the contingent beneficiary. At the death of such a contingent beneficiary, and in other instances of a beneficiary’s death, where there is no contingent beneficiary, the value of any unpaid installments, discounted to the date of his or her death at the same rate used for inclusion of interest in the computation of installments and paid to him or her in one sum.

(c) In instances where payment in installments is made at the election of the beneficiary, upon his or her request, the value of such installments as remain unpaid will be discounted to the date of payment at the same rate used for inclusion of interest in the computation of installments and paid to him or her in one sum.

(d) If a member whose coverage is extended due to total disability converts the group insurance to an individual policy which is effective before he or she ceases to be totally disabled or before the end of 1 year following termination of duty, whichever is earlier, and dies while group insurance would be in effect, except for such conversion, the group insurance will be payable, provided the individual policy is surrendered for a return of premiums and without further claim. When there is no such surrender, any amount of group insurance in excess of the amount of the individual policy will be payable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 9.6 Assignments.

Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance, Veterans’ Group Life Insurance and benefits thereunder are not assignable.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 9.7 Administrative decisions.

(a) Determinations of the Department of Veterans Affairs are conclusive under the policy with respect to the following:

(1) The status of any person being within the term member and whether or not he or she is covered at any point of time under the policy including traveltime under 38 U.S.C. 1967(b) and death within 120 days thereafter from a disability incurred or aggravated while on duty.

(2) The fact and date of a member’s termination of active duty, or active duty for training, and the fact, date and hours of a member’s performance of inactive duty training.

(3) The fact and dates with respect to a member’s absence without leave, confinement by civilian authorities under a sentence adjudged by a civil court, or confinement by military authorities under a court-martial sentence involving total forfeiture of pay and allowances.

(4) The operation of the forfeiture provision provided in 38 U.S.C. 1973 with respect to any member.
(5) The existence of total disability or insurability at standard premium rates under 38 U.S.C. 1968.

(b) When determination is required on a claim that a member who waived coverage, or whose coverage was forfeited for one of the offenses listed under 38 U.S.C. 1973 was in fact insured, or that a member who elected to be insured was insured for an amount greater than the amount shown in the record, and there is no record of an application to be insured or to increase the amount of insurance as required under 38 U.S.C. 1967(c):

(1) The person making the claim will be required to submit all evidence available concerning the member’s actions and intentions with respect to Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance or Veterans’ Group Life Insurance.

(2) Request will be made to the member’s uniformed service and any other likely source of information considered necessary, for whatever evidence in the form of copies of payroll or personnel records, statements of persons having knowledge of the facts, etc., is essential to a decision in the matter.

Based on the evidence obtained, a formal determination will be made as to whether the member involved is deemed to have applied to be insured, or to be insured for an amount other than the amount shown in the record. The determination will include a finding as to the member’s health status for insurance purposes based on the evidence available.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1967)

(c) In making the determination required under paragraph (b) of this section, the following will be considered:

(1) The possibility that due to widespread geographic distribution, inadequate means of communication and the nature of the group insurance program, members may not be adequately and accurately informed, especially in time of war or military emergency, about the detailed requirements for obtaining insurance protection.

(2) Payroll deductions made without objection by a member, following waiver or termination of coverage, representing premiums for insurance or additional insurance, may, by virtue of continuity or the circumstances surrounding their initiation, be indicative that the member did apply. Such deductions without a formal application of record may be considered as evidence that the member’s application was not in proper form or misplaced. They may also be considered as evidence that an application was not made solely because of erroneous or incomplete counseling or absence of counseling on the part of the responsible personnel of the uniformed service.

(d) Questions for determination under this section as well as those involving coverage of groups and classes of members and other questions are properly referable to the Assistant Director for Insurance. Authority to make any determinations required under this section is delegated to the Under Secretary for Benefits and Assistant Director for Insurance.

§ 9.8 Termination of coverage.

Termination of coverage will be in accordance with the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1968 and §9.3 of this part and the following provisions:

(a) In the case of a member whose coverage is forfeited under 38 U.S.C. 1973, coverage terminates at the end of the day preceding the day on which the act or omission forming the basis for such forfeiture occurred.

(b) In the event of discontinuance of the group policy, coverage terminates at the end of the day preceding the date of the discontinuance of the policy except for those members who are insured under Veterans’ Group Life Insurance in which event coverage terminates at the expiration of the day preceding the anniversary of the effective date of such insurance which first occurs, 90 days or more after the discontinuance of the group policy.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1967)

§ 9.9 Conversion privilege.

(a) With respect to a member on active duty or active duty for training
under a call or order to duty that specifies a period of less than 31 days, and a member insured during inactive duty training scheduled in advance by competent authority there shall be no right of conversion unless the insurance is continued in force under 38 U.S.C. 1967(b) or 1968(a) for 120 days following a period of such duty, as the result of a disability incurred or aggravated during such a period of duty.

(b) The individual policy of life insurance to which an insured may convert under 38 U.S.C. 1968(b) or 1977(e) shall not have disability or other supplementary benefits and shall not be term insurance or any policy which does not provide for cash values. Term riders providing level or decreasing insurance for which an additional premium is charged may be attached to an eligible basic conversion policy, but the rider will be excluded from the conversion pool agreement under the policy.

(c) The insurer will establish a conversion pool in cooperation with the reinsurers and converters in accordance with the terms of the policy. Its purpose will be to provide for the determination and maintenance of appropriate charges arising from excess mortality under individual conversion policies issued in accordance with this section and provide for the appropriate distribution of the risk of loss due to such excess mortality among the reinsurers and converters.

§ 9.10 Health standards.

(a) For the purpose of determining if a member who incurred a disability or aggravated a preexisting disability during a period of active duty or active duty for training under a call to duty specifying a period of less than 31 days or during a period of inactive duty was rendered uninsurable at standard premium rates, the underwriting criteria used by the insurer in determining good health for persons applying to it for life insurance in amounts not exceeding the maximum amount of coverage then available under 38 U.S.C. 1967 will be used.

(b) For all other purposes of determining if a member meets the necessary health requirements except paragraph (a) of this section, the underwriting criteria used by the insurer in determining good health for group life insurance purposes will be used.

§ 9.11 Criteria for reinsurers and converters.

The following criteria will control eligibility for reinsuring and converting companies:

(a) The company must be a legal reserve life insurance company as classified by the insurance supervisory authorities of the State of domicile. Qualified fraternal organizations are included.

(b) The company must have been in the life insurance business for a continuous period of 5 years prior to October 1, 1965, or the December 31 preceding any redeterminations of the allocations. In the event of a merger, the 5-year requirement may be satisfied by either the surviving company or by one of the absorbed companies. Upon joint application by a subsidiary of a participating company, together with the parent company, the 5-year requirement may be waived provided such parent company owns more than 50 percent of the outstanding stock of the subsidiary and has been a legal reserve life insurance company for a period of 10 years or more.

(c) The company must be licensed to engage in life insurance in at least one State of the United States or the District of Columbia.

(d) The company will not be one: (1) Certified by the Department of Defense as being under suspension for cause for purpose of allotment or on-base solicitation privileges.

(2) That solicits life insurance applications as conversion or other replacement of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance or Veterans’ Group Life Insurance coverage in jurisdictions in which it is not licensed.

(3) That fails to take effective action to correct an improper practice followed by it or its agents within 30 days after written receipt of notice issued.
by the insurer or the Assistant Director for Insurance. Improper practice includes:

(i) The use for solicitation purposes of lists of names and addresses of former members without obtaining reasonable assurance that such lists have not been obtained contrary to regulations of the Department of Defense or other uniformed service;

(ii) Failure to reveal sources and copies of mailing lists upon proper request or to otherwise cooperate in an authorized investigation of a reported improper practice;

(iii) The use of written or oral representations which may mislead the person addressed as to the true role of the company or its representatives as one of the participating companies;

(iv) The use of written or oral representations which may mislead the person addressed as to rights, privileges, coverage, premiums, or similar matters under Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance, Veterans’ Group Life Insurance, or any policy issued or proposed to be issued as a conversion or other replacement coverage;

(v) Violation of regulations of a uniformed service concerning solicitation of life insurance; and

(vi) The use of written or oral references to Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance, Veterans’ Group Life Insurance or conversions of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance or Veterans’ Group Life Insurance in connection with the attempted sale of an insurance policy which would not be, in fact, a conversion policy or a policy issued in lieu of a conversion, if those references might lead a person addressed to believe there is a connection between the policy being sold and coverage under Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance, Veterans’ Group Life Insurance or a conversion of it.

The Assistant Director for Insurance will furnish the name and address of the insuring company upon written request of a member of the uniformed services or his or her beneficiary. Actions at law or in equity to recover on the policy, in which there is not alleged any breach of any obligation undertaken by the United States, should be brought against the insurer.

The allocation of insurance to the insurer and each reinsurer will be based upon the following:

(a) An amount of the total life insurance in force under the policy in proportion to the company’s total life insurance in force in the United States where:

- The first $100 million in force is counted in full,
- The second $100 million in force is counted at 75 percent,
- The third $100 million in force is counted at 50 percent,
- The fourth $100 million in force is counted at 25 percent,
- And any amount above $400 million in force is counted at 5 percent.

(b) The allocation will be redetermined at the beginning of each policy year for the primary insurer and the companies then reinsuring, with the portion as set forth in paragraph (a) of this section based upon the corresponding in force (excluding the Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance in force) as of the preceding December 31.

(c) Any life insurance company, which is not initially participating in reinsurance or conversions, but satisfies the criteria set forth in §9.11, may subsequently apply to the primary insurer to reinsure and convert, or to convert only. The participation of such company will be effective as of the beginning of the policy year following the date on which application is approved by the insurer.

(a) What is an Accelerated Benefit? An Accelerated Benefit is a payment of a portion of your Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance or Veterans’ Group Life Insurance to you before you die.

(b) Who is eligible to receive an Accelerated Benefit? You are eligible to receive an Accelerated Benefit if you have a valid written medical prognosis from a physician of 9 months or less to live, and otherwise comply with the provisions of this section.

(c) Who can apply for an Accelerated Benefit? Only you, the insured member, can apply for an Accelerated Benefit. No one can apply on your behalf.

(d) How much can you request as an Accelerated Benefit? (1) You can request as an Accelerated Benefit an amount up to a maximum of 50% of the face value of your insurance coverage.

(2) Your request for an Accelerated Benefit must be $5,000 or a multiple of $5,000 (for example, $10,000, $15,000).

(e) How much can you receive as an Accelerated Benefit? You can receive as an Accelerated Benefit the amount you request up to a maximum of 50% of the face value of your insurance coverage, minus the interest reduction. The interest reduction is the amount the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance actuarially determines to be the amount of interest that would be lost because of the early payment of part of your insurance coverage. This means that if you have $100,000 in coverage and you request the maximum amount that you are eligible to request as an Accelerated Benefit, you will be paid $50,000 minus the interest reduction.

(f) How do you apply for an Accelerated Benefit? (1) You can obtain an application form entitled “Claim for Accelerated Benefits” by writing the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance, 290 W. Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Livingston, New Jersey 07039; calling the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance toll-free at 1–800–219–1473; or downloading the form from the Internet at www.insurance.va.gov. You must submit the completed application form to the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance, 290 W. Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Livingston, New Jersey 07039.

(2) As stated on the application form, you will be required to complete part of the application form and your physician will be required to complete part of the application form. If you are an active duty servicemember, your branch of service will also be required to complete part of the form.

[Form: To Be Completed by Insured]

Claim for Accelerated Benefits

Your name: ________________________________
Social Security Number: ____________________
Date of birth: ______________________________
Branch of Service (if covered under SGLI): __
Your mailing address (if different from above):
Amount of SGLI coverage: $ __
Amount of claim (can be no more than one-half of coverage in increments of $5,000): __
Type of coverage (check one):
SGLI (circle one of the following): Active Duty Ready Reserve Army or Air National Guard Separated or Discharged
VGLI

I acknowledge that I have read all of the attached information about the accelerated benefit. I understand that I can get this benefit only once during my lifetime and that I can use it for any purpose I choose. I further understand that the face amount of my coverage will reduce by the amount of accelerated benefit I choose to receive now.

Your signature: ____________________________
Date: ________________________________

Authorization To Release Medical Records

To all physicians, hospitals, medical service providers, pharmacists, employers, other insurance companies, and all other agencies and organizations:

You are authorized to release a copy of all my medical records, including examinations, treatments, history, and prescriptions, to the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (OSGLI) or its representatives.

Printed name: ______________________________
Signature: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________

A photocopy of this authorization will be considered as effective and valid as the original.

Valid for one year from date signed.
§ 9.20 Traumatic injury protection.

(a) What is traumatic injury protection? Traumatic injury protection provides for the payment of a specified benefit amount to a member insured by Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance who sustains a traumatic injury directly resulting in a scheduled loss.

(b) What is a traumatic event? (1) A traumatic event is the application of...
external force, violence, chemical, biological, or radiological weapons, or accidental ingestion of a contaminated substance causing damage to a living being occurring—

(i) On or after December 1, 2005, or
(ii) On or after October 7, 2001, and through and including November 30, 2005, if the scheduled loss is a direct result of a traumatic injury incurred in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom.

(2)(i) The term incurred in Operation Enduring Freedom means a service member was deployed outside of the United States on orders in support of Operation Enduring Freedom or served in a geographic location that qualified the service member for the Combat Zone Tax Exclusion under 26 U.S.C. 211.

(ii) The term incurred in Operation Iraqi Freedom means a service member was deployed outside of the United States on orders in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom or served in a geographic location that qualified the service member for the Combat Zone Tax Exclusion under 26 U.S.C. 211.

(3) A traumatic event does not include a medical or surgical procedure in and of itself.

(c) What is a traumatic injury?

(1) A traumatic injury is physical damage to a living body that is caused by a traumatic event as defined in paragraph (b) of this section.

(2) For purposes of this section, the term “traumatic injury” does not include damage to a living body caused by—

(i) A mental disorder; or
(ii) A mental or physical illness or disease, except if the physical illness or disease is caused by a pyogenic infection, biological, chemical, or radiological weapons, or accidental ingestion of a contaminated substance.

(3) For purposes of this section, all traumatic injuries will be considered to have occurred at the same time as the traumatic event.

(d) What are the eligibility requirements for payment of traumatic injury protection benefits?

You must meet all of the following requirements in order to be eligible for traumatic injury protection benefits.

(1) You must be a member of the uniformed services who is insured by Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance under section 1967(a)(1)(A)(i), (B) or (C)(i) of title 38, United States Code, on the date you sustained a traumatic injury, except if you are a member who experienced a traumatic injury on or after October 7, 2001, through and including December 1, 2005, and your scheduled loss was a direct result of injuries incurred in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom. (For this purpose, you will be considered a member of the uniformed services until midnight on the date of termination of your duty status in the uniformed services that established your eligibility for Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance, notwithstanding an extension of your Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance coverage under section 1968(a) of title 38, United States Code.)

(2) You must suffer a scheduled loss that is a direct result of a traumatic injury and no other cause.

(3) You must survive for a period not less than seven full days from the date of the traumatic injury. The seven day period begins on the date and Zulu (Greenwich Meridean) time of the traumatic injury and ends 168 full hours later.

(4) You must suffer a scheduled loss under paragraph (e)(7) of this section within two years of the traumatic injury.

(5) You must suffer a traumatic injury before midnight on the date of termination of your duty status in the uniformed services that established eligibility for Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance. For purposes of this section, the scheduled loss may occur after the date of termination of your duty status in the uniformed services that established eligibility for Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance.

(e) What is a scheduled loss and what amount will be paid because of that loss?

(1) The term “scheduled loss” means a condition listed in the schedule in paragraph (e)(7) of this section if directly caused by a traumatic injury. A scheduled loss is payable at the amount specified in the schedule.

(2) The maximum amount payable under the schedule for all losses resulting from traumatic events occurring within a seven-day period is $100,000.
We will calculate the seven-day period beginning with the day on which the first traumatic event occurs.

(3) A benefit will not be paid if a scheduled loss is due to a traumatic injury—

(i) Caused by—

(A) The member’s attempted suicide, while sane or insane;

(B) An intentionally self-inflicted injury or an attempt to inflict such injury;

(C) Diagnostic procedures, preventive medical procedures such as inoculations, medical or surgical treatment for an illness or disease, or any complications arising from such procedures or treatment;

(D) Willful use of an illegal substance or a controlled substance unless administered or consumed on the advice of a medical professional; or

(ii) Sustained while a member was committing or attempting to commit a felony.

(4) A benefit will not be paid for a scheduled loss resulting from—

(i) A physical or mental illness or disease, whether or not caused by a traumatic injury, other than a pyogenic infection or physical illness or disease caused by biological, chemical, or radiological weapons or accidental ingestion of a contaminated substance; or

(ii) A mental disorder whether or not caused by a traumatic injury.

(5) Amount Payable under the Schedule of Losses. (i) The maximum amount payable for all scheduled losses resulting from a single traumatic event is limited to $100,000. For example, if a traumatic event on April 1, 2006, results in the immediate total and permanent loss of sight in both eyes, and the loss of one foot on May 1, 2006, as a direct result of the same traumatic event, the member will be paid $100,000.

(ii) If a member suffers more than one scheduled loss from separate traumatic events occurring more than seven full days apart, the scheduled losses will be considered separately and a benefit will be paid for each loss up to the maximum amount according to the schedule. For example, if a member suffers the loss of one foot at or above the ankle on May 1, 2006, from one event, the member will be paid $50,000.

If the same member suffers loss of sight in both eyes from an event that occurred on November 1, 2006, the member will be paid an additional $100,000.

(6) Definitions. For purposes of this paragraph (e)(6)—

(i) The term **quadriplegia** means the complete and irreversible paralysis of all four limbs.

(ii) The term **paraplegia** means the complete and irreversible paralysis of both lower limbs.

(iii) The term **hemiplegia** means the complete and irreversible paralysis of the upper and lower limbs on one side of the body.

(iv) The term **uniplegia** means the complete and irreversible paralysis of one limb of the body.

(v) The term **complete and irreversible paralysis** means total loss of voluntary movement resulting from damage to the spinal cord or associated nerves, or to the brain, that is deemed clinically stable and unlikely to improve.

(vi) The term **inability to carry out activities of daily living** means the inability to independently perform at least two of the six following functions:

(A) Bathing.

(B) Continence.

(C) Dressing.

(D) Eating.

(E) Toileting.

(F) Transferring in or out of a bed or chair with or without equipment.

(vii) The term **pyogenic infection** means a pus-producing infection.

(viii) The term **contaminated substance** means food or water made unfit for consumption by humans because of the presence of chemicals, radioactive elements, bacteria, or organisms.

(ix) The term **chemical weapon** means chemical substances intended to kill, seriously injure, or incapacitate humans through their physiological effects.

(x) The term **biological weapon** means biological agents or microorganisms intended to kill, seriously injure, or incapacitate humans through their physiological effects.

(xi) The term **radiological weapon** means radioactive materials or radiation-producing devices intended to kill, seriously injure, or incapacitate humans through their physiological effects.
humans through their physiological effects.

(xii) The term medical professional means a licensed practitioner of the healing arts acting within the scope of his or her practice. Some examples include a licensed physician, optometrist, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, physician assistant, or audiologist.

(xiii) The term hospitalization means an inpatient stay in a facility that is:

(1) Accredited by the Joint Commission or its predecessor, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), or accredited or approved by a program of the qualified governmental unit in which such institution is located if the Secretary of Health and Human Services has found that the accreditation or comparable approval standards of such qualified governmental unit are essentially equivalent to those of the Joint Commission or JCAHO;

(2) Used primarily to provide, by or under the supervision of physicians, to inpatients diagnostic services and therapeutic services for medical diagnosis, treatment, and care of injured, disabled, or sick persons;

(3) Requires every patient to be under the care and supervision of a physician; and

(4) Provides 24-hour nursing services rendered or supervised by a registered professional nurse and has a licensed practical nurse or registered nurse on duty at all times; or

(B) Any Armed Forces medical facility that is authorized to provide inpatient and/or ambulatory care to eligible service members.

(xiv) The term total and permanent loss of sight means:

(A) Visual acuity in the eye of 20/200 or less (worse) with corrective lenses and a visual field of 20 degrees or less lasting at least 120 days; or

(C) Anatomical loss of the eye.

(xv) The term total and permanent loss of speech means organic loss of speech or the ability to express oneself, both by voice and whisper, through normal organs for speech, notwithstanding the use of an artificial appliance to simulate speech. Loss of speech must be clinically stable and unlikely to improve.

(xvi) The term total and permanent loss of hearing means average hearing threshold sensitivity for air conduction of at least 80 decibels, based on hearing acuity measured at 500, 1,000, and 2,000 Hertz, that is clinically stable and unlikely to improve.

(xvii) The term burns means 2nd degree (partial thickness) or worse burns covering at least 20 percent of the body, including the face and head, or 20 percent of the face alone. Percentage of the body burned may be measured using the Rule of Nines or any means generally accepted within the medical profession.

(xviii) The term coma means a state of profound unconsciousness that is measured at a Glasgow Coma Score of 8 or less.

(xix) The term limb salvage means a series of operations designed to save an arm or leg with all of its associated parts rather than amputate it. For purposes of this section, a surgeon must certify that the option of amputation of the limb(s) was a medically justified alternative to salvage, and the patient chose to pursue salvage.

(xx) The term amputation means the severance or removal of a limb or part of a limb resulting from trauma or surgery. An amputation above a joint means a severance or removal that is closer to the body than the specified joint is.

(f) Schedule of Losses.
§ 9.20  

38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)  

For losses listed in paragraphs (f) through (j) of this section, multiple losses resulting from a single traumatic event may be combined for purposes of a single payment (except where noted otherwise); however, the total payment amount may not exceed $100,000 for losses resulting from a single traumatic event.

Payments for losses listed in paragraphs (k)(19) through (20) of this section may not be made in addition to payments for losses under paragraphs (f)(1) through (18)—only the higher amount will be paid. The total payment amount may not exceed $100,000 for losses resulting from a single traumatic event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the loss is—</th>
<th>Then the amount payable for that loss is—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (1) Total and permanent loss of sight:  
  - For each eye | $50,000 |
| (2) Total and permanent loss of hearing:  
  - For one ear  
  - For both ears | $25,000  
  $109,000 |
| (3) Total and permanent loss of speech | $50,000 |
| (4) Quadriplegia | $100,000 |
| (5) Hemiplegia | $100,000 |
| (6) Paraplegia | $100,000 |
| (7) Uniplegia:  
  - For each limb* | $50,000 |
  *Note: Payment for uniplegia of arm cannot be combined with loss 9, 10, or 14 for the same arm. Payment of uniplegia of leg cannot be combined with loss 11, 12, 13, or 15 for the same leg. |
| (8) Burns | $100,000 |
| (9) Amputation of a hand at or above the wrist:  
  - For each hand* | $50,000 |
  *Note: Payment for loss 9 cannot be made in addition to payment for loss 10 for the same hand. |
| (10) Amputation at or above the metacarpophalangeal joint(s) of either the thumb or the other 4 fingers on one hand:  
  - For each hand* | $50,000 |
  *Note: Payment for loss of the thumb cannot be made in addition to payment for loss of the other 4 fingers for the same hand. |
(11) Amputation of a foot at or above the ankle:

| For each foot* | $50,000 |

*Note: Payment for loss 11 cannot be made in addition to payments for losses 12 or 13 for the same foot.

(12) Amputation at or above the metatarsophalangeal joints of all toes on 1 foot:

| For each foot* | $50,000 |

*Note: Payment for loss 12 cannot be made in addition to payments for loss 13 for the same foot.

(13) Amputation at or above the metatarsophalangeal joint(s) of either the big toe, or the other 4 toes on 1 foot:

| For each foot | $25,000 |

(14) Limb salvage of arm:

| For each arm* | $50,000 |

*Note: Payment for loss 14 cannot be made in addition to payments for losses 9 or 10 for the same arm.

(15) Limb salvage of leg:

| For each leg* | $50,000 |

*Note: Payment for loss 15 cannot be made in addition to payments for losses 11, 12 or 13 for the same leg.

(16) Facial Reconstruction:

- **Jaw** – surgery to correct discontinuity loss of the upper or lower jaw
  
  $75,000

- **Nose** – surgery to correct discontinuity loss of 50% or more of the cartilaginous nose
  
  $50,000

- **Lips** – surgery to correct discontinuity loss of 50% or more of the upper or lower lip
  
  - For one lip
  
  - For both lips
  
  $50,000
  
  $75,000

- **Eyes** – surgery to correct discontinuity loss of 30% or more of the periorbita
  
  - For each eye
  
  $25,000

- **Facial Tissue** – surgery to correct discontinuity loss of the tissue in 50% or more of any of the following facial subunits: forehead, temple, zygomatic, mandibular, infraorbital or chin.
  
  - For each facial subunit
  
  $25,000

*Note 1: Losses due to facial reconstruction may be combined with each other, but the maximum benefit for facial reconstruction may not exceed $75,000.

*Note 2: Any injury or combination of losses under facial reconstruction may also be combined with other losses in paragraphs 9.200(a)(11)-(18) and treated as one loss, provided that all losses are the result of a single traumatic event. However, the total payment amount may not exceed $100,000.

(17) Coma from traumatic injury AND/OR Traumatic Brain Injury resulting in inability to perform at least 2 Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
(g) Who will determine eligibility for traumatic injury protection benefits?

Each uniformed service will certify its own members for traumatic injury protection benefits based upon section 1032 of Public Law 109–13, section 501 of Public Law 109–233, and this section. The uniformed service will certify whether you were at the time of the traumatic injury insured under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance and whether you have sustained a qualifying loss.

(h) How does a member make a claim for traumatic injury protection benefits?

(1)(i) A member who believes he or she qualifies for traumatic injury protection benefits must complete Part A of the Application for TSGLI Benefits Form and sign the form.

(ii) If a member is unable to sign the Application for TSGLI Benefits Form due to the member's physical or mental incapacity, the form must be signed by the member's guardian; if none, the member's agent or attorney acting under a valid Power of Attorney; if none, the member's military trustee.

(iii) If a member suffered a scheduled loss as a direct result of the traumatic injury, survived seven full days from the date of the traumatic event, and then died before the maximum benefit for which the service member qualifies is paid, the beneficiary or beneficiaries of the member's Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance policy should complete an Application for TSGLI Benefits Form.
(2) If a member seeks traumatic injury protection benefits for a scheduled loss occurring after submission of a completed Application for TSGLI Benefits Form for a different scheduled loss, the member must submit a completed Application for TSGLI Benefits Form for each scheduled loss and for each scheduled loss that occurs thereafter and for each increment of a scheduled loss that occurs thereafter. For example, if a member seeks traumatic injury protection benefits for a scheduled loss due to coma from traumatic brain injury (§9.20(f)(17)), or the inability to carry out activities of daily living due to loss directly resulting from a traumatic injury other than an injury to the brain (§9.20(f)(19)), a completed Application for TSGLI Benefits Form must be submitted for each increment of time for which TSGLI is payable. Also, for example, if a service member suffers a scheduled loss due to coma, a completed Application for TSGLI Benefits Form should be filed after the 15th consecutive day that the member is in the coma, for which $25,000 is payable. If the member remains in a coma for another 15 days, another completed Application for TSGLI Benefits Form should be submitted and another $25,000 will be paid.

(i) How does a member or beneficiary appeal an adverse eligibility determination? (1) Notice of a decision regarding a member’s eligibility for traumatic injury protection benefits will include an explanation of the procedure for obtaining review of the decision. An appeal of an eligibility determination, such as whether the loss occurred within 365 days of the traumatic injury, whether the injury was self-inflicted or whether a loss of hearing was total and permanent, must be in writing. An appeal must be submitted by a member or a member’s legal representative or by the beneficiary or the beneficiary’s legal representative within one year of the date of a denial of eligibility to the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance.


(j) Who will be paid the traumatic injury protection benefit? The injured member who suffered a scheduled loss will be paid the traumatic injury protection benefit in accordance with title 38 U.S.C. 1980A except under the following circumstances:

(1) If a member is legally incapacitated, the member’s guardian or agent or attorney acting under a valid Power of Attorney will be paid the benefit on behalf of the member.

(2) If no guardian, agent, or attorney is authorized to act as the member’s legal representative, a military trustee who has been appointed under the authority of 37 U.S.C. 602 will be paid the benefit on behalf of the member. The military trustee will report the receipt of the traumatic injury benefit payment and any disbursements from that payment to the Department of Defense.

(3) If a member dies before payment is made, the beneficiary or beneficiaries who will be paid the benefit will be determined in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 1970(a).

(k) The Traumatic Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance program will be administered in accordance with this rule, except to the extent that any regulatory provision is inconsistent with subsequently enacted applicable law.


(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0671)

PART 10—ADJUSTED COMPENSATION

ADJUSTED COMPENSATION; GENERAL

Sec.
10.0 Adjusted service pay entitlements.
10.1 Issuance of duplicate adjusted service certificate without bond.
10.2 Evidence required of loss, destruction or mutilation of adjusted service certificate.
10.3 Issuance of duplicate adjusted service certificate with bond.
10.4 Loss, destruction, or mutilation of adjusted service certificate while in possession of Department of Veterans Affairs.
10.5 Designation of more than one beneficiary under an adjusted service certificate.
10.6 Conditions requisite for change in designation of beneficiary.
10.7 Designation of beneficiary subsequent to cancellation of previous designation.
10.8 Approval of application for change of designation of beneficiary.
10.9 “Demand for payment” certification.
10.10 Payment to estate of decedent.
10.11 Payment of death claim on lost, destroyed or mutilated adjusted service certificate.
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10.13 Proof of death evidence.
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10.15 Proof of remarriage.
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10.18 Determination of dependency.
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10.28 Evidence required to support claim of mother or father.
10.29 Definition of “widow”.
10.30 Authentication of statements supporting claims.
10.31 Use of prescribed forms.

PAYMENTS
10.50 Section 601 and section 603 payments made on first day of calendar quarter.

ADJUSTED COMPENSATION; GENERAL

§10.0 Adjusted service pay entitlements.

A veteran entitled to adjusted service pay is one whose adjusted service credit does not amount to more than $50 as distinguished from a veteran whose adjusted service credit exceeds $50 and who therefore is entitled to an adjusted service certificate.

§10.1 Issuance of duplicate adjusted service certificate without bond.

If the veteran named in an adjusted service certificate issued pursuant to the provisions of section 501 of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, without bad faith, has not received such certificate, or if prior to receipt by the veteran such certificate was destroyed wholly or in part or was so defaced as to impair its value, or, if after delivery it was partially destroyed or defaced so as to impair its value but can be identified to the satisfaction of the Secretary, a duplicate adjusted service certificate will be issued upon application and a bond of indemnity will not be required.

Provided, That if the adjusted service certificate was destroyed in part or so defaced as to impair its value, the veteran or person entitled to payment thereon will be required to surrender to the Department of Veterans Affairs the original certificate or so much thereof as may remain.

§10.2 Evidence required of loss, destruction or mutilation of adjusted service certificate.

The veteran named in an adjusted service certificate issued pursuant to the provisions of section 501 of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, or the person entitled to payment thereon will be required to furnish evidence of the nonreceipt of the adjusted service certificate, or of its receipt in a mutilated or defaced condition, or of

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the loss or destruction in whole or in part of defacement of the certificate after its receipt, as the case may be. The evidence must be sufficient to establish to the satisfaction of the Secretary that neither the veteran nor the person entitled to payment thereon, or any person for or on their behalf, received the adjusted service certificate, or that at the time of its receipt it was mutilated or defaced to such an extent as to impair its value, or that after receipt of the certificate it was lost or destroyed in whole or in part or defaced, but without bad faith on the part of the veteran, and that every effort has been made to recover the lost certificate. Unless determination is otherwise made by the Secretary the evidence must be in the form of a written statement sworn to by the veteran or person entitled to payment thereon and witnessed by at least two persons who shall state, under oath that they personally know the affiant, that they have read his or her statement and that it is true to the best of their knowledge and belief. These statements should be supplemented by affidavits of any persons having personal knowledge of additional facts and circumstances concerning the matter, and the Secretary may require any additional evidence deemed necessary.

§ 10.3 Issuance of duplicate adjusted service certificate with bond.

An indemnity bond will be required as a prerequisite to the issuance of a duplicate adjusted service certificate in all cases where the certificate was lost after receipt by the veteran, or after receipt by the veteran was defaced or mutilated and cannot be identified to the satisfaction of the Secretary, provided the loss, defacement, or mutilation was without bad faith on the part of the veteran or the person entitled to payment thereon. The bond must be in the manner and form prescribed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and for an amount equal to the face value of the certificate, with surety or sureties residents of the United States and satisfactory to the Secretary, with condition to indemnify and save harmless the United States from any claim on account of such certificate. If the certificate was defaced or mutilated the veteran or person entitled to payment thereon will be required to surrender to the Department of Veterans Affairs the certificate or so much thereof as may remain.

§ 10.4 Loss, destruction, or mutilation of adjusted service certificate while in possession of Department of Veterans Affairs.

A new adjusted service certificate will be issued without bond in lieu of the certificate which has been lost or destroyed, or has been mutilated, defaced or damaged so as to impair its value, while in possession of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

§ 10.15 Designation of more than one beneficiary under an adjusted service certificate.

A veteran to whom an adjusted service certificate has been issued pursuant to the provisions of section 501 of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act may name more than one beneficiary to receive the proceeds of his adjusted service certificate, and may from time to time with the approval of the Secretary change such beneficiaries. The designated beneficiaries shall share equally unless otherwise specified by the veteran. Wherever the word beneficiary appears in the law and Department of Veterans Affairs regulations it shall be interpreted to include beneficiaries.

§ 10.16 Conditions requisite for change in designation of beneficiary.

A change of beneficiary of an adjusted service certificate to be valid must be made:

(a) By notice signed by the veteran or his duly authorized agent, and delivered or properly mailed to the Department of Veterans Affairs during the lifetime of the veteran. Such change shall not take effect until approved by the Secretary and after such approval the change shall be deemed to have been made as of the date the veteran signed said written notice and change, whether the veteran be living at the time of said approval or not.

(b) Or by last will and testament of the veteran, duly probated. Such change shall not be effective until received by the Department of Veterans Affairs and approved by the Secretary.
§ 10.17 Designation of beneficiary subsequent to cancellation of previous designation.

The designation of a beneficiary made subsequent to the cancellation of a previous designation of beneficiary, shall be considered as a change in beneficiary, and shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary and subject to the conditions and requirements respecting change in beneficiary as outlined in §10.16.

§ 10.18 Approval of application for change of beneficiary heretofore made.

Any application for a change of beneficiary heretofore made may be approved if it meets the requirements set out in §§10.16 and 10.17.

§ 10.20 “Demand for payment” certification.

Certification to the execution of demand for payment forms appearing on the reverse side of adjusted service certificates issued pursuant to the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, as amended, is required in accordance with instructions printed on said forms. Such certification if made in the United States or possessions will be accepted if made by and bearing the official seal of a United States postmaster, an executive officer of an incorporated bank or trust company, notary public, or any person who is legally authorized to administer oaths in a State, Territory, District of Columbia or in a Federal judicial district of the United States. If the demand for payment be executed in a foreign country, the same shall be certified by an American consul, a recognized representative of an American embassy or legation or by a person authorized to administer oaths under the laws of the place where execution of demand is made, provided there be attached to the certificate of such latter officer a proper certification by an accredited official of the State Department of the United States that the officer certifying to the execution of the demand for payment was authorized to administer oaths in the place where certification was made.

§ 10.22 Payment to estate of decedent.

Wherever the face value of an adjusted service certificate, issued pursuant to the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, as amended, becomes payable to the estate of any decedent and the amount thereof is not over $500 and an administrator has not been or is not to be appointed, such amount will be paid to such person or persons as would, under the laws of the State of residence of the decedent, be entitled to his personal property in case of intestacy.

§ 10.24 Payment of death claim on lost, destroyed or mutilated adjusted service certificate with bond.

If the veteran named in an adjusted service certificate, issued pursuant to the provisions of section 501 of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, is deceased, and if, after receipt by the veteran, the adjusted service certificate was lost, destroyed, or so defaced as to impair its value and cannot be identified to the satisfaction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the person entitled to payment thereon will be required to furnish an indemnity bond in the manner and form prescribed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and for an amount equal to the face value of the certificate, with surety or sureties residents of the United States and satisfactory to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with condition to indemnify and save harmless the United States from any claim on account of such certificate, before payment will
§ 10.32 Evidence of dependency.

Evidence of a whole or entire dependency shall not be required. The mother or father shall be considered dependent for the purposes of the act when it is established as a fact that the mother or father of a deceased veteran did not have sufficient means from all sources for a reasonable livelihood at the time of the death of the veteran or at any time thereafter and on or before January 2, 1935. In those cases where because of continued and unexplained absence for seven years the veteran is declared deceased under section 312(a) of the Act as amended May 29, 1928, the mother or father shall be considered dependent when it is established that the mother or father did not have sufficient means from all sources for a reasonable livelihood at the beginning of such 7-year period or at any time thereafter.
§ 10.33 Determination of dependency.

A determination of the existence of the alleged dependency will be made upon consideration of all facts relating to dependency, and upon such investigation of such facts as may be warranted. The following facts as existing at the time of the death of the veteran, or at any time thereafter and on or before January 2, 1935, or where it is established that the veteran is deceased as provided in section 312(a), at the beginning of such 7-year period or at any time thereafter and before the expiration of such period, shall be taken into consideration in determining dependency in a given case:

(a) Claimant’s age.
(b) Amount contributed to claimant by deceased veteran.
(c) Value of all real and personal property owned by claimant.
(d) Total monthly expenses of the claimant and total monthly income.
(e) The fact that claimant did or did not receive an allotment of pay or allowance during the veteran’s military or naval service.
(f) Incapability of self-support by reason of mental or physical defect.
(g) Any other fact or facts pertinent to the determination of dependency.

§ 10.34 Proof of age of dependent mother or father.

The mother or father of a veteran to be entitled to the presumption of dependency within the meaning of section 602(c) or section 312(c) of the Act, as amended, shall be required to submit proof of age in accordance with the requirements as set forth in regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

§ 10.35 Claim of mother entitled by reason of unmarried status.

Claim of a mother for the benefits to which she may be entitled by reason of her unmarried status as outlined in section 202(c) or section 312(c)3 of the Act, as amended, shall be supported by a statement of fact, under oath, of such status, together with one of the following:

(a) Certified copy of public record of death of the husband.
(b) Certified copy of court record of divorce decree.

§ 10.36 Proof of marital cohabitation under section 602 or section 312 of the Act.

In order to prove marital cohabitation within the meaning of that term as used in section 602(a) or section 312(c)1 of the Act, as amended, claimant shall be required to establish:

(a) A valid marriage, such marriage to be shown by the best evidence obtainable in accordance with the provisions of regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
(b) The fact of living together as man and wife, with such fact to be established by:

(1) Statement of the widow or widower showing that he or she and the veteran lived together as man and wife and also showing the place or places of residence during such marital cohabitation and the approximate time of such residence; or
(2) Statement of two competent persons showing that they personally knew the claimant and veteran and that they had personal knowledge that said claimant and veteran lived together as man and wife and were recognized as such.

(c) The fact that the marital status existed at the time of the death of the veteran or where it is established that the veteran is deceased, as provided in section 312(a)1 of the Act, as amended, at the beginning of such 7-year period, such fact to be established by:

(1) Statement by claimant that he or she and the veteran had not been divorced and that there had been no annulment of the marriage.
(2) Statement of claimant that he or she was not remarried at the time of making application.
(3) Statement of two competent persons showing that they personally knew the claimant and the veteran; that they personally knew of the marriage relationship between claimant and veteran; that to the best of their knowledge and belief there had been no
§ 10.37 Claim of widow not living with veteran at time of veteran's death.

If a veteran and widow were not living together at the time of the death of the veteran the widow will be required to establish:

(a) That the living apart was not due to her willful act, and
(b) Actual dependency upon the veteran at the time of his death or at any time thereafter and before January 2, 1935.

(1) A determination of what shall constitute a willful act, as used in section 602(a) of the Act, as amended, will be made upon consideration of all facts relating to such act and upon such investigation of such facts as may be deemed warranted. For the purpose of this section, the fact that a veteran lived apart from the widow because of any act by the widow involving desertion or moral turpitude will be construed as the willful act of the widow.

(2) A determination of the existence of actual dependency will be made under the criteria set forth in §§10.32 and 10.33 with respect to dependency of a mother or father.

§ 10.38 Proof of age of veteran's child.

A child of a veteran shall be required to submit proof of age in accordance with the requirements set forth in the regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

§ 10.39 Mental or physical defect of child.

If claim is made under section 602(b), (2), of title IV of the Act as amended, alleging that a child over 18 years of age was incapable of self-support at the death of the veteran or that he became incapable of self-support subsequent to the death of the veteran but on or before January 2, 1935, or that he was incapable of self-support at the disappearance of the veteran or became incapable of self-support after the disappearance of the veteran and before the expiration of the period of seven years mentioned in section 312(c), (2), of the Act, it will be necessary to furnish evidence as to the mental or physical condition of the child at the time it is alleged he became incapable of self-support.

(a) Where incapability of self-support by reason of the mental defect of the child is alleged, the following evidence will be required:

(1) Certified copy of court order or decree declaring the child to be mentally incompetent; or
(2) A report of a licensed physician setting forth all of the facts as to the child's mental condition; or
(3) The affidavit of the person having custody and control of the child, setting forth all of the available information as to the child's mental condition. The affidavit must be substantiated by two competent disinterested persons who shall state that they personally know the child, that they have read the affidavit made by the person having custody and control of the child, and that the information therein set forth is true to the best of their knowledge and belief.

(b) Where incapability of self-support by reason of physical defect of the child is alleged, the following evidence will be required:

(1) Report of a licensed physician setting forth all of the facts as to the child's physical condition; and
(2) Affidavit of the child regarding his physical condition and the affidavits of two competent disinterested persons, who shall state that they personally know the claimant, that they have read his affidavit and that the same is true to the best of their knowledge and belief.

§ 10.40 Payment on account of minor child.

Payments to a minor child shall be made to the legally constituted guardian, curator or conservator, or to the person found by the director to be otherwise legally vested with the care of the child.
§ 10.41 Definition of “child”.

The term child as used in the regulations in this part includes:
(a) A legitimate child;
(b) A child legally adopted;
(c) A stepchild if a member of the veteran’s household at the time of the death of the veteran, or
(d) An illegitimate child but as to the father only if acknowledged in writing signed by him, or if he has been judicially ordered or decreed to contribute to such child’s support or has been judicially decreed to be the putative father of such child.

§ 10.42 Claim of child other than legitimate child.

A claim of a child legally adopted by the veteran upon whose service the claim is based shall be supported by a certified copy of the court record of such adoption. A claim of a stepchild of a veteran shall be supported by an affidavit of his or her legal guardian, stating that at the time of the death of the veteran said stepchild was a member of the veteran’s household. The fact, as stated in such affidavit, and the signature of the guardian thereto, shall be attested by the court having jurisdiction over the guardian, or by two competent persons to whom the child was personally known at the time of the death of the veteran. A claim of an illegitimate child of a veteran upon whose service claim is based, shall be supported by:
(a) A statement by the veteran in writing acknowledging his parentage of such child; or
(b) Certified copy of order or decree of a court ordering the veteran to contribute to such child’s support; or
(c) Certified copy of a decree of a court holding the veteran to be the putative father of such child.

§ 10.43 Claim by guardian of child of veteran.

A claim made by a legal guardian on behalf of his or her ward, a child of a veteran, shall be supported by an affidavit of said guardian, in the capacity of guardian, setting forth the names, ages, and addresses of all living children of the deceased veteran, or, if there be no living child other than the claimant child, statement of that fact shall be made. The signature of the guardian to such required affidavit shall be attested by the court having jurisdiction of the guardian and ward, or by two competent persons to whom the child is personally known.

§ 10.44 Evidence required to support claim of mother or father.

The term mother and father as referred to in the order of preference as outlined in section 601 of the Act, as amended, includes stepmothers, stepfathers, mothers and fathers through adoption, and persons who, for a period of not less than one year, have stood in the place of a mother or father to the veteran at any time prior to the beginning of his service. In addition to the evidence of dependency required from a natural mother or father, a claim of a stepmother or stepfather shall be supported by evidence of marriage to the natural parent of the veteran. This evidence shall be in accordance with the requirements of proof of marriage as set forth in regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs. A claim of a mother or father through adoption shall be supported by a certified copy of the court record of such adoption. A claim by a person who claims to have stood in the place of a mother or father shall be supported by evidence of such relationship satisfactory to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such evidence shall comprise:
(a) An affidavit of the claimant containing a complete detailed statement of the alleged relationship and
(b) Affidavits of two competent witnesses to whom claimant was personally known at the time of the death of the veteran, said witnesses certifying to the truth of the statement as made by the claimant.

§ 10.45 Definition of “widow”.

The term widow as used in the regulations in this part includes widower.

§ 10.46 Authentication of statements supporting claims.

All statements, except those of licensed examining physicians under §10.39 (a)(2) and (b)(1), required by §§10.28 to 10.44 shall be subscribed and sworn to before an officer vested with authority to administer oaths, in the
§ 10.47 Use of prescribed forms.

Statements required by the regulations in this part should be submitted on forms provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, when conveniently available.

PAYMENTS

§ 10.50 Section 601 and section 603 payments made on first day of calendar quarter.

Cash payments and the first installment of installment payments authorized in sections 601 and 603, respectively of title VI of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, as amended, will be made as of the first day of the calendar quarter following the finding by the director that the applicant is a dependent entitled to the benefits of the act, but in no case shall any such payments be made before March 1, 1925: Provided, however, That payments authorized by section 608 of title VI of the Act, as amended, shall be paid in a lump sum to the preferred dependent without reference to payments under section 603 of title VI of the Act, as amended.

§ 10.51 Payments to minor child.

Payments to minor child through legal guardian, natural guardian, or self. (See § 10.40.)

§ 10.52 Duplication of payments prohibited.

Duplication of payments shall not be made in case of change of beneficiary. (See § 10.16.)

§ 10.53 Payment on duplicate certificate.

Issuance of duplicate adjusted service certificates and payment of claims based upon lost, destroyed, or mutilated, adjusted service certificates. (See §§ 10.1 to 10.4 and 10.21 and 10.25, respectively.)

PART 11—LOANS BY BANKS ON AND PAYMENT OF ADJUSTED SERVICE CERTIFICATES

LOANS BY BANKS ON ADJUSTED SERVICE CERTIFICATES UNDER SECTION 502 OF THE WORLD WAR ADJUSTED COMPENSATION ACT

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LOANS ON ADJUSTED SERVICE CERTIFICATES UNDER SECTION 502 OF THE WORLD WAR ADJUSTED COMPENSATION ACT, AS AMENDED

11.96 By whom loans may be made.
11.99 Identification.
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11.102 Term of note.
11.104 Disposition of notes and certificates.
§ 11.75 Certificates.

Adjusted service certificates are dated as of the 1st day of the month in which the applications were filed, but no certificates are dated prior to January 1, 1925. Loans on the security of such certificates may be made at any time after the date of the certificate. The fact that a certificate is stamped or marked “duplicate” does not destroy its value as security for a loan.

§ 11.76 To whom loan may be made.

Only the veteran named in the certificate can lawfully obtain a loan on his adjusted service certificate and neither the beneficiary nor any other person than the veteran has any rights in this respect. The person to whom the loan is made must be known to the lending bank to be the veteran named in the certificate securing such note. The consent of the beneficiary is not required, the act providing that a loan on the security of the certificate may be made “with or without the consent of the beneficiary thereof.” Loans may be made to veterans adjudged incompetent only through the guardians of such veterans and pursuant to specific order of the court having jurisdiction. Certified copy of court order must be submitted if note be presented for redemption by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

§ 11.77 By whom loans may be made.

Any national bank or any bank or trust company incorporated under the laws of any State, Territory, possession, or the District of Columbia, hereinafter referred to as any bank, is authorized to loan to any veteran upon his promissory note secured by his Adjusted Service Certificate any amount not in excess of the loan value of the certificate at the date the loan is made. Each certificate contains on its face a table for determining the loan value of the certificate, but it is provided by amendment to the World War Adjusted Compensation Act dated February 27, 1931, that the loan value of any certificate shall at no time be less than 50 percent of the face value. Upon the making of such loan, the lending bank shall promptly notify the Department of Veterans Affairs of the name of the veteran, the A-number shown immediately after the name, the number of the certificate, the amount, the rate of interest, and date of loan: However, this requirement may be waived by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

§ 11.80 Sale or discount of note by holding bank.

Any bank holding a note secured by an Adjusted Service Certificate may sell the note to any bank authorized to make a loan to a veteran and deliver the certificate to such bank. In case a note secured by an Adjusted Service Certificate is sold or transferred, the bank selling, discounting or rediscounting the note is required by law to notify the veteran promptly by mail at his last known post office address. No Adjusted Service Certificate is negotiable or assignable, or may serve as
§ 11.84 Redemption because of veteran’s death.

If the veteran dies before the maturity of the loan, the amount of the unpaid principal and the unpaid interest shall be immediately due and payable. In such case, or if the veteran dies on the day the loan matures or within six months thereafter, the bank holding the note and certificate shall, upon notice of the death, present them to the Secretary, who shall pay to the bank, in full satisfaction of its claim the amount of the unpaid principal and unpaid interest, at the rate authorized by the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, as amended, accrued up to the date of the check issued to the bank; except that if, prior to the payment, the bank is notified of the death by the

§ 11.83 Additional loans by reason of 50 percent loan value.

(a) It will be the policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs to redeem all loans made in accordance with the law and regulations made pursuant there to, when such loans are made in good faith to the veteran to whom the certificate was issued. If, while his certificate is held by a bank as security for a loan, the veteran applies for the increased loan value authorized by the amendment to the World War Adjusted Compensation Act dated February 27, 1931, whether or not the loan has matured, the veteran and the bank will be informed fully of the provisions of this section and that the bank may make the loan for the additional amount or, upon request of the veteran, may send the note and certificate to the Secretary of Veterans’ Affairs. The Secretary shall, if the loan was legally made, accept such certificate and note, and pay to the bank in full satisfaction of its claim the amount of the unpaid principal due it and the unpaid interest at the rate authorized by the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, as amended, up to the date of the check issued to the bank. If the veteran has not filed application for final settlement of his adjusted service certificate under the provisions of the Adjusted Compensation Payment Act, 1936, and demand is made upon the bank to present the note and certificate for redemption prior to the maturity date of the loan and during the lifetime of the veteran, interest will be payable up to the date the check is issued to the bank, or, if demanded by the bank, up to the maturity date of the loan.

(b) If, however, an application for final settlement is filed and the bank is notified to present the note and certificate to the Secretary and does so within 15 days after the mailing of such notice interest will be payable to the date the check is issued to the bank. If the bank fails to forward the note and certificate within 15 days after the mailing of the notice, interest shall be paid only up to the fifteenth day after the mailing of such notice.

§ 11.82 Security for a loan.

Security for a loan, except as provided in section 502 of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, as amended. Any negotiation, assignment or loan made in violation of section 502 of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act is void. In case of sale, discount or rediscount by the bank which made the loan, the note or notes should be accompanied by the affidavit required by §11.85.

§ 11.81 Rediscounts with Federal Reserve Banks.

Upon the endorsement of any bank, which shall be deemed a waiver of demand, notice and protest by such bank as to its own endorsement exclusively, and subject to regulations to be prescribed by the Federal Reserve Board, any such note secured by an Adjusted Service Certificate and held by a bank is made eligible for discount or rediscount by the Federal reserve bank of the Federal reserve district in which such bank is located, whether or not the bank offering the note for discount or rediscount is a member of the Federal Reserve System and whether or not it acquired the note in the first instance from the veteran or acquired it by transfer upon the endorsement of any other bank: Provided, That at the time of discount or rediscount such note has a maturity not in excess of 9 months, exclusive of days of grace, and complies in all other respects with the provisions of the law, the regulations of the Federal Reserve Board and the regulations in this part.

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§ 11.85 Condition requisite for redemption.

In order to be eligible for redemption by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the note and certificate must be accompanied by an affidavit of a duly authorized officer (the capacity in which the officer serves must be shown) of the lending bank showing that the said bank has not charged or collected, or attempted to charge or collect, directly or indirectly, any fee or other compensation in respect of the loan, or any other loan made by the bank under the provisions of section 502 of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, except the rate of interest specified in the section of the Act cited; that the person who obtained the loan is known to the lending bank to be the person named in the Adjusted Service Certificate; and that notice required by §11.77 was promptly given. In case the note was sold or discounted by the lending bank, there should be incorporated in the affidavit a statement that the veteran was notified promptly of the transfer by mail to his last known address. In case the note was resold or rediscounted by any other bank, affidavit shall be made by a duly authorized officer of such bank that proper notice of such resale or rediscount was promptly mailed to the veteran at his last known address. The proper execution of the appropriate affidavit on Form 6615 or 6615a will be considered as a compliance with the requirements of this section. A single affidavit setting forth the full particulars may be accepted to cover any number of veterans’ notes submitted for redemption at one time. The affidavit must be executed before a judge of the United States court, a United States commissioner, a United States district attorney, a United States marshal, a collector of internal revenue, a collector of customs, a United States postmaster, a clerk of court of record under the seal of the court, an executive officer of an incorporated bank or trust company, under his official designation and the seal of the bank or trust company, or a notary public under his seal, or a diplomatic or consular officer of the United States, under his official seal.

Disposition of Notes Secured by Adjusted Certificates Redeemed from Banks by the Department of Veterans Affairs Under Section 502 of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, as Amended (Pub. L. 120, 68th Cong.)

Source: 13 FR 7126, Nov. 27, 1948, unless otherwise noted.

§ 11.88 Cancellation of note.

When a veteran’s note is redeemed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the note will be canceled and both the note and certificate will be retained in the files of the Department of Veterans Affairs until such time as settlement is made.

§ 11.89 Notification of veteran.

When a note is redeemed notification will be sent to the veteran at his last known address, advising him that the Department of Veterans Affairs holds his note, and outlining the conditions governing repayment.

§ 11.91 Repayment of loans.

Should the veteran so desire, he may repay the amount due on his note in full or in installments.

§ 11.93 Failure to redeem.

(a) If the veteran fails to redeem his certificate before its maturity there will be deducted from the face value of the certificate the amount of the unpaid principal of the note of the veteran and the unpaid interest thereon through September 30, 1931.

(b) If the veteran failed to redeem his certificate and died prior to January 27, 1936, there will be deducted from the face value of the certificate the amount of the unpaid principal of the veteran’s note and the unpaid interest thereon to the date of his death. If the veteran died on or after January 27, 1936, the amount to be deducted when making settlement will be the unpaid principal of the veteran’s note and the unpaid interest thereon through September 30, 1931.
§ 11.104 Disposition of notes and certificates.
All notes and certificates shall be held in the custody of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC 20420.

[13 FR 7126, Nov. 27, 1948, as amended at 54 FR 34982, Aug. 23, 1989]

§ 11.109 Settlement of unmatured adjusted service certificates.
Where an application for final settlement of an adjusted service certificate is received in the Department of Veterans Affairs prior to the maturity date of the certificate, payment will be made under the terms of the Adjusted Compensation Payment Act, 1936. This act provides for payment of the amount due on the certificate, after deducting any unpaid loans with interest through September 30, 1931, in adjusted service bonds. These bonds will be issued by the Treasury Department in denominations of $50, in the name of the veteran only, and will bear interest at the rate of 3 percent per annum from June 15, 1936, to June 15, 1945. Any excess amount not sufficient to purchase a $50 bond will be paid by check.

[19 FR 5087, Aug. 12, 1954]

§ 11.110 Who may make application for final settlement.
A mentally competent veteran to whom an adjusted service certificate has been issued.
(a) A legally appointed guardian of an incompetent veteran. An application submitted by a legally appointed guardian must be accompanied by letters of guardianship showing the fiduciary relationship, provided such papers are not already on file in the Department of Veterans Affairs.
(b) A representative of a physically incapacitated veteran. Where application is made by a representative of a physically incapacitated veteran, the
§ 11.111 Form of application.

Application must be made on Department of Veterans Affairs Adjusted Compensation Form 1701.

[13 FR 7127, Nov. 27, 1948]

§ 11.114 Identification.

Before settlement is made on an adjusted service certificate, the person applying therefor will be identified as the person entitled to the settlement for which an application is made. If made in the United States or possessions, certification will be accepted if made by a United States postmaster or assistant postmaster over an impression of the post office cancellation stamp; a commissioned officer of the regular establishment of the Army, Navy, or Marine Corps; a member of the United States Senate or the House of Representatives; an officer, over his official title, of a post, chapter, or other comparable unit of an organization recognized under Veterans Regulation No. 10 (38 U.S.C. ch. 12A), or an officer over his official title, of the State or national body of such organization, or any person who is legally authorized to administer oaths in a State, Territory, possession, District of Columbia, or in a Federal judicial district, of the United States. If identification is made in a foreign country, it will be certified by an American consul, a recognized representative of an American Embassy or Legation, or by a person authorized to administer oaths under the laws of the place where identification is made; provided, there be attached to the certificate of such latter officer a proper certification by an accredited official of the State Department of the United States that such officer was authorized to administer oaths in the place where certification was made. A manager of a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital is authorized to identify patients, members, or employees of the hospital over which he has charge. An employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who has been specifically designated in writing to do so may identify applicants during official hours and on the premises of the Department of Veterans Affairs using for this purpose, if necessary, the official records of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Field station finance employees may not be designated for this purpose.

(a) Fingerprint impressions shall be required on the application and shall be imprinted thereon in the presence of the persons identifying the veteran. In the case of veterans who are mentally incapacitated and application is being executed by a representative of the veteran, the veterans' fingerprints will be obtained if possible. If this cannot be done, as also in the case of an individual whose fingers are all missing, a statement of explanation will be required.

(b) [Reserved]

[13 FR 7127, Nov. 27, 1948, as amended at 19 FR 5087, Aug. 12, 1954]
§ 11.115 Where to file application.

The application for final settlement, accompanied by the veteran’s adjusted service certificate, unless the certificate is being held in the Department of Veterans Affairs as collateral for a loan, must be forwarded to the Manager, Veterans Benefits Office, Washington, DC 20421.

[19 FR 5087, Aug. 12, 1954]

§ 11.116 Death of veteran before final settlement.

If the veteran dies after making application under the Adjusted Compensation Payment Act, 1936, but before it is filed, it may be filed by any person and will be considered valid if found to bear the bona-fide signature of the applicant, discloses an intention to claim benefits under the Act, and is filed before the maturity of the certificate and before payment is made to the beneficiary. An application made by the veteran or his legal representative shall evidence his intention to claim the benefits of this Act; no other evidence shall be acceptable.

(a) If the veteran’s death occurs after the application is filed but before payment is received under this Act, or if the application is filed after death occurs but before the maturity of the certificate and before payment is made to the beneficiary under section 501 of the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, as amended, payment under this Act shall be made to the estate of the veteran irrespective of any beneficiary designation.

(b) If the veteran dies without filing a valid application under this Act, no payment under this Act shall be made. In such case, payment of the certificate will be made under the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, as amended, in accordance with §11.128; however, in making any settlement there shall be deducted from the face value of the certificate the amount of any outstanding loans and so much of the unpaid interest as accrued prior to October 1, 1931.

[19 FR 5087, Aug. 12, 1954]

§ 11.117 Missing applications.

Where the records of the Department of Veterans Affairs show that an application, disclosing an intention to claim the benefits of this Act, has been filed and the application cannot be found, such application shall be presumed, in the absence of affirmative evidence to the contrary, to have been valid when originally filed. The determination of the correctness of this assumption shall be made by the Manager, Veterans Benefits Office, Washington, DC, or his designee.

[19 FR 5087, Aug. 12, 1954]
§ 11.128 Veteran dies without having filed application for final settlement.

If the veteran dies without having filed application for final settlement under the Adjusted Compensation Payment Act, 1936, and the certificate has not matured, payment will be made to the last designated beneficiary or, if no beneficiary, to his estate. If the certificate has matured, payment will be made to the veteran’s estate regardless of any beneficiary designation. Payment of the amount due on a deceased veteran’s certificate will be made only on an approved award based upon receipt in the Department of Veterans Affairs of an application properly executed by the person or persons entitled.

§ 11.129 Form of application for payment of deceased veteran’s certificate.

Demand for payment (VA Form 8–582) is the proper form for use in applying for payment of the amount due on a deceased veteran’s certificate.

§ 11.130 Where to file applications.

Application for payment of a matured certificate or a deceased veteran’s certificate, accompanied by the adjusted service certificate, unless it is held in the Department of Veterans Affairs as collateral for a loan, must be forwarded to the Manager, Veterans Benefits Office, Washington, DC, 20421.

PART 12—DISPOSITION OF VETERAN’S PERSONAL FUNDS AND EFFECTS

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Operation of Lost and Found Service

12.24 Operation of lost and found service.


Disposition of Veteran’s Personal Funds and Effects on Facility Upon Death, or Discharge, or Unauthorized Absence, and of Funds and Effects Found on Facility

§ 12.0 Definitions.

(a) As used in respect to the disposition of property of veterans dying at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers or other field facilities, or who are discharged or who elope, or are absent without leave therefrom, and in respect to property found thereat, the term funds means all types of United States currency and coin, checks payable to the decedent except checks drawn on the Treasurer of the United States which have never been negotiated, and includes deposits to the credit of the veteran in the account “Personal Funds of Patients,” and
§ 12.2 Designee cases; incompetent veterans.

(a) Each competent veteran now being cared for or who is hereafter admitted to receive care as such at a Department of Veterans Affairs field facility, unless it be detrimental to his or her health, will be requested and encouraged to designate on the prescribed VA Form 10–P–10, Application for Hospital Treatment or Domiciliary Care, the person to whom he or she desires the Department of Veterans Affairs to deliver his or her funds and effects in event of death. He or she may also designate an alternate to whom delivery will be made if the first designee fails or refuses to accept delivery. It should be clearly understood that the delivery of such funds or effects will constitute only a delivery of possession thereof, and such delivery is not intended to affect in any manner the title to such funds or effects or determine the person ultimately entitled to receive same from the person to whom delivery is made (hereinafter in the regulations in this part termed the designee). The person designated may not be an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs unless such employee be the wife (or husband), child, grandchild, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, brother, or sister of the veteran. The veteran may in writing change or revoke such designation at any time. If a veteran becomes incompetent, any designation previously made will become inoperative with respect to those funds deposited by the Department of Veterans Affairs in Personal Funds of Patients which were derived from gratuitous benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The guardian may change or revoke the existing designation with respect to personal effects and funds derived from other sources.

(b) Veterans will be encouraged to place in the custody of their relatives articles of little or no utility value to them during their period of care at a Department of Veterans Affairs field facility, and to retain in their possession only such funds and effects as are actually required and necessary for their immediate convenience.

§ 12.3 Deceased veteran’s cases.

(a) Immediately upon the death or the absence without leave of any beneficiary at a field facility, as defined in §12.0(b), a survey and inventory of the funds and effects of such beneficiary will be taken in the following manner:

(1) If the death or absence without leave occurred during hospitalization, a complete inventory (VA Form 10-2687, Inventory of Funds and Effects) will be made of all personal effects (including those in the custody of the hospital, jewelry being worn by the deceased person, or jewelry and other effects in pockets of clothing he or she may have been wearing) and all funds found and moneys on deposit in Personal Funds of Patients. In the case of death of incompetent veterans after November 30, 1959, the inventory will be completed to show separately those funds deposited by the Department of Veterans Affairs in Personal Funds of Patients which were derived from gratuitous benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. For purpose of determining the source of funds, expenditures from the account will be considered as having been made from gratuitous benefits, not to exceed the extent of deposits of such benefits. In the event death occurred during other than official working hours, the officer of the day and/or a representative of Nursing Service will collect and inventory all funds and personal effects on the person of the deceased beneficiary and on the ward, will carefully safeguard such property and, upon completion of the tour of duty, will turn the funds and effects over to the properly designated employees.

(2) If the death or absence without leave occurred while the beneficiary was assigned to a domiciliary section, or while receiving hospitalization and at time of death or absence without leave any effects are in the section, a like inventory will be made by representatives of the Chief, Domiciliary Operations and/or Medical Administration Division.

(3) The inventory report will be executed in triplicate, original and two copies. All will be signed by the employee making the inventory, and disposed of as provided for in pertinent procedural instructions.

(4) Personally owned clothing or other effects (such as tooth brushes, false teeth not containing gold, etc.), which are unserviceable by reason of wear or tear or insanitary condition, and clothing that had been supplied by the Government, will not be included in this inventory; instead, the unserviceable personally owned articles will be listed on a separate list, with their condition briefly described, and their disposition recommended in a separate report to the facility head. The facility head, if approving this recommendation, will order destruction or utilization in occupational therapy, or as wipe rags, etc., of such unserviceable articles and, when they are so destroyed or utilized, will have entered on the papers the date and nature of the disposition. The completed papers will then be placed in the correspondence file of the beneficiary. Clothing that had been supplied by the Government will be reconditioned if possible and returned to stock for issue to other eligible beneficiaries. When Government-owned clothing cannot be reconditioned it will be disposed of.

(5) When the nearest relative requests that the deceased beneficiary be clad for burial in clothing he or she personally owned, instead of burial clothing to be supplied under the contract for mortuary services, such request will be honored. A receipt in such cases will be obtained from the undertaker, specifying the articles of clothing so used. Adjustment of the undertaker’s bill in the case will correspondingly be made.
§ 12.4 Disposition of effects and funds to designee; exceptions.

(a) Upon authorization by the facility head or his or her designated representative, all funds, as defined in §12.0 (except funds on deposit in Personal Funds of Patients derived from gratuitous benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and deposited by the Department of Veterans Affairs where the veteran was incompetent at time of death), and effects will be delivered or sent to the designee of the deceased veteran if requested therefor be made after death and within 90 days following the mailing of notice to such designee (see §12.9(a)), unless:

(1) The executor or administrator of the estate of the deceased veteran shall have notified the facility head or his or her designated representative of his or her desire and readiness to receive such funds or effects, in which event the facility head or his or her designated representative will authorize delivery of all funds and effects to such executor or administrator upon receipt of appropriate documentary evidence of his or her qualifications and in exchange for appropriate receipts, or

(2) An heir capable of inheriting the personal property of the veteran makes claim for the funds and effects prior to delivery to the designee.

(b) Upon completion of the survey and inventory, the effects will be turned over to the designated employee for safekeeping. Any funds found in excess of $100 which apparently were the property of the deceased will be turned over to the details clerk and delivered immediately to the agent cashier, who shall deposit same in the account “Personal Funds of Patients”. Unendorsed checks other than Treasury checks and funds not in excess of $100 will be considered personal effects and not funds and will be handled accordingly.


§ 12.4 Disposition of effects and funds to designee; exceptions.

(a) Upon authorization by the facility head or his or her designated representative, all funds, as defined in §12.0 (except funds on deposit in Personal Funds of Patients derived from gratuitous benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and deposited by the Department of Veterans Affairs where the veteran was incompetent at time of death), and effects will be delivered or sent to the designee of the deceased veteran if requested therefor be made after death and within 90 days following the mailing of notice to such designee (see §12.9(a)), unless:

(1) The executor or administrator of the estate of the deceased veteran shall have notified the facility head or his or her designated representative of his or her desire and readiness to receive such funds or effects, in which event the facility head or his or her designated representative will authorize delivery of all funds and effects to such executor or administrator upon receipt of appropriate documentary evidence of his or her qualifications and in exchange for appropriate receipts, or

(b) Upon completion of the survey and inventory, the effects will be turned over to the designated employee for safekeeping. Any funds found in excess of $100 which apparently were the property of the deceased will be turned over to the details clerk and delivered immediately to the agent cashier, who shall deposit same in the account “Personal Funds of Patients”. Unendorsed checks other than Treasury checks and funds not in excess of $100 will be considered personal effects and not funds and will be handled accordingly.

§ 12.5 Nondesignee cases.

(a) If there exists no designee at the time of death at a hospital, domiciliary, or regional office of a veteran admitted as competent, or the designee fails or refuses to claim the funds and effects as defined in § 12.0(a) within 90 days following the mailing of notice to such designee, the facility head will take appropriate action to dispose of the effects to the person or persons legally entitled thereto, i.e., the executor or administrator of the decedent, or, if no notice of such an appointment has been received, to the decedent’s widow, child, grandchild, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, brother, or sister, in the order named. Subject to the applicable provisions of §§ 12.3 and 12.4, such delivery may be made at any time before the sale contemplated by § 12.9 to the designee or other person entitled under the facts of the case. Delivery will be made to the person entitled to priority as prescribed in this paragraph, unless such person waives right to possession, in which event delivery will be to the person, if any, in whose favor such prior entitled person waives right to possession. If the waiver is not in favor of a particular person or class, delivery will be to the person or persons next in order of priority under this paragraph. If in any case there be more than one person in the class entitled to priority, initially or by reason of waiver, delivery will be made only to their joint designated agent (who may, but need not, be one of the class), or to one of such class in his or her own behalf upon written waiver of all others of the class entitled thereto. The guardian of a minor or incompetent may waive his or her ward’s prior right to possession.

(b) Except where delivery is made to a designee, executor, or administrator, funds of veterans who were competent at time of death will be released to the person or persons who would ultimately be entitled to distribution under the laws of the State of the decedent’s domicile. The person or persons entitled may waive in writing his or her right to the funds in favor of another heir or next of kin.

(c) Funds of veterans who were incompetent at time of death occurring after November 30, 1959, if derived from sources other than gratuitous benefits deposited by the Department of Veterans Affairs in Personal Funds of Patients under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, will be disposed of in the same manner as for competent veterans.

(d) Funds deposited by the Department of Veterans Affairs in Personal Funds of Patients, at any office, for veterans who were incompetent at time of death occurring after November 30, 1959 and which were derived from gratuitous benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, will be paid upon receipt of proper application to the following persons living at the time of settlement, and in the order named: the surviving spouse, the children (without regard to age or marital status) in equal parts, and the dependent parents of such veteran, in equal parts. Any funds derived from gratuitous benefits not disposed of in accordance with this paragraph shall be deposited to the credit of the applicable current appropriation; except that there may be paid only so much of such funds as may be necessary to reimburse a person (other than a political subdivision of the United States) who bore the expenses of last sickness or burial of the veteran for such expenses.

(e) No payment shall be made under paragraph (d) of this section unless claim therefor is filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs within 5 years after the death of the veteran, except that, if any person so entitled under such regulation is under legal disability at the time of death of the veteran, such 5-year period of limitation shall run from the termination or removal of the legal disability.

§ 12.6 Cases of living veterans.

(a) Except as provided in §12.8, effects of veterans absent without leave or who have been discharged or have eloped (and who are not to be returned to the field facility) will be disposed of as follows:

1) To the owner if competent, or if deceased to his or her executor or administrator, or as directed in writing by such guardian, executor or administrator.

2) To the guardian of the owner if the latter be incompetent, or if deceased to his or her administrator or executor, or as directed in writing by

(b) Funds of veterans absent without leave or who have been discharged or have eloped (and who are not to be returned to the station) will be disposed of in accordance with the provisions of current Department of Veterans Affairs procedures.

§ 12.7 Cases not applicable to provisions of §§ 12.0 to 12.6.

The provisions of §§12.0 to 12.6 shall be inapplicable to property known to be that of any person dying in or discharged or absent without leave from a Department of Veterans Affairs field facility other than a veteran admitted as such to such field facility.

§ 12.8 Unclaimed effects of veterans.

(a) In the case of any property of a veteran who was in receipt of hospital or domiciliary care, heretofore or hereafter, or incompetent veterans discharged, on trail visit, absent without leave, or who have eloped, except that personal effects of a beneficiary discharged or on trail visit, or of a beneficiary being transferred to another facility at Government expense, which are not available at time of discharge, beginning of trail visit, or transfer of the beneficiary, due to the whereabouts or identity of any owner of any property thereat be unknown,
such property, unless it shall be disposed of under the provisions of §§ 12.4 and 12.6 shall be sold, used, destroyed or otherwise disposed of as the manager or his or her designated representative shall determine the circumstances in the case may warrant. Any sale of such property shall be conditioned upon the 90-day notice provided in section 6 of the Act of June 25, 1938 (38 U.S.C. 5–16e).

(b) If the circumstances are such that retention of any property as is mentioned in paragraph (a) of this section, or of any property of unknown ownership found on the premises would endanger the health or life of patients or others on the premises (by reason of contagion, infection, or otherwise) such property shall be forthwith destroyed on order of the manager or his or her designated representative, and proper record of the action taken will be made.

(c) If there be no known claimant of any such property and if it may be used at the field facility for the benefit of the members or patients for such purposes as the General Post Fund is intended to serve, and if the value is inconsequential, the manager or his or her designated representative may authorize the retention and use of such property at the field facility.

(d) Any such property which is not destroyed or used as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section shall be sold in the manner provided in §§ 12.9 and 12.10, after notice as therein provided unless, prior to sale, claim be made for any such property by someone legally entitled thereto.

[13 FR 7129, Nov. 27, 1948]

§ 12.9 Rights of designate; sales instruction; transportation charges.

(a) Upon death of a veteran admitted as such to a field facility, the Manager or his or her designated representative will cause notice (parts I and V of VA Form 10–1171) to be sent to the designate: Provided, however, That if the Manager or his or her designated representative has information of the death of the primary designate, notice shall be sent to the alternate designate and all of the provisions of the regulations in this part respecting the designate will be deemed to apply to the alternate. If the designate is a minor or a person known to be incompetent, delivery of the funds or effects will be made only to the designate’s guardian or custodian upon qualification. The right of the designate to receive possession ceases when he or she refuses to accept delivery or if he or she fails to respond within 90 days after VA Form 10–1171 was mailed. When the right of a designate ceases, VA Form 10–1171 will be forwarded immediately to the alternate designate, whose rights then become identical with those forfeited by the first designate, and the rights of the alternate designate shall terminate at the expiration of 90 days after VA Form 10–1171 was mailed to him or her. Delivery will not be made to a designate until he or she submits a signed statement to the effect that he or she understands that the delivery of such funds and effects constitutes a delivery of possession only and that such delivery is not intended to affect in any manner the title thereto. Such notice shall fully identify the decedent and state the fact that he or she designated the addressee to receive possession of such property; that the right to receive possession thereof does not affect the ownership but that the designate will be responsible for the ultimate disposition thereof to those who, under applicable law, are entitled to the decedent’s property; and will request prompt advice as to whether the designate will accept such property and that, if he or she will, he or she furnish shipping instructions, upon receipt of which the property will be shipped at the expense of the Government. However, prior to dispatching such notice, it will be definitely determined that the shipping expense will not exceed $25. If such expense will exceed $25, the excess cost will be ascertained, and the notice will include a statement of the amount of such excess shipping cost with request that the amount thereof be remitted at the time shipping instructions are furnished. In estimating the shipping expense, it will be assumed that shipment to the designate will be to the same address as that to which the notice is sent. Each notice, however, shall contain a statement that in no event will the Government pay shipping expense in excess of $25.
The notice will include a copy of the inventory of the property which it is proposed to deliver to the designate.

(b) Upon receipt of appropriate shipping instructions the property will be shipped, transportation charges prepaid, by mail, express, or freight as may be appropriate under the circumstances and most economical to the Government. The expense of such shipment, chargeable to the Government, in no case to exceed $25.00, is payable the same as other administrative expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) The living owner of any property left or found at a field facility will be promptly notified thereof. Except as provided in §12.6(a), transportation charges on property shipped to a living veteran will not be paid by the Government. In such cases, shipment shall be made as requested by the owner of the property (or his or her guardian) upon receipt of necessary transportation charges, which will be prepaid, unless the owner requests shipment with charges collect and the carrier will accept such shipment without liability for such charges, contingent or otherwise, upon the Government.

(d) If the designate refuses or, upon the lapse of 90 days, has failed to take possession or request shipment of decedent's property (paragraph (a) of this section), or if 90 days have elapsed after the finding of any property and the owner (known or unknown) has failed to request same, the manager or his or her designated representative will authorize destruction, use or sale.

(e) If sale of the property is authorized the manager will take necessary action to ascertain the names and addresses of the owners; or, in the event of the owner's decease, of his or her executor or administrator, widow, child, grandchild, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, brother, or sister.

(f) When in possession of the necessary information the manager will cause proper notice of sale (Form 4–1171) to be mailed. Such notice in all cases must disclose the identity, if known, of the decedent whose property is to be sold and contain a copy of the inventory of such property. A copy of such notice (Form 4–1171), after parts I, IV, and V thereof are completed, shall be mailed to the owner, if known, or if deceased to the decedent's executor or administrator, if known, and also to the widow (or widower), child, grandchild, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, brother and sister, if known. If more than one relative of the degree named is known, copies will be mailed to each. If the owner is living, parts IV and V only of Form 4–1171 will be completed.

(g) Copy of such notice (Form 4–1171, parts IV and V) will also be posted by a responsible employee more than 21 years of age at:

(1) The field facility where the death occurred or property shall have been found,

(2) The place where property is situated at the time such notice is posted, and

(3) The place where probate notices are posted in the county wherein the sale is to be had.

(h) In addition to showing the name of the owner, if known (alive or deceased), and the inventory of the property to be sold, such notice shall state the hour and day when and the precise place where the sale will occur and that the same will be at public auction for cash upon delivery without warranty, express or implied, and that such sale is pursuant to the act of June 25, 1938 (38 U.S.C. 16–16j); and shall also state that any person legally entitled to said property may claim the same at any time prior to sale thereof and in the event of such claim by a proper person the property will not be sold but will be delivered to the person lawfully entitled thereto. Said notice shall also contain a statement substantially to the effect that if sold the net proceeds of sale may be claimed by the person who is legally entitled at any time within 5 years after the date of notice; or in case of property the ownership of which was not originally known, within 5 years after its finding; otherwise such proceeds will be retained in the General Post Fund, subject to disbursement for the purposes of such fund.

(i) The person (or persons) posting said notice of sale (Form 4–1171) shall make appropriate affidavit on a copy thereof as to his or her action in that respect and the manager or his or her
designated representative will also certify on the same copy as to the persons to whom copies of such notice were mailed and the mailing dates. The copy on which appear the affidavit and certificate as to service of the notice will be retained in the facility file pertaining to the disposition of such property.


§ 12.10 Proceeds of sale.

After proper notice as prescribed, sale of any such property which it is proper to sell, will be made by public auction by the manager (or any employee designated by him or her) at the time and place stated in the notice of sale. The property will be sold to the highest bidder (no employee except member employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall purchase any of this property) and forthwith delivered and the amount of the bid collected and deposited to the credit of “General Post Fund, Department of Veterans Affairs.” Care will be taken to segregate the property of each owner and separate account will be maintained as to the proceeds of sale thereof. Property not disposed of by public auction will be included in the next sale or will be used or destroyed as the value thereof warrants at the discretion of the manager.

[13 FR 7130, Nov. 27, 1948]

§ 12.12 Miscellaneous provisions.

If it is shown that some person other than the veteran has title to property in a veteran’s possession at the time of death, nothing contained in §§12.0 to 12.12 shall be construed as prohibiting delivery of such property to the owner. A life insurance policy may be delivered to the beneficiary therein named if the insured is deceased, notwithstanding the veteran has designated a person to whom possession of his or her property at the field facility is to be transferred. In no case will funds or effects be delivered to a minor, or to an incompetent person other than as provided in §12.9 (a) and (c), but where any such person is entitled to title or possession delivery may be made to his or her guardian.

[13 FR 7130, Nov. 27, 1948]


In order that all persons who bring property on premises of the Department of Veterans Affairs may be advised of the existence of the act of June 25, 1938 (38 U.S.C. 16–16j), and that it affects such property, notice thereof (Form 4-1162), shall be permanently posted in at least one prominent place on the premises of each field facility where persons are likely to see such notice.

[13 FR 7130, Nov. 27, 1948]

§ 12.15 Inventory of property.

Immediately upon the death at a Department of Veterans Affairs field facility of a person who was not admitted as a veteran, or immediately after it is ascertained that any such person has absented himself or herself from such field facility, a survey and inventory of the personal funds and effects of such deceased or absent person will be made in the manner prescribed in §12.3(a).

[13 FR 7130, Nov. 27, 1948]

§ 12.16 Action on inventory and funds.

(a) The manager will dispose of the personal funds and effects as promptly as possible. No expense will be incurred by the Government for shipment of the effects.

(b) In making disposition of funds and effects the manager will release the funds to the owner if living and will release the effects to him or her or as directed by him or her, provided that if he or she is incompetent and has a guardian the funds and effects will be released to such guardian. If the owner is deceased, and left a last will and testament probated under the laws of the place of his or her last legal domicile or under the laws of the
§ 12.17 Unclaimed effects to be sold.

(a) Personal effects of persons referred to in §12.15 which remain unclaimed for 90 days after the death or departure of the owner shall be sold in the manner provided by §12.8. The owner, his or her personal representative, or next of kin may reclaim any such property upon request therefor at any time prior to the sale.

(b) Any unclaimed funds and the proceeds of any effects sold as unclaimed will be deposited to the General Post Fund subject to be reclaimed within five years after notice of sale, by or on behalf of any person or persons who, if known, would have been entitled to the property prior to the sale.

[13 FR 7131, Nov. 27, 1948, as amended at 14 FR 4726, July 28, 1949]

§ 12.18 Disposition of funds and effects left by officers and enlisted men on the active list of the Army, Navy or Marine Corps of the United States.

(a) The manager will notify the commanding officer of the death or absence of such patient and will deliver to the commanding officer, without expense to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the funds and effects of the deceased or absent officer, or enlisted man procuring a receipt therefor.

(b) If the funds and effects are not delivered to the commanding officer within seven days after the death or absence without leave of an officer, or enlisted man, the funds will be deposited in the Personal Funds of Patients. If not disposed of at the expiration of 90 days after the date of death or absence, the funds will be transferred to the General Post Fund and the effects will be handled in accordance with regulations governing the disposition of unclaimed effects left by veterans. The funds and the proceeds derived from the sale of the personal effects will be paid to the person lawfully entitled thereto, providing claim is made within five years from the date of notice of sale, or in the case of legal disability within five years after termination of legal disability.

[13 FR 7131, Nov. 27, 1948, as amended at 14 FR 4726, July 28, 1949]


(a) Whenever any veteran (admitted as a veteran) shall die in any Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, center, or domiciliary activity or in any Federal, State, or private hospital or other institution, while being furnished care or treatment therein by the Department of Veterans Affairs, without leaving a will and without leaving any spouse, heirs, or next of kin entitled to his or her personal property, all such property, except funds on deposit in Personal Funds of Patients to the credit of an incompetent beneficiary, derived from payments of compensation, automatic or term insurance, emergency officers’ retirement pay or pension, shall immediately vest in and become the property of the United States as trustee for the sole use and benefit of the General Post Fund, subject to claim as elsewhere provided. Funds to the credit of an incompetent beneficiary derived from payments of compensation, automatic or term insurance, emergency officers’ retirement
pay or pension will be deposited to the credit of the current appropriations provided for the payment of compensation, insurance or pension.

(b) Personal property as used in this section shall include cash, funds on deposit in Personal Funds of Patients, bank accounts, certificates of stock, bonds, and notes, the obligation of the United States or of others, money orders, checks, insurance policies the proceeds of which are payable to the veteran or his or her estate, postal savings certificates, money and choses in action, and all other papers of every character; also clothing, jewelry, and all other forms of personality, or evidences of interest therein.

[19 FR 9330, Dec. 30, 1954]


(a) VA Form 10–P–10, Application for Hospital Treatment or Domiciliary Care, includes notice to the applicant that the acceptance of care or treatment by any veteran shall constitute acceptance of the provisions of the act. Similar notice shall be given to each veteran receiving care as of March 26, 1942, by posting notice in a prominent place in each building wherein patients or members are housed. Such notices shall be posted immediately and kept posted.

(b) Since the provisions of the law are applicable to all veterans receiving care at the expense of the Department of Veterans Affairs (whether in contract, Federal, State or private hospital) it shall be the responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs officer authorizing admission of a veteran to other than a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, center or home, to cause the chief officer of such institution to post in a conspicuous place, in all buildings where veterans are housed, the provisions of §12.19(a), or if he or she declines to post such provisions, notify the patients individually and supply a statement from each acknowledging notice. Such provisions supersede in part the provisions of Form 10–P–10, executed prior to March 26, 1942.

[13 FR 7131, Nov. 27, 1948, as amended at 14 FR 243, Jan. 18, 1949]

§ 12.21 Action upon death of veteran.

Upon the death of a veteran at a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, center or domiciliary activity while receiving care or treatment therein, and who it is believed leaves no will or heirs or next of kin entitled to his or her personal property, regardless of whether VA Form 10–P–10, executed by the veteran, names a designee, an inventory of the funds and effects, VA Form 10–2687, will be promptly prepared and supplemented by all information or evidence available as to personal property owned by the veteran in addition to that left at the place of death; similar action will be taken when the death of such a veteran hospitalized by the Department of Veterans Affairs occurs at a contract hospital, Army, Navy, Marine or other hospital. Such inventories and information together with any bank books, stocks, bonds, or other valuable paper as enumerated in §12.19(b), left in the effects of the veteran, will be delivered to the manager of the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, center, or domiciliary activity having jurisdiction, for disposition in accordance with existing regulations.

[14 FR 243, Jan. 18, 1949]

§ 12.22 Disposition of personal property.

Any assets heretofore or hereafter accruing to the benefit of the General Post Fund, including stocks, bonds, checks, bank deposits, savings certificates, money orders, and similar assets, will be sold or otherwise converted into cash, except that articles of personal adornment which are obviously of sentimental value shall, if unclaimed, be retained for 5 years from the date of death of the veteran, unless for sanitary or other reasons their retention is deemed unsafe. Possession of effects other than those located on the premises of the Department of Veterans Affairs will be obtained, except that if transportation, storage, etc., is involved, determination will be made as to whether expenditure therefor is warranted. Proceeds from the conversion or sale will be deposited to the credit of the General Post Fund.
on deposit in Personal Funds of Patients will be transferred to the General Post Fund. Any claims against the estate of the deceased veteran will be adjudicated and paid, if valid.

[33 FR 1073, Jan. 27, 1968]

§ 12.23 Recognition of valid claim against the General Post Fund.

Effective December 26, 1941, the assets of the estate of a veteran theretofore or thereafter deposited to the General Post Fund are subject to the valid claims of creditors presented to the Department of Veterans Affairs within 1 year from the date of death or otherwise as provided by any applicable law. Any heir, next of kin, legatee, or other person found to be legally entitled to the personal property of the veteran may claim same within 5 years from the date of the veteran’s death. If claimant is under any legal disability (as a minor, incompetent, etc.) at the date of the veteran’s death, the 5-year period begins upon the termination of removal of legal disability. Such claims are for settlement by the field facility which had originally made the deposit. In the event of doubt as to entitlement or the necessity of legal proceedings to obtain assets for the benefit of the General Post Fund, the case will be referred to the Chief Attorney of jurisdiction for advice and/or appropriate action. Any necessary court costs or expenses will be paid from the appropriation, General Operating Expenses, Department of Veterans Affairs.

[33 FR 1073, Jan. 27, 1968]

OPERATION OF LOST AND FOUND SERVICE

§ 12.24 Operation of lost and found service.

Unless maintained by the Public Buildings Service, the lost and found service will be maintained by an employee designated by the Manager to be known as the lost and found custodian. VA Form 3771, Record of Lost or Found Article, will be used for recording articles of any personal property lost or found. Every effort will be made to determine rightful ownership of found articles and to recover items which have been reported lost. Currency, including readily negotiable instruments, found and delivered to the lost and found custodian will not be retained beyond the official closing hour. The currency or negotiable instruments will be delivered to the agent cashier before the close of business. Individuals claiming found articles will furnish complete identification and satisfy the facility authority of rightful ownership. Where more than one individual claims ownership the matter will be referred to the Manager for decision. All articles of personal property remaining unclaimed for 90 days or more will be disposed of in accordance with §12.8.

[21 FR 3875, June 6, 1956]

PART 13—VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION, FIDUCIARY ACTIVITIES

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§ 13.1 Authority.

The regulations in this part are issued pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 501 to reflect action under 38 U.S.C. 512 and to implement 38 U.S.C. 5301, 5502, 5503, 5711 and 8520. The duties, the delegations of authority, and all actions required of the Veterans Service Center Manager set forth in §§13.1 through 13.111 inclusive, are to be performed under the direction of, and authority vested in, the Director of the field facility.

[40 FR 54247, Nov. 21, 1975]

§ 13.2 Field examinations.

(a) Authority to conduct; generally. Field personnel in the Veterans Service Center and other employees who are qualified and designated by the field facility Director are authorized, when assigned, to conduct investigations (field examinations) and examine witnesses upon any matter within the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to take affidavits, to administer oaths and affirmations, to certify copies of public or private documents and to aid claimants in the preparation of claims.

(b) Scope of field examinations; fiduciary activities. Field examinations include but are not limited to the following:

(1) Matters involving the administration of estates and the welfare of beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs who are under legal disability or in need of supervision by the Veterans Service Center Manager.

(2) Matters involving the welfare and needs of dependents of incompetent beneficiaries.

(3) Recovery of amounts due the Government or General Post Fund under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

[40 FR 54247, Nov. 21, 1975, as amended at 67 FR 46869, July 17, 2002]

§ 13.3 State legislation.

Field facility Directors are authorized to cooperate with the affiliated organizations, legislative committees, and through the General Counsel with local and State bar associations, to the end that deficiencies of the State laws relating to Department of Veterans Affairs operations may be removed. No action to commit the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding any proposed legislation relating to fiduciary matters will be taken without the approval of the Under Secretary for Benefits or designee.

[40 FR 54247, Nov. 21, 1975]

§ 13.55 Veterans Service Center Manager to select and appoint or recommend for appointment the person or legal entity to receive Department of Veterans Affairs benefits in a fiduciary capacity.

(a) Authority. The Veterans Service Center Manager is authorized to select and appoint (or in the case of a court-appointed fiduciary, to recommend for appointment) the person or legal entity best suited to receive Department of Veterans Affairs benefits in a fiduciary capacity for a beneficiary who is mentally ill (incompetent) or under legal disability by reason of minority or court action, and beneficiary’s dependents.

(b) Payees. Authorized payees include:

(1) The beneficiary (§ 13.56(c));

(2) The beneficiary under supervision (supervised direct payment) (§ 13.56 (a) and (b));

(3) The wife or husband of an incompetent veteran (§ 13.57);

(4) The legal custodian of a beneficiary’s Department of Veterans Affairs benefits (§ 13.58);

(5) A court-appointed fiduciary of a beneficiary (§ 13.59);
§ 13.58 Legal custodian.

(a) Authority. The Veterans Service Center Manager is authorized to make determinations as to the person or legal entity to be appointed legal custodian to receive Department of Veterans Affairs payments on behalf of a beneficiary who is incompetent or under legal disability by reason of minority or court action. In the absence of special circumstances, the person or legal entity to be appointed legal custodian will be the person or legal entity caring for and/or having custody of the beneficiary or the beneficiary's estate.

(b) Payment to. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits may be paid to a legal custodian subject to the following conditions:

(1) The Veterans Service Center Manager has determined that it would be in the best interests of the beneficiary to appoint a legal custodian.

(2) The proposed legal custodian is qualified to administer the benefits payable and agrees to:

(i) Apply the benefits paid for the best interests of the beneficiary,
§ 13.59 Court-appointed fiduciary.

(a) Payment to. Any Department of Veterans Affairs benefit may be paid to the fiduciary appointed by a State court for a beneficiary who is a minor, or incompetent or under other legal disability adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction. Formal or informal accountings may be required from such fiduciaries, with or without judicial proceedings.

(b) Veterans Service Center Manager’s responsibility. The Veterans Service Center Manager shall: (1) Determine and recommend to the Regional Counsel the person or legal entity best fitted for appointment as State court fiduciary for the particular beneficiary. Necessary legal action will be taken by the Regional Counsel.

(2) Upon advice from the Regional Counsel that the fiduciary has been appointed, issue appropriate certification thereof so that payment of benefits can be made to such fiduciary.

§ 13.61 Payment to the chief officer of institution.

The Veterans Service Center Manager may authorize the payment of all or part of the pension, compensation or emergency officers’ retirement pay payable in behalf of a veteran rated incompetent by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the chief officer of the institution wherein the veteran is being furnished hospital treatment or institutional, nursing or domiciliary care, for the veteran’s use and benefit, when the Veterans Service Center Manager has determined such payment (called an institutional award) will adequately provide for the needs of the veteran and obviate need for appointment of another type of fiduciary.

[40 FR 54247, Nov. 21, 1975]

§ 13.62 Payment to bonded officer of Indian reservation.

Any benefits due an incompetent adult or minor Indian, who is a recognized ward of the Government, may be awarded to the superintendent or other bonded officer designated by the Secretary of the Interior to receive funds under 25 U.S.C. 14.

[40 FR 54248, Nov. 21, 1975]

§ 13.63 Payment to custodian-in-fact.

All or any part of a benefit due a minor or incompetent adult, payment of which is suspended or withheld because payment may not be properly made to an existing fiduciary, may be paid temporarily to the person having custody and control of the beneficiary.

[36 FR 19023, Sept. 25, 1971]

§ 13.64 Fiduciary commissions.

Generally, a VA appointed fiduciary is to be encouraged to serve without fee.

(a) Authority. The Veterans Service Center Manager is authorized to determine when a commission is necessary in order to obtain the services of a fiduciary, except that the Veterans Service Center Manager may not authorize a commission to a fiduciary who receives any other form of remuneration or payment in connection with rendering fiduciary services on behalf of the beneficiary. Necessity is established only if the beneficiary’s best interest would be served by the appointment of a qualified professional, or, if a qualified professional is not available, the proposed fiduciary is the only qualified person available and is not willing to serve without a fee.

(b) Amount; notice to beneficiary. The Veterans Service Center Manager shall authorize a fiduciary to whom a commission is payable under paragraph (a) of this section to deduct from the beneficiary’s estate a reasonable commission for fiduciary services rendered. The commission for any year may not
§ 13.71 Payment of cost of veteran’s maintenance in institution.

(a) The payment of part of compensation, pension or emergency officers’ retirement pay for the cost of a veteran’s hospital treatment, institutional or domiciliary care in an institution operated by a political subdivision of the United States may be authorized as provided in paragraph (b) of this section when:

(1) The veteran is rated incompetent or under other legal disability by court action, the Veterans Service Center Manager may recommend such apportionment to or in behalf of the veteran’s spouse, child or dependent parent as may be necessary to provide for their needs.

(b) Dependent parents. When the compensation of a veteran paid to his or her fiduciary includes an additional amount for a dependent parent or parents and the fiduciary neglects or refuses to make an equivalent contribution for their support, the Veterans Service Center Manager may recommend the apportionment to the parent or parents of the additional amount.

(c) Payments withheld because of fiduciary’s failure to properly administer veteran’s estate. When payments of compensation, pension or emergency officers’ retirement pay in behalf of a veteran have been stopped because of the fiduciary’s failure or inability to properly account or otherwise administer the estate, the Veterans Service Center Manager may recommend the apportionment to the veteran’s spouse, child or dependent parent of any benefit not paid under an institutional award or to a custodian-in-fact.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5502, 5503


§ 13.70 Apportionment of benefits to dependents.

(a) Incompetent veterans being furnished hospital treatment, institutional or domiciliary care by United States or political subdivision thereof. When compensation, pension or emergency officers’ retirement pay is payable in behalf of a veteran who is incompetent or under other legal disability by court action, the Veterans Service Center Manager may recommend such apportionment to or in behalf of the veteran’s spouse, child or dependent parent as may be necessary to provide for their needs.

(b) Dependent parents. When the compensation of a veteran paid to his or her fiduciary includes an additional amount for a dependent parent or parents and the fiduciary neglects or refuses to make an equivalent contribution for their support, the Veterans Service Center Manager may recommend the apportionment to the parent or parents of the additional amount.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5502, 5503

§ 13.72

Veterans Service Center Managers may authorize release of funds from Personal Funds of Patients for the needs of veterans and their dependents, including amounts fixed by statute or administrative regulations as the cost of current maintenance of veterans in institutions of the United States or a political subdivision thereof other than Department of Veterans Affairs institutions.

[40 FR 54248, Nov. 21, 1975]

§ 13.73

Veterans Service Center Managers may, when required for the benefit of the veteran and/or the veteran’s dependents, authorize the transfer of amounts credited to veterans in Funds Due Incompetent Beneficiaries to Department of Veterans Affairs Personal Funds of Patients accounts or to chief officers of non-Department of Veterans Affairs institutions for the accounts of institutionalized veterans.

[40 FR 54248, Nov. 21, 1975]
$ 13.104 Accounts of court-appointed fiduciaries.

(a) Requirement to account; notices of filings and hearings. Accounts may be required from court-appointed fiduciaries as provided by State law, but in no event less frequently than once every 3 years. Arrangements will be made with the courts whereby notices of filing of all petitions, accounts, etc., and of hearings on same, relative to court-appointed fiduciary cases where-in the Department of Veterans Affairs is an interested party, will be sent to the Veterans Service Center Manager for review, distribution and such action as may be appropriate. Matters which require legal action will be referred to the Regional Counsel, and will include any matter in which the Department of Veterans Affairs has any objections to offer.

(b) Fiduciary and beneficiary in jurisdiction other than a State of the United States. Accounts will not be required, in the discretion of the Veterans Service Center Manager, in cases where the fiduciary and beneficiary permanently

§ 13.102 Accountability of legal custodians.

(a) Institutionalized veterans without spouse or child. The legal custodian of VA benefits of an incompetent veteran who has neither spouse nor child and who is being furnished hospital treatment or institutional or domiciliary care by the United States or a political subdivision thereof, will account upon request to VA for funds received from VA for the beneficiary and will submit a statement of all other income received and the total assets from any source held for the beneficiary.

(b) All other beneficiaries. Compliance with the agreement as to benefit use and any authorized modifications due to changed need, proof of existence of funds surplus to immediate needs and proper investment thereof, if appropriate, will be established by personal contact.

§ 13.103 Investments by Federal fiduciaries.

(a) Type authorized. VA benefits paid to a Federally appointed fiduciary other than a spouse payee or an institutional award payee may be invested only in United States savings bonds, or in interest or dividend-paying accounts in State or Federally insured institutions, whichever is to the beneficiary’s advantage. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits that are paid on behalf of an incompetent veteran to an institution via an institutional award payment arrangement may not be invested.

(b) Registration. (1) When funds are invested in bonds, the bonds will be registered in this form: (Beneficiary’s Name), (Social Security No.), under custodianship by designation of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) When funds are invested in interest or dividend-paying accounts in State or Federally insured institutions, the account will be registered in this form: (Beneficiary’s name), by (Fiduciary’s Name), Federal fiduciary.

(c) Pre-need burial arrangements. Federally appointed fiduciaries, other than institutional award payees, may use a beneficiary’s funds derived from VA benefits to make deposits into, or purchase, a pre-need burial plan or burial insurance on behalf of the beneficiary, if to do so is in the beneficiary’s interest.

§ 13.104 Accounts of court-appointed fiduciaries.

(a) Requirement to account; notices of filings and hearings. Accounts may be required from court-appointed fiduciaries as provided by State law, but in no event less frequently than once every 3 years. Arrangements will be made with the courts whereby notices of filing of all petitions, accounts, etc., and of hearings on same, relative to court-appointed fiduciary cases where-in the Department of Veterans Affairs is an interested party, will be sent to the Veterans Service Center Manager for review, distribution and such action as may be appropriate. Matters which require legal action will be referred to the Regional Counsel, and will include any matter in which the Department of Veterans Affairs has any objections to offer.

(b) Fiduciary and beneficiary in jurisdiction other than a State of the United States. Accounts will not be required, in the discretion of the Veterans Service Center Manager, in cases where the fiduciary and beneficiary permanently

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(b) Fiduciary and beneficiary in jurisdiction other than a State of the United States. Accounts will not be required, in the discretion of the Veterans Service Center Manager, in cases where the fiduciary and beneficiary permanently
§ 13.105  Surety bonds.

(a) Federal fiduciaries. (1) The Veterans Service Center Manager may require a legal custodian, custodian-in-fact or chief officer of a private institution recognized to administer Department of Veterans Affairs benefits on behalf of a beneficiary, to furnish a corporate surety bond in an amount determined to be sufficient to protect the interest of the beneficiary. Such bond shall run to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the use and benefit of the beneficiary.

(2) The Veterans Service Center Manager may require a legal custodian to furnish an agreement in lieu of a surety bond or additional surety bond when funds are deposited in an interest or dividend-paying account in a State or federally insured institution. The agreement will provide that the legal custodian and institution agree that all funds received from the Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of the beneficiary, which have been or will be deposited by the legal custodian in the account, will be withdrawn only with the written consent of the Veterans Service Center Manager or designee.

(b) Substitution of surety; claims against defunct companies. If any surety company is placed in receivership or ceases to do business in the particular State, the Veterans Service Center Manager will take the necessary action to have proper bonds substituted in Federal fiduciary cases and refer the matter to the Regional Counsel for such other action as may be appropriate.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 13.106  Investments by court-appointed fiduciaries.

The Veterans Service Center Manager will review and to the extent possible determine the legality and prudence of investments involving Department of Veterans Affairs income or estate. It is Department of Veterans Affairs policy to invest income or estate derived from Department of Veterans Affairs benefits only in legal investments which have safety, assured income, stability of principal and ready convertibility for the requirements of the beneficiary and his or her dependents. When notice of a contemplated or actual illegal or imprudent investment comes to the attention of the Veterans Service Center Manager, he or she will take remedial action to protect the beneficiary’s estate. Cases in which it becomes necessary to institute court action will be referred to the Regional Counsel.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 13.107  Accounts of chief officers of public or private institutions.

(a) Department of Veterans Affairs benefits. The chief officer of an institution, other than a Federal institution, shall, when requested, render an account to the Department of Veterans Affairs for funds received from the Department of Veterans Affairs on account of an incompetent veteran.

(b) All income and assets. The chief officer of the aforementioned institutions shall, when requested, furnish a statement of all income received in behalf of a Department of Veterans Affairs beneficiary under legal disability and the total assets held for the beneficiary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5502)


§ 13.110  Escheat; post fund.

(a) Escheat; 38 U.S.C. 5502(e). Upon death of a beneficiary for whom payment of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits was made to a court-appointed fiduciary, legal custodian, custodian-in-fact, or by institutional award, the fiduciary (or the deceased beneficiary’s personal representative) shall, upon request, account for and return to the Department of Veterans Affairs any remaining assets derived from...
Department of Veterans Affairs

Department of Veterans Affairs benefits which would under State law escheat to the State, less legal expenses of any administration necessary to determine that an escheat is in order.

(b) General Post Fund; 38 U.S.C. 5229(a). Upon the death of a veteran intestate while a member or patient in any facility while being furnished care or treatment therein by the Department of Veterans Affairs, who is not survived by a spouse, next of kin, or heirs entitled under the laws of the veteran’s domicile, the veteran’s fiduciary, if any, or the veteran’s personal representative shall account for and turn over to the Department of Veterans Affairs all personal property, including money and choses in action owned by the veteran at the time of his or her death. (See also §14.514(c) of this chapter.)

(c) Refusal of fiduciary or personal representative to cooperate. If the fiduciary or personal representative, if any, refuses to voluntarily comply with the provisions of paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, the Veterans Service Center Manager will submit a complete report to the Regional Counsel.

[36 FR 19025, Sept. 25, 1971, as amended at 40 FR 54250, Nov. 21, 1975]

§ 13.111 Claims of creditors.

Under 38 U.S.C. 5301(a), payments made to or on account of a beneficiary under any of the laws relating to veterans are exempt, either before or after receipt by the beneficiary, from the claims of creditors and State and local taxation. The fiduciary should invoke this defense where applicable. If the fiduciary does not do so, the Veterans Service Center Manager should refer the matter to the Regional Counsel for appropriate action.

[40 FR 54251, Nov. 21, 1975]

PART 14—LEGAL SERVICES, GENERAL COUNSEL, AND MISCELLANEOUS CLAIMS

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14.502 Requests for legal opinions from Central Office.
§ 14.500

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**Authority: 5 U.S.C. 301; 28 U.S.C. 2671–2680; 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 512, 515, 5502, 5901–5905; 28 CFR part 14, appendix to part 14, unless otherwise noted.**

**Source: 19 FR 5552, Aug. 31, 1954, unless otherwise noted.**

§ 14.500 **Functions and responsibilities of General Counsel.**

The General Counsel is responsible to the Secretary for the following:

(a) All litigation arising in, or out of, the activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs or involving any employee thereof in his or her official capacity.

(b) All interpretative legal advice involving construction or application of laws, including statutes, regulations, and decisional as well as common law.

(c) All legal services, advice and assistance required to implement any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(d) All delegations of authority and professional guidance required to meet these responsibilities.

(e) Maintenance of a system of field offices capable of providing legal advice and assistance to all Department of Veterans Affairs field installations and acting for the General Counsel as provided by Department of Veterans Affairs Regulations and instructions, or as directed by the General Counsel in special cases. This includes cooperation with U.S. Attorneys in all civil and criminal cases pertaining to the Department of Veterans Affairs and reporting to the U.S. Attorneys, as authorized, or to the General Counsel, or both, criminal matters coming to the attention of the Regional Counsel.
§ 14.501 Functions and responsibilities of Regional Counsels.

(a) Functions and responsibilities of the Regional Counsels are those set forth in this part and all other matters assigned by the General Counsel.

(b) In any matter within the jurisdiction of the General Counsel, delegated or otherwise assigned, the Regional Counsel and designated staff attorneys are authorized to conduct investigations, examine witnesses, take affidavits, administer oaths and affirmations and certify copies of public or private documents.

(c) The Regional Counsel is authorized to, and shall, under the guidance of the General Counsel, provide legal services, advice and assistance to Department of Veterans Affairs installations within the district assigned. In any area of regulatory, assigned or delegated responsibility, the Regional Counsel may delegate to staff members or other Department of Veterans Affairs attorneys authority to perform, to the extent specified, any legal function under the professional direction of the Regional Counsel. Conversely, the Regional Counsel may modify, suspend, or rescind any authority delegated hereunder.

(d) The Regional Counsel is authorized to cooperate with affiliated organizations, legislative committees, and with local and State bar associations to the end that any State law deficiencies relating to Department of Veterans Affairs operations may be removed. No commitment as to proposed legislation will be made without the approval of the General Counsel.

(e) In any case wherein the Regional Counsel is authorized to take legal action and payment of costs and necessary expenses incident thereto are involved, the administration requesting such action will pay such cost and expenses. Where it is impractical for the Regional Counsel to perform the legal service because of cost, distance, etc., the customary fee for the service rendered by a local attorney employed by the Regional Counsel will be borne by the administration requesting such action.

(f) Other matters assigned.

(42 FR 41410, Aug. 17, 1977)

§ 14.501 Functions and responsibilities of Regional Counsels.

(a) Functions and responsibilities of the Regional Counsels are those set forth in this part and all other matters assigned by the General Counsel.

(b) In any matter within the jurisdiction of the General Counsel, delegated or otherwise assigned, the Regional Counsel and designated staff attorneys are authorized to conduct investigations, examine witnesses, take affidavits, administer oaths and affirmations and certify copies of public or private documents.

(c) The Regional Counsel is authorized to, and shall, under the guidance of the General Counsel, provide legal services, advice and assistance to Department of Veterans Affairs installations within the district assigned. In any area of regulatory, assigned or delegated responsibility, the Regional Counsel may delegate to staff members or other Department of Veterans Affairs attorneys authority to perform, to the extent specified, any legal function under the professional direction of the Regional Counsel. Conversely, the Regional Counsel may modify, suspend, or rescind any authority delegated hereunder.

(d) The Regional Counsel is authorized to cooperate with affiliated organizations, legislative committees, and with local and State bar associations to the end that any State law deficiencies relating to Department of Veterans Affairs operations may be removed. No commitment as to proposed legislation will be made without the approval of the General Counsel.

(e) In any case wherein the Regional Counsel is authorized to take legal action and payment of costs and necessary expenses incident thereto are involved, the administration requesting such action will pay such cost and expenses. Where it is impractical for the Regional Counsel to perform the legal service because of cost, distance, etc., the customary fee for the service rendered by a local attorney employed by the Regional Counsel will be borne by the administration requesting such action.

(f) The jurisdictions and addresses of Regional Counsels are as follows:

1. Region 1: (JURISDICTION) Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island; (ADDRESS) VAMC, 200 Springs Road, Bldg. 61, Bedford, MA 01730.

2. Region 2: (JURISDICTION) New Jersey, Metropolitan New York City; (ADDRESS) 800 Poly Place, Building 14, Brooklyn, NY 11209.

3. Region 3: (JURISDICTION) District of Columbia; Fairfax, Virginia; Arlington, Virginia; Alexandria, Virginia; Martinsburg, West Virginia; and Maryland; (ADDRESS) 3900 Loch Raven Blvd., Bldg. 4, Baltimore, MD 21218.


5. Region 5: (JURISDICTION) Georgia, South Carolina; (ADDRESS) 1700 Clairmont Rd., Decatur, GA 30033–4032.

6. Region 6: (JURISDICTION) Florida, Puerto Rico; (ADDRESS) P.O. Box 5005, Building 22, Room 333, Bay Pines, FL 33744.

7. Region 7: (JURISDICTION) Ohio, West Virginia (excluding Martinsburg, West Virginia); (ADDRESS) 1800 Brecksville Rd., Bldg. 1, 5th Floor, Brecksville, OH 44141.

8. Region 8: (JURISDICTION) Arkansas, Tennessee; (ADDRESS) 110 9th Ave., South Room A–201A, Nashville, TN 37203.

9. Region 9: (JURISDICTION) Alabama, Mississippi; (ADDRESS) 1500 E. Woodrow Wilson Dr., Jackson, MS 39216.

10. Region 10: (JURISDICTION) Illinois, Iowa; (ADDRESS) VA Medical Center, Bldg. 1, G Section 1st Floor, P. O. Box 1427, Hines, IL 60141.


12. Region 12: (JURISDICTION) Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska; (ADDRESS) 4800 Memorial Drive, Bldg. 12, Waco, TX 76711.
§ 14.502 Requests for legal opinions from Central Office.

Requests for formal legal advice, including interpretation of law or regulations, shall be made only by the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, the Assistant Secretaries, the Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and the administration head or top staff office official having jurisdiction over the particular subject matter, or by a subordinate acting for any such official.

§ 14.503 Requests for legal advice and assistance in other than domestic relations matters.

(a) Requests from administrative officials in the field for legal advice or assistance will be addressed to the appropriate Regional Counsel and will be in writing if requested by the Regional Counsel. Questions regarding insurance activities at St. Paul and Philadelphia should be referred to the Regional Counsel at the respective station. Except as to matters referred to in §14.504(b), the Regional Counsel’s authority to render legal advice and assistance shall extend to the release (unless otherwise instructed by the General Counsel), without prior approval of the General Counsel, of opinions on all legal questions which are either:

(1) Wholly controlled by the interpretation or application of the laws of the State or States in the district office area, or

(2) Covered by Department of Veterans Affairs precedents and opinions of the General Counsel which the Regional Counsel knows to be currently authoritative on the issues involved.

In cases covered by §14.504(b) and all others not included in paragraph (a)(1) or (2) or paragraph (b) of this section, the Regional Counsel will prepare a tentative opinion (including identification of the benefit sought) and forward it to the General Counsel for review. When it is returned, the Regional Counsel will conform the opinion (if necessary) to the views of the General Counsel, and release it to the requesting official. The Regional Counsel may release any modified opinion as the opinion of the General Counsel.

(b) The Regional Counsel may submit to the General Counsel any legal question, opinion, or question pertinent to legal functions, upon which the views or advice of the General Counsel are desired. This request should set forth the special circumstances, contain a statement of the legal implications involved (including any Department of Veterans Affairs benefits claimed), set forth the facts out of which they arise, and cite any statutes or court decisions readily available, regulations, related opinions of the General Counsel and other matters deemed pertinent, with
appropriate discussion. If any administration will be affected, a copy of the reply will be forwarded to that administration head.


§ 14.504 Domestic relations questions, authority and exceptions.

(a) Regional Counsels have the same authority with respect to domestic relations questions as they do with respect to matters covered by §14.503 except as specifically excluded by the provisions of paragraph (a) of that section.

(b) In the following instances the Regional Counsel, regardless of whether State law is wholly controlling or a Department of Veterans Affairs precedent is available, will prepare a tentative opinion, researched as completely as possible with reasonably available facilities, and forward two copies thereof directly to the General Counsel for review and disposition (as provided in §14.503 respecting other than domestic relations matters):

(1) Where it is not clear under applicable State law: (i) Whether the marriage of a veteran’s child or the remarriage of a veteran’s widow was void without decree of annulment, or (ii) whether an annulment decree was rendered by a court with basic authority to render annulment decrees;

(2) When fraud or collusion by either party appears to have influenced the granting of an annulment decree;

(3) Cases in which there are contesting claims;

(4) Unusual situations, such as those involving proxy marriages, the law of two or more jurisdictions or of a foreign country;

(5) Cases involving difference of opinion between Regional Counsels or between a Regional Counsel and the official who submitted the question involved.

[42 FR 41411, Aug. 17, 1977]

§ 14.505 Submissions.

All submissions will set forth the question of law on which the opinion is desired, together with a complete and accurate summary of relevant facts. Files, correspondence, and other original papers will not be submitted unless pertinent portions thereof cannot practically be summarized or copies made and attached as exhibits.

[42 FR 41411, Aug. 17, 1977]

§ 14.507 Opinions.

(a) A written legal opinion of the General Counsel involving veterans’ benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be conclusive as to all Department officials and employees with respect to the matter at issue, unless there has been a material change in controlling statute or regulation, a superseding written legal opinion by the General Counsel, or the designation on its face as “advisory only” by the General Counsel or the Deputy General Counsel acting as or for the General Counsel. Written legal opinions having conclusive effect under this section and not designated as precedent opinions pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section shall be considered by the Department of Veterans Affairs to be subject to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2).

Advice, recommendations, or conclusions on matters of Government or Department policy, contained within a written legal opinion, shall not be binding on Department officials and employees merely because of their being contained within a written legal opinion. Written legal opinions will be maintained in the Office of the General Counsel. Written legal opinions involving veterans’ benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which pertain to a particular benefit matter, in addition to being maintained in the Office of the General Counsel, will be filed in the individual claim folder.

(b) A written legal opinion of the General Counsel involving veterans’ benefits under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs which, in the judgment of the General Counsel or the Deputy General Counsel acting as or for the General Counsel, necessitates regulatory change, interprets a statute or regulation as a matter of first impression, clarifies or modifies a prior opinion, or is otherwise of significance beyond the matter
at issue, may be designated a “precedent opinion” for purposes of such benefits. Written legal opinions designated as precedent opinions under this section shall be considered by Department of Veterans Affairs to be subject to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(1). An opinion designated as a precedent opinion is binding on Department officials and employees in subsequent matters involving a legal issue decided in the precedent opinion, unless there has been a material change in a controlling statute or regulation or the opinion has been overruled or modified by a subsequent precedent opinion or judicial decision.

(c) For purposes of this section, the term written legal opinion of the General Counsel means a typed or printed memorandum or letter signed by the General Counsel or by the Deputy General Counsel acting as or for the General Counsel, addressed to an official or officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs stating a conclusion on a legal issue pertaining to Department of Veterans Affairs activities.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)


§ 14.514 Suits by or against United States or Department of Veterans Affairs officials; indemnification of Department of Veterans Affairs employees.

(a) Suits against United States or Department of Veterans Affairs officials. When a suit involving any activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs is filed against the United States or the Secretary or a suit is filed against any employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs in which is involved any official action of the employee, not covered by the provisions of §§ 14.600 through 14.617, a copy of the petition will be forwarded to the General Counsel who will take necessary action to obtain the pertinent facts, cooperate with or receive the cooperation of the Department of Justice and, where indicated, advise the Regional Counsel of any further action required.

(b) Counsel and representation of employees. The Department of Justice may afford counsel and representation to Government employees who are sued individually as a result of the performance of their official duties. A civil action commenced in a State court against an employee, as the result of an action under color of his or her office, may be removed to the applicable Federal District Court. If a suit is filed against an employee as the result of the performance of his or her official duties, where the provisions of either 28 U.S.C. 2679 or 38 U.S.C. 7316 are not applicable (see §14.610), and the employee desires to be represented by the U.S. Attorney, the Regional Counsel will obtain a written request to this effect from the employee and will also obtain an affidavit of the facility Director describing the incident in sufficient detail to enable a determination to be made as to whether the employee was in the scope of his or her employment at the time. These statements, together with a copy of the petition and two copies of a summary of pertinent facts, will be sent to the General Counsel, who will transmit copies thereof to the Department of Justice for appropriate action.

(c) Indemnification. (1) The Department of Veterans Affairs may indemnify a Department of Veterans Affairs employee, who is personally named as a defendant in any civil suit in state or Federal court or an arbitration proceeding or other proceeding seeking damages against the employee personally, where either 28 U.S.C. 2679 or 38 U.S.C. 7316 is not applicable, for any verdict, judgment, or other monetary award which is rendered against such employee; provided that: the alleged conduct giving rise to the verdict, judgment, or award was taken within the scope of his or her employment and that such indemnification is in the interest of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as determined by the Secretary or his designee.

(2) The Department of Veterans Affairs may settle or compromise a personal damage claim against a Department of Veterans Affairs employee, in cases where the provisions of either 28 U.S.C. 2679 or 38 U.S.C. 7316 are not applicable, by the payment of available
§ 14.515 Suits involving loan guaranty matters.

(a) In actions for debt, possession or actions similar in substance (including title actions) in which §36.4282 or §36.4319 of this chapter has been complied with, the Regional Counsel is authorized to enter the appearance of and represent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs as the attorney of record and to file claims for debt in probate proceedings without prior reference to the General Counsel. Any such action will normally be taken within the time prescribed by law as though there had been valid service of process. In all other types of cases, the Regional Counsel will not enter an appearance or file any pleading on behalf of the Secretary except in imperative emergency until authorization is received.

(b) Attorney-client privilege. Attorneys employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs who participate in any process utilized for the purpose of determining whether the Agency should request the Department of Justice to provide representation to a Department employee sued, subpoenaed or charged in his individual capacity, or whether attorneys employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs should provide assistance in the representation of such a Department employee, undertake a full and traditional attorney-client relationship with the employee with respect to application of the attorney-client privilege. If representation is authorized, Department of Veterans Affairs attorneys who assist in the representation of an employee also undertake a full and traditional attorney-client relationship with the employee with respect to the attorney-client privilege. Any adverse information communicated by the client-employee to an attorney during the course of such attorney-client relationship shall not be disclosed to anyone, either inside or outside the Department of Veterans Affairs, other than attorneys responsible for representation of the employee, unless such disclosure is authorized by the employee.

(c) Suits by the United States. In any instance wherein direct submission to a U.S. Attorney for institution of civil action has been authorized by the Department of Justice, the Regional Counsel will furnish the U.S. Attorney a complete report of the facts and applicable law, documentary evidence, names and addresses of witnesses and, in cases wherein Department of Veterans Affairs action has been taken, a copy of any pertinent decision rendered. The Regional Counsel will forward two copies of such report and of any proposed pleading to the General Counsel, and will render any practicable assistance requested by the U.S. Attorney.
§ 14.515 38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)

from the General Counsel after submission of all relevant facts. In doubtful cases, the Regional Counsel will request instructions from the General Counsel, submitting copy of so much of the pleadings or other papers, together with a sufficient recital of the facts as will make clear the background, the issues, and the relief sought. The submission also will include names and addresses of adverse parties and attorneys so that immediate action may be taken if injunctive relief seems proper. Where necessary in any case to preserve rights which might be lost by default if there had been proper service of process, appropriate action will be taken by a special appearance, or, in jurisdictions where a special appearance does not serve the purpose or under State statute or decisions will constitute a general appearance for a later date, by an appearance through amicus curiae, to obtain an extension of time, preferably 30 days or more, in which to appear and plead without prejudice. If not feasible to obtain an extension, the Regional Counsel will explain to adverse counsel by letter, and personally, if desirable, the necessity of deferring all action and will see that the proper judge receives a signed copy of the letter before default day. The letter will point out that there is no valid service of process on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs but will not base the delay on that alone.

(b) The General Counsel or each Regional Counsel representing the General Counsel is the attorney of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for all purposes of 38 U.S.C. 3720 and, as such, is authorized to represent the Secretary in any court action or other legal matter arising under said statutory provisions. Said authorization is subject to any applicable statutes and Executive orders concerning claims of the United States. A Regional Counsel may enter appearance in such cases, subject to the provisions of §§ 36.4282 and 36.4319 of this chapter and paragraph (a) of this section. Each Regional Counsel is authorized to contract for the employment of attorneys on a fee basis for conducting any action arising under guaranty or insurance of loans or direct loans by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or for examination and other proper services with respect to title to and liens on real and personal property, material incident to such activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, when, such employment is deemed by the Regional Counsel to be appropriate, the authority delegated to the Regional Counsel may be redelegated with the approval of the General Counsel.

(c) The General Counsel and each Regional Counsel, in carrying out their duties as authorized in paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, are authorized: (1) To contract for and execute, for and on behalf of the Secretary, any bond (and appropriate contract or application therefor) which is required in or preliminary to or in connection with any judicial proceeding in which the Regional Counsel is attorney for the Secretary, and to incur obligations for premiums for such bonds and (2) to do all other acts and incur all costs and expenses which are necessary or appropriate to further or protect the interests of the Secretary in or in connection with prosecuting or defending any cause in any court or tribunal within the United States, which cause arises out of or incident to the guaranty or insurance of loans, or the making or direct loans by the Department of Veterans Affairs, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. ch. 37.

(d) Except in an emergency, no Regional Counsel will initiate action for appellate review without prior approval by the General Counsel. These limitations do not preclude the filing of a motion for a new trial, appeal to intermediate court with hearing de novo, the giving of notice of appeal, reserving of bills of exception, or any other preliminary action in the trial court which may be necessary or appropriate to protect or facilitate, the exercise of the right of appellate review, nor do they preclude the taking of appropriate steps on behalf of the Secretary as appellee (respondent) without prior reference to the General Counsel. Upon the conclusion of the trial of a case, the Regional Counsel will report the result thereof to the General Counsel with recommendation as to seeking appellate review if the result reported is adverse to the position of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
§ 14.518 Litigation involving beneficiaries in custody of Department of Veterans Affairs employees acting in official capacity.

(a) Service of process generally. An employee, at a field facility, served with a writ of habeas corpus involving a beneficiary of the Department of Veterans Affairs in the employee’s custody will immediately notify the General Counsel and promptly forward the record and brief without delay so that authority for printing may be granted in accordance with the prescribed procedure, MP–1, part II, chapter 9.1 and (8) the recommendation or a statement as to nonrecommendation by the Loan Guaranty Officer.

[42 FR 41411, Aug. 17, 1977]

§ 14.516 Escheat and post fund cases.

In any case in which the Department of Veterans Affairs is entitled to possession of assets or property under the escheat provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5502(e), the gifts provisions of 38 U.S.C. ch. 83 or the General Post Fund provisions of 38 U.S.C. ch. 85, the Regional Counsel will endeavor to obtain possession of such assets or property in any manner appropriate under local procedure and practice, other than litigation. This proceeding would include exploratory inquiry of the person having custody or possession of the assets or property for the purpose of determining whether the person would be willing to turn over the property to the Department of Veterans Affairs without litigation. If unsuccessful in this effort, a complete report will be submitted by the Regional Counsel to the General Counsel so that appropriate action may be taken to obtain the assistance of the Department of Justice in the matter.

[42 FR 41411, Aug. 17, 1977]

§ 14.517 Cases affecting the Department of Veterans Affairs generally.

Regional Counsels will establish and maintain such close liaison with the State and Federal courts as to insure that notice will be afforded the Department of Veterans Affairs on all cases affecting the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such information will be forwarded to the General Counsel promptly in every case.

[42 FR 41411, Aug. 17, 1977]
§ 14.560 Procedure where violation of penal statutes is involved including those offenses coming within the purview of the Assimilative Crime Act (18 U.S.C. 13).

The Department of Justice, or the U.S. Attorneys, are charged with the duty and responsibility of interpreting and enforcing criminal statutes, and the final determination as to whether the evidence in any case is sufficient to warrant prosecution is a matter solely for their determination. If the Department of Justice or U.S. Attorney decides to initiate action, the Regional Counsel will cooperate as may be requested. The Regional Counsel will promptly bring to the attention of the General Counsel any case wherein he or she is of the opinion that criminal or civil action should be initiated notwithstanding a decision by the U.S. Attorney not to bring such action; any case where action has been inordinately delayed; and any case which would cause significant publicity or notoriety.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

§ 14.561 Administrative action prior to submission.

Before a submission is made to the U.S. Attorney in cases involving personnel or claims, the General Counsel, if the file is in Central Office, or the Regional Counsel at the regional office, hospital or center, if the file is in the regional office or other field facility, will first ascertain that necessary administrative or adjudicatory (forfeiture (see Pub. L. 86-222; 73 Stat. 452), etc.), action has been taken; except that in urgent cases such as breaches of the peace, disorderly conduct, trespass, robbery, or where the evidence may be lost by delay, or prosecution barred by the statute of limitations, submission to the U.S. Attorney will be made immediately.

[42 FR 4143, Aug. 17, 1977]

§ 14.562 Collections or adjustments.

When it is determined that a submission is to be made to the U.S. Attorney, no demand for payment or adjustment will be made without the advice of the U.S. Attorney. However, if, before or after submission, the potential defendant or other person tenders payment of the liability to the United States, payment will be accepted if the U.S. Attorney has no objection. If the U.S. Attorney determines that prosecution is not indicated, or when prosecution has ended, the file will be returned to the appropriate office with a report as to the action taken.

[42 FR 4143, Aug. 17, 1977]

Federal Tort Claims

§ 14.600 Federal Tort Claims Act—general.

(a) Federal Tort Claims Act—overview. The Federal Tort Claims Act (28 U.S.C. 1291, 1346, 1402, 2401, 2402, 2411, 2412, and 2671 through 2680) prescribes a uniform procedure for handling of claims against the United States, for money only, on account of damage to or loss of property, or on account of personal injury or death, caused by the negligent or wrongful act or omission of a Government employee while acting within the scope of his or her office or employment, under circumstances where the United States, if a private person, would be liable in accordance with the law of the place where the act or omission occurred.

(b) Applicable regulations. The regulations issued by the Department of Justice at 28 CFR part 14 are applicable to claims asserted under the Federal Tort Claims Act, including such claims that are filed with VA. The regulations in §§14.600 through 14.605 of this part supplement the regulations at 28 CFR part 14.

(c) Delegations of authority concerning claims. Subject to the limitations in 28 CFR 14.6(c), (d), and (e), authority to consider, ascertain, adjust, determine, compromise, and settle claims asserted
under the Federal Tort Claims Act (including the authority to execute an appropriate voucher and other necessary instruments in connection therewith) is delegated as follows:

(1) To the Under Secretary for Health, the Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors, and VA Medical Facility Directors; with respect to any claim for $2,500 or less that arises out of the operations of the Veterans Health Administration.

(2) To the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, and Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group I) or those authorized to act for them with respect to any claim; provided that any award, compromise, or settlement in excess of $300,000 shall be effected only with the prior written approval of the Attorney General or his or her designee; provided further that whenever a settlement is effected in an amount in excess of $100,000, a memorandum fully explaining the basis for the action taken shall be sent to the Department of Justice.

(3) To the Regional Counsels and the Deputy Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group I) or those authorized to act for them with respect to any claim; provided that:

(i) Any award, compromise, or settlement in excess of $150,000 but not more than $300,000 shall be effected only with the prior written approval of the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, or Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group I); provided further that whenever a settlement is effected in an amount in excess of $100,000, a memorandum fully explaining the basis for the action taken shall be sent to the Department of Justice; and

(ii) Any award where, for any reason, the compromise of a particular claim, as a practical matter, will, or may control the disposition of a related claim in which the amount to be paid may exceed $150,000 shall be effected only with the prior written approval of the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, or Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group I); and

(iii) Any award, compromise, or settlement in excess of $300,000 shall be effected only with the prior written approval of the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, or Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group I) and with the prior written approval of the Attorney General or his or her designee.

(d) Delegations of authority to reconsider final denial of a claim. Subject to the limitations in 28 CFR 14.6(c), (d), and (e), authority under 28 CFR 14.9 to reconsider final denials of claims under the Federal Tort Claims Act is delegated as follows:

(1) To the Regional Counsel with jurisdiction over the geographic area where the occurrence complained of arose, with respect to any claim for $2,500 or less that arises out of the operations of the Veterans Health Administration.

(2) To the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, and Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group I) with respect to any claim; provided that any award, compromise, or settlement in excess of $300,000 shall be effected only with the prior written approval of the Attorney General or his or her designee; provided further that whenever a settlement is effected in an amount in excess of $100,000, a memorandum fully explaining the basis for the action taken shall be sent to the Department of Justice.


§ 14.601 Investigation and development.

(a) Development of untoward incidents.

(1) A report of any collision involving a Government-owned vehicle which results in property damage or personal injury or death will be made by the operator of the Government vehicle immediately following the accident, on SF 91, Operator’s Report of Motor Vehicle Accident, and shall be submitted to the Director of the facility involved. A copy of said report, accompanied by an executed copy of VA Form 2162, Report of Accident, will be promptly submitted by the Director to the appropriate Regional Counsel, who will authorize such additional investigation as the circumstances of the case may warrant. Forms required by other
agencies will continue to be used in addition to VA Form 2162.

(2)(i) Any incident resulting in damage to, or loss of, property, other than personal effects of a patient in a Department of Veterans Affairs facility, or in personal injury or death, due apparently or allegedly to the negligent or wrongful act or omission of an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs acting within the scope of his or her office or employment, or damage to or loss of Government-owned property caused by other than a Department of Veterans Affairs employee acting within the scope of his or her office or employment, will be immediately reported. The Director of the facility where such occurrence took place will promptly transmit a copy of the report to the appropriate Regional Counsel who will authorize such additional investigation as the circumstances of the case may warrant.

(ii) Where the incident involves the loss of personal effects of a patient in a Department of Veterans Affairs facility, the Director will assist the patient in completing an SF 95, Claim for Damage, Injury, or Death, and will advise the patient that it will be forwarded immediately to the appropriate Regional Counsel for consideration. The Director will forward along with the claim a brief summary of the facts, as well as his or her recommendation, to the Regional Counsel. The Regional Counsel will expedite the processing of claims of this nature.

(3) An employee will be designated at each facility to investigate motor vehicle collisions and other incidents involving damage to, or loss of privately owned property or personal injury or death, apparently or allegedly resulting from the negligent or wrongful act or omission of an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs acting within the scope of his or her employment, other than investigation of alleged malpractice, or damage to or loss of Government-owned property caused by other than Department of Veterans Affairs employees. In Central Office, the designation will be made by the Director of Support Service, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, and at all other facilities, by the Director.

(4) The Regional Counsel for the area in which a field facility is located will be responsible for processing claims involving motor vehicle collisions and other occurrences resulting in property damage, personal injury, or death, within such area. The Baltimore Regional Counsel will also have jurisdiction, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (a)(3) of this section over incidents occurring in Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office.

(b) Development of medical malpractice claims. In medical malpractice cases, the Regional Counsel may refer a claim to the Under Secretary for Health via the Director, Medical-Legal Affairs for review and for professional opinion or guidance. In the consideration of claims involving a medical question, the responsible Regional Counsel involved and the General Counsel will be guided by the views of the Under Secretary for Health as to the standard of medical care and treatment, the nature and extent of the injuries, the degree of temporary or permanent disability, the prognosis, the necessity for future treatment or physical rehabilitation, and any other pertinent medical aspects of a claim.


Veterans Affairs for unauthorized medical treatment, there will be included in the tort claim award the amount of the claimant’s indebtedness to the Government. The amount of the indebtedness is for credit to the appropriation account from which the services were provided. The voucher prepared for settlement of the claim will specify the amount to be deposited to the credit of the designated account and that the balance of the award be paid to the claimant.


§ 14.604 Filing a claim.

(a) Each person who inquires as to the procedure for filing a claim against the United States, predicated on a negligent or wrongful act or omission of an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs acting within the scope of his or her employment, will be furnished a copy of SF 95, Claim for Damage, Injury, or Death. The claimant will be advised to submit the executed claim directly to the Regional Counsel having jurisdiction of the area wherein the occurrence complained of took place. He or she will also be advised to submit the information prescribed by 28 CFR 14.4 to the extent applicable. If a claim is presented to the Department of Veterans Affairs which involves the actions of employees or officers of other agencies, it will be forwarded to the Department of Veterans Affairs General Counsel, for appropriate action in accord with 28 CFR 14.2.

(b) A claim shall be deemed to have been presented when the Department of Veterans Affairs receives from a claimant, his or her duly authorized agent or legal representative, an executed SF 95, or other written notification of an incident, together with a claim for money damages, in a sum certain, for damage to or loss of property or personal injury or death: Provided, however, That before compromising or settling any claim, an executed SF 95 shall be obtained from the claimant.

(c) A claim presented in compliance with paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section may be amended by the claimant at any time prior to final Department of Veterans Affairs action or prior to the exercise of the claimant’s option under 28 U.S.C. 2675(a). Amendments shall be submitted in writing and signed by the claimant or his or her duly authorized agent or legal representative. Upon the timely filing of an amendment to a pending claim, the Department of Veterans Affairs shall have 6 months in which to make a final disposition of the claim as amended and the claimant’s option under 28 U.S.C. 2675(a) shall not accrue until 6 months after the filing of the amendment.


§ 14.605 Suits against Department of Veterans Affairs employees arising out of a wrongful act or omission or based upon medical care and treatment furnished in or for the Veterans Health Administration.

(a)(1) Section 2679 of title 28 U.S.C., provides that no suit will lie against a Federal employee, or the employee’s estate, for damage to property, personal injury, or death resulting from his or her wrongful act or omission while acting within the scope of his or her office or employment with the Federal Government. An action against the United States under 28 U.S.C. 2671–2680 is the exclusive remedy under these circumstances.

(2) Section 7316 of title 38 U.S.C., provides that no suit will lie against a Federal employee, or the employee’s estate, for damage to property, personal injury, or death resulting from his or her wrongful act or omission while acting within the scope of his or her office or employment with the Federal Government. An action against the United States under 28 U.S.C. 2671–2680 is the exclusive remedy under these circumstances.

(2) Section 2679 of title 28 U.S.C., provides that no suit will lie against a Federal employee, or the employee’s estate, for damage to property, personal injury, or death resulting from his or her wrongful act or omission while acting within the scope of his or her office or employment with the Federal Government. An action against the United States under 28 U.S.C. 2671–2680 is the exclusive remedy under these circumstances.

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(2) Section 2679 of title 28 U.S.C., provides that no suit will lie against a Federal employee, or the employee’s estate, for damage to property, personal injury, or death resulting from his or her wrongful act or omission while acting within the scope of his or her office or employment with the Federal Government. An action against the United States under 28 U.S.C. 2671–2680 is the exclusive remedy under these circumstances.
(for example, medical and dental technicians, nursing assistants, and therapists), or other supporting personnel, while furnishing medical care and treatment in the exercise of duties in or for the Veterans Health Administration. Accordingly, a malpractice or negligence suit for property damage, personal injury, or death will not lie against such personnel under the circumstances set forth in this subparagraph.

(b) The Department of Justice will defend any civil action or proceeding brought in any court against persons referred to in paragraph (a) (1) or (2) of this section under the circumstances set forth therein. Accordingly, when a suit is filed against any employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs as a result of a wrongful act or omission arising out of employment with the Government, or as a result of furnishing medical or dental care and treatment in or for the Veterans Health Administration, the employee shall immediately forward a copy of all papers served on him or her to the Regional Counsel having jurisdiction over the area in which the employee works. The employee will also promptly forward to the appropriate Regional Counsel a signed statement indicating whether he or she desires the Department of Justice to provide representation, and to otherwise protect his or her interests as provided for by law. Even though there may not have been service, if an employee learns that a suit arising from either of the above-described circumstances has been filed against him or her, the employee shall immediately so advise the Regional Counsel having jurisdiction over the place where the employee works. The employee will also promptly forward to the appropriate Regional Counsel a signed statement indicating whether he or she desires Federal intervention.

(c) Upon receipt of notice that suit has been filed against an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who is entitled to protection under 28 U.S.C. 2679 or 38 U.S.C. 7316, the Regional Counsel having jurisdiction over the place where the employee works will conduct a preliminary investigation, which will include an affidavit by the employee’s supervisor as to whether the defendant-employee was acting in the scope of his or her employment at the time of the incident, and a request from the defendant-employee for representation. The affidavit will contain a factual description of the employee’s duties and responsibilities at the time of the incident and should describe the incident in question. Upon receipt of such information, the Regional Counsel will make a preliminary determination as to whether such suit comes within the provisions of either 28 U.S.C. 2679 or 38 U.S.C. 7316. The Regional Counsel will refer the matter to the appropriate U.S. Attorney with a recommendation as to whether the employee is eligible for protection under 28 U.S.C. 2679 or 38 U.S.C. 7316. The U.S. Attorney will decide whether the Department of Veterans Affairs employee is eligible for the protection. The Regional Counsel will submit to the General Counsel a preliminary report in duplicate containing the information furnished the U.S. Attorney. In all such cases, the Regional Counsel will conduct a complete investigation of the facts and law. Two copies of the investigation report will be sent to the General Counsel and one copy will be sent to the appropriate U.S. Attorney. The General Counsel, through the Regional Counsel, will keep the employee advised of the action being taken concerning the suit. In the event that the U.S. Attorney or the Department of Justice determines that the employee is not eligible for immunization pursuant to one of the aforementioned provisions, the General Counsel’s office, through the Regional Counsel, will advise the employee and will call to his or her attention the discretionary conditional indemnification provisions of section 7316(e) of title 38 U.S.C.

(d) Where a civil action is commenced in a State court against a Department of Veterans Affairs employee, and the matter is within the purview of either 28 U.S.C. 2679, or 38 U.S.C. 7316, the Department of Justice will be asked to remove such suit to the appropriate Federal District Court before trial, where it will be deemed an action against the United States. The defendant employee will be dismissed from the suit. After such removal, the United States has available all defenses to which it would have been entitled if the action had originally been
commenced against the United States in the proper Federal District Court. Should a Federal District Court determine that the Department of Veterans Affairs employee whose acts or omissions gave rise to the suit was not acting within the scope of his or her office or employment, and therefore not eligible for immunization as provided for in the aforementioned section, the case will be remanded to the State court from which it was removed, the employee will be reinstated as the defendant, and the United States will be dismissed from the suit. Where the employee has been reinstated as the defendant under such circumstances, in order to protect any rights which he or she may have under 38 U.S.C. 7316(e), he or she shall immediately notify the General Counsel, through the local Regional Counsel. Through the Regional Counsel, the General Counsel will call the employee’s attention to the discretionary conditional indemnification provisions of section 7316(e).

(e) Under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 7316(e), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may pay for monetary damages sustained by or assessed against an individual (or his or her estate) described in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, as the result of any suit instituted against such individual which is not cognizable under the provisions of 28 U.S.C. 2671–2680 because the individual was assigned to a foreign country, the said individual was detailed to a State or political division thereof, or the cause of action was specifically excluded under the provisions of 28 U.S.C. 2671–2680(h); Provided, That the amount of damages sustained is reasonable when compared with similar cases, litigated or settled, and the United States was given a reasonable opportunity to defend such individual and to participate in settlement negotiations.

Administrative Settlement of Tort Claims Arising in Foreign Countries

§ 14.615 General.

(a) Authority. Section 515(b), title 38 U.S.C., provides that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may pay tort claims, in the manner authorized in the first paragraph of section 2672 of title 28 U.S.C., when such claims arise in foreign countries in connection with Department of Veterans Affairs operations abroad.

(b) Action by claimant. Claims for property loss or damage may be filed by the owner of the property or his or her duly authorized agent or legal representative. If the property was insured and the insurer is subrogated, in whole or in part, and if both the owner and the insurer desire to file a claim for their respective losses they should join in one claim. Claims for personal injury may be filed by the injured person or his or her agent or legal representative. Claims for death may be filed by the personal representative of the decedent or any other legally qualified person. When filed by an agent or legal representative, the claim must show the title or capacity of the person representing the claimant and be accompanied by evidence of the appointment of such person as agent, legal representative, executor/executrix, administrator/administratrix, guardian, or other fiduciary.

(c) Time for filing. A claim may not be allowed under 38 U.S.C. 515(b) unless it is presented to the Secretary or his or her designee within 2 years after the claim accrues.

Form and place of filing claim.

(a) Form of claim. Claims arising under 38 U.S.C. 515(b) will be prepared in the form of a sworn statement and submitted in duplicate. The original copy of the claim will be sworn to or affirmed before an official with authority to administer oaths or affirmations and will contain the following information, at least:
§ 14.616  

1 The name and address of claimant;  
2 The amount claimed for injury or death, and for property loss or damage;  
3 If property was lost or damaged, the amount paid or payable by the insurer together with the name of the insurer;  
4 A detailed statement of the facts and circumstances giving rise to the claim, including the time, place, and date of the accident or incident;  
5 If property was involved, a description of the property and the nature and extent of the damage and the cost of repair or replacement based upon at least two impartial estimates;  
6 If personal injury was involved, the nature of the injury, the cost of medical and/or hospital services, and time and income lost due to the injury;  
7 If death is involved, the names and ages of claimants and their relationship to decedent;  
8 The name and official position of the employee of the United States allegedly responsible for the accident or injury, or loss or damage of property;  
9 The names and addresses of any witnesses to accident or incident; and  
10 If desired, the law applicable to the claim.  

(b) Place of filing claim. Claims arising in the Philippines under 38 U.S.C. 515(b) will be filed with the Director, Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office, Manila, Republic of the Philippines. Claims arising in other foreign countries will be filed with the American Embassy or Consulate nearest the place where the incident giving rise to the claim took place.

(c) Evidence to be submitted by claimant—(1) General. The amount claimed on account of damage to or loss of property or on account of personal injury or death shall, so far as possible, be substantiated by competent evidence. Supporting statements, estimates and the like will, if possible, be obtained from disinterested parties. All evidence will be submitted in duplicate. Original evidence or certified copies shall be attached to the original copy of the claim, and simple copies shall be attached to the other copy of the claim. All documents in other than the English language will be accompanied by English translations.

2 Personal injury or death. In support of claims for personal injury or death, the claimant will submit, as may be appropriate, itemized bills for medical, hospital, or burial expenses actually incurred; a statement from the claimant’s or decedent’s employer as to time and income lost from work; and a written report by the attending physician with respect to the nature and extent of the injury, the nature and extent of treatment, the degree of disability, the period of hospitalization or incapacitation, and the prognosis as to future treatment, hospitalization and the like.

3 Damage to personal property. In support of claims for damage to personal property which has been repaired, the claimant will submit an itemized receipt, or, if not repaired, itemized estimates of the cost of repairs by two reliable parties who specialize in such work. If the property is not economically repairable, the claimant will submit corroborative statements of two reliable, qualified persons with respect to cost, age of the property and salvage value.

4 Damage to real property. In support of claims for damage to land, trees, buildings, fences, or other improvements to real property, the claimant will submit an itemized receipt if repairs have been made, or, if repairs have not been made, itemized estimates of the cost of repairs by two reliable persons who specialize in such work. If the property is not economically repairable, the claimant will submit corroborative statements of two reliable, qualified persons with respect to the value of the improvements both before and after the accident or incident and the cost of replacements.

5 Damage to crops. In support of claims for damage to crops, the claimant will submit an itemized signed statement showing the number of acres, or other unit measure of crop damaged, the probable yield per unit, the gross amount which would have been realized from such probable yield and an estimate of the costs of cultivating, harvesting and marketing the crop. If the crop is one which need not be planted each year, the diminution in value of the land beyond the damage to
the current year’s crop will also be stated.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900–0437)

§ 14.618 Collection action.

(a) In a case where the Regional Counsel determines that damage to or loss of Government property under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs resulted from the negligence or other legal wrong of a person other than an employee of the United States, while acting within the scope of his or her employment, the Regional Counsel will request payment in full of the amount of damage from the person liable therefor or such person’s insurer.

(b) The Regional Counsel may collect, compromise, suspend, or terminate collection action on any such claim as is authorized under §2.6(e)(4)(i) of this chapter, in conformity with the standards in §1.900 series of this chapter. Any such claim that has not been collected in full and which has not been compromised, suspended or terminated and does not exceed $100,000, will be referred by the Regional Counsel to the appropriate U.S. attorney along with the information required by §§1.951 through 1.953 of this chapter. Any claim in excess of $100,000 for which payment in full has not been made, will be transmitted along with the report required by §14.601(a)(2)(i), a report on credit data (§1.952 of this chapter), and any other pertinent information, to the General Counsel for appropriate action.

(c) The General Counsel or those designated in §2.6(e)(4) of this chapter will take action to collect in full on such claims and to compromise, suspend, or terminate any such claims not exceeding $100,000 in conformity with §1.900 series of this chapter. Any such claims not compromised, or on which collection actions is not suspended or terminated and does not exceed $100,000, will be referred to the appropriate U.S. attorney. Any such claims in excess of $100,000, which have not been collected in full, will be referred by the General Counsel to the Department of Justice for appropriate action.

(d) The provisions of paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section are not applicable to the collection of claims involving damage to General Services Administration Motor Pool System vehicles issued for Department of Veterans Affairs use. Whenever there is any indication that a party other than the operator of a motor pool system vehicle is at fault in an accident, all documents and data pertaining to the accident and its investigation will be submitted to the General Services Administration Regional Counsel of the region that issued the vehicle who has jurisdiction over such matters. Whenever a motor pool system vehicle is involved in an accident, resulting in damage to the property of, or injury to the person
§ 14.619 Collection action.

(a) In a case where the Regional Counsel determines that medical care and services were furnished as a result of the negligence of a third party, other than an employee of the United States while acting in the scope of his or her employment, the Regional Counsel will request payment in full of the amount of damage from the person liable therefor or such person’s insurer.

(b) The Regional Counsel may collect, compromise, suspend, or terminate collection activity on any such claim as is authorized under §2.6(e)(3) of this chapter. However, claims in excess of $100,000 may be compromised, settled, or waived only with the prior approval of the Department of Justice, which will be obtained through the General Counsel. Any such claim that has not been collected in full and which has not been compromised, suspended or terminated will be referred to the appropriate United States Attorney with sufficient data to enable that office to protect the interest of the Government. A copy of all materials referred to the United States Attorney will be furnished the General Counsel.

[Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1729(c)(1)]

the standards and qualifications in §14.629(b).

(e) **Benefit** means any payment, service, commodity, function, or status, entitlement to which is determined under laws administered by VA pertaining to veterans, dependents, and survivors.

(f) **Cancellation** means termination of authority to represent claimants.

(g) **Claim** means application made under title 38 U.S.C., and implementing directives, for entitlement to VA benefits, reinstatement, continuation, or increase of benefits, or the defense of a proposed agency adverse action concerning benefits.

(h) **Claimant** means a person who has filed or has expressed to a representative, agent, or attorney an intention to file a written application for determination of entitlement to benefits provided under title 38, United States Code, and implementing directives.

(i) **Complete claims service** means representation of each claimant requesting assistance, from the initiation of a claim until the completion of any potential administrative appeal.

(j) **Cross-accreditation** means an accreditation based on the status of a representative as an accredited and functioning representative of another organization.

(k) **Facilities** means equipment and furnishings that promote the efficient operation of an office, and adjacent accommodations, which are needed to facilitate access to office space.

(l) **Recognition** means certification by VA of organizations to assist claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits.

(m) **Representation** means the acts associated with representing a claimant in a proceeding before VA pursuant to a properly executed and filed VA Form 21-22, “Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant’s Representative,” or VA Form 21-22a, “Appointment of Individual as Claimant’s Representative.”

(n) **Representative** means a person who has been recommended by a recognized organization and accredited by VA.

(o) **Service** means the delivery of a motion, response, or reply to a person or entity to which it is directed. Proof of service consists of a statement by the person who made service certifying the date and manner of service, the names of the persons served, and the addresses of the place of delivery. For service by mail, proof of service shall include the date and manner by which the document was mailed.

(p) **State** includes any State, possession, territory, or Commonwealth of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

(q) **Suspension** means temporary withholding of authority to represent claimants.


§14.628 Recognition of organizations.

Authorized officers of an organization may request recognition by letter to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(a) **National organization.** An organization may be recognized as a national organization if:

1. It was recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs prior to October 10, 1978, and continues to satisfy the requirements of §14.628(d) of this section, or

2. It satisfies the following requirements:

   (i) Requirements set forth in paragraph (d) of this section, including information required to be submitted under that paragraph;

   (ii) In the case of a membership organization, membership of 2,000 or more persons, as certified by the head of the organization;

   (iii) Capability and resources to provide representation to a sizable number of claimants;

   (iv) Capability to represent claimants before the Board of Veterans’ Appeals in Washington, D.C.; and

   (v) Geographic diversification, i.e., either one or more posts, chapters, or offices in at least ten states, or one or more members in at least twenty states.

(b) **State organization.** An organization created and primarily funded by a State government for the purpose of serving the needs of veterans of that State may be recognized. Only one such organization may be recognized in each State.
(c) Regional or local organization. An organization other than a State or national organization as set forth in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section may be recognized when the Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that it is a veterans' service organization primarily involved in delivering services connected with either title 38 U.S.C., benefits and programs or other Federal and State programs designed to assist veterans. The term veteran as used in this paragraph shall include veterans, former armed forces personnel, and the dependents or survivors of either. Further, the organization shall provide responsible, qualified representation in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for title 38 U.S.C., benefits.

(d) Requirements for recognition. (1) In order to be recognized under this section, an organization shall meet the following requirements:

(i) Have as a primary purpose serving veterans. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit a statement establishing the purpose of the organization and that veterans would benefit by recognition of the organization.

(ii) Demonstrate a substantial service commitment to veterans either by showing a sizable organizational membership or by showing performance of veterans' services to a sizable number of veterans. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit:

(A) The number of members and number of posts, chapters, or offices and their addresses;

(B) A copy of the articles of incorporation, constitution, charter, and bylaws of the organization, as appropriate;

(C) A description of the services performed or to be performed in connection with programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, with an approximation of the number of veterans, survivors, and dependents served or to be served by the organization in each type of service designated; and

(D) A description of the type of services, if any, performed in connection with other Federal and State programs which are designed to assist former Armed Forces personnel and their dependents, with an approximation of the number of veterans, survivors, and dependents served by the organization under each program designated.

(ii) Commit a significant portion of its assets to veterans' services and have adequate funding to properly perform those services. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit:

(A) A copy of the last financial statement of the organization indicating the amount of funds allocated for conducting particular veterans' services (VA may, in cases where it deems necessary, require an audited financial statement); and

(B) A statement indicating that use of the organization's funding is not subject to limitations imposed under any Federal grant or law which would prevent it from representing claimants before the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(iv) Maintain a policy and capability of providing complete claims service to each claimant requesting representation or give written notice of any limitation in its claims service with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service. Except as provided in paragraphs (d)(1)(iv)(A) and (B) of this section, in establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit evidence of its capability to represent claimants before Department of Veterans Affairs regional offices and before the Board of Veterans Appeals.

(A) If an organization does not intend to represent claimants before the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the organization shall submit evidence of an association or agreement with a recognized service organization for the purpose of representation before the Board of Veterans' Appeals, or the proposed method of informing claimants of the limitations in service that can be provided, with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service.

(B) If an organization does not intend to represent each claimant requesting representation...
§ 14.629 Requirements for accreditation of service organization representatives; agents; and attorneys.

The Assistant General Counsel of jurisdiction or his or her designee will conduct an inquiry and make an initial determination regarding any question relating to the qualifications of a prospective service organization representative, agent, or attorney. If the Assistant General Counsel or designee determines that the prospective service organization representative, agent, or attorney meets the requirements for accreditation in paragraphs (a) or (b) of this section, notification of accreditation will be issued by the Assistant General Counsel or the Assistant General Counsel’s designee and will constitute authority to prepare, present, and prosecute claims before an agency of original jurisdiction or the Board of Veterans’ Appeals. If the Assistant General Counsel determines that the prospective representative, agent, or attorney does not meet the requirements for accreditation, notification will be issued by the Assistant General Counsel concerning the reasons for disapproval, an opportunity to submit additional information, and any restrictions on further application for accreditation. If an applicant submits additional evidence, the Assistant General Counsel will consider such evidence and provide further notice concerning his or her final decision. The determination of the Assistant General Counsel regarding the qualifications of a prospective service organization representative, agent, or attorney may be within 90 days of receipt of all information to be supplied.

(f) Requests for further information. The Secretary or the Secretary’s designee may request further information from any recognized organization, including progress reports, updates, or verifications.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5002)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0439)


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(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5002)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0439)

appealed by the applicant to the General Counsel. Appeals must be in writing and filed with the Office of the General Counsel (022D), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, not later than 30 days from the date on which the Assistant General Counsel’s decision was mailed. In deciding the appeal, the General Counsel’s decision shall be limited to the evidence of record before the Assistant General Counsel. A decision of the General Counsel is a final agency action for purposes of review under the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. 701–706.

(a) Service Organization Representatives. A recognized organization shall file with the Office of the General Counsel VA Form 21 (Application for Accreditation as Service Organization Representative) for each person it desires accredited as a representative of that organization. The form must be signed by the prospective representative and the organization’s certifying official. For each of its accredited representatives, a recognized organization’s certifying official shall complete, sign and file with the Office of the General Counsel, not later than five years after initial accreditation through that organization or the most recent recertification by that organization, VA Form 21 to certify that the representative continues to meet the criteria for accreditation specified in paragraph (a)(1), (2) and (3) of this section. In recommending a person, the organization shall certify that the designee:

(1) Is of good character and reputation and has demonstrated an ability to represent claimants before the VA;

(2) Is either a member in good standing or a paid employee of such organization working for it not less than 1,000 hours annually; is accredited and functioning as a representative of another recognized organization; or, in the case of a county veteran’s service officer recommended by a recognized State organization, meets the following criteria:

(i) Is a paid employee of the county working for it not less than 1,000 hours annually;

(ii) Has successfully completed a course of training and an examination which have been approved by a Regional Counsel with jurisdiction for the State; and

(iii) Will receive either regular supervision and monitoring or annual training to assure continued qualification as a representative in the claim process; and

(3) Is not employed in any civil or military department or agency of the United States.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5002)

(b) Accreditation of Agents and Attorneys. (1) No individual may assist claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits as an agent or attorney unless he or she has first been accredited by VA for such purpose.

(i) For agents, the initial accreditation process consists of application to the General Counsel, self-certification of admission information concerning practice before any other court, bar, or State or Federal agency, an affirmative determination of character and fitness by VA, and a written examination.

(ii) For attorneys, the initial accreditation process consists of application to the General Counsel, self-certification of admission information concerning practice before any other court, bar, or State or Federal agency, and a determination of character and fitness. The General Counsel will presume an attorney’s character and fitness to practice before VA based on State bar membership in good standing unless the General Counsel receives credible information to the contrary.

(iii) As a further condition of initial accreditation, both agents and attorneys are required to complete 3 hours of qualifying continuing legal education (CLE) during the first 12-month period following the date of initial accreditation by VA. To qualify under this subsection, a CLE course must be approved for a minimum of 3 hours of CLE credit by any State bar association and, at a minimum, must cover the following topics: representation before VA, claims procedures, basic eligibility for VA benefits, right to appeal, disability compensation (38 U.S.C. Chapter 11), dependency and indemnity compensation (38 U.S.C. Chapter 13), and pension (38 U.S.C. Chapter 15).
Upon completion of the initial CLE requirement, agents and attorneys shall certify to the Office of the General Counsel in writing that they have completed qualifying CLE. Such certification shall include the title of the CLE, date and time of the CLE, and identification of the CLE provider, and shall be submitted to VA as part of the annual certification prescribed by §14.629(b)(4).

(iv) To maintain accreditation, agents and attorneys are required to complete an additional 3 hours of qualifying CLE on veterans benefits law and procedure not later than 3 years from the date of initial accreditation and every 2 years thereafter. To qualify under this subsection, a CLE course must be approved for a minimum of 3 hours of CLE credit by any State bar association. Agents and attorneys shall certify completion of the post-accreditation CLE requirement in the same manner as described in §14.629(b)(1)(iii).

(2) An individual desiring accreditation as an agent or attorney must establish that he or she is of good character and reputation, is qualified to render valuable assistance to claimants, and is otherwise competent to advise and assist claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of their claim(s) before the Department. An individual desiring accreditation as an agent or attorney must file a completed application (VA Form 21a) with the Office of the General Counsel (022D), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, on which the applicant submits the following:

(i) His or her full name and home and business addresses;

(ii) Information concerning the applicant’s military and civilian employment history (including character of military discharge, if applicable);

(iii) Information concerning representation provided by the applicant before any department, agency, or bureau of the Federal government;

(iv) Information concerning any criminal background of the applicant;

(v) Information concerning whether the applicant has ever been determined mentally incompetent or hospitalized as a result of a mental disease or disability, or is currently under treatment for a mental disease or disability;

(vi) Information concerning whether the applicant was previously accredited as a representative of a veterans service organization and, if so, whether that accreditation was terminated or suspended by or at the request of that organization;

(vii) Information concerning the applicant’s level of education and academic history;

(viii) The names, addresses, and phone numbers of three character references; and

(ix) Information relevant to whether the applicant for accreditation as an agent has any physical limitations that would interfere with the completion of a comprehensive written examination administered under the supervision of a VA Regional Counsel (agents only); and

(x) Certification that the applicant has satisfied the qualifications and standards required for accreditation as prescribed by VA in this section, and that the applicant will abide by the standards of conduct prescribed by VA in §14.632 of this part.

(3) Evidence showing lack of good character and reputation includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following: Conviction of a felony, conviction of a misdemeanor involving fraud, bribery, deceit, theft, or misappropriation; suspension or disbarment from a court, bar, or Federal or State agency on ethical grounds; or resignation from admission to a court, bar, or Federal or State agency while under investigation to avoid sanction.

(4) As a further condition of initial accreditation and annually thereafter, each person seeking accreditation as an agent or attorney shall submit to VA information about any court, bar, or Federal or State agency to which the agent or attorney is admitted to practice or otherwise authorized to appear. Applicants shall provide identification numbers and membership information for each jurisdiction in which the applicant is admitted and a certification that the agent or attorney is in good standing in every jurisdiction in which admitted. After accreditation, agents and attorneys must notify VA within 30 days of any change
in their status in any jurisdiction in which they are admitted to appear.

(5) VA will not accredit an individual as an agent or attorney if the individual has been suspended by any court, bar, or Federal or State agency in which the individual was previously admitted and not subsequently reinstated. However, if an individual remains suspended in a jurisdiction on grounds solely derivative of suspension or disbarment in another jurisdiction to which he or she has been subsequently reinstated, the General Counsel may evaluate the facts and grant or reinstate accreditation as appropriate.

(6) After an affirmative determination of character and fitness for practice before the Department, applicants for accreditation as a claims agent must achieve a score of 75 percent or more on a written examination administered by VA as a prerequisite to accreditation. No applicant shall be allowed to sit for the examination more than twice in any 6-month period.

(c) Representation by Attorneys, Law Firms, Law Students and Paralegals. (1) After accreditation by the General Counsel, an attorney may represent a claimant upon submission of a VA Form 21–22a, "Appointment of Attorney or Agent as Claimant’s Representative."

(2) If the claimant consents in writing, an attorney associated or affiliated with the claimant's attorney of record or employed by the same legal services office as the attorney of record may assist in the representation of the claimant.

(3) A legal intern, law student, or paralegal may not be independently accredited to represent claimants under this paragraph. A legal intern, law student, or certified paralegal may assist in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim, under the direct supervision of an attorney of record designated under §14.631(a), if the claimant’s written consent is furnished to VA. Such consent must specifically state that participation in all aspects of the claim by a legal intern, law student, or paralegal furnishing written authorization from the attorney of record is authorized. In addition, suitable authorization for access to the claimant’s records must be provided in order for such an individual to participate. The supervising attorney must be present at any hearing in which a legal intern, law student, or paralegal participates. The written consent must include the name of the veteran, or the name of the appellant if other than the veteran (e.g., a veteran’s survivor, a guardian, or a fiduciary appointed to receive VA benefits on an individual’s behalf); the applicable VA file number; the name of the attorney-at-law; the consent of the appellant for the use of the services of legal interns, law students, or paralegals and for such individuals to have access to applicable VA records; and the names of the legal interns, law students, or paralegals who will be assisting in the case. The signed consent must be submitted to the agency of original jurisdiction and maintained in the claimant’s file. In the case of appeals before the Board in Washington, DC, the signed consent must be submitted to: Director, Management and Administration (01E), Board of Veterans’ Appeals, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. In the case of hearings before a Member or Members of the Board at VA field facilities, the consent must be presented to the presiding Member of the hearing.

(4) Unless revoked by the claimant, consent provided under paragraph (c)(2) or paragraph (c)(3) of this section shall remain effective in the event the claimant’s original attorney is replaced as attorney of record by another member of the same law firm or an attorney employed by the same legal services office.

NOTE TO §14.629: A legal intern, law student, paralegal, or veterans service organization support-staff person, working under the supervision of an individual designated under §14.631(a) as the claimant’s representative, attorney, or agent, may qualify for read-only access to pertinent Veterans Benefits Administration automated claims records as
§ 14.630 Authorization for a particular claim.

(a) Any person may be authorized to prepare, present, and prosecute one claim. A power of attorney executed on VA Form 21–22a, “Appointment of Attorney or Agent as Claimant’s Representative,” and a statement signed by the person and the claimant that no compensation will be charged or paid for the services, shall be filed with the agency of original jurisdiction where the claim is presented. The power of attorney identifies to VA the claimant’s appointment of representation and authorizes VA’s disclosure of information to the person representing the claimant.

(b) Representation may be provided by an individual pursuant to this section one time only. An exception to this limitation may be granted by the General Counsel in unusual circumstances. Among the factors which may be considered in determining whether an exception will be granted are:

1. The number of accredited representatives, agents, and attorneys operating in the claimant’s geographic region;
2. Whether the claimant has unsuccessfully sought representation from other sources;
3. The nature and status of the claim; and
4. Whether there exists unique circumstances which would render alternative representation inadequate.

(c) Persons providing representation under this section must comply with the laws administered by VA and with the regulations governing practice before VA including the rules of conduct in §14.632 of this part.

(d) Persons providing representation under this section are subject to suspension and or exclusion from representation of claimants before VA on the same grounds as apply to representation of claimants before VA on the same grounds as apply to representatives, agents, and attorneys in §14.633 of this part.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5003.

§ 14.631 Powers of attorney; disclosure of claimant information.

(a) A power of attorney, executed on either VA Form 21–22, “Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant’s Representative,” or VA Form 21–22a, “Appointment of Attorney or Agent as Claimant’s Representative,” is required to represent a claimant before VA and to authorize VA’s disclosure of information to any person or organization representing a claimant before the Department. Without the signature of a person providing representation for a particular claim under §14.630 of this part or an accredited veterans service organization representative, agent, or attorney, the appointment is invalid, and the person appointed to provide representation is under no obligation to do so. The power of attorney shall meet the following requirements:

1. Contain signature by:
   (i) The claimant, or
   (ii) The claimant’s guardian, or
   (iii) In the case of an incompetent, minor, or otherwise incapacitated person without a guardian, the following in the order named—spouse, parent, other relative or friend (if interests are not adverse), or the director of the hospital in which the claimant is maintained; and
   (iv) An individual providing representation on a particular claim under §14.630 of this part or an accredited veterans service organization representative, agent, or attorney; and
2. Shall be presented to the appropriate VA office for filing in the veteran’s claims folder.

(b) VA may, for any purpose, treat a power of attorney naming as a claimant’s representative an organization recognized under §14.628, a particular
office of such an organization, or an individual representative of such an organization as an appointment of the entire organization as the claimant’s representative, unless the claimant specifically indicates in the power of attorney a desire to appoint only the individual representative. Such specific indication must be made in the space on the power-of-attorney form for designation of the representative and must use the word “only” with reference to the individual representative.

(c) An organization, individual providing representation on a particular claim under §14.630, representative, agent, or attorney named in a power of attorney executed pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section may withdraw from representation provided before a VA agency of original jurisdiction if such withdrawal would not adversely impact the claimant’s interests. This section is applicable until an agency of original jurisdiction certifies an appeal to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals after which time 38 CFR 20.608 governs withdrawal from representation before the Board. Withdrawal is also permissible if a claimant persists in a course of action that the organization or individual providing representation reasonably believes is fraudulent or criminal and is furthered through the representation of the organization or individual; the claimant fails to uphold an obligation to the organization or individual providing representation regarding the services of the organization or individual; or other good cause for withdrawal exists. An organization or individual providing representation withdraws from representation before the Board. Withdrawal is also permissible if a claimant persists in a course of action that the organization or individual providing representation reasonably believes is fraudulent or criminal and is furthered through the representation of the organization or individual; the claimant fails to uphold an obligation to the organization or individual providing representation regarding the services of the organization or individual; or other good cause for withdrawal exists. An organization or individual providing representation withdraws from representation before the Board. Withdrawal is also permissible if a claimant persists in a course of action that the organization or individual providing representation reasonably believes is fraudulent or criminal and is furthered through the representation of the organization or individual; the claimant fails to uphold an obligation to the organization or individual providing representation regarding the services of the organization or individual; or other good cause for withdrawal exists.

(d) Questions concerning the validity or effect of powers of attorney shall be referred to the Regional Counsel of jurisdiction for initial determination. This determination may be appealed to the General Counsel.

(e)(1) Only one organization, representative, agent, or attorney will be recognized at one time in the prosecution of a particular claim. Except as provided in §14.629(c) and paragraph (f)(2) of this section, all transactions concerning the claim will be conducted exclusively with the recognized organization, representative, agent, or attorney of record until notice of a change, if any, is received by the appropriate office of VA.

(2) An organization named in a power of attorney executed in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section may employ an attorney to represent a claimant in a particular claim. Unless the attorney is an accredited representative of the organization, the written consent of the claimant shall be required.

(f)(1) A power of attorney may be revoked at any time, and an agent or attorney may be discharged at any time. Unless a claimant specifically indicates otherwise, the receipt of a new power of attorney executed by the claimant and the organization or individual providing representation shall constitute a revocation of an existing power of attorney.

(2) If an agent or attorney limits the scope of his or her representation regarding a particular claim by so indicating on VA Form 21–22a, or a claimant authorizes a person to provide representation in a particular claim under §14.630, such specific authority shall constitute a revocation of an existing general power of attorney filed under paragraph (a) of this section only as it pertains to, and during the pendency
of, that particular claim. Following the final determination of such claim, the general power of attorney shall remain in effect as to any new or reopened claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5902, 5903, 5904)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0321)


§ 14.632 Standards of conduct for persons providing representation before the Department

(a)(1) All persons acting on behalf of a claimant shall faithfully execute their duties as individuals providing representation on a particular claim under §14.630, representatives, agents, or attorneys.

(2) All individuals providing representation are required to be truthful in their dealings with claimants and VA.

(b) An individual providing representation on a particular claim under §14.630, representative, agent, or attorney shall:

(1) Provide claimants with competent representation before VA. Competent representation requires the knowledge, skill, thoroughness, and preparation necessary for the representation. This includes understanding the issues of fact and law relevant to the claim as well as the applicable provisions of title 38, United States Code, and title 38, Code of Federal Regulations;

(2) Act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing claimants. This includes responding promptly to VA requests for information or assisting a claimant in responding promptly to VA requests for information.

(c) An individual providing representation on a particular claim under §14.630, representative, agent, or attorney shall not:

(1) Violate the standards of conduct as described in this section;

(2) Circumvent a rule of conduct through the actions of another;

(3) Engage in conduct involving fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or dishonesty;

(4) Violate any of the provisions of title 38, United States Code, or title 38, Code of Federal Regulations;

(5) Enter into an agreement for, charge, solicit, or receive a fee that is clearly unreasonable or otherwise prohibited by law or regulation;

(6) Solicit, receive, or enter into agreements for gifts related to representation provided before an agency of original jurisdiction has issued a decision on a claim or claims and a Notice of Disagreement has been filed with respect to that decision;

(7) Delay, without good cause, the processing of a claim at any stage of the administrative process;

(8) Mislead, threaten, coerce, or deceive a claimant regarding benefits or other rights under programs administered by VA;

(9) Engage in, or counsel or advise a claimant to engage in acts or behavior prejudicial to the fair and orderly conduct of administrative proceedings before VA;

(10) Disclose, without the claimant’s authorization, any information provided by VA for purposes of representation; or

(11) Engage in any other unlawful or unethical conduct.

(d) In addition to complying with standards of conduct for practice before VA in paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section, an attorney shall not, in providing representation to a claimant before VA, engage in behavior or activities prohibited by the rules of professional conduct of any jurisdiction in which the attorney is licensed to practice law.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5902, 5904)

[73 FR 29873, May 22, 2008]

§ 14.633 Termination of accreditation or authority to provide representation under §14.630.

(a) Accreditation or authority to provide representation on a particular claim under §14.630 may be suspended or canceled at the request of an organization. individual providing representation under §14.630, representative, agent, or attorney. When an organization requests suspension or cancellation of the accreditation of a representative due to misconduct or lack of

competence on the part of the representative or because the representative resigned to avoid suspension or cancellation of accreditation for misconduct or lack of competence, the organization shall inform VA of the reason for the request for suspension or cancellation and the facts and circumstances surrounding any incident that led to the request.

(b) Accreditation shall be canceled at such time as a determination is made by the General Counsel that any requirement of §14.629 is no longer met by a representative, agent, or attorney.

(c) Accreditation or authority to provide representation on a particular claim shall be canceled when the General Counsel finds, by clear and convincing evidence, one or more of the following:

(1) Violation of or refusal to comply with the laws administered by VA or with the regulations governing practice before VA including the standards of conduct in §14.632;

(2) Knowingly presenting or prosecuting a fraudulent claim against the United States, or knowingly providing false information to the United States;

(3) Demanding or accepting unlawful compensation for preparing, presenting, prosecuting, or advising or consulting, concerning a claim;

(4) Knowingly presenting to VA a frivolous claim, issue, or argument. A claim, issue, or argument is frivolous if the individual providing representation under §14.630, representative, agent, or attorney is unable to make a good faith argument on the merits of the position taken or to support the position taken by a good faith argument for an extension, modification, or reversal of existing law;

(5) Suspension or disbarment by any court, bar, or Federal or State agency to which such individual providing representation under §14.630, representative, agent, or attorney was previously admitted to practice, or disqualification from participating in or appearing before any court, bar, or Federal or State agency and lack of subsequent reinstatement;

(6) Charging excessive or unreasonable fees for representation as determined by VA, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, or the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit; or

(7) Any other unlawful or unethical practice adversely affecting an individual’s fitness for practice before VA.

(d) Accreditation or authority to provide representation on a particular claim shall be canceled when the General Counsel finds that the performance of an individual providing representation under §14.630, representative, agent, or attorney before VA demonstrates a lack of the degree of competence necessary to adequately prepare, present, and prosecute claims for veteran’s benefits. A determination that the performance of an individual providing representation under §14.630, representative, agent, or attorney before VA demonstrates a lack of the degree of competence required to represent claimants before VA will be based upon consideration of the following factors:

(1) The relative complexity and specialized nature of the matter;

(2) The individual’s general experience;

(3) The individual’s training and experience; and

(4) The preparation and study the individual is able to give veterans benefits matters and whether it is feasible to refer such matters to, or associate or consult with, an individual of established competence in the field of practice.

(e) As to cancellation of accreditation under paragraphs (c) or (d) of this section, upon receipt of credible written information from any source indicating improper conduct, or incompetence, the Assistant General Counsel of jurisdiction shall inform the subject of the allegations about the specific law, regulation, or policy alleged to have been violated or the nature of the alleged incompetence and the source of the complaint, and shall provide the subject with the opportunity to respond. If the matter involves an accredited representative of a recognized organization, the notice shall include contact with the representative’s organization. When appropriate, including situations where no harm results to the claimant or VA, the Assistant General Counsel will provide the subject with an opportunity to correct the offending
behavior before deciding whether to proceed with a formal inquiry. If the subject refuses to comply and the matter remains unresolved, or the behavior subsequently results in harm to a claimant or VA, the Assistant General Counsel shall immediately initiate a formal inquiry into the matter.

(1) If the result of the inquiry does not justify further action, the Assistant General Counsel will close the inquiry and maintain the record for 3 years.

(2) If the result of the inquiry justifies further action, the Assistant General Counsel shall:

(i) Inform the General Counsel of the result of the inquiry and notify the individual providing representation under §14.630, representative, agent or attorney of an intent to cancel accreditation or authority to provide representation on a particular claim. The notice will be sent to individuals providing representation on a particular claim by certified or registered mail to the individual’s last known address of record as indicated on the VA Form 21–22a on file with the agency of original jurisdiction. The notice will be sent to accredited individuals by certified or registered mail to the individual’s last known address of record as indicated in VA’s accreditation records. The notice will state the reason(s) for the cancellation proceeding and advise the individual to file an answer, in oath or affidavit form or the form specified for unsworn declarations under penalty of perjury in 28 U.S.C. 1746, within 30 days from the date the notice was mailed, responding to the stated reasons for cancellation and explaining why he or she should not be suspended or excluded from practice before VA. The notice will also advise the individual of the right to submit additional evidence and the right to request a hearing on the matter. Requests for hearings must be made in the answer. If the individual does not file an answer with the Office of the General Counsel within 30 days of the date that the Assistant General Counsel mailed the notice, the Assistant General Counsel shall close the record and forward it with a recommendation to the General Counsel for a final decision.

(ii) In the event that a hearing is not requested, the Assistant General Counsel shall close the record and forward it with a recommendation to the General Counsel for a final decision.

(iii) The Assistant General Counsel may extend the time to file an answer or request a hearing for a reasonable period upon a showing of sufficient cause.

(iv) For purposes of computing time for responses to notices of intent to cancel accreditation, days means calendar days. In computing the time for filing this response, the date on which the notice was mailed by the Assistant General Counsel shall be excluded. A response postmarked prior to the expiration of the 30th day shall be accepted as timely filed. If the 30th day falls on a weekend or legal holiday, the first business day thereafter shall be included in the computation. As used in this section, legal holiday means New Year’s Day, Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., Washington’s Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and any other day appointed as a holiday by the President or the Congress of the United States, or by the State in which the individual resides.

(f) If a hearing is requested, it will be held at the VA Regional Office nearest the individual’s principal place of business. If the individual’s principal place of business is Washington, DC, the hearing will be held at the VA Central Office or other VA facility in Washington, DC. For hearings conducted at either location, the Assistant General Counsel or his or her designee shall present the evidence. The hearing officer shall not report, directly or indirectly to, or be employed by the General Counsel or the head of the VA agency of original jurisdiction before which the individual provided representation. The hearing officer shall provide notice of the hearing to the individual providing representation under §14.630, representative, agent, or attorney by certified or registered mail at least 21 days before the date of the hearing. Hearings shall not be scheduled before the completion of the 30-day period for filing an answer to the
§ 14.634 Notice of intent to cancel accreditation.

The hearing officer will have authority to administer oaths. The party requesting the hearing will have a right to counsel, to present evidence, and to cross-examine witnesses. Upon request of the individual requesting the hearing, an appropriate VA official designated in § 2.1 of this chapter may issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents necessary for a fair hearing. The hearing shall be conducted in an informal manner and court rules of evidence shall not apply. Testimony shall be recorded verbatim. The evidentiary record shall be closed 10 days after the completion of the hearing. The hearing officer shall submit the entire hearing transcript, any pertinent records or information, and a recommended finding to the Assistant General Counsel within 30 days of closing the record. The Assistant General Counsel shall immediately forward the record and the hearing officer’s recommendation to the General Counsel for a final decision.

(g) The General Counsel may suspend the accreditation of a representative, agent, or attorney, under paragraphs (b), (c), or (d) of this section, for a definite period or until the conditions for reinstatement specified by the General Counsel are satisfied. The General Counsel shall reinstate an individual’s accreditation at the end of the suspension period or upon verification that the individual has satisfied the conditions for reinstatement.

(h) The decision of the General Counsel is a final adjudicative determination of an agency of original jurisdiction and may be appealed to the Board of Veterans Appeals. The effective date for cancellation of accreditation or authority to provide representation on a particular claim shall be the date upon which the General Counsel’s final decision is rendered. Notwithstanding provisions in this section for closing the record at the end of the 30-day period for filing an answer or 10 days after a hearing, appeals shall be initiated and processed using the procedures in 38 CFR parts 19 and 20. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the Board’s authority to remand a matter to the General Counsel under 38 CFR 19.9 for any action that is essential for a proper appellate decision or the General Counsel’s ability to issue a Supplemental Statement of the Case under 38 CFR 19.31.

(i) In cases where the accreditation of an agent or attorney is cancelled, the Office of the General Counsel may notify all agencies, courts, and bars to which the agent or attorney is admitted to practice.

(38 U.S.C. 501, 5902, 5904)

The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collections requirements in this section control number 2900-0018.


§ 14.634 Banks or trust companies acting as guardians.

Banks or trust companies, corporate entities, acting as guardians for claimants, may be represented before adjudicating agencies as authorized representatives of claimants by an officer or employee, including a regularly employed attorney, if the employee or attorney represents the corporation in its fiduciary capacity.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5903, 5904)


§ 14.635 Office space and facilities.

The Secretary may furnish office space and facilities, if available, in buildings owned or occupied by the Department of Veterans Affairs, for the use of paid full-time representatives of recognized national organizations, and for employees of recognized State organizations who are accredited to national organizations, for purposes of assisting claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.

(a) Request for office space should be made by an appropriate official of the organization to the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs facility in which space is desired and should set forth:

(38 U.S.C. 501, 5902, 5904)
(1) The number of full-time paid representatives who will be permanently assigned to the office;
(2) The number of secretarial or other support staff who will be assigned to the office;
(3) The number of claimants for whom the organization holds powers of attorney whose claims are within the jurisdiction of the facility or who reside in the area served by the facility, the number of such claimants whose claims are pending, and the number of claims prosecuted during the previous three years; and
(4) Any other information the organization deems relevant to the allocation of office space.

(b) When in the judgment of the Director office space and facilities previously granted could be better used by the Department of Veterans Affairs, or would receive more effective use or serve more claimants if allocated to another recognized national organization, the Director may withdraw such space or reassign such space to another organization. In the case of a facility under the control of the Veterans Benefits Administration or the Veterans Health Administration, the final decision on such matters will be made by the Under Secretary for Benefits or the Under Secretary for Health, respectively.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 5902)


§ 14.636 Payment of fees for representation by agents and attorneys in proceedings before Agencies of Original Jurisdiction and before the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

(a) Applicability of rule. The provisions of this section apply to the services of accredited agents and attorneys with respect to benefits under laws administered by VA in all proceedings before the agency of original jurisdiction or before the Board of Veterans’ Appeals regardless of whether an appeal has been initiated.

(b) Who may charge fees for representation. Only accredited agents and attorneys may receive fees from claimants or appellants for their services provided in connection with representation. Recognized organizations (including their accredited representatives when acting as such) and individuals recognized under §14.630 of this part are not permitted to receive fees. An agent or attorney who may also be an accredited representative of a recognized organization may not receive such fees unless he or she has been properly designated as an agent or attorney in accordance with §14.631 of this part in his or her individual capacity as an accredited agent or attorney.

(c) Circumstances under which fees may be charged. Except as noted in paragraph (c)(2) and in paragraph (d) of this section, agents and attorneys may charge claimants or appellants for representation provided: after an agency of original jurisdiction has issued a decision on a claim or claims, including any claim to reopen under 38 CFR 3.156 or for an increase in rate of a benefit; a Notice of Disagreement has been filed with respect to that decision on or after June 20, 2007; and the agent or attorney has complied with the power of attorney requirements in §14.631 and the fee agreement requirements in paragraph (g) of this section.

(1) Agents and attorneys may charge fees for representation provided with respect to a request for revision of a decision of an agency of original jurisdiction under 38 U.S.C. 5109A or the Board of Veterans’ Appeals under 38 U.S.C. 7111 based on clear and unmistakable error if a Notice of Disagreement was filed with respect to the challenged decision on or after June 20, 2007, and the agent or attorney has complied with the power of attorney requirements in §14.631 and the fee agreement requirements in paragraph (g) of this section.

(2) In cases in which a Notice of Disagreement was filed on or before June 19, 2007, agents and attorneys may charge fees only for services provided after both of the following conditions have been met:

(i) A final decision was promulgated by the Board with respect to the issue, or issues, involved in the appeal; and

(ii) The agent or attorney was retained not later than 1 year following the date that the decision by the Board was promulgated. (This condition will
be considered to have been met with respect to all successor agents or attorneys acting in the continuous prosecution of the same matter if a predecessor was retained within the required time period.)

(3) Except as noted in paragraph (i) of this section and §14.637(d), the agency of original jurisdiction that issued the decision identified in a Notice of Disagreement shall determine whether an agent or attorney is eligible for fees under this section. The agency of original jurisdiction’s eligibility determination is a final adjudicative action and may be appealed to the Board.

(d) Exceptions—(1) Chapter 37 loans. With respect to services of agents and attorneys provided after October 9, 1992, a reasonable fee may be charged or paid in connection with any proceeding in a case arising out of a loan made, guaranteed, or insured under chapter 37, United States Code, even though the conditions set forth in paragraph (c) of this section are not met.

(2) Payment of fee by disinterested third party. (i) An agent or attorney may receive a fee or salary from an organization, governmental entity, or other disinterested third party for representation of a claimant or appellant even though the conditions set forth in paragraph (c) of this section have not been met. An organization, governmental entity, or other third party is considered disinterested only if the entity or individual does not stand to benefit financially from the successful outcome of the claim. In no such case may the attorney or agent charge a fee which is contingent, in whole or in part, on whether the matter is resolved in a manner favorable to the claimant or appellant.

(ii) For purposes of this part, a person shall be presumed not to be disinterested if that person is the spouse, child, or parent of the claimant or appellant, or if that person resides with the claimant or appellant. This presumption may be rebutted by clear and convincing evidence that the person in question has no financial interest in the success of the claim.

(iii) The provisions of paragraph (g) of this section (relating to fee agreements) shall apply to all payments or agreements to pay involving disinterested third parties. In addition, the agreement shall include or be accompanied by the following statement, signed by the attorney or agent: “I certify that no agreement, oral or otherwise, exists under which the claimant or appellant will provide anything of value to the third-party payer in this case in return for payment of my fee or salary, including, but not limited to, reimbursement of any fees paid.”

(e) Fees permitted. Fees permitted for services of an agent or attorney admitted to practice before VA must be reasonable. They may be based on a fixed fee, hourly rate, a percentage of benefits recovered, or a combination of such bases. Factors considered in determining whether fees are reasonable include:

(1) The extent and type of services the representative performed;

(2) The complexity of the case;

(3) The level of skill and competence required of the representative in giving the services;

(4) The amount of time the representative spent on the case;

(5) The results the representative achieved, including the amount of any benefits recovered;

(6) The level of review to which the claim was taken and the level of the review at which the representative was retained;

(7) Rates charged by other representatives for similar services; and

(8) Whether, and to what extent, the payment of fees is contingent upon the results achieved.

(f) Presumptions. Fees which do not exceed 20 percent of any past-due benefits awarded as defined in paragraph (h)(3) of this section shall be presumed to be reasonable. Fees which exceed 33\(\frac{1}{3}\) percent of any past-due benefits awarded shall be presumed to be unreasonable. These presumptions may be rebutted through an examination of the factors in paragraph (e) of this section establishing that there is clear and convincing evidence that a fee which does not exceed 20 percent of any past-due benefits awarded is not reasonable or that a fee which exceeds 33\(\frac{1}{3}\) percent is reasonable in a specific circumstance.
(g) Fee agreements. All agreements for the payment of fees for services of agents and attorneys (including agreements involving fees or salary paid by an organization, governmental entity or other disinterested third party) must be in writing and signed by both the claimant or appellant and the agent or attorney.

(1) To be valid, a fee agreement must include the following:

(i) The name of the veteran,

(ii) The name of the claimant or appellant if other than the veteran,

(iii) The name of any disinterested third-party payer (see paragraph (d)(2) of this section) and the relationship between the third-party payer and the veteran, claimant, or appellant,

(iv) The applicable VA file number, and

(v) The specific terms under which the amount to be paid for the services of the attorney or agent will be determined.

(2) Fee agreements must also clearly specify if VA is to pay the agent or attorney directly out of past due benefits. A direct-pay fee agreement is a fee agreement between the claimant or appellant and an agent or attorney providing for payment of fees out of past due benefits awarded directly to an agent or attorney. A fee agreement that does not clearly specify that VA is to pay the agent or attorney out of past due benefits awarded directly to an agent or attorney may enter into a fee agreement providing that payment for the services of the agent or attorney will be made directly to the agent or attorney by VA out of any past-due benefits awarded in any proceeding before VA or the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. VA will charge and collect an assessment out of the fees paid directly to agents or attorneys from past-due benefits awarded. The amount of such assessment shall be equal to five percent of the amount of the fee required to be paid to the agent or attorney, but in no event shall the assessment exceed $100. Such an agreement will be honored by VA only if the following conditions are met:

(i) The total fee payable (excluding expenses) does not exceed 20 percent of the total amount of the past-due benefits awarded,

(ii) The amount of the fee is contingent on whether or not the claim is resolved in a manner favorable to the claimant or appellant, and

(iii) The amount of past-due benefits results in a cash payment to a claimant or an appellant from which the fee may be deducted. (An award of past-due benefits will not always result in a cash payment to a claimant or an appellant. For example, no cash payment will be made to military retirees unless there is a corresponding waiver of retirement pay. (See 38 U.S.C. 5304(a) and 38 CFR 3.750)

(3) A copy of the agreement must be filed with the Office of the General Counsel within 30 days of its execution by mailing the copy to the following address: Office of the General Counsel (022D), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. Only fee agreements and documents related to review of fees under paragraph (i) of this section and expenses under §14.637 may be filed with the Office of the General Counsel. All documents relating the adjudication of a claim for VA benefits, including any correspondence, evidence, or argument, must be filed with the agency of original jurisdiction, Board of Veterans’ Appeals, or other VA office as appropriate.

(h) Payment of fees by Department of Veterans Affairs directly to an agent or attorney from past-due benefits. (1) Subject to the requirements of the other paragraphs of this section, including paragraphs (c) and (e), the claimant or appellant and an agent or attorney may enter into a fee agreement providing that payment for the services of the agent or attorney will be made directly to the agent or attorney by VA out of any past-due benefits awarded in any proceeding before VA or the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. VA will charge and collect an assessment out of the fees paid directly to agents or attorneys from past-due benefits awarded. The amount of such assessment shall be equal to five percent of the amount of the fee required to be paid to the agent or attorney, but in no event shall the assessment exceed $100. Such an agreement will be honored by VA only if the following conditions are met:

(i) The total fee payable (excluding expenses) does not exceed 20 percent of the total amount of the past-due benefits awarded,

(ii) The amount of the fee is contingent on whether or not the claim is resolved in a manner favorable to the claimant or appellant, and

(iii) The award of past-due benefits results in a cash payment to a claimant or an appellant from which the fee may be deducted. (An award of past-due benefits will not always result in a cash payment to a claimant or an appellant. For example, no cash payment will be made to military retirees unless there is a corresponding waiver of retirement pay. (See 38 U.S.C. 5304(a) and 38 CFR 3.750)

(2) For purposes of this paragraph (h), a claim will be considered to have been resolved in a manner favorable to the claimant or appellant if all or any part of the relief sought is granted.

(3) For purposes of this paragraph (h), “past-due benefits” means a non-recurring payment resulting from a benefit, or benefits, granted on appeal or awarded on the basis of a claim reopened after a denial by a VA agency of original jurisdiction or the Board of Veterans Appeals or the lump sum
payment that represents the total amount of recurring cash payments that accrued between the effective date of the award, as determined by applicable laws and regulations, and the date of the grant of the benefit by the agency of original jurisdiction, the Board of Veterans' Appeals, or an appellate court.

(i) When the benefit granted on appeal, or as the result of the reopened claim, is service connection for a disability, the “past-due benefits” will be based on the initial disability rating assigned by the agency of original jurisdiction following the award of service connection. The sum will equal the payments accruing from the effective date of the award to the date of the initial disability rating decision. If an increased evaluation is subsequently granted as the result of an appeal of the disability evaluation initially assigned by the agency of original jurisdiction, and if the agent or attorney represents the claimant or appellant in that phase of the claim, the agent or attorney will be paid a supplemental payment based upon the increase granted on appeal, to the extent that the increased amount of disability is found to have existed between the initial effective date of the award following the grant of service connection and the date of the rating action implementing the appellate decision granting the increase.

(ii) Unless otherwise provided in the fee agreement between the claimant or appellant and the agent or attorney, the agent’s or attorney’s fees will be determined on the basis of the total amount of the past-due benefits even though a portion of those benefits may have been apportioned to the claimant’s or appellant’s dependents.

(iii) If an award is made as the result of favorable action with respect to several issues, the past-due benefits will be calculated only on the basis of that portion of the award which results from action taken on issues concerning which the criteria in paragraph (c) of this section have been met.

(4) In addition to filing a copy of the fee agreement with the Office of the General Counsel as required by paragraph (g) of this section, the agent or attorney must notify the agency of original jurisdiction within 30 days of the date of execution of the agreement of the existence of an agreement providing for the direct payment of fees out of any benefits subsequently determined to be past due and provide that agency with a copy of the fee agreement.

(i) Motion for review of fee agreement. Before the expiration of 120 days from the date of the final VA action, the Office of the General Counsel may review a fee agreement between a claimant or appellant and an agent or attorney upon its own motion or upon the motion of the claimant or appellant. The Office of the General Counsel may order a reduction in the fee called for in the agreement if it finds by a preponderance of the evidence, or by clear and convincing evidence in the case of a fee presumed reasonable under paragraph (f) of this section, that the fee is unreasonable. The Office of the General Counsel may approve a fee presumed unreasonable under paragraph (f) of this section if it finds by clear and convincing evidence that the fee is reasonable. The Office of the General Counsel’s review of the agreement under this paragraph will address the issues of eligibility under paragraph (c) of this section and reasonableness under paragraph (e) of this section. The Office of the General Counsel will limit its review and decision under this paragraph to the issue of reasonableness if another agency of original jurisdiction has reviewed the agreement and made an eligibility determination under paragraph (c) of this section. Motions for review of fee agreements must be in writing and must include the name of the veteran, the name of the claimant or appellant if other than the veteran, and the applicable VA file number. Such motions must set forth the reason, or reasons, why the fee called for in the agreement is unreasonable and must be accompanied by all evidence the moving party desires to submit.

(1) A claimant’s or appellant’s motion for review of a fee agreement must be served on the agent or attorney and must be filed at the following address: Office of the General Counsel (022D), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. The agent or attorney may file a response to the motion, with any
relevant evidence, with the Office of the General Counsel not later than 30 days from the date on which the claimant or appellant served the motion on the agent or attorney. Such responses must be served on the claimant or appellant. The claimant or appellant then has 15 days from the date on which the agent or attorney served a response to file a reply with the Office of the General Counsel. Such replies must be served on the agent or attorney.

(2) The Assistant General Counsel shall initiate the Office of the General Counsel's review of a fee agreement on its own motion by serving the motion on the agent or attorney and the claimant or appellant. The agent or attorney may file a response to the motion, with any relevant evidence, with the Office of the General Counsel (222D), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, not later than 30 days from the date on which the Office of the General Counsel served the motion on the agent or attorney. Such responses must be served on the claimant or appellant. Such replies must be served on the agent or attorney.

(3) The Office of the General Counsel shall close the record in proceedings to review fee agreements 15 days after the date on which the agent or attorney served a response on the claimant or appellant, or 30 days after the claimant, appellant, or the Office of the General Counsel served the motion on the agent or attorney if there is no response. The Assistant General Counsel may, for a reasonable period upon a showing of sufficient cause, extend the time for an agent or attorney to serve an answer or for a claimant or appellant to serve a reply. The Assistant General Counsel shall forward the record and a recommendation to the General Counsel for a final decision. Unless either party files a Notice of Disagreement with the Office of the General Counsel, the agent or attorney must refund any excess payment to the claimant or appellant not later than the expiration of the time within which the General Counsel's decision may be appealed to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(j) In addition to whatever other penalties may be prescribed by law or regulation, failure to comply with the requirements of this section may result in proceedings under §14.633 of this chapter to terminate the agent's or attorney's accreditation to practice before VA.

(k) Notwithstanding provisions in this section for closing the record at the end of the 30-day period for serving a response or 15 days after the date on which the agent or attorney served a response, appeals shall be initiated and processed using the procedures in 38 CFR parts 19 and 20. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the Board's authority to remand a matter to the General Counsel under 38 CFR 19.9 for any action that is essential for a proper appellate decision or the General Counsel's ability to issue a Supplemental Statement of the Case under 38 CFR 19.31.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5902, 5904, 5905)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0085)

[73 FR 29875, May 22, 2008]

§ 14.637 Payment of the expenses of agents and attorneys in proceedings before Agencies of Original Jurisdiction and before the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(a) Applicability of rule. The provisions of this section apply to the services of accredited agents and attorneys with respect to benefits under laws administered by VA in all proceedings before the agency of original jurisdiction or before the Board of Veterans' Appeals regardless of whether an appeal has been initiated.

(b) General. Any agent or attorney may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of a veteran or a veteran's dependents or survivors in the prosecution of a claim for benefits pending before VA. Whether such an agent or attorney will be reimbursed for expenses and the method of such reimbursement is a matter to be determined by the agent or attorney and the claimant or appellant in the fee agreement filed with the Office of the General Counsel under §14.636 of this part. Expenses are not payable directly to the agent or attorney by VA out of benefits determined to be due to a claimant or appellant.
§ 14.637 38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)

(c) Nature of expenses subject to reimbursement. "Expenses" include non-recurring expenses incurred directly in the prosecution of a claim for benefits on behalf of a claimant or appellant. Examples of such expenses include expenses for travel specifically to attend a hearing with respect to a particular claim, the cost of copies of medical records or other documents obtained from an outside source, and the cost of obtaining the services of an expert witness or an expert opinion. "Expenses" do not include normal overhead costs of the agent or attorney such as office rent, utilities, the cost of obtaining or operating office equipment or a legal library, salaries of the representative and his or her support staff, and the cost of office supplies.

(d) Expense charges permitted; motion for review of expenses. Reimbursement for the expenses of an agent or attorney may be obtained only if the expenses are reasonable. The Office of the General Counsel may review the expenses charged by an agent or attorney upon its own motion or the motion of the claimant or appellant and may order a reduction in the expenses charged if it finds that they are excessive or unreasonable. The Office of the General Counsel’s review of expenses under this paragraph will address the issues of eligibility under §14.636(c) and reasonableness. The Office of the General Counsel will limit its review and decision under this paragraph to the issue of reasonableness if another agency of original jurisdiction has reviewed the fee agreement between the claimant and the agent or attorney and determined that the agent or attorney is eligible for reimbursement of expenses. Motions for review of expenses must be in writing and must include the name of the veteran, the name of the claimant or appellant if other than the veteran, and the applicable VA file number. Such motions must specifically identify which expenses charged are excessive or unreasonable; must set forth the reason, or reasons, why such expenses are excessive or unreasonable and must be accompanied by all evidence the claimant or appellant desires to submit. Factors considered in determining whether expenses are excessive or unreasonable include the complexity of the case, the potential extent of benefits recoverable, and whether travel expenses are in keeping with expenses normally incurred by other representatives.

(1) A claimant’s or appellant’s motion for review of expenses must be served on the agent or attorney and must be filed at the following address: Office of the General Counsel (022D), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. The agent or attorney may file a response to the motion, with any accompanying evidence, with the Office of the General Counsel not later than 30 days from the date on which the claimant or appellant served the motion on the agent or attorney. Such responses must be served on the claimant or appellant. The claimant or appellant then has 15 days from the date on which the agent or attorney served a response to file a reply with the Office of the General Counsel. Such replies must be served on the agent or attorney.

(2) The Assistant General Counsel shall initiate the Office of the General Counsel’s review of expenses on its own motion by serving the motion on the agent or attorney and the claimant or appellant. The agent or attorney may file a response to the motion, with any accompanying evidence, with the Office of the General Counsel (022D), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, not later than 30 days from the date on which the Office of the General Counsel served the motion on the agent or attorney. Such responses must be served on the claimant or appellant.

(3) The Office of the General Counsel shall close the record in proceedings to review expenses 15 days after the date on which the agent or attorney served a response on the claimant or appellant, or 30 days after the claimant, appellant, or the Office of the General Counsel served the motion on the agent or attorney. Such responses must be served on the claimant or appellant.

(4) The Assistant General Counsel may, for a reasonable period upon a showing of sufficient cause, extend the time for an agent or attorney to serve an answer or for a claimant or appellant to serve a reply. Unless either party files a Notice of Disagreement with the General Counsel’s decision, the attorney or agent must refund any excess payment to the claimant or appellant not later
than the expiration of the time within which the General Counsel’s decision may be appealed to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

(e) In addition to whatever other penalties may be prescribed by law or regulation, failure to comply with the requirements of this section may result in proceedings under §14.633 of this part to terminate the agent’s or attorney’s accreditation to practice before VA.

(f) Notwithstanding provisions in this section for closing the record at the end of the 30-day period for serving a response or 15 days after the date on which the agent or attorney served a response, appeals shall be initiated and processed using the procedures in 38 CFR parts 19 and 20. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the Board’s authority to remand a matter to the General Counsel under 38 CFR 19.9 for any action that is essential for a proper appellate decision or the General Counsel’s ability to issue a Supplemental Statement of the Case under 38 CFR 19.31.

[Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5904]

[The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0085]

[73 FR 29878, May 22, 2008]

PERSONNEL CLAIMS

§ 14.664 Scope of authority and effective date.

Pub. L. 88–558 (78 Stat. 767), approved August 31, 1964, as amended, authorizes the Secretary or the Secretary’s designee to settle and pay a claim for not more than $40,000 made by a civilian officer or employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs for damage to, or loss of personal property incident to such person’s service. Authority is delegated by §2.6(e)(5) of this chapter to the General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel (Professional Staff Group III), and the Deputy Assistant General Counsel, of said staff group and the Regional Counsel and those acting for them to settle and pay such claims on behalf of the Secretary, and such settlement shall be final and conclusive.

[Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3721(b)]


§ 14.665 Claims.

(a) The claim must be presented in writing on VA Form 2–4760, Employee’s Claim for Reimbursement for Personal Property Damaged or Lost Incident to Employment. It will be submitted to the personnel office where the claim originates within 2 years after it accrues except that if the claim accrues in time of war or in time of armed conflict in which any Armed Force of the United States is engaged or if such war or armed conflict intervenes within 2 years after it accrues except that if the claim accrues in time of war or in time of armed conflict in which any Armed Force of the United States is engaged or if such war or armed conflict intervenes within 2 years after it accrues, and if good cause is shown, the claim may be presented not later than 2 years after that cause ceases to exist. The claim must be executed and certified by the officer or the employee suffering the loss or damage, or in the event of his or her death, by the surviving spouse, children, father or mother or both, or brothers or sisters or both. Claims of survivors shall be settled and paid in the order named. All claims must contain the following:

(1) The date, time, and place the loss or damage occurred and the circumstances surrounding such loss or damage, together with the supporting statements of any witnesses who can verify such facts.

(2) In the event of damage, the date of acquisition, original cost, condition before damage, and at least two estimates of the cost of repair or replacement. In the event of loss, the date of acquisition, the original cost, the condition, and an estimate of the reasonable market value of the article or articles.

(3) A statement as to any claims or potential claim he or she may have for indemnification of the loss or damage against other than the United States and whether he or she will assign such to the United States and cooperate in its prosecution. Where such claim or potential claim is against a carrier or insurer, evidence that a timely claim
§ 14.666 Regional Counsel responsibility.

(a) The Regional Counsel having jurisdiction will conduct such additional investigation as is deemed necessary to establish all facts required. If the claimant has a potential claim for indemnification against other than the United States, the Regional Counsel will ascertain that a suitable assignment, legally enforceable, of all right and title to such claim, to the extent the United States makes reimbursement, and the agreement of the claimant to furnish such evidence as may be necessary to pursue such claim is of record. If such potential claim is against a carrier or insurer, the Regional Counsel will ascertain that claimant has filed a timely proper claim against the carrier or insurer and review same for legal sufficiency.

(b) The Regional Counsel having jurisdiction over a claim will not authorize payment thereon unless the requirement of §§14.664 through 14.667 are met. In determining the equitable value of a claim, the depreciation schedule issued by the General Counsel will be used as a guide.

§ 14.667 Claims payable.

(a) No claim shall be paid unless timely filed in proper form as provided in §14.665 and the preponderance of the evidence establishes that the loss or damage:

(1) Actually occurred and the amount claimed is reasonable,

(2) Was incident to the employee’s service and his or her possession of the property was reasonable, useful, or proper under the circumstances,

(3) Did not occur at quarters occupied within the 50 States or the District of Columbia that were not assigned to the claimant or otherwise provided in kind by the United States.

(4) Was not caused wholly or partly by the negligent act of claimant, the claimant’s agent, or employee, and that the claimant has no right to indemnification for the loss or damage from other than the United States, except to the extent that the claimant assigns such right to the United States and agrees to furnish evidence required to enable the United States to enforce such right. In the event there is a right to recovery for the loss or damage from a carrier or insurer the claimant will be required to file a timely claim for such recovery before consideration of the claim against the United States.

(b) No claim for the cost of repair or replacement of personal property of employees damaged or destroyed by patients or domiciliary members while
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such employees are engaged in the performance of official duties shall be entertained under §§14.664 through 14.667, unless claim filed pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 703(a)(5) (§17.78 of this chapter) has been finally denied for the reason that such claim did not meet the criteria established by that law.


§ 14.668 Disposition of claims.

(a) Disallowed claims. Claimants will be promptly notified of the disallowance of a claim and the reasons therefor.

(b) Allowed claims—(1) Reimbursement in kind. Where a claim is allowed and it is determined to be to the advantage of the Government, reimbursement will be made in kind. The official authorizing settlement will request the Director, Supply Service, Veterans Health Services and Research Administration, to procure the necessary article or articles and deliver same to the claimant.

(2) Reimbursement by check. The official authorizing settlement will forward allowed claims, other than those requiring reimbursement in kind, to the Finance activity at the Department of Veterans Affairs installation where the claim arose. That activity will audit the claim, which if found proper for payment, will be scheduled on SF 1166, Voucher and Schedule of Payments, and forwarded to the appropriate Regional Disbursing Office for payment.


§ 14.669 Fees of agents or attorneys; penalty.

The Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claims Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88–558; 78 Stat. 767) was amended by Pub. L. 89–185 (79 Stat. 789), on September 15, 1965, by adding a new section which provided that no more than 10 percent of the amount paid in settlement of each individual claim submitted and settled under the authority of the Act shall be paid or delivered to or received by any agent or attorney on account of services rendered in connection with that claim. Any person violating the provisions of this Act is deemed to be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be fined in any sum not exceeding $1,000.

[38 FR 5475, Mar. 1, 1973]

COMMITMENTS—FIDUCIARIES

SOURCE: 42 FR 41422, Aug. 17, 1977, unless otherwise noted.

§ 14.700 Court cost and expenses; commitment, restoration, fiduciary appointments.

It is the responsibility of the Regional Counsel to assure the protection of the veteran, his or her beneficiaries, and their estates in State court proceedings involving commitment and restoration, and the appointment of fiduciaries. To this end certain expenses such as court costs, publication fees, recording fees, transportation expenses and fees for medical testimony may be authorized by the Regional Counsel. Payment of these costs will be borne by the administration concerned. However, every effort will be made by the Regional Counsel to avoid having these costs imposed on the Department of Veterans Affairs. The travel and per diem cost of the Regional Counsel personnel will be borne by the Regional Counsel.

§ 14.701 Commitment and restoration proceedings.

(a) State institutions. Regional Counsels are authorized to cooperate with State courts, including the production of required records in the commitment of veterans to State hospitals or in their restoration to full civil rights.

(b) Department of Veterans Affairs institutions—(1) Assistance to courts in commitment proceedings. The Regional Counsel will render assistance to the courts in cases involving the commitment of mentally ill veterans to the Department of Veterans Affairs. To this end, the Regional Counsel may:

(i) Produce Department of Veterans Affairs records.

(ii) Appear in court and present material facts.

(iii) When authorized to institute commitment proceedings under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, prepare and present all necessary legal papers, and
§ 14.702 Medical testimony in commitment or restoration proceedings.

(a) Commitment. When permissible under State law, Department of Veterans Affairs physicians, upon request of the Regional Counsel, will sign interrogatories or certificates of mental illness or insanity and, unless unavailable, as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, will testify in proceedings which the Regional Counsel is authorized to institute under §14.701 to commit eligible veterans to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) Restoration. (1) When permissible under State law, Department of Veterans Affairs physicians, upon the request of the Regional Counsel, will testify in proceedings brought for the purpose of restoring a committed veteran to full civil rights when the veteran is a committed patient in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital.

(2) The Director of a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or the Regional Counsel upon discharge of the veteran, may furnish a certificate of sanity or such similar certificate to the proper civil authorities.

(c) Employment of private physicians. When testimony of Department of Veterans Affairs physicians is prohibited or is unavailable because of a duty assignment, comparative expense or other valid reason, the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, upon recommendation of the Regional Counsel, may employ any qualified physician for preliminary examination of the veteran and for testimony in any commitment or restoration proceeding which the Regional Counsel is authorized to institute under §14.701, and authorize the payment of a fee not to exceed the prescribed fee, or in the absence thereof, the customary fee charged for the service rendered.

§ 14.703 Costs in commitment or restoration proceedings.

(a) When authorized to institute a proceeding under §14.701, the Regional Counsel may authorize in advance or thereafter the payment of reimbursement of costs and other expenses for
which the veteran is legally liable, including publication of notice necessary to accomplish the commitment.

(b) The Regional Counsel also may authorize the payment of necessary costs and expenses for which the veteran is legally liable incident to his or her restoration to full civil rights in any case in which the Regional Counsel is authorized to institute restoration proceedings under §14.701(b)(4).

§ 14.705 Authority to file petitions for appointment of fiduciaries in State courts.

(a) Adult beneficiary. The Regional Counsel is authorized to file or cause to be filed on behalf of a petitioner in a case coming within §14.706(a) a petition for the appointment of a fiduciary and all necessary legal papers for an adult beneficiary only if it has been determined that alternative methods of payment would not be to the best interests of the beneficiary and when the Regional Counsel has obtained the written consent of:

(1) The beneficiary’s spouse.

(2) The beneficiary’s adult child, parent, adult brother or sister if the beneficiary is unmarried, or consent of the spouse is immaterial because of estrangement or mental incapacity, or refusal to consent coupled with failure to offer adequate alternative means for providing for the beneficiary’s needs.

(3) A civil official or representative of a cooperating agency when none of the relative listed in paragraph (a) (1) and (2) of this section can be located after reasonable inquiry or those located are not mentally competent to consent or refuse without offering adequate alternative means for providing for the needs of the beneficiary.

(b) Minor beneficiaries. The Regional Counsel is authorized to file or cause to be filed on behalf of a petitioner in a case coming within §14.706(a) a petition for the appointment of a fiduciary for a minor. If permissible under the law of the jurisdiction concerned and if it has been determined that protection of the minor’s rights under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs requires the appointment, provided: the written consent of the minor’s natural or adoptive parent or parents or the person or persons occupying the relationship of “in loco parentis” as defined, by the law of the jurisdiction, in which they reside has been obtained. The Regional Counsel will not institute a court proceeding for the appointment of a fiduciary over the objections of such parent or parents if they are sui juris unless the parent or parents have abandoned the minor or have otherwise refused to meet their parental obligations toward the minor or they have previously been appointed or recognized as the minor’s fiduciary and failed to properly execute the duties of their trust. If the minor has no parent or the parent or parents are not sui juris, the Regional Counsel may file the petition without the consent of any relative.

(c) Court-appointed fiduciaries. In court-appointed fiduciary cases, the Regional Counsel may appear in the court of appointment or in any court having original, concurrent, or appellate jurisdiction, and make proper presentation relating to the foregoing matters. The Regional Counsel’s authority includes but is not limited to:

(1) Petitioning the court to cite a fiduciary to account;

(2) Filing exceptions to accountings;

(3) Requiring fiduciaries to file bonds or make any necessary adjustments;

(4) Requiring investments;
(5) Filing petitions to vacate or modify court orders;
(6) Appearing or intervening in any State court as attorney for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in litigation instituted by the Secretary or otherwise affecting money paid to such fiduciary by the Department of Veterans Affairs;
(7) Incurring necessary court costs and other expenses, including witness fees, appeal bonds, advertising in any newspaper or other publication, preparing briefs or transcripts, purchase of records of trial or other records;
(8) Instituting any other action necessary to secure proper administration of the estate of a Department of Veterans Affairs beneficiary, such as filing petitions for the removal of a fiduciary and appointment of a successor;
(9) Taking appropriate action to recover funds improperly disbursed.

(d) Appeal. Unless a trial is de novo, no appeal shall be taken to an appellate court and no costs incurred in connection therewith without the prior approval of the General Counsel and the Under Secretary for Benefits or their designees.

§ 14.706 Legal services in behalf of beneficiaries.

(a) The Regional Counsel may furnish legal services in behalf of minor and incompetent beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs in fiduciary appointment and estate administration matters involving Department of Veterans Affairs benefits or property derived therefrom when the beneficiary's estate or income is not sufficient to justify the employment of an attorney.

(b) The Regional Counsel may also furnish legal services in hardship situations when restoration from legal disability is a condition of precedent to direct payment of Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.

(c) Where the fiduciary does not in due course institute the necessary action to terminate the trust relationship and the beneficiary requests representation by the Regional Counsel or in any such case where there is in question the proper administration of the estate, the Regional Counsel may file the necessary action and supply legal services. Costs, unless assessed against the fiduciary, should be charged to the estate of the beneficiary.


When the appointment of a fiduciary is required for an incompetent veteran hospitalized by the Department of Veterans Affairs and, under the law of the State wherein the hospital is located, the appointment cannot be had locally, the veteran may be returned temporarily to the jurisdiction of the appropriate court in order that the appointment can be accomplished. If the veteran is in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, the Hospital Director, upon request of the Regional Counsel, may authorize travel of the veteran and an attendant or attendants, if necessary. If the veteran is being maintained in a non-Department of Veterans Affairs hospital, the Director of the facility authorizing and paying for the care may authorize such travel upon request of the Regional Counsel.

§ 14.708 Costs and other expenses incident to appointment of fiduciary.

(a) The Regional Counsel may authorize the payment of costs and other necessary expenses incident to the appointment of an initial or successor fiduciary for a Department of Veterans Affairs beneficiary when:

(1) Authorized to render legal services under § 14.706.

(2) Appointment was caused by the Department of Veterans Affairs and it develops that no benefits are payable and there is no estate from which costs may be paid.

(3) Costs must be advanced when there is no immediate estate from which same may be paid. These costs are to be recovered from benefits payable unless the case falls within paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(b) Costs and necessary expenses include:

(1) All those chargeable by statute or rule of court and certified by the clerk of court.

(2) Certified copies of court records required by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
§ 14.801  Applicability.

(a) Sections 14.800 through 14.810 apply to:

(1) Contractors and subcontractors which undertake a VA activity or maintain VA records when the contract covering their actions provides that these regulations apply, as well as the personnel of contractors and subcontractors.

(2) All components of the Department, including Canteen Service, the Office of Inspector General, and all staff offices, services and administrations, and their personnel.

(b) Sections 14.800 through 14.810 do not apply to:

(1) Testimony or records provided in accordance with Office of Personnel Management regulations implementing 5 U.S.C. 6322.

§ 14.802 Definitions.

(a) Demand. Order, subpoena, or other demand of a court of competent jurisdiction, or other specific authority or under color of law, for the production, disclosure, or release of VA information or records or for the appearance and testimony of VA personnel as witnesses.

(b) Request. Any informal request, by whatever method, from a party, a party’s attorney, or any person acting on behalf of a party, for the production of VA records or information or for the testimony of VA personnel as witnesses, which has not been ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction or other specific authority or under color of law.

(c) VA personnel. All present and former officers and employees of the VA and any other individuals who are or have been appointed by, or subject to the supervision, jurisdiction, or control of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or another official of the VA, including nonappropriated fund activity employees, and other individuals hired to perform services for the VA.

§ 14.802 Definitions.

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(b) Request. Any informal request, by whatever method, from a party, a party’s attorney, or any person acting on behalf of a party, for the production of VA records or information or for the testimony of VA personnel as witnesses, which has not been ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction or other specific authority or under color of law.

(c) VA personnel. All present and former officers and employees of the VA and any other individuals who are or have been appointed by, or subject to the supervision, jurisdiction, or control of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or another official of the VA, including nonappropriated fund activity employees, and other individuals hired to perform services for the VA.

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(b) Request. Any informal request, by whatever method, from a party, a party’s attorney, or any person acting on behalf of a party, for the production of VA records or information or for the testimony of VA personnel as witnesses, which has not been ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction or other specific authority or under color of law.

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through contractual agreements by or on behalf of the VA, or performing services under such agreements for VA, such as consultants, contractors, subcontractors, their employees and personnel. This phrase also includes individuals who served or are serving on any advisory committee or in any advisory capacity, whether formal or informal.

(d) Legal proceedings. All pretrial, trial, and post-trial stages of all existing or reasonably anticipated judicial or administrative actions, hearings, investigations, or similar proceedings before courts, commissions, boards, or other tribunals, foreign or domestic that are not specified in §14.801(b). This phrase includes depositions and other pretrial proceedings, as well as responses to formal or informal requests by attorneys or others in situations involving legal proceedings not specified in §14.801(b).

(e) Official VA information. All information of any kind, however stored, that is in the custody and control of VA or was acquired by VA personnel as part of their official duties or because of their official status.

(f) Testimony. Testimony in any form, including personal appearances in court, depositions, recorded interviews, telephonic, televised or videotaped testimony or any response during discovery or similar proceedings, which response would involve more than the production of records.

(g) VA records. All documents which are records of the Department of Veterans Affairs for purposes of the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, regardless of storage media, including the term “record” as defined in 44 U.S.C. 3301, and implementing regulations.

§14.803 Policy.

(a) VA personnel may provide testimony or produce VA records in legal proceedings covered by §§14.800 through 14.810 only as authorized in accordance with these regulations. In determining whether to authorize testimony or the production of records, the determining official will consider the effect in this case, as well as in future cases generally, based on the factors set forth in §14.804, which testifying or producing records not available for public disclosure will have on the ability of the agency or VA personnel to perform their official duties.

(b) The Department of Veterans Affairs does not seek to deny its employees access to the courts as citizens, or in the employees’ private capacities on off-duty time.

(c) The Department of Veterans Affairs does not seek to deny the Nation's veterans access to the courts.

§14.804 Factors to consider.

In deciding whether to authorize the disclosure of VA records or information or the testimony of VA personnel, VA personnel responsible for making the decision should consider the following types of factors:

(a) The need to avoid spending the time and money of the United States for private purposes and to conserve the time of VA personnel for conducting their official duties concerning servicing the Nation's veteran population;

(b) How the testimony or production of records would assist VA in performing its statutory duties;

(c) Whether the disclosure of the records or presentation of testimony is necessary to prevent the perpetration of fraud or other injustice in the matter in question;

(d) Whether the demand or request is unduly burdensome or otherwise inappropriate under the applicable court or administrative rules;

(e) Whether the testimony or production of records would assist VA in performing its statutory duties;

(f) Whether the testimony or production of records would violate a statute, executive order, regulation or directive. (Where the production of a record or testimony as to the content of a record or about information contained in a record would violate a confidentiality statute’s prohibition against
§ 14.805 Contents of a demand or request.

The request or demand for testimony or production of documents shall set forth in, or be accompanied by, an affidavit, or if that is not feasible, in, or accompanied by, a written statement by the party seeking the testimony or records, or by the party’s attorney, a summary of the nature and relevance of the testimony or records sought in the legal proceedings containing sufficient information for the responsible VA official to determine whether VA personnel should be allowed to testify or records should be produced. Where the materials are considered insufficient to make the determination as described in §14.807, the responsible VA official may ask the requester to provide additional information.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501 (a) and (b); 5 U.S.C. 301)

§ 14.806 Scope of testimony or production.

VA personnel shall not, in response to a request or demand for testimony or production of records in legal proceedings, comment or testify or produce records without the prior written approval of the responsible VA official designated in §14.807(b). VA personnel may only testify concerning or comment upon official VA information, subjects or activities, or produce records, that were specified in writing, submitted to and properly approved by the responsible VA official.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501 (a) and (b); 5 U.S.C. 301)

§ 14.807 Procedure when demand or request is made.

(a) VA personnel upon whom a demand or request for testimony or the production of records in connection with legal proceedings as defined in §14.802(d) is made shall notify the head of his or her field station, or if in Central Office, the head of the component for which he or she works. The field station or Central Office component shall notify the responsible VA official designated in §14.807(b).

(b) In response to a demand or request for the production of records or the testimony of VA personnel, other than personnel in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), as witnesses in legal proceedings covered by these regulations, the General Counsel, the Regional Counsel, an attorney in the Office of General Counsel designated by the General Counsel, or an attorney in the Regional Counsel office designated...
by the Regional Counsel is the responsible VA official authorized to determine whether VA personnel may be interviewed, contacted or used as witnesses, including used as expert witnesses, and whether VA records may be produced; and what, if any, conditions will be imposed upon such interview, contact, testimony or production of records. For personnel in the OIG, the Counselor to the Inspector General or an attorney designated by the Counselor to the Inspector General, is the responsible VA official authorized to make the determinations provided in §14.807, and that official will keep the General Counsel informed of such determinations for purposes of litigation or claims of privilege.

(c) In appropriate cases, the responsible VA official shall promptly notify the Department of Justice of the demand or request. After consultation and coordination with the Department of Justice, as required, and after any necessary consultation with the VA component which employs or employed the VA personnel whose testimony is sought or which is responsible for the maintenance of the records sought, the VA official shall determine in writing whether the individual is required to comply with the demand or request and shall notify the requester or the court or other authority of the determination reached where the determination is that VA will not comply fully with the request or demand. The responsible VA official shall give notice of the decision to other persons as circumstances may warrant. Oral approval may be granted, and a record of such approval made and retained in accordance with the procedures in §14.807(f) concerning oral requests or demands.

(d) If, after VA personnel have received a request or demand in a legal proceeding and have notified the responsible VA official in accordance with this section, a response to the request or demand is required before instructions from the responsible official are received, the responsible official designated in paragraph (b) of this section shall furnish the requester or the court or other authority with a copy of §§14.800 through 14.810 and any other relevant documentation, inform the requester or the court or other authority that the request or demand is being reviewed, and seek a stay of the request or demand pending a final determination by the VA official concerned.

(e) If a court of competent jurisdiction or other appropriate authority declines to stay the effect of the demand or request in response to action taken pursuant to §14.807(d), or if such court or other authority orders that the demand or request be complied with notwithstanding the final decision of the appropriate VA official, the VA personnel upon whom the demand or request was made shall notify the responsible VA official of such ruling or order. If the responsible VA official determines that no further legal review of or challenge to the ruling or order will be sought, the affected VA personnel shall comply with the demand, order or request. If directed by the appropriate VA official after consultation with the appropriate United States Attorney’s office, however, the affected VA personnel shall respectfully decline to comply with the demand, request or order. See United States ex rel. Touhy v. Ragen, 340 U.S. 462 (1951).

(f) Normally, written demands or requests allowing reasonable lead time for evaluation and processing are required. However, in emergency situations where response time is limited and a written demand or request is impractical, the following procedures should be followed:

(1) The responsible VA official has the authority to waive the requirement of a written demand or request and may expedite a response in the event of an emergency under conditions which could not be anticipated in the course of proper planning or which demonstrate a good faith attempt to comply with these regulations. Determinations on oral demands or requests should be reserved for instances where insistence on compliance with the requirements of a proper written request would result in the effective denial of the request and cause an injustice in the outcome of the legal proceeding for which the testimony or records are sought. No requester has a right to make an oral demand or request and receive a determination, however. Whether to permit such an exceptional
§ 14.808 Expert or opinion testimony.

(a) VA personnel shall not provide, with or without compensation, opinion or expert testimony in any legal proceedings concerning official VA information, subjects or activities, except on behalf of the United States or a party represented by the United States Department of Justice. Upon a showing by the requester or court or other appropriate authority that, in light of the factors listed in § 14.804, there are exceptional circumstances and that the anticipated testimony will not be adverse to the interests of the Department of Veterans Affairs or to the United States, the responsible VA official designated in § 14.807(b) may, in writing, grant special authorization for VA personnel to appear and testify. If, despite the final determination of the responsible VA official, a court of competent jurisdiction or other appropriate authority, orders the expert or opinion testimony of VA personnel, the personnel shall respectfully decline to comply with the demand, request or order. See United States ex rel. Touhy v. Ragen, 340 U.S. 462 (1951).

(b)(1) If, while testifying in any legal proceeding, VA personnel are asked for expert or opinion testimony concerning official VA information, subjects or activities, which testimony has not been approved in advance in accordance with these regulations, the witness shall:

(i) Respectfully decline to answer on the grounds that such expert or opinion testimony is forbidden by these regulations;

(ii) Request an opportunity to consult with the responsible VA official mentioned in § 14.807(b) before giving such testimony;

(iii) Explain that, upon such consultation, approval for such testimony may be provided; and

(iv) Explain that providing such testimony absent such approval may expose the individual to criminal liability under 18 U.S.C. 201–209 and to disciplinary or other adverse personnel action.

(2) If the witness is then ordered by the body conducting the proceeding to provide expert or opinion testimony concerning official VA information, subjects or activities without the opportunity to consult with the appropriate VA official, the witness respectfully shall refuse to do so. See United States ex rel. Touhy v. Ragen, 340 U.S. 462 (1951).

(c) Upon notification by the witness of a request for opinion or expert testimony concerning official VA information during § 14.802(d) legal proceedings, the responsible VA official shall follow the procedures contained in this section to determine whether such testimony shall be approved.

(d) If VA personnel who are unaware of these regulations provide expert or opinion testimony concerning official VA information, subjects or activities in any legal proceeding, including one mentioned in § 14.802(d) in which the United States is not already represented, without consulting with the responsible VA official, the witness, as soon after testifying as possible, shall inform the responsible VA official of
the fact that such testimony was given and provide a summary of the expert or opinion testimony given.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501 (a) and (b); 5 U.S.C. 301)

§ 14.809 Demands or requests in legal proceedings for records protected by confidentiality statutes.

In addition to complying with the requirements of §§ 14.800 through 14.810, requests or demands in legal proceedings for the production of records, or for testimony of VA employees concerning information, protected by the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a, or other confidentiality statutes, such as 38 U.S.C. 5701, 5705 and 7332, must satisfy the requirements for disclosure imposed by those statutes, and implementing regulations, such as 38 CFR 1.511, before the records may be provided or testimony given. Accordingly, the responsible VA official may first determine whether there is legal authority to provide the testimony or records sought under applicable confidentiality statutes before applying §§ 14.800 through 14.810. Where an applicable confidentiality statute mandates disclosure, §§ 14.800 through 14.810 will not apply.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501 (a) and (b); 5 U.S.C. 301)

§ 14.810 Fees.

(a) The testimony of VA personnel as witnesses, particularly as expert witnesses, and the production of VA records in legal proceedings subject to §§ 14.800 through 14.810 are services which convey special benefits to the individuals or entities seeking such testimony or production of records above and beyond those accruing to the general public. These services are not regularly received by or available without charge to the public at large. Consequently, these are the sort of services for which the VA may establish a charge for providing under 31 U.S.C. 9701. The responsible VA official will determine all fees associated with §§ 14.800 through 14.810, and shall timely notify the requester of the fees, particularly those which are to be paid in advance.

(b)(1) When a request is granted under § 14.808 to permit VA personnel to testify in whole or in part as to expert, opinion or policy matters, the requester shall pay to the government a fee calculated to reimburse the cost of providing the witness. The fee shall include:

(i) Costs of the time expended by VA personnel to process and respond to the demand or request;
(ii) Costs of attorney time expended in reviewing the demand or request and any information located in connection with the demand or request;
(iii) Expenses generated by materials and equipment used to search for, produce, and copy the responsive information;
(iv) The cost of the time expended by the witness to prepare to testify; and
(v) Costs of travel by the witness and attendance at trial.

(2) All costs for documents necessary for such expert testimony shall be calculated as provided in VA regulations implementing the fee provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

(c) When an individual testifies in legal proceedings covered by these regulations in any capacity other than as an expert witness, the requester shall pay to the witness the fee and expenses prescribed for attendance by the applicable rule of court. If no such fee is prescribed, the applicable Federal rule, such as a local Federal district court rule, will apply. No additional fee will be prescribed for the time spent while testifying or in attendance to do so.

(d) When a requester wishes to interview VA personnel as part of legal proceedings covered by these regulations, and such interview has been approved in accordance with these regulations, the requester shall pay a fee calculated upon the total hourly pay of the individual interviewed.

(e) When VA produces records in legal proceedings pursuant to §§ 14.800 through 14.810, the fees to be charged and paid prior to production of the records shall be the fees charged by VA under its regulations implementing the fee provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

(f) Fees shall be paid as follows:

(1) Fees for copies of documents, blueprints, electronic tapes, or other
VA records will be paid to the VA office or station providing the records, and covered to the General Fund of the Department of the Treasury.

(2) Witness fees for testimony shall be paid to the witness, who shall endorse the check “pay to the United States,” and surrender it to his or her supervisor. It shall thereafter be deposited in the General Fund.

(3) The private party requesting a VA witness shall forward in advance necessary round trip tickets and all requisite travel and per diem funds.

(g) A waiver of any fees in connection with the testimony of an expert witness may be granted by the appropriate VA official at the official’s discretion provided that the waiver is in the interest of the United States. Fee waivers shall not be routinely granted, nor shall they be granted under circumstances which might create the appearance that the VA or the United States favors one party or a position advocated by a party to the legal proceeding.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501 (a) and (b); 5 U.S.C. 301)

PART 15—ENFORCEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF HANDICAP IN PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

§ 15.101 Purpose.
The purpose of this regulation is to effectuate section 119 of the Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Amendments of 1978, which amended section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to prohibit discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs or activities conducted by Executive agencies or the United States Postal Service.

§ 15.102 Application.
This regulation (§§ 15.101–15.170) applies to all programs or activities conducted by the agency, except for programs or activities conducted outside the United States that do not involve individuals with handicaps in the United States.

§ 15.103 Definitions.
For purposes of this regulation, the term—

Assistant Attorney General means the Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice.

Auxiliary aids means services or devices that enable persons with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, programs or activities conducted by the agency. For example, auxiliary aids useful for persons with impaired vision include readers, Brailled materials, audio recordings, and other similar services and devices. Auxiliary aids useful for persons with impaired hearing include telephone handset amplifiers, telephones compatible with hearing aids, telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TDD’s), interpreters, notetakers, written materials, and other similar services and devices.

Complete complaint means a written statement that contains the complainant’s name and address and describes the agency’s alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the agency of the nature and date of the alleged violation of section 504. It shall be signed by the complainant or by someone authorized to do so on his or
Department of Veterans Affairs § 15.103

her behalf. Complaints filed on behalf of classes or third parties shall describe or identify (by name, if possible) the alleged victims of discrimination.

Facility means all or any portion of buildings, structures, equipment, roads, walks, parking lots, rolling stock or other conveyances, or other real or personal property.

Historic preservation programs means programs conducted by the agency that have preservation of historic properties as a primary purpose.

Historic properties means those properties that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or properties designated as historic under a statute of the appropriate State or local government body.

Individual with handicaps means any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

As used in this definition, the phrase:

(1) Physical or mental impairment includes—

(i) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genitourinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or

(ii) Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, and drug addiction and alcoholism.

(2) Major life activities includes functions such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

(3) Has a record of such an impairment means has a history of, or has been classified as having, a mental or physical impairment that substantially

limits one or more major life activities.

(4) Is regarded as having an impairment means—

(i) Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but is treated by the agency as constituting such a limitation;

(ii) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such impairment; or

(iii) Has none of the impairments defined in paragraph (1) of this definition but is treated by the agency as having such an impairment.

Qualified individual with handicaps means—

(1) With respect to preschool, elementary, or secondary education services provided by the agency, an individual with handicaps who is a member of a class of persons otherwise entitled by statute, regulation, or agency policy to receive education services from the agency;

(2) With respect to any other agency program or activity under which a person is required to perform services or to achieve a level of accomplishment, an individual with handicaps who meets the essential eligibility requirements and who can achieve the purpose of the program or activity without modifications in the program or activity that the agency can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in its nature;

(3) With respect to any other program or activity, an individual with handicaps who meets the essential eligibility requirements for participation in, or receipt of benefits from, that program or activity; and

(4) Qualified handicapped person as that term is defined for purposes of employment in 29 CFR 1613.702(f), which is made applicable to this regulation by §15.140.

§§ 15.104–15.109 1978 (Pub. L. 95–602, 92 Stat. 2955); and
used in this regulation, section 504 applies only to programs or activities
conducted by Executive agencies and not to federally assisted programs.

Substantial impairment means a sig-
nificant loss of the integrity of finished
materials, design quality, or special
character resulting from a permanent
alteration.

§§ 15.104–15.109 [Reserved]

§ 15.110 Self-evaluation.

(a) The agency shall, by September 6,
1989, evaluate its current policies and
practices, and the effects thereof, that
do not or may not meet the require-
ments of this regulation and, to the ex-
tent modification of any such policies
and practices is required, the agency
shall proceed to make the necessary
modifications.

(b) The agency shall provide an op-
portunity to interested persons, includ-
ing individuals with handicaps or orga-
nizations representing individuals with
handicaps, to participate in the self-
evaluation process by submitting com-
ments (both oral and written).

(c) The agency shall, for at least
three years following completion of the
self-evaluation, maintain on file and
make available for public inspection:
(1) A description of areas examined
and any problems identified; and
(2) A description of any modifications
made.

§ 15.111 Notice.

The agency shall make available to
employees, applicants, participants,
beneficiaries, and other interested per-
sons such information regarding the
provisions of this regulation and its ap-
plicability to the programs or activi-
ties conducted by the agency, and
make such information available to
them in such manner as the head of the
agency finds necessary to apprise such
persons of the protections against dis-
crimination assured them by section
504 and this regulation.

§§ 15.112–15.129 [Reserved]

§ 15.130 General prohibitions against
discrimination.

(a) No qualified individual with
handicaps shall, on the basis of handi-
cap, be excluded from participation in,
be denied the benefits of, or otherwise
be subjected to discrimination under
any program or activity conducted by
the agency.

(b)(1) The agency, in providing any
aid, benefit, or service, may not, di-
rectly or through contractual, licens-
ing, or other arrangements, on the
basis of handicap—
(i) Deny a qualified individual with
handicaps the opportunity to partici-
pate in or benefit from the aid, benefit,
or service;
(ii) Afford a qualified individual with
handicaps an opportunity to partici-
pate in or benefit from the aid, benefit,
or service that is not equal to that af-
forded others;
(iii) Provide a qualified individual
with handicaps with an aid, benefit, or
service that is not as effective in af-
fording equal opportunity to obtain the
same result, to gain the same benefit,
or to reach the same level of achieve-
ment as that provided to others;
(iv) Provide different or separate aid,
benefits, or services to individuals with
handicaps or to any class of individuals
with handicaps than is provided to oth-
ers unless such action is necessary to
provide qualified individuals with
handicaps with aid, benefits, or serv-
ces that are as effective as those pro-
vided to others;
(v) Deny a qualified individual with
handicaps the opportunity to partici-
pate as a member of planning or advi-
sory boards;
(vi) Otherwise limit a qualified indi-
vidual with handicaps in the enjoy-
ment of any right, privilege, advan-
tage, or opportunity enjoyed by others
receiving the aid, benefit, or service.

(2) The agency may not deny a quali-
fied individual with handicaps the op-
portunity to participate in programs or
activities that are not separate or dif-
ferent, despite the existence of permis-
sibly separate or different programs or
activities.
(3) The agency may not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, utilize criteria or methods of administration the purpose or effect of which would—

(i) Subject qualified individuals with handicaps to discrimination on the basis of handicap; or

(ii) Defeat or substantially impair accomplishment of the objectives of a program or activity with respect to individuals with handicaps.

(4) The agency may not, in determining the site or location of a facility, make selections the purpose or effect of which would—

(i) Exclude individuals with handicaps from, deny them the benefits of, or otherwise subject them to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by the agency; or

(ii) Defeat or substantially impair the accomplishment of the objectives of a program or activity with respect to individuals with handicaps.

(5) The agency, in the selection of procurement contractors, may not use criteria that subject qualified individuals with handicaps to discrimination on the basis of handicap.

(6) The agency may not administer a licensing or certification program in a manner that subjects qualified individuals with handicaps to discrimination on the basis of handicap.

The program or activity, when viewed in its entirety, is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with handicaps.

(3) The agency may not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, utilize criteria or methods of administration the purpose or effect of which would—

(i) Subject qualified individuals with handicaps to discrimination on the basis of handicap; or

(ii) Defeat or substantially impair accomplishment of the objectives of a program or activity with respect to individuals with handicaps.

(4) The agency may not, in determining the site or location of a facility, make selections the purpose or effect of which would—

(i) Exclude individuals with handicaps from, deny them the benefits of, or otherwise subject them to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by the agency; or

(ii) Defeat or substantially impair the accomplishment of the objectives of a program or activity with respect to individuals with handicaps.

(5) The agency, in the selection of procurement contractors, may not use criteria that subject qualified individuals with handicaps to discrimination on the basis of handicap.

(6) The agency may not administer a licensing or certification program in a manner that subjects qualified individuals with handicaps to discrimination on the basis of handicap.

§§ 15.131–15.139 [Reserved]

§ 15.140 Employment.

No qualified individual with handicaps shall, on the basis of handicap, be subject to discrimination in employment under any program or activity conducted by the agency. The definitions, requirements, and procedures of section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791), as established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613, shall apply to employment in federally conducted programs or activities.

§§ 15.141–15.148 [Reserved]

§ 15.149 Program accessibility: Discrimination prohibited.

Except as otherwise provided in § 15.150, no qualified individual with handicaps shall, on the basis of handicap, be subject to discrimination in employment under any program or activity conducted by the agency. The definitions, requirements, and procedures of section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791), as established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613, shall apply to employment in federally conducted programs or activities.

§§ 15.131–15.139 [Reserved]

§ 15.140 Employment.

No qualified individual with handicaps shall, on the basis of handicap, be subject to discrimination in employment under any program or activity conducted by the agency. The definitions, requirements, and procedures of section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791), as established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613, shall apply to employment in federally conducted programs or activities.

§§ 15.141–15.148 [Reserved]

§ 15.149 Program accessibility: Discrimination prohibited.

Except as otherwise provided in § 15.150, no qualified individual with handicaps shall, on the basis of handicap, be subject to discrimination in employment under any program or activity conducted by the agency. The definitions, requirements, and procedures of section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791), as established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613, shall apply to employment in federally conducted programs or activities.

§§ 15.131–15.139 [Reserved]

§ 15.140 Employment.

No qualified individual with handicaps shall, on the basis of handicap, be subject to discrimination in employment under any program or activity conducted by the agency. The definitions, requirements, and procedures of section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791), as established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613, shall apply to employment in federally conducted programs or activities.

§§ 15.141–15.148 [Reserved]

§ 15.149 Program accessibility: Discrimination prohibited.

Except as otherwise provided in § 15.150, no qualified individual with handicaps shall, on the basis of handicap, be subject to discrimination in employment under any program or activity conducted by the agency. The definitions, requirements, and procedures of section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791), as established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613, shall apply to employment in federally conducted programs or activities.

§§ 15.131–15.139 [Reserved]

§ 15.140 Employment.

No qualified individual with handicaps shall, on the basis of handicap, be subject to discrimination in employment under any program or activity conducted by the agency. The definitions, requirements, and procedures of section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791), as established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613, shall apply to employment in federally conducted programs or activities.
result in undue financial and administrative burdens, the agency has the burden of proving that compliance with §15.150(a) would result in such alteration or burdens. The decision that compliance would result in such alteration or burdens must be made by the agency head or his or her designee after considering all agency resources available for use in the funding and operation of the conducted program or activity, and must be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion. If an action would result in such an alteration or such burdens, the agency shall take any other action that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens but would nevertheless ensure that individuals with handicaps receive the benefits and services of the program or activity.

(b) Methods—(1) General. The agency may comply with the requirements of this section through such means as redesign of equipment, reassignment of services to accessible buildings, assignment of aides to beneficiaries, home visits, delivery of services at alternate accessible sites, alteration of existing facilities and construction of new facilities, use of accessible rolling stock, or any other methods that result in making its programs or activities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with handicaps. The agency is not required to make structural changes in existing facilities where other methods are effective in achieving compliance with this section. The agency, in making alterations to existing buildings, shall meet accessibility requirements to the extent compelled by the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4151–4157), and any regulations implementing it. In choosing among available methods for meeting the requirements of this section, the agency shall give priority to those methods that offer programs and activities to qualified individuals with handicaps in the most integrated setting appropriate.

(2) Historic preservation programs. In meeting the requirements of §15.150(a) in historic preservation programs, the agency shall give priority to methods that provide physical access to individuals with handicaps. In cases where a physical alteration to an historic property is not required because of §15.150(a)(2) or (3), alternative methods of achieving program accessibility include—

(i) Using audio-visual materials and devices to depict those portions of an historic property that cannot otherwise be made accessible;

(ii) Assigning persons to guide individuals with handicaps into or through portions of historic properties that cannot otherwise be made accessible; or

(iii) Adopting other innovative methods.

(c) Time period for compliance. The agency shall comply with the obligations established under this section by November 7, 1988, except that where structural changes in facilities are undertaken, such changes shall be made by September 6, 1991, but in any event as expeditiously as possible.

(d) Transition plan. In the event that structural changes to facilities will be undertaken to achieve program accessibility, the agency shall develop, by March 6, 1989, a transition plan setting forth the steps necessary to complete such changes. The agency shall provide an opportunity to interested persons, including individuals with handicaps or organizations representing individuals with handicaps, to participate in the development of the transition plan by submitting comments (both oral and written). A copy of the transition plan shall be made available for public inspection. The plan shall, at a minimum—

(1) Identify physical obstacles in the agency’s facilities that limit the accessibility of its programs or activities to individuals with handicaps;

(2) Describe in detail the methods that will be used to make the facilities accessible;

(3) Specify the schedule for taking the steps necessary to achieve compliance with this section and, if the time period of the transition plan is longer than one year, identify steps that will be taken during each year of the transition period; and

(4) Indicate the official responsible for implementation of the plan.
§ 15.151 Program accessibility: New construction and alterations.

Each building or part of a building that is constructed or altered by, on behalf of, or for the use of the agency shall be designed, constructed, or altered so as to be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with handicaps. The definitions, requirements, and standards of the Architectural Barriers Act (42 U.S.C. 4151–4157), as established in 41 CFR 101–19.600 to 101–19.607, apply to buildings covered by this section.

§§ 15.152–15.159 [Reserved]

§ 15.160 Communications.

(a) The agency shall take appropriate steps to ensure effective communication with applicants, participants, personnel of other Federal entities, and members of the public.

(1) The agency shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids where necessary to afford an individual with handicaps an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a program or activity conducted by the agency.

(i) In determining what type of auxiliary aid is necessary, the agency shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individual with handicaps.

(ii) The agency need not provide individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices of a personal nature.

(2) Where the agency communicates with applicants and beneficiaries by telephone, telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TDD’s) or equally effective telecommunication systems shall be used to communicate with persons with impaired hearing.

(b) The agency shall ensure that interested persons, including persons with impaired vision or hearing, can obtain information as to the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities.

(c) The agency shall provide signage at a primary entrance to each of its inaccessible facilities, directing users to a location at which they can obtain information about accessible facilities. The international symbol for accessibility shall be used at each primary entrance of an accessible facility.

(d) This section does not require the agency to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a program or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. In those circumstances where agency personnel believe that the proposed action would fundamentally alter the program or activity or would result in undue financial and administrative burdens, the agency has the burden of proving that compliance with §15.160 would result in such alteration or burdens. The decision that compliance would result in such alteration or burdens must be made by the agency head or his or her designee after considering all agency resources available for use in the funding and operation of the conducted program or activity and must be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion. If an action required to comply with this section would result in such an alteration or such burdens, the agency shall take any other action that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens but would nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with handicaps receive the benefits and services of the program or activity.

§§ 15.161–15.169 [Reserved]

§ 15.170 Compliance procedures.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, this section applies to all allegations of discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs and activities conducted by the agency.

(b) The agency shall process complaints alleging violations of section 504 with respect to employment according to the procedures established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613 pursuant to section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791).

(c) The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management shall be responsible for coordinating implementation of this section. Complaints may be sent to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Deputy Assistant Secretary.

for Resolution Management at the following address: Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420.

d) The agency shall accept and investigate all complete complaints for which it has jurisdiction. All complete complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged act of discrimination. The agency may extend this time period for good cause.

e) If the agency receives a complaint over which it does not have jurisdiction, it shall promptly notify the complainant and shall make reasonable efforts to refer the complaint to the appropriate Government entity.

f) The agency shall notify the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board upon receipt of any complaint alleging that a building or facility that is subject to the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4151–4157), is not readily accessible to and usable by individuals with handicaps.

g) Within 180 days of the receipt of a complete complaint for which it has jurisdiction, the agency shall notify the complainant of the results of the investigation in a letter containing—

(1) Findings of fact and conclusions of law;

(2) A description of a remedy for each violation found; and

(3) A notice of the right to appeal.

h) Appeals of the findings of fact and conclusions of law or remedies must be filed by the complainant within 90 days of receipt from the agency of the letter required by § 15.170(g). The agency may extend this time for good cause.

i) Timely appeals shall be accepted and processed by the head of the agency.

j) The head of the agency shall notify the complainant of the results of the appeal within 60 days of the receipt of the request. If the head of the agency determines that additional information is needed from the complainant, he or she shall have 90 days from the date of receipt of the additional information to make his or her determination on the appeal.

k) The time limits cited in paragraphs (g) and (j) of this section may be extended with the permission of the Assistant Attorney General.

(l) The agency may delegate its authority for conducting complaint investigations to other Federal agencies, except that the authority for making the final determination may not be delegated to another agency.


§§ 15.171–15.999 [Reserved]

PART 16—PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Sec.

16.101 To what does this policy apply?

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16.103 Assuring compliance with this policy—research conducted or supported by any Federal Department or Agency.

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16.122 Use of Federal funds.

16.123 Early termination of research support: Evaluation of applications and proposals.

16.124 Conditions.


SOURCE: 56 FR 28012, 28021, June 18, 1991, unless otherwise noted.

§ 16.101 To what does this policy apply?

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, this policy applies
to all research involving human subjects conducted, supported or otherwise subject to regulation by any federal department or agency which takes appropriate administrative action to make the policy applicable to such research. This includes research conducted by federal civilian employees or military personnel, except that each department or agency head may adopt such procedural modifications as may be appropriate from an administrative standpoint. It also includes research conducted, supported, or otherwise subject to regulation by the federal government outside the United States.

(1) Research that is conducted or supported by a federal department or agency, whether or not it is regulated as defined in §16.102(e), must comply with all sections of this policy.

(2) Research that is neither conducted nor supported by a federal department or agency but is subject to regulation as defined in §16.102(e) must be reviewed and approved, in compliance with §§16.101, 16.102, and §§16.107 through 16.117 of this policy, by an institutional review board (IRB) that operates in accordance with the pertinent requirements of this policy.

(b) Unless otherwise required by department or agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:

   (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
   (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if:

   (i) The human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

(4) Research, involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:

   (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

(c) Department or agency heads retain final judgment as to whether a particular activity is covered by this policy.
(d) Department or agency heads may require that specific research activities or classes of research activities conducted, supported, or otherwise subject to regulation by the department or agency but not otherwise covered by this policy, comply with some or all of the requirements of this policy.

(e) Compliance with this policy requires compliance with pertinent federal laws or regulations which provide additional protections for human subjects.

(f) This policy does not affect any state or local laws or regulations which may otherwise be applicable and which provide additional protections for human subjects.

(g) This policy does not affect any foreign laws or regulations which may otherwise be applicable and which provide additional protections to human subjects of research.

(h) When research covered by this policy takes place in foreign countries, procedures normally followed in the foreign countries to protect human subjects may differ from those set forth in this policy. [An example is a foreign institution which complies with guidelines consistent with the World Medical Assembly Declaration (Declaration of Helsinki amended 1989) issued either by sovereign states or by an organization whose function for the protection of human research subjects is internationally recognized.] In these circumstances, if a department or agency head determines that the procedures prescribed by the institution afford protections that are at least equivalent to those provided in this policy, the department or agency head may approve the substitution of the foreign procedures in lieu of the procedural requirements provided in this policy. Except when otherwise required by statute, Executive Order, or the department or agency head, notices of these actions as they occur will be published in the Federal Register or will be otherwise published as provided in department or agency procedures.

(i) Unless otherwise required by law, department or agency heads may waive the applicability of some or all of the provisions of this policy to specific research activities or classes of research activities otherwise covered by this policy. Except when otherwise required by statute or Executive Order, the department or agency head shall forward advance notices of these actions to the Office for Human Research Protections, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), or any successor office, and shall also publish them in the Federal Register or in such other manner as provided in department or agency procedures. \(^1\)

\(^1\)Institutions with HHS-approved assurances on file will abide by provisions of title 45 CFR part 46 subparts A-D. Some of the other Departments and Agencies have incorporated all provisions of title 45 CFR part 46 into their policies and procedures as well. However, the exemptions at 45 CFR 46.101(b) do not apply to research involving prisoners, subpart C. The exemption at 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2), for research involving survey or interview procedures or observation of public behavior, does not apply to research involving observations of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed.

§ 16.102 Definitions.

(a) Department or agency head means the head of any federal department or agency and any other officer or employee of any department or agency to whom authority has been delegated.

(b) Institution means any public or private entity or agency (including federal, state, and other agencies).

(c) Legally authorized representative means an individual or judicial or other body authorized under applicable law to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to the subject’s participation in the procedure(s) involved in the research.

(d) Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes. For example, some demonstration and
service programs may include research activities.

(e) Research subject to regulation, and similar terms are intended to encompass those research activities for which a federal department or agency has specific responsibility for regulating as a research activity. (for example, Investigational New Drug requirements administered by the Food and Drug Administration). It does not include research activities which are incidentally regulated by a federal department or agency solely as part of the department’s or agency’s broader responsibility to regulate certain types of activities whether research or non-research in nature (for example, Wage and Hour requirements administered by the Department of Labor).

(f) Human subject means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains

(1) Data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or

(2) Identifiable private information. Intervention includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (for example, venipuncture) and manipulations of the subject or the subject’s environment that are performed for research purposes. Interaction includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject. “Private information” includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a medical record). Private information must be individually identifiable (i.e., the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information) in order for obtaining the information to constitute research involving human subjects.

(g) IRB means an institutional review board established in accord with and for the purposes expressed in this policy.

(h) IRB approval means the determination of the IRB that the research has been reviewed and may be conducted at an institution within the constraints set forth by the IRB and by other institutional and federal requirements.

(i) Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

(j) Certification means the official notification by the institution to the supporting department or agency, in accordance with the requirements of this policy, that a research project or activity involving human subjects has been reviewed and approved by an IRB in accordance with an approved assurance.

§ 16.103 Assuring compliance with this policy—research conducted or supported by any Federal Department or Agency.

(a) Each institution engaged in research which is covered by this policy and which is conducted or supported by a federal department or agency shall provide written assurance satisfactory to the department or agency head that it will comply with the requirements set forth in this policy. In lieu of requiring submission of an assurance, individual department or agency heads shall accept the existence of a current assurance, appropriate for the research in question, on file with the Office for Human Research Protections, HHS, or any successor office for federalwide use by that office. When the existence of an HHS-approved assurance is accepted in lieu of requiring submission of an assurance, reports (except certification) required by this policy to be made to department and agency heads shall also be made to the Office for Human Research Protections, HHS, or any successor office.

(b) Departments and agencies will conduct or support research covered by this policy only if the institution has an assurance approved as provided in this section, and only if the institution has certified to the department or agency head that the research has been reviewed and approved by an IRB provided for in the assurance, and will be subject to continuing review by the
IRB. Assurances applicable to federally supported or conducted research shall at a minimum include:

(1) A statement of principles governing the institution in the discharge of its responsibilities for protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects of research conducted at or sponsored by the institution, regardless of whether the research is subject to federal regulation. This may include an appropriate existing code, declaration, or statement formulated by the institution itself. This requirement does not preempt provisions of this policy applicable to department- or agency-supported or regulated research and need not be applicable to any research exempted or waived under §16.101 (b) or (i).

(2) Designation of one or more IRBs established in accordance with the requirements of this policy, and for which provisions are made for meeting space and sufficient staff to support the IRB's review and recordkeeping duties.

(3) A list of IRB members identified by name; earned degrees; representative capacity; indications of experience such as board certifications, licenses, etc., sufficient to describe each member's chief anticipated contributions to IRB deliberations; and any employment or other relationship between each member and the institution: for example: full-time employee, part-time employee, member of governing panel or board, stockholder, paid or unpaid consultant. Changes in IRB membership shall be reported to the department or agency head, unless in accord with §16.103(a) of this policy, the existence of an HHS-approved assurance is accepted. In this case, change in IRB membership shall be reported to the Office for Human Research Protections, HHS, or any successor office.

(4) Written procedures which the IRB will follow (i) for conducting its initial and continuing review of research and for reporting its findings and actions to the investigator and the institution; (ii) for determining which projects require review more often than annually and which projects need verification from sources other than the investigators that no material changes have occurred since previous IRB review; and (iii) for ensuring prompt reporting to the IRB of proposed changes in a research activity, and for ensuring that such changes in approved research, during the period for which IRB approval has already been given, may not be initiated without IRB review and approval except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject.

(5) Written procedures for ensuring prompt reporting to the IRB, appropriate institutional officials, and the department or agency head of (i) any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others or any serious or continuing noncompliance with this policy or the requirements or determinations of the IRB and (ii) any suspension or termination of IRB approval.

(c) The assurance shall be executed by an individual authorized to act for the institution and to assume on behalf of the institution the obligations imposed by this policy and shall be filed in such form and manner as the department or agency head prescribes.

(d) The department or agency head will evaluate all assurances submitted in accordance with this policy through such officers and employees of the department or agency and such experts or consultants engaged for this purpose as the department or agency head determines to be appropriate. The department or agency head's evaluation will take into consideration the adequacy of the proposed IRB in light of the anticipated scope of the institution's research activities and the types of subject populations likely to be involved, the appropriateness of the proposed initial and continuing review procedures in light of the probable risks, and the size and complexity of the institution.

(e) On the basis of this evaluation, the department or agency head may approve or disapprove the assurance, or enter into negotiations to develop an approvable one. The department or agency head may limit the period during which any particular approved assurance or class of approved assurances shall remain effective or otherwise condition or restrict approval.
(f) Certification is required when the research is supported by a federal department or agency and not otherwise exempted or waived under §16.101 (b) or (l). An institution with an approved assurance shall certify that each application or proposal for research covered by the assurance and by §16.103 of this Policy has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. Such certification must be submitted with the application or proposal or by such later date as may be prescribed by the department or agency to which the application or proposal is submitted. Under no condition shall research covered by §16.103 of the Policy be supported prior to receipt of the certification that the research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. Institutions without an approved assurance covering the research shall certify within 30 days after receipt of a request for such a certification from the department or agency, that the application or proposal has been approved by the IRB. If the certification is not submitted within these time limits, the application or proposal may be returned to the institution.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under Control Number 0990–0260)

§§ 16.104–16.106 [Reserved]

§ 16.107 IRB membership.

(a) Each IRB shall have at least five members, with varying backgrounds to promote complete and adequate review of research activities commonly conducted by the institution. The IRB shall be sufficiently qualified through the experience and expertise of its members, and the diversity of the members, including consideration of race, gender, and cultural backgrounds and sensitivity to such issues as community attitudes, to promote respect for its advice and counsel in safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects. In addition to possessing the professional competence necessary to review specific research activities, the IRB shall be able to ascertain the acceptability of proposed research in terms of institutional commitments and regulations, applicable law, and standards of professional conduct and practice. The IRB shall therefore include persons knowledgeable in these areas. If an IRB regularly reviews research that involves a vulnerable category of subjects, such as children, prisoners, pregnant women, or handicapped or mentally disabled persons, consideration shall be given to the inclusion of one or more individuals who are knowledgeable about and experienced in working with these subjects.

(b) Every nondiscriminatory effort will be made to ensure that no IRB consists entirely of men or entirely of women, including the institution’s consideration of qualified persons of both sexes, so long as no selection is made to the IRB on the basis of gender. No IRB may consist entirely of members of one profession.

(c) Each IRB shall include at least one member whose primary concerns are in scientific areas and at least one member whose primary concerns are in nonscientific areas.

(d) Each IRB shall include at least one member who is not otherwise affiliated with the institution and who is not part of the immediate family of a person who is affiliated with the institution.

(e) No IRB may have a member participate in the IRB’s initial or continuing review of any project in which the member has a conflicting interest, except to provide information requested by the IRB.

(f) An IRB may, in its discretion, invite individuals with competence in special areas to assist in the review of issues which require expertise beyond or in addition to that available on the IRB. These individuals may not vote with the IRB.

§ 16.108 IRB functions and operations.

In order to fulfill the requirements of this policy each IRB shall:

(a) Follow written procedures in the same detail as described in §16.103(b)(4) and, to the extent required by §16.103(b)(5).

(b) Except when an expedited review procedure is used (see §16.110), review proposed research at convened meetings at which a majority of the members of the IRB are present, including at least one member whose primary
§ 16.109 IRB review of research.

(a) An IRB shall review and have authority to approve, require modifications in (to secure approval), or disapprove all research activities covered by this policy.

(b) An IRB shall require that information given to subjects as part of informed consent is in accordance with §16.116. The IRB may require that information, in addition to that specifically mentioned in §16.116, be given to the subjects when in the IRB’s judgment the information would meaningfully add to the protection of the rights and welfare of subjects.

(c) An IRB shall require documentation of informed consent or may waive documentation in accordance with §16.117.

(d) An IRB shall notify investigators and the institution in writing of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed research activity, or of modifications required to secure IRB approval of the research activity. If the IRB decides to disapprove a research activity, it shall include in its written notification a statement of the reasons for its decision and give the investigator an opportunity to respond in person or in writing.

(e) An IRB shall conduct continuing review of research covered by this policy at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk, but not less than once per year, and shall have authority to observe or have a third party observe the consent process and the research.

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§ 16.110 Expedited review procedures for certain kinds of research involving no more than minimal risk, and for minor changes in approved research.

(a) The Secretary, HHS, has established, and published as a Notice in the Federal Register, a list of categories of research that may be reviewed by the IRB through an expedited review procedure. The list will be amended, as appropriate after consultation with other departments and agencies, through periodic republication by the Secretary, HHS, in the Federal Register. A copy of the list is available from the Office for Human Research Protections, HHS, or any successor office.

(b) An IRB may use the expedited review procedure to review either or both of the following:

(1) Some or all of the research appearing on the list and found by the reviewer(s) to involve no more than minimal risk;

(2) Minor changes in previously approved research during the period (of one year or less) for which approval is authorized.

Under an expedited review procedure, the review may be carried out by the IRB chairperson or by one or more experienced reviewers designated by the chairperson from among members of the IRB. In reviewing the research, the reviewers may exercise all of the authorities of the IRB except that the reviewers may not disapprove the research. A research activity may be disapproved only after review in accordance with the non-expedited procedure set forth in §16.108(b).

(c) Each IRB which uses an expedited review procedure shall adopt a method for keeping all members advised of research proposals which have been approved under the procedure.

(d) The department or agency head may restrict, suspend, terminate, or choose not to authorize an institution’s or IRB’s use of the expedited review procedure.

(56 FR 28012, 28021, June 18, 1991, as amended at 70 FR 36328, June 23, 2005)

§ 16.111 Criteria for IRB approval of research.

(a) In order to approve research covered by this policy the IRB shall determine that all of the following requirements are satisfied:

(1) Risks to subjects are minimized;

(2) By using procedures which are consistent with sound research design and which do not unnecessarily expose subjects to risk, and (ii) whenever appropriate, by using procedures already...
being performed on the subjects for diagnostic or treatment purposes.

(2) Risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits, if any, to subjects, and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result. In evaluating risks and benefits, the IRB should consider only those risks and benefits that may result from the research (as distinguished from risks and benefits of therapies subjects would receive even if not participating in the research). The IRB should not consider possible long-range effects of applying knowledge gained in the research (for example, the possible effects of the research on public policy) as among those research risks that fall within the purview of its responsibility.

(3) Selection of subjects is equitable. In making this assessment the IRB should take into account the purposes of the research and the setting in which the research will be conducted and should be particularly cognizant of the special problems of research involving vulnerable populations, such as children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, or economically or educationally disadvantaged persons.

(4) Informed consent will be sought from each prospective subject or the subject’s legally authorized representative, in accordance with, and to the extent required by §16.116.

(5) Informed consent will be appropriately documented, in accordance with, and to the extent required by §16.117.

(6) When appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provision for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of subjects.

(7) When appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of data.

(8) When some or all of the subjects are likely to be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence, such as children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, or economically or educationally disadvantaged persons, additional safeguards have been included in the study to protect the rights and welfare of these subjects.

§ 16.112 Review by institution.

Research covered by this policy that has been approved by an IRB may be subject to further appropriate review and approval or disapproval by officials of the institution. However, those officials may not approve the research if it has not been approved by an IRB.

§ 16.113 Suspension or termination of IRB approval of research.

An IRB shall have authority to suspend or terminate approval of research that is not being conducted in accordance with the IRB’s requirements or that has been associated with unexpected serious harm to subjects. Any suspension or termination of approval shall include a statement of the reasons for the IRB’s action and shall be reported promptly to the investigator, appropriate institutional officials, and the department or agency head.

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[56 FR 28012, 28021, June 18, 1991, as amended at 70 FR 36328, June 23, 2005]

§ 16.114 Cooperative research.

Cooperative research projects are those projects covered by this policy which involve more than one institution. In the conduct of cooperative research projects, each institution is responsible for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects and for complying with this policy. With the approval of the department or agency head, an institution participating in a cooperative project may enter into a joint review arrangement, rely upon the review of another qualified IRB, or make similar arrangements for avoiding duplication of effort.

§ 16.115 IRB records.

(a) An institution, or when appropriate an IRB, shall prepare and maintain adequate documentation of IRB activities, including the following:

(1) Copies of all research proposals reviewed, scientific evaluations, if any, that accompany the proposals, approved sample consent documents, progress reports submitted by investigators, and reports of injuries to subjects.
§ 16.116 General requirements for informed consent.

Except as provided elsewhere in this policy, no investigator may involve a human being as a subject in research covered by this policy unless the investigator has obtained the legally effective informed consent of the subject or the subject’s legally authorized representative. An investigator shall seek such consent only under circumstances that provide the prospective subject or the representative sufficient opportunity to consider whether or not to participate and that minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence. The information that is given to the subject or the representative shall be in language understandable to the subject or the representative. No informed consent, whether oral or written, may include any exculpatory language through which the subject or the representative is made to waive or appear to waive any of the subject’s legal rights, or releases or appears to release the investigator, the sponsor, the institution or its agents from liability for negligence.

(a) Basic elements of informed consent. Except as provided in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section, in seeking informed consent the following information shall be provided to each subject:

(1) A statement that the study involves research, an explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of the subject’s participation, a description of the procedures to be followed, and identification of any procedures which are experimental;

(2) A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject;

(3) A description of any benefits to the subject or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research;

(4) A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject;

(5) A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained;

(6) For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation as to whether any compensation and an explanation as to whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of, or where further information may be obtained;

(7) An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects’ rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject; and

(8) A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

(b) Additional elements of informed consent. When appropriate, one or
more of the following elements of information shall also be provided to each subject:

(1) A statement that the particular treatment or procedure may involve risks to the subject (or to the embryo or fetus, if the subject is or may become pregnant) which are currently unforeseeable;

(2) Anticipated circumstances under which the subject's participation may be terminated by the investigator without regard to the subject's consent;

(3) Any additional costs to the subject that may result from participation in the research;

(4) The consequences of a subject's decision to withdraw from the research and procedures for orderly termination of participation by the subject;

(5) A statement that significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to the subject's willingness to continue participation will be provided to the subject; and

(6) The approximate number of subjects involved in the study.

c) An IRB may approve a consent procedure which does not include, or which alters, some or all of the elements of informed consent set forth above, or waive the requirement to obtain informed consent provided the IRB finds and documents that:

(1) The research or demonstration project is to be conducted by or subject to the approval of state or local government officials and is designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:
(i) Public benefit of service programs;
(ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs; and

(2) The research could not practically be carried out without the waiver or alteration;

(d) An IRB may approve a consent procedure which does not include, or which alters, some or all of the elements of informed consent set forth in this section, or waive the requirements to obtain informed consent provided the IRB finds and documents that:

(1) The research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects;

(2) The waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects;

(3) The research could not practically be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and

(4) Whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

d) The informed consent requirements in this policy are not intended to preempt any applicable federal, state, or local laws which require additional information to be disclosed in order for informed consent to be legally effective.

(e) Nothing in this policy is intended to limit the authority of a physician to provide emergency medical care, to the extent the physician is permitted to do so under applicable federal, state, or local law.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under Control Number 0990–0260)

[56 FR 28012, 28021, June 18, 1991, as amended at 70 FR 36328, June 23, 2005]

§ 16.117 Documentation of informed consent.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, informed consent shall be documented by the use of a written consent form approved by the IRB and signed by the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative. A copy shall be given to the person signing the form.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, the consent form may be either of the following:

(1) A written consent document that embodies the elements of informed consent required by §16.116. This form may be read to the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative, but in any event, the investigator shall give either the subject or the representative adequate opportunity to read it before it is signed; or

(2) A short form written consent document stating that the elements of informed consent required by §16.116 have been presented orally to the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative. When this method is used, there shall be a witness to the
oral presentation. Also, the IRB shall approve a written summary of what is to be said to the subject or the representative. Only the short form itself is to be signed by the subject or the representative. However, the witness shall sign both the short form and a copy of the summary, and the person actually obtaining consent shall sign a copy of the summary. A copy of the summary shall be given to the subject or the representative, in addition to a copy of the short form.

(c) An IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either:

(1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject’s wishes will govern; or

(2) That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

In cases in which the documentation requirement is waived, the IRB may require the investigator to provide subjects with a written statement regarding the research.

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§ 16.119 Research undertaken without the intention of involving human subjects.

In the event research is undertaken without the intention of involving human subjects, but it is later proposed to involve human subjects in the research, the research shall first be reviewed and approved by an IRB, as provided in this policy, a certification submitted, by the institution, to the department or agency, and final approval given to the proposed change by the department or agency.

§ 16.120 Evaluation and disposition of applications and proposals for research to be conducted or supported by a Federal Department or Agency.

(a) The department or agency head will evaluate all applications and proposals involving human subjects submitted to the department or agency through such officers and employees of the department or agency and such experts and consultants as the department or agency head determines to be appropriate. This evaluation will take into consideration the risks to the subjects, the adequacy of protection against these risks, the potential benefits of the research to the subjects and others, and the importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained.

(b) On the basis of this evaluation, the department or agency head may approve or disapprove the application or proposal, or enter into negotiations to develop an approvable one.
§ 16.121 [Reserved]

§ 16.122 Use of Federal funds.
Federal funds administered by a department or agency may not be expended for research involving human subjects unless the requirements of this policy have been satisfied.

§ 16.123 Early termination of research support: Evaluation of applications and proposals.

(a) The department or agency head may require that department or agency support for any project be terminated or suspended in the manner prescribed in applicable program requirements, when the department or agency head finds an institution has materially failed to comply with the terms of this policy.

(b) In making decisions about supporting or approving applications or proposals covered by this policy the department or agency head may take into account, in addition to all other eligibility requirements and program criteria, factors such as whether the applicant has been subject to a termination or suspension under paragraph (a) of this section and whether the applicant or the person or persons who would direct or have directed the scientific and technical aspects of an activity has have, in the judgment of the department or agency head, materially failed to discharge responsibility for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects (whether or not the research was subject to federal regulation).

§ 16.124 Conditions.
With respect to any research project or any class of research projects the department or agency head may impose additional conditions prior to or at the time of approval when in the judgment of the department or agency head additional conditions are necessary for the protection of human subjects.

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AUTHORITY: 38 U.S.C. 501, and as noted in specific sections.

DEFINITIONS AND ACTIVE DUTY

§ 17.1 Incorporation by reference.

(a) Certain materials are incorporated by reference into this part.
§ 17.31 Duty periods defined.

Definitions of duty periods applicable to eligibility for medical benefits are as follows:

(a) Medical services. The term medical services includes, in addition to medical examination, treatment, and rehabilitative services:

(1) Surgical services, dental services and appliances as authorized in §§17.160 through 17.166, optometric and pediatric services, (in the case of a person otherwise receiving care or services under this chapter) the preventive health care services set forth in 38 U.S.C. 1762, noninstitutional extended care, wheelchairs, artificial limbs, trusses and similar appliances, special clothing made necessary by the wearing of prosthetic appliances, and such other supplies or services as are medically determined to be reasonable and necessary.

(2) Consultation, professional counseling, marriage and family counseling, training, and mental health services for the members of the immediate family or legal guardian of the veteran or the individual in whose household the veteran certifies an intention to live, as necessary in connection with the veteran’s treatment.

(3) Transportation and incidental expenses for any person entitled to such benefits under the provisions of §17.143.

(b) Domiciliary care. The term domiciliary care means the furnishing of a home to a veteran, embracing the furnishing of shelter, food, clothing and other comforts of home, including necessary medical services. The term further includes travel and incidental expenses pursuant to §17.143.

[Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1701(6)]

[26 FR 5528, Aug. 22, 1958]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For Federal Register citations affecting §17.31, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.fdsys.gov.
§ 17.32 Informed consent and advance care planning.

(a) Definitions: 

Advance Directive. Specific written statements made by a patient who has decision-making capacity regarding future health care decisions in any of the following:

(i) VA Living Will. A written statement made by a patient on an authorized VA form which sets forth the patient's wishes regarding the patient's health care treatment preferences including the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.


(iii) State-Authorized Advance Directive. A non-VA living will, durable power of attorney for health care, or other advance health care planning document, the validity of which is determined pursuant to applicable State law. For the purposes of this paragraph and paragraph (h) of this section, “applicable State law” means the law of the State where the advance directive was signed, the State where the patient resided when the advance directive was signed, the State where the patient now resides, or the State where the patient is receiving treatment. VA will resolve any conflict between those State laws regarding the validity of the advance directive by following the law of the State that gives effect to the expressed wishes in the advance directive.

Close friend. Any person eighteen years or older who has shown care and concern for the patient's welfare, who is familiar with the patient's activities, health, religious beliefs and values, and who has presented a signed written statement for the record that describes that person's relationship to and familiarity with the patient.

Decision-making capacity. The ability to understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of health care treatment decisions.

Health care agent. An individual named by the patient in a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care.

Legal guardian. A person appointed by a court of appropriate jurisdiction to make decisions for an individual who has been judicially determined to be incompetent.

Practitioner. Any physician, dentist, or health care professional who has been granted specific clinical privileges to perform the treatment or procedure. For the purpose of obtaining informed consent for medical treatment, the term practitioner includes medical and dental residents and other appropriately trained health care professionals designated by VA regardless of whether they have been granted clinical privileges.

Signature consent. The patient's or surrogate's signature on a VA-authorized consent form.

Special guardian. A person appointed by a court of appropriate jurisdiction for the specific purpose of making health care decisions.

Surrogate. An individual, organization or other body authorized under this section to give informed consent on behalf of a patient who lacks decision-making capacity.

(b) Policy. Except as otherwise provided in this section, all patient care furnished under title 38 U.S.C. shall be carried out only with the full and informed consent of the patient or, in appropriate cases, a representative thereof. In order to give informed consent,
the patient must have decision-making capacity and be able to communicate decisions concerning health care. If the patient lacks decision-making capacity or has been declared incompetent, consent must be obtained from the patient’s surrogate. Practitioners may provide necessary medical care in emergency situations without the patient’s or surrogate’s express consent when immediate medical care is necessary to preserve life or prevent serious impairment of the health of the patient or others and the patient is unable to consent and the practitioner determines that the patient has no surrogate or that waiting to obtain consent from the patient’s surrogate would increase the hazard to the life or health of the patient or others. In such circumstances consent is implied.

(c) General requirements for informed consent. Informed consent is the freely given consent that follows a careful explanation by the practitioner to the patient or the patient’s surrogate of the proposed diagnostic or therapeutic procedure or course of treatment. The practitioner, who has primary responsibility for the patient or who will perform the particular procedure or provide the treatment, must explain in language understandable to the patient or surrogate the nature of a proposed procedure or treatment; the expected benefits; reasonably foreseeable associated risks, complications or side effects; reasonable and available alternatives; and anticipated results if nothing is done. The patient or surrogate must be given the opportunity to ask questions, to indicate comprehension of the information provided, and to grant permission freely without coercion. The practitioner must advise the patient or surrogate if the proposed treatment is novel or unorthodox. The patient or surrogate may withhold or revoke his or her consent at any time.

(d) Documentation of informed consent.

(1) The informed consent process must be appropriately documented in the health record. In addition, signature consent is required for all diagnostic and therapeutic treatments or procedures that:
   (i) Require the use of sedation;
   (ii) Require anesthesia or narcotic analgesia;
   (iii) Are considered to produce significant discomfort to the patient;
   (iv) Have a significant risk of complication or morbidity; or
   (v) Require injections of any substance into a joint space or body cavity.

(2) A patient or surrogate will sign with an “X” when the patient or surrogate has a debilitating illness or disability, i.e., significant physical impairment and/or difficulty in executing a signature due to an underlying health condition(s), or is unable to read and write. When the patient’s or surrogate’s signature is indicated by an “X,” two adults must witness the act of signing. By signing, the witnesses are attesting only to the fact that they saw the patient or surrogate and the practitioner sign the form. The signed form must be filed in the patient’s health record. A properly executed VA-authorized consent form is valid for a period of 60 calendar days. If, however, the treatment plan involves multiple treatments or procedures, it will not be necessary to repeat the informed consent discussion and documentation so long as the course of treatment proceeds as planned, even if treatment extends beyond the 60-day period. If there is a change in the patient’s condition that might alter the diagnostic or therapeutic decision, the consent is automatically rescinded.

(3) If it is impractical to consult with the surrogate in person, informed consent may be obtained by mail, facsimile, or telephone. A facsimile copy of a signed consent form is adequate to proceed with treatment. However, the surrogate must agree to submit a signed consent form to the practitioner. If consent is obtained by telephone, the conversation must be audiotaped or witnessed by a second VA employee. The name of the person giving consent and his or her authority to act as surrogate must be adequately identified for the record.

(e) Surrogate consent. If the practitioner who has primary responsibility for the patient determines that the patient lacks decision-making capacity and is unlikely to regain it within a reasonable period of time, informed
consent must be obtained from the patient’s surrogate. Patients who are incapable of giving consent as a matter of law, i.e., persons judicially determined to be incompetent and minors not otherwise able to provide informed consent, will be deemed to lack decision-making capacity for the purposes of this section. If the patient is considered a minor in the state where the VA facility is located and cannot consent to medical treatment, consent must be obtained from the patient’s parent or legal guardian. The surrogate generally assumes the same rights and responsibilities as the patient in the informed consent process. The surrogate’s decision must be based on his or her knowledge of what the patient would have wanted, i.e., substituted judgment. If the patient’s wishes are unknown, the decision must be based on the patient’s best interest. The following persons are authorized to consent on behalf of patients who lack decision-making capacity in the following order of priority:

(1) Health care agent;
(2) Legal guardian or special guardian;
(3) Next-of-kin: a close relative of the patient eighteen years of age or older, in the following priority: spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, or grandchild; or
(4) Close friend.

(f) Consent for patients without surrogates. (1) If none of the surrogates listed in paragraph (e) of this section are available, the practitioner may request Regional Counsel assistance to obtain a special guardian for health care or follow the procedures outlined in this paragraph (f).

(2) Facilities may use the following process to make treatment decisions for patients who lack decision-making capacity and have no surrogate. For treatments or procedures that involve minimal risk, the practitioner must verify that no authorized surrogate can be located. The practitioner must attempt to explain the nature and purpose of the proposed treatment to the patient and enter this information in the health record. For procedures that require signature consent, the practitioner must certify that the patient has no surrogate. The attending physician and the Chief of Service (or his or her designee) must indicate their approval of the treatment decision in writing. Any decision to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatment for such patients must be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary committee appointed by the facility Director. The committee functions as the patient’s advocate and may not include members of the treatment team. The committee must submit its findings and recommendations in a written report to the Chief of Staff who must note his or her approval of the report in writing. After reviewing the record, the facility Director may concur with the decision to withhold or withdraw life support or request further review by Regional Counsel.

(g) Special consent situations. In addition to the other requirements of this section, additional protections are required in the following situations.

(1) No patient will undergo any unusual or extremely hazardous treatment or procedure, e.g., that which might result in irreversible brain damage or sterilization, except as provided in this paragraph (g). Before treatment is initiated, the patient or surrogate must be given adequate opportunity to consult with independent specialists, legal counsel or other interested parties of his or her choosing. The patient’s or surrogate’s signature on a VA authorized consent form must be witnessed by someone who is not affiliated with the VA health care facility, e.g., spouse, legal guardian, or patient advocate. If a surrogate makes the treatment decision, a multi-disciplinary committee, appointed by the facility Director, must review that decision to ensure it is consistent with the patient’s wishes or in his or her best interest. The committee functions as the patient’s advocate and may not include members of the treatment team. The committee must submit its findings and recommendations in a written report to the facility Director. The Director may authorize treatment consistent with the surrogate’s decision or request that a special guardian for health care be appointed to make the treatment decision.

(2) Administration of psychotropic medication to an involuntarily committed patient against his or her will
must meet the following requirements. The patient or surrogate must be allowed to consult with independent specialists, legal counsel or other interested parties concerning the treatment with psychotropic medication. Any recommendation to administer or continue medication against the patient’s or surrogate’s will must be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary committee appointed by the facility Director for this purpose. This committee must include a psychiatrist or a physician who has psychopharmacology privileges. The facility Director must concur with the committee’s recommendation to administer psychotropic medications contrary to the patient’s or surrogate’s wishes. Continued therapy with psychotropic medication must be reviewed every 30 days. The patient (or a representative on the patient’s behalf) may appeal the treatment decision to a court of appropriate jurisdiction.

(3) If a proposed course of treatment or procedure involves approved medical research in whole or in part, the patient or representative shall be advised of this. Informed consent shall be obtained specifically for the administration or performance of that aspect of the treatment or procedure that involves research. Such consent shall be in addition to that obtained for the administration or performance of the nonresearch aspect of the treatment or procedure and must meet the requirements for informed consent set forth in 38 CFR Part 16, Protection of Human Subjects.

(h) Advance health care planning. Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (h)(1) through (h)(4) of this section, VA will follow the wishes of a patient expressed in an Advance Directive when the attending physician determines and documents in the patient’s health record that the patient lacks decision-making capacity and is not expected to regain it. An advance directive that is valid in one or more States under applicable State law, as defined in paragraph (a) of this section, will be recognized throughout the VA health care system.

(1) Witnesses. A VA Advance Directive: Living Will and Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care must be signed by the patient in the presence of two witnesses. Neither witness may to the witness’ knowledge be named in the patient’s will, appointed as health care agent in the advance directive, or financially responsible for the patient’s care. VA employees of the Chaplain Service, Psychology Service, Social Work Service, or nonclinical employees (e.g., Medical Administration Service, Voluntary Service, or Environmental Management Service) may serve as witnesses. Other individuals employed by the VA facility in which the patient is being treated may not sign as witnesses to the advance directive. Witnesses are attesting only to the fact that they saw the patient sign the form.

(2) Instructions in critical situations. VA will follow the unambiguous verbal or non-verbal instructions regarding future health care decisions of a patient who has decision-making capacity when the patient is admitted to care when critically ill and loss of capacity may be imminent and the patient is not physically able to sign an advance directive form, or the appropriate form is not readily available. The patient’s instructions must have been expressed to at least two members of the health care team. The substance of the patient’s instructions must be recorded in a progress note in the patient’s health record and must be co-signed by at least two members of the health care team who were present and can attest to the wishes expressed by the patient. These instructions will be given effect only if the patient loses decision-making capacity during the presenting situation.

(3) Revocation. A patient who has decision-making capacity may revoke an advance directive or instructions in a critical situation at any time by using any means expressing the intent to revoke.

(4) VA policy and disputes. Neither the treatment team nor surrogate may override a patient’s clear instructions in an Advance Directive or in instructions in critical situations, except that those portions of an Advance Directive
or instructions given in a critical situation that are not consistent with VA policy will not be given effect.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7331–7334)

(The information collection requirements in this section have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900–0583)


§ 17.33 Patients' rights.

(a) General. (1) Patients have a right to be treated with dignity in a humane environment that affords them both reasonable protection from harm and appropriate privacy with regard to their personal needs.

(2) Patients have a right to receive, to the extent of eligibility therefor under the law, prompt and appropriate treatment for any physical or emotional disability.

(3) Patients have the right to the least restrictive conditions necessary to achieve treatment purposes.

(4) No patient in the Department of Veterans Affairs medical care system, except as otherwise provided by the applicable State law, shall be denied legal rights solely by virtue of being voluntarily admitted or involuntarily committed. Such legal rights include, but are not limited to, the following:

(i) The right to hold and to dispose of property except as may be limited in accordance with paragraph (c)(2) of this section;

(ii) The right to execute legal instruments (e.g., will);

(iii) The right to enter into contractual relationships;

(iv) The right to register and vote;

(v) The right to marry and to obtain a separation, divorce, or annulment;

(vi) The right to hold a professional, occupational, or vehicle operator's license.

(b) Residents and inpatients. Subject to paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section, patients admitted on a residential or inpatient care basis to the Department of Veterans Affairs medical care system have the following rights:

(1) Visitation and communications. Each patient has the right to communicate freely and privately with persons outside the facility, including government officials, attorneys, and clergymen. To facilitate these communications each patient shall be provided the opportunity to meet with visitors during regularly scheduled visiting hours, convenient and reasonable access to public telephones for making and receiving phone calls, and the opportunity to send and receive unopened mail.

(i) Communications with attorneys, law enforcement agencies, or government officials and representatives of recognized service organizations when the latter are acting as agents for the patient in a matter concerning Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, shall not be reviewed.

(ii) A patient may refuse visitors.

(iii) If a patient's right to receive unopened mail is restricted pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section, the patient shall be required to open the sealed mail while in the presence of an appropriate person for the sole purpose of ascertaining whether the mail contains contraband material, i.e., implements which pose significant risk of bodily harm to the patient or others or any drugs or medication. Any such material will be held for the patient or disposed of in accordance with instructions concerning patients' mail published by the Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, and/or the local health care facility.

(iv) Each patient shall be afforded the opportunity to purchase, at the patient's expense, letter writing material including stamps. In the event a patient needs assistance in purchasing writing material, or in writing, reading or sending mail, the medical facility will attempt, at the patient's request, to provide such assistance by means of volunteers, sufficient to mail at least one (1) letter each week.

(v) All information gained by staff personnel of a medical facility during the course of assisting a patient in writing, reading, or sending mail is to be kept strictly confidential except for any disclosure required by law.

(2) Clothing. Each patient has the right to wear his or her own clothing.

(3) Personal Possessions. Each patient has the right to keep and use his or her
own personal possessions consistent with available space, governing fire safety regulations, restrictions on noise, and restrictions on possession of contraband material, drugs and medications.

(4) **Money.** Each patient has the right to keep and spend his or her own money and to have access to funds in his or her account in accordance with instructions concerning personal funds of patients published by the Veterans Health Administration.

(5) **Social Interaction.** Each patient has the right to social interaction with others.

(6) **Exercise.** Each patient has the right to regular physical exercise and to be outdoors at regular and frequent intervals. Facilities and equipment for such exercise shall be provided.

(7) **Worship.** The opportunity for religious worship shall be made available to each patient who desires such opportunity. No patient will be coerced into engaging in any religious activities against his or her desires.

(c) **Restrictions.**

(1) A right set forth in paragraph (b) of this section may be restricted within the patient's treatment plan by written order signed by the appropriate health care professional if—

(i) It is determined pursuant to paragraph (c)(2) of this section that a valid and sufficient reason exists for a restriction, and

(ii) The order imposing the restriction and a progress note detailing the indications therefor are both entered into the patient's permanent medical record.

(2) For the purpose of paragraph (c) of this section, a valid and sufficient reason exists when, after consideration of pertinent facts, including the patient’s history, current condition and prognosis, a health care professional reasonably believes that the full exercise of the specific right would—

(i) Adversely affect the patient’s physical or mental health,

(ii) Under prevailing community standards, likely stigmatize the patient’s reputation to a degree that would adversely affect the patient’s return to independent living,

(iii) Significantly infringe upon the rights of or jeopardize the health or safety of others, or

(iv) Have a significant adverse impact on the operation of the medical facility, to such an extent that the patient’s exercise of the specific right should be restricted. In determining whether a patient’s specific right should be restricted, the health care professional concerned must determine that the likelihood and seriousness of the consequences that are expected to result from the full exercise of the right are so compelling as to warrant the restriction. The Chief of Service or Chief of Staff, as designated by local policy, should concur with the decision to impose such restriction. In this connection, it should be noted that there is no intention to imply that each of the reasons specified in paragraphs (c)(2)(i) through (iv) of this section are logically relevant to each of the rights set forth in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(3) If it has been determined under paragraph (c)(2) of this section that a valid and sufficient reason exists for restricting any of the patient’s rights set forth in paragraph (b) of this section, the least restrictive method for protecting the interest or interests specified in paragraphs (c)(2)(i) through (iv) of this section that are involved shall be employed.

(4) The patient must be promptly notified of any restriction imposed under paragraph (c) of this section and the reasons therefor.

(5) All restricting orders under paragraph (c) of this section must be reviewed at least once every 30 days by the practitioner and must be concurred in by the Chief of Service or Chief of Staff.

(d) **Restraint and seclusion of patients.**

(1) Each patient has the right to be free from physical restraint or seclusion except in situations in which there is a substantial risk of imminent harm by the patient to himself, herself, or others and less restrictive means of preventing such harm have been determined to be inappropriate or insufficient. Patients will be physically restrained or placed in seclusion only on the written order of an appropriate licensed health care professional. The reason for any restraint order will be clearly documented in the progress notes of the patient’s medical record.
The written order may be entered on the basis of telephonic authority, but in such an event, an appropriate licensed health care professional must examine the patient and sign a written order within an appropriate timeframe that is in compliance with current community and/or accreditation standards. In emergency situations, where inability to contact an appropriate licensed health care professional prior to restraint is likely to result in immediate harm to the patient or others, the patient may be temporarily restrained by a member of the staff until appropriate authorization can be received from an appropriate licensed health care professional. Use of restraints or seclusion may continue for a period of time that does not exceed current community and/or accreditation standards, within which time an appropriate licensed health care professional shall again be consulted to determine if continuance of such restraint or seclusion is required. Restraint or seclusion may not be used as a punishment, for the convenience of staff, or as a substitute for treatment programs.

(2) While in restraint or seclusion, the patient must be seen within appropriate timeframes in compliance with current community and/or accreditation standards:

(i) By an appropriate health care professional who will monitor and chart the patient’s physical and mental condition; and

(ii) By other ward personnel as frequently as is reasonable under existing circumstances.

(3) Each patient in restraint or seclusion shall have bathroom privileges according to his or her needs.

(4) Each patient in restraint or seclusion shall have the opportunity to bathe at least every twenty-four (24) hours.

(5) Each patient in restraint or seclusion shall be provided nutrition and fluid appropriately.

(e) Medication. Patients have a right to be free from unnecessary or excessive medication. Except in an emergency, medication will be administered only on a written order of an appropriate health care professional in that patient’s medical record. The written order may be entered on the basis of telephonic authority received from an appropriate health care professional, but in such event, the written order must be countersigned by an appropriate health care professional within 24 hours of the ordering of the medication. An appropriate health care professional will be responsible for all medication given or administered to a patient. A review by an appropriate health care professional of the drug regimen of each inpatient shall take place at least every thirty (30) days. It is recognized that administration of certain medications will be reviewed more frequently. Medication shall not be used as punishment, for the convenience of the staff, or in quantities which interfere with the patient’s treatment program.

(f) Confidentiality. Information gained by staff from the patient or the patient’s medical record will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed except in accordance with applicable law.

(g) Patient grievances. Each patient has the right to present grievances with respect to perceived infringement of the rights described in this section or concerning any other matter on behalf of himself, herself or others, to staff members at the facility in which the patient is receiving care, other Department of Veterans Affairs officials, government officials, members of Congress or any other person without fear or reprisal.

(h) Notice of patient’s rights. Upon the admission of any patient, the patient or his/her representative shall be informed of the rights described in this section, shall be given a copy of a statement of those rights and shall be informed of the fact that the statement of rights is posted at each nursing station. All staff members assigned to work with patients will be given a copy of the statement of rights and these rights will be discussed with them by their immediate supervisor.

(i) Other rights. The rights described in this section are in addition to and not in derogation of any statutory, constitutional or other legal rights.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1721)

§ 17.34 Tentative eligibility determinations.

Subject to the provisions of §§17.36 through 17.38, when an application for hospital care or other medical services, except outpatient dental care, has been filed which requires an adjudication as to service connection or a determination as to any other eligibility prerequisite which cannot immediately be established, the service (including transportation) may be authorized without further delay if it is determined that eligibility for care probably will be established. Tentative eligibility determinations under this section, however, will only be made if:

(a) In emergencies. The applicant needs hospital care or other medical services in emergency circumstances, or

(b) For persons recently discharged from service. The application was filed within 6 months after date of honorable discharge from a period of not less than 6 months of active duty.


§ 17.35 Hospital care and medical services in foreign countries.

The Secretary may furnish hospital care and medical services to any veteran sojourning or residing outside the United States, without regard to the veteran’s citizenship:

(a) If necessary for treatment of a service-connected disability, or any disability associated with and held to be aggravating a service-connected disability;

(b) If the care is furnished to a veteran participating in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31 who requires care for the reasons enumerated in 38 CFR 17.47(l)(2).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1724)

disabilities; veterans who were discharged or released from active military service for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; veterans who receive disability compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1151; veterans whose entitlement to disability compensation is suspended pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1151, but only to the extent that such veterans’ continuing eligibility for that care is provided for in the judgment or settlement described in 38 U.S.C. 1151; veterans whose entitlement to disability compensation is suspended because of the receipt of military retired pay; and veterans receiving compensation at the 10 percent rating level based on multiple noncompensable service-connected disabilities that clearly interfere with normal employability.

(4) Veterans who receive increased pension based on their need for regular aid and attendance or by reason of being permanently housebound and other veterans who are determined to be catastrophically disabled by the Chief of Staff (or equivalent clinical official) at the VA facility where they were examined.

(5) Veterans not covered by paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(4) of this section who are determined to be unable to defray the expenses of necessary care under 38 U.S.C. 1722(a).

(6) Veterans of the Mexican border period or of World War I; veterans solely seeking care for a disorder associated with exposure to a toxic substance or radiation, for a disorder associated with service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War, or for any illness associated with service in combat in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after November 11, 1998, as provided and limited in 38 U.S.C. 1710(e); and veterans with 0 percent service-connected disabilities who are nevertheless compensated, including veterans receiving compensation for inactive tuberculosis.

(7) Veterans who agree to pay to the United States the applicable copayment determined under 38 U.S.C. 1710(f) and 1710(g) if their income for the previous year constitutes “low income” under the geographical income limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the fiscal year that ended on September 30 of the previous calendar year. For purposes of this paragraph, VA will determine the income of veterans (to include the income of their spouses and dependents) using the rules in §§3.271, 3.272, 3.273, and 3.276. After determining the veterans’ income and the number of persons in the veterans’ family (including only the spouse and dependent children), VA will compare their income with the current applicable “low-income” income limit for the public housing and section 8 programs in their area that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development publishes pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)(2). If the veteran’s income is below the applicable “low-income” income limits for the area in which the veteran resides, the veteran will be considered to have “low income” for purposes of this paragraph. To avoid a hardship to a veteran, VA may use the projected income for the current year of the veteran, spouse, and dependent children if the projected income is below the “low income” income limit referenced above. This category is further prioritized into the following subcategories:

(i) Noncompensable zero percent service-connected veterans who are in an enrolled status on a specified date announced in a FEDERAL REGISTER document promulgated under paragraph (c) of this section and who subsequently do not request disenrollment;

(ii) Nonservice-connected veterans who are in an enrolled status on a specified date announced in a FEDERAL REGISTER document promulgated under paragraph (c) of this section and who subsequently do not request disenrollment;

(iii) Noncompensable zero percent service-connected veterans not included in paragraph (b)(7)(i) of this section; and

(iv) Nonservice-connected veterans not included in paragraph (b)(7)(i) of this section.

(8) Veterans not included in priority category 4 or 7, who are eligible for care only if they agree to pay to the United States the applicable copayment determined under 38 U.S.C. 1710(f) and 1710(g). This category is further
prioritized into the following subcategories:

(i) Noncompensable zero percent service-connected veterans who were in an enrolled status on January 17, 2003, or who are moved from a higher priority category or subcategory due to no longer being eligible for inclusion in such priority category or subcategory and who subsequently do not request disenrollment;

(ii) Noncompensable zero percent service-connected veterans not included in paragraph (b)(8)(i) of this section and whose income is not greater than ten percent more than the income that would permit their enrollment in priority category 5 or priority category 7, whichever is higher;

(iii) Nonservice-connected veterans who were in an enrolled status on January 17, 2003, or who are moved from a higher priority category or subcategory due to no longer being eligible for inclusion in such priority category or subcategory and who subsequently do not request disenrollment;

(iv) Nonservice-connected veterans not included in paragraph (b)(8)(iii) of this section and whose income is not greater than ten percent more than the income that would permit their enrollment in priority category 5 or priority category 7, whichever is higher;

(v) Noncompensable zero percent service-connected veterans not included in paragraph (b)(8)(i) or paragraph (b)(8)(ii) of this section; and

(vi) Nonservice-connected veterans not included in paragraph (b)(8)(iii) or paragraph (b)(8)(iv) of this section.

(c) Federal Register notification of eligible enrollees. (1) It is anticipated that each year the Secretary will consider whether to change the categories and subcategories of veterans eligible to be enrolled. The Secretary at any time may revise the categories or subcategories of veterans eligible to be enrolled, by amending paragraph (c)(2) of this section. The preamble to a Federal Register document announcing which priority categories and subcategories are eligible to be enrolled must specify the projected number of fiscal year applicants for enrollment in each priority category, projected healthcare utilization and expenditures for veterans in each priority category, appropriated funds and other revenue projected to be available for fiscal year enrollees, and projected total expenditures for enrollees by priority category. The determination should include consideration of relevant internal and external factors, e.g., economic changes, changes in medical practices, and waiting times to obtain an appointment for care. Consistent with these criteria, the Secretary will determine which categories of veterans are eligible to be enrolled based on the order of priority specified in paragraph (b) of this section.

(2) Unless changed by a rulemaking document in accordance with paragraph (c)(1) of this section, VA will enroll the priority categories of veterans set forth in §17.36(b) beginning June 15, 2009, except that those veterans in subcategories (v) and (vi) of priority category 8 are not eligible to be enrolled.

(d) Enrollment and disenrollment process—(1) Application for enrollment. A veteran may apply to be enrolled in the VA healthcare system at any time. A veteran who wishes to be enrolled must apply by submitting a VA Form 10-10EZ to a VA medical facility or via an Online submission at https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/. Upon receipt of a completed VA Form 10-10EZ, a VA network or facility director, or the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management or Chief, Health Administration Service or equivalent official at a VA medical facility, or Director, Health Eligibility Center, will accept a veteran as an enrollee upon determining that the veteran is in a priority category eligible to be enrolled as set forth in §17.36(c)(2). Upon determining that a veteran is not in a priority category eligible to be enrolled, the VA network or facility director, or the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management or Chief, Health Administration Service or equivalent official at a VA medical facility, or Director, Health Eligibility Center, will inform the applicant that the applicant is ineligible to be enrolled.

(3) Placement in enrollment categories. (1) Veterans will be placed in priority categories whether or not veterans in...
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that category are eligible to be enrolled.

(ii) A veteran will be placed in the highest priority category or categories for which the veteran qualifies.

(iii) A veteran may be placed in only one priority category, except that a veteran placed in priority category 6 based on a specified disorder or illness will also be placed in priority category 7 or priority category 8, as applicable, if the veteran has previously agreed to pay the applicable copayment, for all matters not covered by priority category 6.

(iv) A veteran who had been enrolled based on inclusion in priority category 5 and became no longer eligible for inclusion in priority category 5 due to failure to submit to VA a current VA Form 10–10EZ will be changed automatically to enrollment based on inclusion in priority category 6 or 8 (or more than one of these categories if the previous principle applies), as applicable, and be considered continuously enrolled. To meet the criteria for priority category 5, a veteran must be eligible for priority category 5 based on the information submitted to VA in a current VA Form 10–10EZ. To be current, after VA has sent a form 10–10EZ to the veteran at the veteran’s last known address, the veteran must return the completed form (including signature) to the address on the return envelope within 60 days from the date VA sent the form to the veteran.

(v) Veterans will be disenrolled, and reenrolled, in the order of the priority categories listed with veterans in priority category 1 being the last to be disenrolled and the first to be reenrolled. Similarly, within priority categories 7 and 8, veterans will be disenrolled, and reenrolled, in the order of the priority subcategories listed with veterans in subcategory (i) being the last to be disenrolled and first to be reenrolled.

(4) [Reserved]

(5) **Disenrollment.** A veteran enrolled in the VA health care system under paragraph (d)(2) of this section will be disenrolled only if:

(i) The veteran submits to a VA Medical Center or to the VA Health Eligibility Center, 2957 Clairmont Road, NE., Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30329, a signed and dated document stating that the veteran no longer wishes to be enrolled; or

(ii) A VA network or facility director, or the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management or Chief, Health Administration Service or equivalent official at a VA medical facility, or Director, Health Eligibility Center, determines that the veteran is no longer in a priority category eligible to be enrolled, as set forth in §17.36(c)(2).

(6) **Notification of enrollment status.** Notice of a decision by a VA network or facility director, or the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management or Chief, Health Administration Service or equivalent official at a VA medical facility, or Director, Health Eligibility Center, regarding enrollment status will be provided to the affected veteran by letter and will contain the reasons for the decision. The letter will include an effective date for any changes and a statement regarding appeal rights. The decision will be based on all information available to the decisionmaker, including the information contained in VA Form 10–10EZ.

(e) **Catastrophically disabled.** For purposes of this section, catastrophically disabled means to have a permanent severely disabling injury, disorder, or disease that compromises the ability to carry out the activities of daily living to such a degree that the individual requires personal or mechanical assistance to leave home or bed or requires constant supervision to avoid physical harm to self or others. This definition is met if an individual has been found by the Chief of Staff (or equivalent clinical official) at the VA facility where the individual was examined to have a permanent condition specified in paragraph (e)(1) of this section; to meet permanently one of the conditions specified in paragraph (e)(2) of this section by a clinical evaluation of the patient’s medical records that documents that the patient previously met the permanent criteria and continues to meet such criteria (permanently) without the continuation of on-going treatment; or
to meet permanently one of the conditions specified in paragraph (e)(2) of this section by a current medical examination that documents that the patient meets the permanent criteria and will continue to meet such criteria (permanently) or would continue to meet such criteria (permanently) without the continuation of on-going treatment.

(1) Quadriplegia and quadriparesis (ICD–9–CM Code 344.0x: 344.00, 344.01, 344.02, 344.03, 344.04, 3.44.09), paraplegia (ICD–9–CM Code 344.1), blindness (ICD–9–CM Code 369.4), persistent vegetative state (ICD–9–CM Code 780.03), or a condition resulting from two of the following procedures (ICD–9–CM Code 84.x or associated V Codes when available or Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Codes) provided the two procedures were not on the same limb:
   (i) Amputation through hand (ICD–9–CM Code 84.03 or V Code V49.63 or CPT Code 25927);
   (ii) Disarticulation of wrist (ICD–9–CM Code 84.04 or V Code V49.64 or CPT Code 25920);
   (iii) Amputation through forearm (ICD–9–CM Code 84.05 or V Code V49.65 or CPT Codes 25900, 25905);
   (iv) Disarticulation of forearm (ICD–9–CM Code 84.05 or V Code V49.66 or CPT Codes 25900, 25905);
   (v) Amputation or disarticulation through elbow. (ICD–9–CM Code 84.06 or V Code V49.66 or CPT 24999);
   (vi) Amputation through humerus (ICD–9–CM Code 84.07 or V Code V49.66 or CPT Codes 24900, 24920);
   (vii) Shoulder disarticulation (ICD–9–CM Code 84.08 or V Code V49.67 or CPT Code 23999);
   (viii) Forequarter amputation (ICD–9–CM Code 84.09 or CPT Code 23900);
   (ix) Lower limb amputation not otherwise specified (ICD–9–CM Code 84.10 or V Code V49.70 or CPT Codes 27880, 27882);
   (x) Amputation of great toe (ICD–9–CM Code 84.11 or V Code V49.71 or CPT Codes 28810, 28820);
   (xi) Amputation through foot (ICD–9–CM Code 84.12 or V Code V49.73 or CPT Codes 28800, 28805);
   (xii) Disarticulation of ankle (ICD–9–CM Code 84.13 or V Code V49.74 or CPT Code 27889);
   (xiii) Amputation through malleol (ICD–9–CM Code 84.14 or V Code V49.75 or CPT Code 27888);
   (xiv) Other amputation below knee (ICD–9–CM Code 84.15 or V Code V49.75 or CPT Codes 27880, 27882);
   (xv) Disarticulation of knee (ICD–9–CM Code 84.16 or V Code V49.76 or CPT Code 27598);
   (xvi) Above knee amputation (ICD–9–CM Code 84.17 or V Code V49.76 or CPT Code 27598);
   (xvii) Disarticulation of hip (ICD–9–CM Code 84.18 or V Code V49.77 or CPT Code 27295); and
   (xviii) Hindquarter amputation (ICD–9–CM Code 84.19 or CPT Code 27290).

(2)(i) Dependent in 3 or more Activities of Daily Living (eating, dressing, bathing, toileting, transferring, incontinence of bowel and/or bladder), with at least 3 of the dependencies being permanent with a rating of 1, using the Katz scale.
   (ii) A score of 10 or lower using the Folstein Mini-Mental State Examination.
   (iii) A score of 2 or lower on at least 4 of the 13 motor items using the Functional Independence Measure.
   (iv) A score of 30 or lower using the Global Assessment of Functioning.

(f) VA Form 10–10EZ. Copies of VA Form 10–10EZ are available at any VA medical center and at https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/.

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0091)

Authority: 38 U.S.C 101, 501, 1521, 1701, 1705, 1710, 1721, 1722)

§ 17.37 Enrollment not required—provision of hospital and outpatient care to veterans.

Even if not enrolled in the VA healthcare system:

(a) A veteran rated for service-connected disabilities at 50 percent or greater will receive VA care provided for in the “medical benefits package” set forth in §17.38.
(b) A veteran who has a service-connected disability will receive VA care provided for in the “medical benefits package” set forth in §17.38 for that service-connected disability.

(c) A veteran who was discharged or released from active military service for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty will receive VA care provided for in the “medical benefits package” set forth in §17.38 for that disability for the 12-month period following discharge or release.

(d) When there is a compelling medical need to complete a course of VA treatment started when the veteran was enrolled in the VA healthcare system, a veteran will receive that treatment.

(e) Subject to the provisions of §21.240, a veteran participating in VA’s vocational rehabilitation program described in §§21.1 through 21.430 will receive VA care provided for in the “medical benefits package” set forth in §17.38.

(f) A veteran may receive care provided for in the ‘medical benefits package’ based on factors other than veteran status (e.g., a veteran who is a private-hospital patient and is referred to VA for a diagnostic test by that hospital under a sharing contract; a veteran who is a VA employee and is examined to determine physical or mental fitness to perform official duties; a Department of Defense retiree under a sharing agreement).

(g) For care not provided within a State, a veteran may receive VA care provided for in the “medical benefits package” set forth in §17.38 if authorized under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1724 and 38 CFR 17.35.

(h) Commonwealth Army veterans and new Philippine Scouts may receive care provided for in the “medical benefits package” set forth in §17.38 if authorized under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1724 and 38 CFR 17.35.

(i) A veteran may receive certain types of VA care not included in the “medical benefits package” set forth in §17.38 if authorized by statute or other sections of 38 CFR (e.g., humanitarian emergency care for which the individual will be billed, compensation and pension examinations, dental care, domiciliary care, nursing home care, readjustment counseling, care as part of a VA-approved research project, seeing-eye or guide dogs, sexual trauma counseling and treatment, special registry examinations).

(j) A veteran may receive an examination to determine whether the veteran is catastrophically disabled and therefore eligible for inclusion in priority category 4.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 501, 1701, 1705, 1710, 1721, 1722


§ 17.38 Medical benefits package.

(a) Subject to paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, the following hospital, outpatient, and extended care services constitute the “medical benefits package” (basic care and preventive care): (1) Basic care.

(i) Outpatient medical, surgical, and mental healthcare, including care for substance abuse.

(ii) Inpatient hospital, medical, surgical, and mental healthcare, including care for substance abuse.

(iii) Prescription drugs, including over-the-counter drugs and medical and surgical supplies available under the VA national formulary system.

(iv) Emergency care in VA facilities; and emergency care in non-VA facilities in accordance with sharing contracts or if authorized by §§17.52(a)(3), 17.53, 17.54, 17.120–132.

(v) Bereavement counseling as authorized in §17.98.

(vi) Comprehensive rehabilitative services other than vocational services provided under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31.

(vii) Consultation, professional counseling, marriage and family counseling, training, and mental health services for the members of the immediate family or legal guardian of the veteran or the individual in whose household the veteran certifies an intention to live, as necessary and appropriate, in connection with the veteran’s treatment as authorized under 38 CFR 71.50.

(viii) Durable medical equipment and prosthetic and orthotic devices, including eyeglasses and hearing aids as authorized under §17.149.

(ix) Home health services authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1717 and 1720C.
(x) Reconstructive (plastic) surgery required as a result of disease or trauma, but not including cosmetic surgery that is not medically necessary.

(xi)(A) Hospice care, palliative care, and institutional respite care; and

(B) Noninstitutional extended care services, including but not limited to noninstitutional geriatric evaluation, noninstitutional adult day health care, and noninstitutional respite care.

(xii) Payment of beneficiary travel as authorized under 38 CFR part 70.

(xiii) Pregnancy and delivery services, to the extent authorized by law.

(xiv) Completion of forms (e.g., Family Medical Leave forms, life insurance applications, Department of Education forms for loan repayment exemptions based on disability, non-VA disability program forms) by healthcare professionals based on an examination or knowledge of the veteran's condition, but not including the completion of forms for examinations if a third party customarily will pay health care practitioners for the examination but will not pay VA.

(2) Preventive care, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 1701(9), which includes:

(i) Periodic medical exams.

(ii) Health education, including nutrition education.

(iii) Maintenance of drug-use profiles, drug monitoring, and drug use education.

(iv) Mental health and substance abuse preventive services.

(v) Immunizations against infectious disease.

(vi) Prevention of musculoskeletal deformity or other gradually developing disabilities of a metabolic or degenerative nature.

(vii) Genetic counseling concerning inheritance of genetically determined diseases.

(viii) Routine vision testing and eye care services.

(ix) Periodic reexamination of members of high-risk groups for selected diseases and for functional decline of sensory organs, and the services to treat these diseases and functional declines.

(b) Provision of the "medical benefits package". Care referred to in the "medical benefits package" will be provided to individuals only if it is determined by appropriate healthcare professionals that the care is needed to promote, preserve, or restore the health of the individual and is in accord with generally accepted standards of medical practice.

(1) Promote health. Care is deemed to promote health if the care will enhance the quality of life or daily functional level of the veteran, identify a predisposition for development of a condition or early onset of disease which can be partly or totally ameliorated by monitoring or early diagnosis and treatment, and prevent future disease.

(2) Preserve health. Care is deemed to preserve health if the care will maintain the current quality of life or daily functional level of the veteran, prevent the progression of disease, cure disease, or extend life span.

(3) Restoring health. Care is deemed to restore health if the care will restore the quality of life or daily functional level that has been lost due to illness or injury.

(c) In addition to the care specifically excluded from the "medical benefits package" under paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, the "medical benefits package" does not include the following:

(1) Abortions and abortion counseling.

(2) In vitro fertilization.

(3) Drugs, biologicals, and medical devices not approved by the Food and Drug Administration unless the treating medical facility is conducting formal clinical trials under an Investigational Device Exemption (IDE) or an Investigational New Drug (IND) application, or the drugs, biologicals, or medical devices are prescribed under a compassionate use exemption.

(4) Gender alterations.

(5) Hospital and outpatient care for a veteran who is either a patient or inmate in an institution of another government agency if that agency has a duty to give the care or services. This exclusion does not apply to veterans who are released from incarceration in a prison or jail into a temporary housing program (such as a community residential re-entry center or halfway house).
§ 17.39 Certain Filipino veterans.

(a) Any Filipino Commonwealth Army veteran, including one who was recognized by authority of the U.S. Army as belonging to organized Filipino guerilla forces, or any new Philippine Scout is eligible for hospital care, nursing home care, and outpatient medical services within the United States in the same manner and subject to the same terms and conditions as apply to U.S. veterans, if such veteran or scout resides in the United States and is a citizen or lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence. For purposes of these VA health care benefits, the standards described in 38 CFR 3.42(c) will be accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful permanent residence.

(b) Commonwealth Army Veterans, including those who were recognized by authority of the U.S. Army as belonging to organized Filipino guerilla forces, and new Philippine Scouts are not eligible for VA health care benefits if they do not meet the residency and citizenship requirements described in § 3.42(c).

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0091)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1734)

[71 FR 6680, Feb. 9, 2006]

§ 17.40 Additional services for indigents.

In addition to the usual medical services agreed upon between the governments of the United States and the Republic of the Philippines to be made available to patients for whom the Department of Veterans Affairs has authorized care at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, any such patient determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be indigent or without funds may be furnished toilet articles and barber services, including haircutting and shaving necessary for hygienic reasons.


§ 17.41 Persons eligible for hospital observation and physical examination.

Hospitalization for observation and physical (including mental) examination may be effected when requested by an authorized official, or when found necessary in examination of the following persons:

(a) Claimants or beneficiaries of VA for purposes of disability compensation, pension, participation in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31, and Government insurance. (38 U.S.C. 1711(a))

(b) Claimants or beneficiaries referred to a diagnostic center for study to determine the clinical identity of an obscure disorder.

(c) Employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs when necessary to determine their mental or physical fitness to perform official duties.

(d) Claimants or beneficiaries of other Federal agencies:

(1) Department of Justice—plaintiffs in Government insurance suits.

(2) United States Civil Service Commission—annuitants or applicants for retirement annuity, and such examinations of prospective appointees as may be requested.

(3) Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs—to determine identity, severity, or persistence of disability.

(4) Railroad Retirement Board—applicants for annuity under Public No. 162, 75th Congress.

(5) Other Federal agencies.

(e) Pensioners of nations allied with the United States in World War I and World War II, upon authorization from
accrued officials of the respective governments.

§ 17.42 Examinations on an outpatient basis.

Physical examinations on an outpatient basis may be furnished to applicants who have been tentatively determined to be eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or domiciliary care to determine their need for such care and to the same categories of persons for whom hospitalization for observation and examination may be authorized under §17.41.

§ 17.43 Persons entitled to hospital or domiciliary care.

Hospital or domiciliary care may be provided:

(a) Not subject to the eligibility provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1710, 1722, and 1729, and 38 CFR 17.44 and 17.45, for:

(1) Persons in the Armed Forces when duly referred with authorization therefor, may be furnished hospital care. Emergency treatment may be rendered, without obtaining formal authorization, to such persons upon their own application, when absent from their commands. Identification of active duty members of the uniformed services will be made by military identification card.

(2) Hospital care may be provided, upon authorization, for beneficiaries of the Public Health Service, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, and other Federal agencies.

(3) Pensioners of nations allied with the United States in World War I and World War II may be supplied hospital care when duly authorized.

(b) Emergency hospital care may be provided for:

(1) Persons having no eligibility, as a humanitarian service.

(2) Persons admitted because of presumed discharge or retirement from the Armed Forces, but subsequently found to be ineligible as such.

(3) Employees (not potentially eligible as ex-members of the Armed Forces) and members of their families, when residing on reservations of field facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and when they cannot feasibly obtain emergency treatment from private facilities.

(c) Hospital care when incidental to, and to the extent necessary for, the use of a specialized Department of Veterans Affairs medical resource pursuant to a sharing agreement entered into under §17.210, may be authorized for any person designated by the other party to the agreement as a patient to be benefited under the agreement.

(d) The authorization of services under any provision of this section, except services for eligible veterans, is subject to charges as required by §17.101.

§ 17.44 Hospital care for certain retirees with chronic disability (Executive Orders 10122, 10400 and 11733).

Hospital care may be furnished when beds are available to members or former members of the uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Coast and Geodetic Survey, now National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration hereinafter referred to as NOAA, and Public Health Service) temporarily or permanently retired for physical disability or receiving disability retirement pay who require hospital care for chronic diseases and who have no eligibility for hospital care under laws governing the Department of Veterans Affairs, or who having eligibility do not elect hospitalization as Department of Veterans Affairs beneficiaries. Care under this section is subject to the following conditions:

(a) Persons defined in this section who are members or former members of
§ 17.45 Hospital care for research purposes.

Subject to the provisions of §17.62(g), any person who is a bona fide volunteer may be admitted to a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital when the treatment to be rendered is part of an approved Department of Veterans Affairs research project and there are insufficient veteran-patients suitable for the project.


§ 17.46 Eligibility for hospital, domiciliary or nursing home care of persons discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service.

(a) In furnishing hospital care under 38 U.S.C. 1710(a)(1), VA officials shall:

(1) If the veteran is in immediate need of hospitalization, furnish care at VA facility where the veteran applies or, if that facility is incapable of furnishing care, arrange to admit the veteran to the nearest VA medical center, or Department of Defense hospital with which VA has a sharing agreement under 38 U.S.C. 8111, which is capable of providing the needed care, or if VA or DOD facilities are not available, arrange for care on a contract basis if authorized by 38 U.S.C. 1703 and 38 CFR 17.52; or

(2) If the veteran needs non-immediate hospitalization, schedule the veteran for admission at VA facility where the veteran applies, if the schedule permits, or refer the veteran for admission or scheduling for admission at the nearest VA medical center, or Department of Defense facility with which VA has a sharing agreement under 38 U.S.C. 8111.


(b) Domiciliary care may be furnished when needed to:

(1) Any veteran whose annual income does not exceed the maximum annual rate of pension payable to a veteran in need of regular aid and attendance, or

(2) Any veteran who the Secretary determines had no adequate means of support. An additional requirement for eligibility for domiciliary care is the ability of the veteran to perform the following:

(i) Perform without assistance daily ablutions, such as brushing teeth; bathing; combing hair; body eliminations.

(ii) Dress self, with a minimum of assistance.

(iii) Proceed to and return from the dining hall without aid.
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(iv) Feed Self.
(v) Secure medical attention on an ambulatory basis or by use of personally propelled wheelchair.
(vi) Have voluntary control over body eliminations or control by use of an appropriate prosthesis.
(vii) Make rational and competent decisions as to his or her desire to remain or leave the facility.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1710(b), sec. 102, Pub. L. 100–322

§ 17.47 Considerations applicable in determining eligibility for hospital, nursing home or domiciliary care.

(a)(1) For applicants discharged or released for disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty and who are not in receipt of compensation for service-connected or service-aggravated disability, the official records of the Armed Forces relative to findings of line of duty for its purposes will be accepted in determining eligibility for hospital care. Where the official records of the Armed Forces show a finding of disability not incurred or aggravated in line of duty, such showing will be accepted for the purpose of determining his or her eligibility for hospitalization, notwithstanding the fact that the Department of Veterans Affairs has made a determination in connection with a claim for monetary benefits that the disability was incurred or aggravated not in line of duty.

(2) In those exceptional cases where the official records of the Armed Forces show discharge or release under other than dishonorable conditions because of expiration of period of enlistment or any other reason except disability, but also show a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty during the said enlistment; and the disability so recorded is considered in medical judgment to be or to have been of such character, duration, and degree as to have justified a discharge or release for disability had the period of enlistment not expired or other reason for discharge or release been given, the Under Secretary for Health, upon consideration of a clear, full statement of circumstances, is authorized to approve admission of the applicant for hospital care, provided other eligibility requirements are met. A typical case of this kind will be one where the applicant was under treatment for the said disability recorded during his or her service at the time discharge or release was given for the reason other than disability.

(b)(1) Under 38 U.S.C. 1710(a)(1), veterans who are receiving disability compensation awarded under § 3.800 of this chapter, where a disease, injury or the aggravation of an existing disease or...
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injury occurs as a result of VA examination, medical or surgical treatment, or of hospitalization in a VA health care facility or of participation in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. ch. 31, under any law administered by VA and not the result of his/her own willful misconduct. Treatment may be provided for the disability for which the compensation is being paid or for any other disability. Treatment under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 1710(a)(1) may not be authorized during any period when disability compensation under §3.800 of this title is not being paid because of the provision of §3.800(a)(2), except to the extent continuing eligibility for such treatment is provided for in the judgment for settlement described in §3.800(a)(2) of this title.


(2) For purposes of eligibility for domiciliary care, the phrase no adequate means of support refers to an applicant for domiciliary care whose annual income exceeds the annual rate of pension for a veteran in receipt of regular aid and attendance, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 1503, but who is able to demonstrate to competent VA medical authority, on the basis of objective evidence, that deficits in health and/or functional status render the applicant incapable of pursuing substantially gainful employment, as determined by the Chief of Staff, and who is otherwise without the means to provide adequately for self, or be provided for in the community.


(c) A disability, disease, or defect will comprehend any acute, subacute, or chronic disease (or a general medical, tuberculous, or neuropsychiatric type) of any acute, subacute, or chronic surgical condition susceptible of cure or decided improvement by hospital care; or any condition which does not require hospital care for an acute or chronic condition but requires domiciliary care. Domiciliary care, as the term implies, is the provision of a home, with such ambulant medical care as is needed. To be provided with domiciliary care, the applicant must consistently have a disability, disease, or defect which is essentially chronic in type and is producing disablement of such degree and probable persistency as will incapacitate from earning a living for a prospective period.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1701, 1710)

(d)(1) For purposes of determining eligibility for hospital or nursing home care under §17.47(a), a veteran will be determined unable to defray the expenses of necessary care if the veteran agrees to provide verifiable evidence, as determined by the Secretary, that:

(i) The veteran is eligible to receive medical assistance under a State plan approved under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)

(ii) The veteran is in receipt of pension under 38 U.S.C. 1521; or

(iii) The veteran’s attributable income does not exceed $15,000 if the veteran has no dependents, $18,000 if the veteran has one dependent, plus $1,000 for each additional dependent.


(2) For purposes of determining eligibility for hospital or nursing home care under §17.47(c), a veteran will be determined eligible for necessary care if the veteran agrees to provide verifiable evidence, as determined by the Secretary, that: The veteran’s attributable income does not exceed $20,000 if the veteran has no dependents, $25,000 if the veteran has one dependent, plus $1,000 for each additional dependent.


(3) Effective on January 1 of each year after calendar year 1986, the amounts set forth in paragraph (d)(1) and (2) of this section shall be increased by the percentage by which the maximum rates of pension were increased under 38 U.S.C. 1111(a), during the preceding year.

(4) Determinations with respect to attributable income made under paragraph (d)(1) and (2) of this section, shall be made in the same manner, including the same sources of income and exclusions from income, as determinations with respect to income are made for determining eligibility for pension under §§3.271 and 3.272 of this title. The term attributable income means income of a veteran for the calendar year preceding application for care, determined in the same manner as the manner in which a determination is made of the total amount of income by which the rate of pension for such veteran under 38 U.S.C. 1521 would be reduced if such veteran were eligible for pension under that section.


(5) Notwithstanding the attributable income of a veteran, VA may determine that such veteran is not eligible under paragraph (d)(1) and (2) of this section if the corpus of the estate of the veteran is such that under all the circumstances it is reasonable that some part of the corpus of the estate of the veteran be consumed for the veteran’s maintenance. The corpus of the estate of a veteran shall be determined in the same manner as determinations are made with respect to the determinations of eligibility for pension under §3.275 of this chapter. The term corpus of the estate of the veteran includes the corpus of the estates of the veteran’s spouse and dependent children, if any.


(6) In order to avoid hardship VA may determine that a veteran is eligible for care notwithstanding that the veteran does not meet the income requirements established in paragraph (d)(1)(iii) or (d)(2) of this section, if projections of the veteran’s income for the year following application for care are substantially below the income requirements established in paragraph (d)(1)(iii) or (d)(2) of this section.


(e)(1) If VA determines that an individual was incorrectly charged a copayment, VA will refund the amount of any copayment actually paid by that individual.


(2) In the event a veteran provided inaccurate information on an application and is incorrectly deemed eligible for care under 38 U.S.C. 1710(a)(1) or (a)(2) rather than 38 U.S.C. 1710(a)(3), VA shall retroactively bill the veteran for the applicable copayment.


(f) If a veteran who receives hospital or nursing home care under 38 U.S.C. 1710(a)(2) or outpatient care under 38 U.S.C. 1712(a)(4) by virtue of the veteran’s eligibility for hospital care under 38 U.S.C. 1710(a), fails to pay to the United States the amounts agreed to under those sections shall be grounds for determining, in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Under Secretary for Health, that the veteran is not eligible to receive further care under those sections until such amounts have been paid in full.


(g)(1) Persons hospitalized who have no service-connected disabilities pursuant to §17.47, and/or persons receiving outpatient medical services pursuant to paragraphs (e), (f), (i), (j), and/or (k) of §17.60 who have no service-connected disabilities who it is believed may be eligible for hospital care and/or medical services, or reimbursement for the expenses of care or services for all or part of the cost thereof by reason of the following:

(i) Membership in a union, fraternal or other organization, or

(ii) Coverage under an insurance policy, contract, medical, or hospital service agreement, membership, or subscription contract or similar arrangement under which health services for individuals are provided or the expenses of such services are paid, will not be furnished hospital care or medical services without charge therefore to the extent of the amount for which
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such parties referred to in paragraphs (g)(1)(i) or (g)(1)(ii) of this section, are, will become, or may be liable. Persons believed entitled to care under any of the plans discussed above will be required to provide such information as the Secretary may require. Provisions of this paragraph are effective April 7, 1986, except in the case of a health care policy or contract that was entered into before that date, the effective date shall be the day after the plan was modified or renewed or on which there was any change in premium or coverage and will apply only to care and services provided by VA after the date the plan was modified, renewed, or on which there was any change in premium or coverage.


(2) Persons hospitalized for the treatment of nonservice-connected disabilities pursuant to §17.47, or persons receiving outpatient medical services pursuant to paragraph (e), (f), (h), (j), or (k) of §17.60, and who it is believed may be entitled to hospital care and/or medical services or to reimbursement for all or part of the cost thereof from any one or more of the following parties:
   (i) Workers’ Compensation or employer’s liability statutes, State or Federal;
   (ii) By reason of statutory or other relationships with third parties, including those liable for damages because of negligence or other legal wrong;
   (iii) By reason of a statute in a State, or political subdivision of a State;
      (A) Which requires automobile accident reparations or;
      (B) Which provides compensation or payment for medical care to victims suffering personal injuries as the result of a crime of personal violence;
   (iv) Right to maintenance and cure in admiralty;
   will not be furnished hospital care or medical services without charge therefore to the extent of the amount for which such parties are, will become, or may be liable. Persons believed entitled to care under circumstances described in paragraph (g)(2)(i) or (g)(2)(iii) of this section will be required to complete such forms as the Secretary may require, such as a power of attorney and assignment. Notice of this assignment will be mailed promptly to the party or parties believed to be liable. When the amount of charges is ascertained, a bill therefore will be mailed to such party or parties. Persons believed entitled to care under circumstances described in paragraph (g)(2)(i) or (g)(2)(iii) of this section will be required to complete such forms as the Secretary may require.


(h) Within the limits of Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, any veteran who is receiving nursing home care in a hospital under the direct jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs, may be furnished medical services to correct or treat any nonservice-connected disability of such veteran, in addition to treatment incidental to the disability for which the veteran is hospitalized, if the veteran is willing, and such services are reasonably necessary to protect the health of such veteran.

(1) Participating in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31 refers to any veteran.

(1) Who is eligible for and entitled to participate in a rehabilitation program under chapter 31.

   (i) Who is in an extended evaluation period for the purpose of determining feasibility, or
   (ii) For whom a rehabilitation objective has been selected, or
   (iii) Who is pursuing a rehabilitation program, or
   (iv) Who is pursuing a program of independent living, or
   (v) Who is being provided employment assistance under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31, and

(2) Who is medically determined to be in need of hospital care or medical services (including dental) for any of the following reasons:

   (i) Make possible his or her entrance into a rehabilitation program; or
   (ii) Achieve the goals of the veteran’s vocational rehabilitation program; or
   (iii) Prevent interruption of a rehabilitation program; or
§ 17.48 Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residences program.

(a) This section sets forth requirements for persons residing in housing under the Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residences program.

(b) House managers shall be responsible for coordinating and supervising the day-to-day operations of the facilities. The local VA program coordinator shall select each house manager and may give preference to an individual who is a current or past resident of the facility or the program. A house manager must have the following qualifications:

(1) A stable, responsible and caring demeanor;
(2) Leadership qualities including the ability to motivate;
(3) Effective communication skills including the ability to interact;
(4) A willingness to accept feedback;
(5) A willingness to follow a chain of command.

(c) Each resident admitted to the Transitional Residence, except for a house manager, must also be in the Compensated Work Therapy program.

(d) Each resident, except for a house manager, must bi-weekly, in advance, pay a fee to VA for living in the housing. The local VA program coordinator will establish the fee for each resident in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (d)(1) of this section.

(1) The total amount of actual operating expenses of the residence (utilities, maintenance, furnishings, appliances, service equipment, all other operating costs) for the previous fiscal year plus 15 percent of that amount equals the total operating budget for the current fiscal year. The total operating budget is to be divided by the average number of beds occupied during the previous fiscal year and the resulting amount is the average yearly amount per bed. The bi-weekly fee shall equal 1/26th of the average yearly amount per bed, except that a resident shall not, on average, pay more than 30 percent of their gross CWT (Compensated Work Therapy) bi-weekly earnings. The VA program manager shall, bi-annually, conduct a review of the factors in this paragraph for determining resident payments. If he or she determines that the payments are too
high or too low by more than 5 percent of the total operating budget, he or she shall recalculate resident payments under the criteria set forth in this paragraph, except that the calculations shall be based on the current fiscal year (actual amounts for the elapsed portion and projected amounts for the remainder).

(2) If the revenues of a residence do not meet the expenses of the residence resulting in an inability to pay actual operating expenses, the medical center of jurisdiction shall provide the funds necessary to return the residence to fiscal solvency in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(e) The length of stay in housing under the Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residences program is based on the individual needs of each resident, as determined by consensus of the resident and his/her VA Clinical Treatment team. However, the length of stay should not exceed 12 months.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1772)

[70 FR 29627, May 24, 2005]

§ 17.49 Priorities for outpatient medical services and inpatient hospital care.

In scheduling appointments for outpatient medical services and admissions for inpatient hospital care, the Under Secretary for Health shall give priority to:

(a) Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50 percent or greater based on one or more disabilities or unemployability; and

(b) Veterans needing care for a service-connected disability.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 301, 1705, 1710)

[67 FR 58529, Sept. 17, 2002]

§ 17.50 Use of Department of Defense, Public Health Service or other Federal hospitals

Hospital facilities operated by the Department of Defense or the Public Health Service (or any other agency of the U.S. Government) which do not have beds allocated for the care of Department of Veterans Affairs patients may be used for the care of Department of Veterans Affairs patients pursuant to agreements between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the department or agency operating the facility. When such an agreement has been entered into and a bed allocation for Department of Veterans Affairs patients has been provided for in a specific hospital covered by the agreement, care may be authorized within the bed allocation for any veteran eligible under 38 U.S.C. 1710 or 38 CFR 17.44. Care in a Federal facility not operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, however, shall not be authorized for any military retiree whose sole basis for eligibility is under §17.46b, or, except in Alaska and Hawaii, for any retiree of the uniformed services suffering from a chronic disability whose entitlement is under §17.46b, §17.47(b)(2) or §17.47(c)(2) regardless of whether he or she may have dual eligibility under other provisions of §17.47.


§ 17.51 Emergency use of Department of Defense, Public Health Service or other Federal hospitals.

Hospital care in facilities operated by the Department of Defense or the Public Health Service (or any other agency of the U.S. Government) which do not have beds allocated for the care of Department of Veterans Affairs patients may be authorized subject to the limitations enumerated in §17.50 only in emergency circumstances for any veteran otherwise eligible for hospital care under 38 U.S.C. 1710 or 38 CFR 17.46.


§ 17.52 Hospital care and medical services in non-VA facilities.

(a) When VA facilities or other government facilities are not capable of furnishing economical hospital care or medical services because of geographic inaccessibility or are not capable of furnishing care or services required, VA may contract with non-VA facilities for care in accordance with the
provisions of this section. When demand is only for infrequent use, individual authorizations may be used. Care in public or private facilities, however, subject to the provisions of §§17.53, 17.54, 17.55 and 17.56, will only be authorized, whether under a contract or an individual authorization, for—

(1) Hospital care or medical services to a veteran for the treatment of—

(i) A service-connected disability; or

(ii) A disability for which a veteran was discharged or released from the active military, naval, or air service or

(iii) A disability of a veteran who has a total disability permanent in nature from a service-connected disability, or

(iv) For a disability associated with and held to be aggravating a service-connected disability, or

(v) For any disability of a veteran participating in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. ch. 31 and when there is a need for hospital care or medical services for any of the reasons enumerated in §17.48(j).

(2) Medical services for the treatment of any disability of—

(i) A veteran who has a service-connected disability rated at 50 percent or more,

(ii) A veteran who has received VA inpatient care for treatment of non-service-connected conditions for which treatment was begun during the period of inpatient care. The treatment period (to include care furnished in both facilities of VA and non-VA facilities or any combination of such modes of care) may not continue for a period exceeding 12 months following discharge from the hospital except when it is determined that a longer period is required by virtue of the disabilities being treated, and

(iii) A veteran of the Mexican border period of World War I who is in receipt of increased pension or additional compensation based on the need for aid and attendance or housebound benefits when it has been determined based on an examination by a physician employed by VA (or, in areas where no such physician is available, by a physician carrying out such function under a contract or fee arrangement), that the medical condition of such veteran precludes appropriate treatment in VA facilities;


(3) Hospital care or medical services for the treatment of medical emergencies which pose a serious threat to the life or health of a veteran receiving hospital care or medical services in a facility over which the Secretary has direct jurisdiction or government facility with which the Secretary contracts, and for which the facility is not staffed or equipped to perform, and transfer to a public or private hospital which has the necessary staff or equipment is the only feasible means of providing the necessary treatment, until such time following the furnishing of care in the non-VA facility as the veteran can be safely transferred to a VA facility;


(4) Hospital care for women veterans;


(5) Through September 30, 1988, hospital care or medical services that will obviate the need for hospital admission for veterans in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, except that the dollar expenditure in Fiscal year 1986 cannot exceed 85% of the Fiscal year 1985 obligations, in Fiscal year 1987 the dollar expenditure cannot exceed 50% of the Fiscal year 1985 obligations and in Fiscal year 1988 the dollar expenditure cannot exceed 25% of the Fiscal year 1985 obligations.


(6) Hospital care or medical services that will obviate the need for hospital admission for veterans in Alaska, Hawaii, Virgin Islands and other territories of the United States except that the annually determined hospital patient load and incidence of the furnishing of medical services to veterans hospitalized or treated at the expense...
§ 17.53 Limitations on use of public or private hospitals.

The admission of any patient to a private or public hospital at Department of Veterans Affairs expense will only be authorized if a Department of Veterans Affairs medical center or other Federal facility to which the patient would otherwise be eligible for admission is not feasibly available. A Department of Veterans Affairs facility may be considered as not feasibly available when the urgency of the applicant’s medical condition, the relative distance of the travel involved, or the nature of the treatment required makes it necessary or economically advisable to use public or private facilities. In those instances where care in public or private hospitals at Department of Veterans Affairs expense is authorized because a Department of Veterans Affairs or other Federal facility was not feasibly available, as defined in this section, the authorization will be continued after admission only for the period of time required to stabilize or improve the patient’s condition to the extent that further care is no longer required to satisfy the purpose for which it was initiated.

(9) Diagnostic services necessary for determination of eligibility for, or of the appropriate course of treatment in connection with, furnishing medical services at independent VA outpatient clinics to obviate the need for hospital admission.

(10) For any disability of a veteran receiving VA contract nursing home care, the veteran is receiving contract nursing home care and requires emergency treatment in non-VA facilities.

(11) For completion of evaluation for observation and examination (O&E) purposes, clinic directors or their designees will authorize necessary diagnostic services at non-VA facilities (on an inpatient or outpatient basis) in order to complete requests from VA Regional Offices for O&E of a person to determine eligibility for VA benefits or services.

(b) The Under Secretary for Health shall only furnish care and treatment under paragraph (a) of this section to veterans described in §17.47(d).

(1) To the extent that resources are available and are not otherwise required to assure that VA can furnish needed care and treatment to veterans described in §17.47 (a) and (c), and

(2) If the veteran agrees to pay the United States an amount as determined in §17.48(e).

(9) Diagnostic services necessary for determination of eligibility for, or of the appropriate course of treatment in connection with, furnishing medical services at independent VA outpatient clinics to obviate the need for hospital admission.

(10) For any disability of a veteran receiving VA contract nursing home care, the veteran is receiving contract nursing home care and requires emergency treatment in non-VA facilities.

(11) For completion of evaluation for observation and examination (O&E) purposes, clinic directors or their designees will authorize necessary diagnostic services at non-VA facilities (on an inpatient or outpatient basis) in order to complete requests from VA Regional Offices for O&E of a person to determine eligibility for VA benefits or services.

(b) The Under Secretary for Health shall only furnish care and treatment under paragraph (a) of this section to veterans described in §17.47(d).

(1) To the extent that resources are available and are not otherwise required to assure that VA can furnish needed care and treatment to veterans described in §17.47 (a) and (c), and

(2) If the veteran agrees to pay the United States an amount as determined in §17.48(e).

(9) Diagnostic services necessary for determination of eligibility for, or of the appropriate course of treatment in connection with, furnishing medical services at independent VA outpatient clinics to obviate the need for hospital admission.

(10) For any disability of a veteran receiving VA contract nursing home care, the veteran is receiving contract nursing home care and requires emergency treatment in non-VA facilities.

(11) For completion of evaluation for observation and examination (O&E) purposes, clinic directors or their designees will authorize necessary diagnostic services at non-VA facilities (on an inpatient or outpatient basis) in order to complete requests from VA Regional Offices for O&E of a person to determine eligibility for VA benefits or services.

(b) The Under Secretary for Health shall only furnish care and treatment under paragraph (a) of this section to veterans described in §17.47(d).

(1) To the extent that resources are available and are not otherwise required to assure that VA can furnish needed care and treatment to veterans described in §17.47 (a) and (c), and

(2) If the veteran agrees to pay the United States an amount as determined in §17.48(e).

(9) Diagnostic services necessary for determination of eligibility for, or of the appropriate course of treatment in connection with, furnishing medical services at independent VA outpatient clinics to obviate the need for hospital admission.

(10) For any disability of a veteran receiving VA contract nursing home care, the veteran is receiving contract nursing home care and requires emergency treatment in non-VA facilities.

(11) For completion of evaluation for observation and examination (O&E) purposes, clinic directors or their designees will authorize necessary diagnostic services at non-VA facilities (on an inpatient or outpatient basis) in order to complete requests from VA Regional Offices for O&E of a person to determine eligibility for VA benefits or services.

(b) The Under Secretary for Health shall only furnish care and treatment under paragraph (a) of this section to veterans described in §17.47(d).

(1) To the extent that resources are available and are not otherwise required to assure that VA can furnish needed care and treatment to veterans described in §17.47 (a) and (c), and

(2) If the veteran agrees to pay the United States an amount as determined in §17.48(e).
§ 17.54 Necessity for prior authorization.

(a) The admission of a veteran to a non-Department of Veterans Affairs hospital at Department of Veterans Affairs expense must be authorized in advance. In the case of an emergency which existed at the time of admission, an authorization may be deemed a prior authorization if an application, whether formal or informal, by telephone, telegraph or other communication, made by the veteran or by others in his or her behalf is dispatched to the Department of Veterans Affairs (1) for veterans in the 48 contiguous States and Puerto Rico, within 72 hours after the hour of admission, including in the computation of time Saturday, Sunday and holidays, or (2) for veterans in a noncontiguous State, territory or possession of the United States (not including Puerto Rico) if facilities for dispatch of application as described in this section are not available within the 72-hour period, provided the application was filed within 72 hours after facilities became available.

(b) When an application for admission by a veteran in one of the 48 contiguous States in the United States or in Puerto Rico has been made more than 72 hours after admission, or more than 72 hours after facilities are available in a noncontiguous State, territory of possession of the United States, authorization for continued care at Department of Veterans Affairs expense shall be effective as of the postmark or dispatch date of the application, or the date of any telephone call constituting an informal application.


§ 17.55 Payment for authorized public or private hospital care.

Except as otherwise provided in this section, payment for public or private hospital care authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1703 and 38 CFR 17.52 of this part or under 38 U.S.C. 1720 and 38 CFR 17.120 of this part shall be effective as of the postmark or dispatch date of the application, or the date of any telephone call constituting an informal application.

(g) Payments made in accordance with this section shall constitute payment in full and the provider or agent for the provider may not impose any additional charge on a veteran or his or her health care insurer for any inpatient services for which payment is made by the VA.

(h) Hospitals of distinct part hospital units excluded from the prospective payment system by Medicare and hospitals that do not participate in Medicare will be paid at the national cost-to-charge ratio times the billed charges that are reasonable, usual, customary, and not in excess of rates or fees the hospital charges the general public for similar services in the community.

(i) A hospital participating in an alternative payment system that has been granted a Federal waiver from the prospective payment system under the provisions of 42 U.S.C. section 1395f(b)(3) or 42 U.S.C. section 1395ww(c) for the purposes of Medicare payment shall not be subject to the payment methodology set forth in this section so long as such Federal waiver remains in effect.

(j) Payments for episodes of hospital care furnished in Alaska that begin during the period starting on the effective date of this section through the 364th day thereafter will be in the amount determined by the HCFA PRIER plus 50 percent of the difference between the amount billed by the hospital and the amount determined by the PRIER. Claims for services provided during that period will be accepted for payment by VA under this paragraph (k) until December 31 of the year following the year in which this section became effective.

(k) Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, VA, for public or private hospital care covered by this section, will pay the lesser of the amount determined under paragraphs (a) through (j) of this section or the amount negotiated with the hospital or its agent.

(Authority: 38 USCS 513, 1703, 1728; §233 of P.L. 99–576)

with discounted rates from non-VA providers as a result of existing contracts that the non-VA provider may have within the commercial health care industry.

(iii) The amount that the provider bills the general public for the same service.

(b) For physician and non-physician professional services rendered in Alaska, VA will pay for services in accordance with a fee schedule that uses the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act mandated national standard coding sets. VA will pay a specific amount for each service for which there is a corresponding code. Under the VA Alaska Fee Schedule, the amount paid in Alaska for each code will be 90 percent of the average amount VA actually paid in Alaska for the same services in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003. For services that VA provided less than eight times in Alaska in FY 2003, for services represented by codes established after FY 2003, and for unit-based codes prior to FY 2004, VA will take the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ rate for each code and multiply it times the average percentage paid by VA in Alaska for Medicare and Medicaid Services-like codes. VA will increase the amounts on the VA Alaska Fee Schedule annually in accordance with the published national Medicare Economic Index (MEI). For those years where the annual average is a negative percentage, the fee schedule will remain the same as the previous year. Payment for non-VA health care professional services in Alaska shall be the lesser of the amount billed or the amount calculated under this subpart.

(c) Payments made by VA to a non-VA facility or provider under this section shall be considered payment in full. Accordingly, the facility or provider or agent for the facility or provider may not impose any additional charge for any services for which payment is made by VA.

(d) In a case where a veteran has paid for emergency treatment for which VA may reimburse the veteran under §17.120, VA will reimburse the amount that the veteran actually paid. Any amounts due to the provider but unpaid by the veteran will be reimbursed to the provider under paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1703, 1728)

[75 FR 78915, Dec. 17, 2010]

§17.57 Use of community nursing homes.

(a) Nursing home care in a contract public or private nursing home facility may be authorized for the following: Any veteran who has been discharged from a hospital under the direct jurisdiction of VA and is currently receiving VA hospital based medical services.


(b) To the extent that resources are available and are not otherwise required to assure that VA can furnish needed care and treatment to veterans described in 38 U.S.C. 1710(a)(1), the Under Secretary for Health may furnish care under this paragraph to any veteran described in 38 U.S.C. 1710(a)(2) if the veteran agrees to pay the United States an amount as determined in 38 U.S.C. 1710(f).


(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1720(b)


§17.60 Extensions of community nursing home care beyond six months.

Directors of health care facilities may authorize, for any veteran whose hospitalization was not primarily for a service-connected disability, an extension of nursing home care at VA expense beyond six months when the need for nursing home care continues to exist and

(a) Arrangements for payment of such care through a public assistance program (such as Medicaid) for which the veteran has applied, have been delayed due to unforeseen eligibility
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VA health care personnel may assist a veteran by referring such veteran for placement in a privately or publicly-owned community residential care facility if:

(a) At the time of initiating the assistance:

(1) The veteran is receiving VA medical services on an outpatient basis or VA medical center, domiciliary, or nursing home care; or

(2) Such care or services were furnished the veteran within the preceding 12 months;

(b) The veteran does not need hospital or nursing home care but is unable to live independently because of medical (including psychiatric) conditions and has no suitable family resources to provide needed monitoring, supervision, and any necessary assistance in the veteran’s daily living activities; and

(c) The facility has been approved in accordance with §17.63 of this part.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

§ 17.62 Definitions.

For the purpose of §§17.61 through 17.72:

(a) The term community residential care means the monitoring, supervision, and assistance, in accordance with a statement of needed care, of the daily living activities of referred veterans in an approved home in the community by the facility’s provider.

(b) The term daily living activities includes:

(1) Walking;

(2) Bathing, shaving, brushing teeth, combing hair;

(3) Dressing;

(4) Eating;

(5) Getting in or getting out of bed;

(6) Laundry;

(7) Cleaning room;

(8) Managing money;

(9) Shopping;

(10) Using public transportation;

(11) Writing letters;

(12) Making telephone calls;

(13) Obtaining appointments;

(14) Self-administration of medications;

(15) Recreational and leisure activities; and

(16) Other similar activities.

(c) The term paper hearing means a review of the written evidence of record by the hearing official.

(d) The term oral hearing means the in person testimony of representatives of a community residential care facility and of VA before the hearing official and the review of the written evidence of record by that official.

(e) The term approving official means the Director or, if designated by the Director, the Associate Director or Chief of Staff of a Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center or Outpatient Clinic which has jurisdiction to approve a community residential care facility.

(f) The term hearing official means the Director or, if designated by the Director, the Associate Director or Chief of Staff of a Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center or Outpatient Clinic which has jurisdiction to
§ 17.63 Approval of community residential care facilities.

The approving official may approve a community residential care facility, based on the report of a VA inspection and on any findings of necessary interim monitoring of the facility, if that facility meets the following standards:

(a) Health and safety standards. The facility must:

(1) Meet all State and local regulations including construction, maintenance, and sanitation regulations;

(2) Meet the requirements in the applicable provisions of NFPA 101 and NFPA 101A (incorporated by reference, see §17.1) and the other publications referenced in those provisions. The institution shall provide sufficient staff to assist patients in the event of fire or other emergency. Any equivalencies or variances to VA requirements must be approved by the appropriate Veterans Health Administration Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director;

(3) Have safe and functioning systems for heating and/or cooling, as needed (a heating or cooling system is deemed to be needed if VA determines that, in the county, parish, or similar jurisdiction where the facility is located, a majority of community residential care facilities or other extended care facilities have one), hot and cold water, electricity, plumbing, sewage, cooking, laundry, artificial and natural light, and ventilation.

(4) Meet the following additional requirements, if the provisions for One and Two-Family Dwellings, as defined in NFPA 101, are applicable to the facility:

(i) Portable fire extinguishers must be installed, inspected, and maintained in accordance with NFPA 10 (incorporated by reference, see §17.1); and

(ii) The facility must meet the requirements in section 33.7 of NFPA 101.

(b) [Reserved]

(c) Interior plan. The facility must:

(1) Have comfortable dining areas, adequate in size for the number of residents;

(2) Have comfortable living room areas, adequate in size to accommodate a reasonable proportion of residents; and

(3) Maintain at least one functional toilet and lavatory, and bathing or shower facility for every six people living in the facility, including provider and staff.

(d) Laundry service. The facility must provide or arrange for laundry service.

(e) Residents’ bedrooms. Residents’ bedrooms must:

(1) Contain no more than four beds;

(2) Measure, exclusive of closet space, at least 100 square feet for a single-resident room, or 80 square feet for each resident in a multiresident room; and

(3) Contain a suitable bed for each resident and appropriate furniture and furnishings.

(f) Nutrition. The facility must:

(1) Provide a safe and sanitary food service that meets individual nutritional requirements and residents’ preferences;

(2) Plan menus to meet currently recommended dietary allowances;

(g) Activities. The facility must plan and facilitate appropriate recreational and leisure activities to meet individual needs.

(h) Residents’ rights. The facility must have written policies and procedures that ensure the following rights for each resident:

(i) Each resident has the right to:

(1) Be informed of the rights described in this section;

(ii) The confidentiality and nondisclosure of information obtained by community residential care facility staff on the residents and the residents’ records subject to the requirements of applicable law;

(iii) Be able to inspect the residents’ own records kept by the community residential care facility;

(iv) Exercise rights as a citizen; and

(v) Voice grievances and make recommendations concerning the policies and procedures of the facility.

(2) Financial affairs. Residents must be allowed to manage their own personal financial affairs, except when the resident has been restricted in this manner.
right by law. If a resident requests assistance from the facility in managing personal financial affairs the request must be documented.

(3) Privacy. Residents must:
(i) Be treated with respect, consideration, and dignity;
(ii) Have access, in reasonable privacy, to a telephone within the facility;
(iii) Be able to send and receive mail unopened and uncensored; and
(iv) Have privacy of self and possessions.

(4) Work. No resident will perform household duties, other than personal housekeeping tasks, unless the resident receives compensation for these duties or is told in advance they are voluntary and the patient agrees to do them.

(5) Freedom of association. Residents have the right to:
(i) Receive visitors and associate freely with persons and groups of their own choosing both within and outside the facility;
(ii) Make contacts in the community and achieve the highest level of independence, autonomy, and interaction in the community of which the resident is capable;
(iii) Leave and return freely to the facility, and
(iv) Practice the religion of their own choosing or choose to abstain from religious practice.

(6) Transfer. Residents have the right to transfer to another facility or to an independent living situation.

(i) Records. (1) The facility must maintain records on each resident in a secure place.
(2) Facility records must include:
(i) Emergency notification procedures; and
(ii) A copy of all signed agreements with the resident.
(3) Records may only be disclosed with the resident’s permission, or when required by law.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900–0491)

(j) Staff requirements. (1) Sufficient, qualified staff must be on duty and available to care for the resident and ensure the health and safety of each resident.

(2) The community residential care provider and staff must have the following qualifications: Adequate education, training, or experience to maintain the facility.

(k) Cost of community residential care. (1) Payment for the charges of community residential care is not the responsibility of the United States Government or VA.

(2) The resident or an authorized personal representative and a representative of the community residential care facility must agree upon the charge and payment procedures for community residential care.

(3) The charges for community residential care must be reasonable:
(i) For residents in a community residential care facility as of June 14, 1989, the rates charged for care are pegged to the facility’s basic rate for care as of July 31, 1987. Increases in the pegged rate during any calendar year cannot exceed the annual percentage increase in the National Consumer Price Index (CPI) for that year;
(ii) For community residential care facilities approved after July 31, 1987, the rates for care shall not exceed 110 percent of the average rate for approved facilities in that State as of March 31, 1987. Increases in this rate during any calendar year cannot exceed the annual percentage increase in the National Consumer Price Index (CPI) for that year.
(iii) The approving official may approve a deviation from the requirements of paragraphs (k)(3)(i) through (ii) of this section upon request from a community residential care facility representative, a resident in the facility, or an applicant for residency, if the approving official determines that the cost of care for the resident will be greater than the average cost of care for other residents, or if the resident chooses to pay more for the care provided at a facility which exceeds VA standards.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)
§ 17.64 [Reserved]

§ 17.65 Approvals and provisional approvals of community residential care facilities.

(a) An approval of a facility meeting all of the standards in 38 CFR 17.63 based on the report of a VA inspection and any findings of necessary interim monitoring of the facility shall be for a 12-month period.

(b) The approving official, based on the report of a VA inspection and on any findings of necessary interim monitoring of the facility, may provide a community residential care facility with a provisional approval if that facility does not meet one or more of the standards in 38 CFR 17.63, provided that the deficiencies do not jeopardize the health or safety of the residents, and that the facility management and VA agree to a plan of correcting the deficiencies in a specified amount of time.

A provisional approval shall not be for more than 12 months and shall not be for more time than VA determines is reasonable for correcting the specific deficiencies.

(c) An approval may be changed to a provisional approval or terminated under the provisions of §§17.66 through 17.71 because of a subsequent failure to meet the standards of §17.63 and a provisional approval may be terminated under the provisions of §§17.66 through 17.71 based on failure to meet the plan of correction or failure otherwise to meet the standards of §17.63.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)
[74 FR 6308, Dec. 3, 2009]

§ 17.66 Notice of noncompliance with VA standards.

If the hearing official determines that an approved community residential care facility does not comply with the standards set forth in §17.63 of this part, the hearing official shall notify the community residential care facility in writing:

(a) The standards which have not been met;

(b) The date by which the standards must be met in order to avoid revocation of VA approval;

(c) The community residential care facility’s opportunity to request an oral or paper hearing under §17.51n of this part before VA approval is revoked; and

(d) The date by which the hearing official must receive the community residential care facility’s request for a hearing, which shall not be less than 10 calendar days and not more than 20 calendar days after the date of VA notice of noncompliance, unless the hearing official determines that noncompliance with the standards threatens the lives of community residential care residents in which case the hearing official must receive the community residential care facility’s request for an oral or paper hearing within 36 hours of receipt of VA notice.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

§ 17.67 Request for a hearing.

The community residential care facility operator must specify in writing whether an oral or paper hearing is requested. The request for the hearing must be sent to the hearing official. Timely receipt of a request for a hearing will stay the revocation of VA approval until the hearing official issues a decision on the community residential care facility’s compliance with VA standards. The hearing official may accept a request for a hearing received after the time limit, if the community residential care facility shows that the failure of the request to be received by the hearing official’s office by the required date was due to circumstances beyond its control.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

§ 17.68 Notice and conduct of hearing.

(a) Upon receipt of a request for an oral hearing, the hearing official shall:

(1) Notify the community residential care facility operator of the date, time, and location for the hearing; and

(2) Notify the community residential care facility operator that written statements and other evidence for the record may be submitted to the hearing official before the date of the hearing. An oral hearing shall be informal.
§ 17.69 Waiver of opportunity for hearing.

If representatives of a community residential care facility which receive a notice of noncompliance under §17.66 of this part fail to appear at an oral hearing of which they have been notified or fail to submit written statements for a paper hearing in accordance with §17.68 of this part, unless the hearing official determines that their failure was due to circumstances beyond their control, the hearing official shall:

(a) Consider the representatives of the community residential care facility to have waived their opportunity for a hearing; and,

(b) Revoke VA approval of the community residential care facility and notify the community residential care facility of this revocation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

§ 17.70 Written decision following a hearing.

(a) The hearing official shall issue a written decision within 20 days of the completion of the hearing. An oral hearing shall be considered completed when the hearing ceases to receive in person testimony. A paper hearing shall be considered complete on the date by which written statements must be submitted to the hearing official in order to be considered as part of the record.

(b) The hearing official’s determination of a community residential care facility’s noncompliance with VA standards shall be based on the preponderance of the evidence.

(c) The written decision shall include:

(1) A statement of the facts;

(2) A determination whether the community residential care facility complies with the standards set forth in §17.63 of this part; and

(3) A determination of the time period, if any, the community residential care facility shall have to remedy any noncompliance with VA standards before revocation of VA approval occurs.

(d) The hearing official’s determination of any time period under paragraph (c)(3) of this section shall consider the safety and health of the residents of the community residential care facility and the length of time since the community residential care facility received notice of the noncompliance.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)

§ 17.71 Revocation of VA approval.

(a) If a hearing official determines under §17.70 of this part that a community residential care facility does not comply with the standards set forth in §17.63 of this part and determines that the community residential care facility shall not have further time to remedy the noncompliance, the hearing official shall revoke approval of the community residential care facility and notify the community residential care facility of this revocation.

(b) Upon revocation of VA approval, VA health care personnel shall:

(1) Cease referring veterans to the community residential care facility; and,

(2) Notify any veteran residing in the community residential care facility of the facility’s disapproval and request permission to assist in the veteran’s removal from the facility. If a veteran has a person or entity authorized by law to give permission on behalf of the
veteran, VA health care personnel shall notify that person or entity of the community residential care facility’s disapproval and request permission to assist in removing the veteran from the community residential care facility.

(c) If the hearing official determines that a community residential care facility fails to comply with the standards set forth in §17.63 of this part and determines that the community residential care facility shall have an additional time period to remedy the noncompliance, the hearing official shall review at the end of the time period the evidence of the community residential care facility’s compliance with the standards which were to have been met by the end of that time period and determine if the community residential care facility complies with the standards. If the community residential care facility fails to comply with these or any other standards, the procedures set forth in §§17.66–17.71 of this part shall be followed.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)


§ 17.72 Availability of information.

VA standards will be made available to other Federal, State and local agencies charged with the responsibility of licensing, or otherwise regulating or inspecting community residential care facilities.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1730)


USE OF SERVICES OF OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES

§ 17.80 Alcohol and drug dependence or abuse treatment and rehabilitation in residential and nonresidential facilities by contract.

(a) Alcohol and drug dependence or abuse treatment and rehabilitation may be authorized by contract in nonresidential facilities and in residential facilities provided by halfway houses, therapeutic communities, psychiatric residential treatment centers and other community-based treatment facilities, when considered to be medically advantageous and cost effective for the following:

1. Veterans who have been or are being furnished care by professional staff over which the Secretary has jurisdiction and such transitional care is reasonably necessary to continue treatment;

2. Persons in the Armed Forces who, upon discharge therefrom will become eligible veterans, when duly referred with authorization for Department of Veterans Affairs medical center hospital care in preparation for treatment and rehabilitation in this program under the following limitations:

   (i) Such persons may be accepted by transfer only during the last 30 days of such person’s enlistment or tour of duty,

   (ii) The person requests transfer in writing for treatment for a specified period of time during the last 30 days of such person’s enlistment period or tour of duty,

   (iii) Treatment does not extend beyond the period of time specified in the request unless such person requests in writing an extension for a further specified period of time and such request is approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center Director authorizing treatment and rehabilitation,

   (iv) Such care and treatment will be provided as if the person were a veteran, subject to reimbursement by the respective military service for the costs of hospital care and control treatment provided while the person is an active duty member.

(b) The maximum period for one treatment episode is limited to 60 days. The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center Director may authorize one 30-day extension.

(c) Any person who has been discharged or released from active military, naval or air service, and who, upon application for treatment and rehabilitative services under the authority of this section is determined to be legally ineligible for such treatment or rehabilitation services shall be:

1. Provided referral services to assist the person, to the maximum extent possible, in obtaining treatment and rehabilitation services from sources...
§ 17.81 Contracts for residential treatment services for veterans with alcohol or drug dependence or abuse disabilities.

(a) Contracts for treatment services authorized under §17.80(a) may be awarded in accordance with applicable Department of Veterans Affairs and Federal procurement procedures. Such contracts will be awarded only after the quality and effectiveness, including adequate protection for the safety of the residents of the contractor's program, has been determined and then only to contractors, determined by the Under Secretary for Health or designee to meet the following requirements.

(1) Meet fire safety requirements as follows:

(i) The building must meet the requirements in the applicable provisions of NFPA 101 (incorporated by reference, see §17.1) and the other publications referenced in those provisions. Any equivalencies or variances to VA requirements must be approved by the appropriate Veterans Health Administration Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director.

(ii) Where applicable, the home must have a current occupancy permit issued by the local and state governments in the jurisdiction where the home is located.

(iii) All Department of Veterans Affairs sponsored residents will be mentally and physically capable of leaving the building, unaided, in the event of an emergency. Halfway house, therapeutic community and other residential program management must agree that all the other residents in any building housing veterans will also have such capability.

(iv) There must be at least one staff member on duty 24 hours a day.

(v) The facility must meet the following additional requirements, if the provisions for One and Two-Family Dwellings, as defined in NFPA 101, are applicable to the facility:

(A) Portable fire extinguishers shall be installed, inspected, and maintained in accordance with NFPA 10 (incorporated by reference, see §17.1).

(B) The facility shall meet the requirements in section 33.7 of NFPA 101.

(vi) An annual fire and safety inspection shall be conducted at the halfway house or residential facility by qualified Department of Veterans Affairs personnel. If a review of past Department of Veterans Affairs inspections or inspections made by the local authorities indicates that a fire and safety inspection would not be necessary, then the visit to the facility may be waived.

(2) Be in compliance with existing standards of State safety codes and local, and/or State health and sanitation codes.

(3) Be licensed under State or local authority.

(4) Where applicable, be accredited by the State.

(5) Comply with the requirements of the “Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records” (42 CFR part II) and the “Confidentiality of Certain Medical Records” (38 U.S.C. 7332), which shall be part of the contract.

(6) Demonstrate an existing capability to furnish the following:

(i) A supervised alcohol and drug free environment, including active affiliation with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) programs.

(ii) Staff sufficient in numbers and position qualifications to carry out the policies, responsibilities, and programs of the facility.

(iii) Board and room.

(iv) Laundry facilities for residents to do their own laundry.

(v) Structured activities.

(vi) Appropriate group activities, including physical activities.

(vii) Health and personal hygiene maintenance.

(viii) Monitoring administration of medications.

(ix) Supportive social service.
(x) Individual counseling as appropriate.

(xi) Opportunities for learning/development of skills and habits which will enable Department of Veterans Affairs sponsored residents to adjust to and maintain freedom from dependence on or involvement with alcohol or drug abuse or dependence during or subsequent to leaving the facility.

(xii) Support for the individual desire for sobriety (alcohol/drug abuse-free lifestyle).

(xiii) Opportunities for learning, testing, and internalizing knowledge of illness/recovery process, and for upgrading skills and improving personal relationships.

(7) Data normally maintained and included in a medical record as a function of compliance with State or community licensing standards will be accessible.

(b) Representatives of the Department of Veterans Affairs will inspect the facility prior to award of a contract to assure that prescribed requirements can be met. Inspections may also be carried out at such other times as deemed necessary by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) All requirements in this rule, and Department of Veterans Affairs reports of inspection of residential facilities furnishing treatment and rehabilitation services to eligible veterans shall to the extent possible, be made available to all government agencies charged with the responsibility of licensing or otherwise regulating or inspecting such institutions.

(d) An individual case record will be created for each client which shall be maintained in security and confidence as required by the “Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records” (42 CFR part 2) and the “Confidentiality of Certain Medical Records” (38 U.S.C. 7332), and will be made available on a need to know basis to appropriate Department of Veterans Affairs staff members involved with the treatment program of the veterans concerned.

(e) Contractors under this section shall provide reports of budget and case load experience upon request from a Department of Veterans Affairs official.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1720A)


§ 17.82 Contracts for outpatient services for veterans with alcohol or drug dependence or abuse disabilities.

(a) Contracts for treatment services authorized under §17.80 may be awarded in accordance with applicable Department of Veterans Affairs and Federal procurement procedures. Such contracts will be awarded only after the quality and effectiveness, including adequate protection for the safety of the participants of the contractor’s program, has been determined and then only to contractors determined by the Under Secretary for Health or designee to be fully capable of meeting the following standards:

(1) The following minimum fire safety requirements must be met:

(i) The building must meet the requirements in the applicable provisions of the NFPA 101 (incorporated by reference, see §17.1) and the other publications referenced in those provisions. Any equivalencies or variances to VA requirements must be approved by the appropriate Veterans Health Administration Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director.

(ii) Where applicable, the facility must have a current occupancy permit issued by the local and state governments in the jurisdiction where the home is located.

(iii) All Department of Veterans Affairs sponsored patients will be mentally and physically capable of leaving the building, unaided, in the event of an emergency.

(iv) As a minimum, fire exit drills must be held at least quarterly, and a written plan for evacuation in the event of fire shall be developed and reviewed annually. The plan shall outline the duties, responsibilities and actions to be taken by the staff in the event of a fire emergency. This plan shall be implemented during fire exit drills.

(v) An annual fire and safety inspection shall be conducted at the facility...
§ 17.83 Limitations on payment for alcohol and drug dependence or abuse treatment and rehabilitation.

The authority to enter into contracts shall be effective for any fiscal year only to such extent or in such amounts as are provided in appropriation acts, and payments shall not exceed these amounts.

(From 38 CFR Ch. 1 (7-1-11 Edition))
participation in a research project approved by a VA Research and Development Committee and conducted under the supervision of one or more VA employees. This section does not apply to:

(1) Treatment for injuries due to non-compliance by a subject with study procedures, or

(2) Research conducted for VA under a contract with an individual or a non-VA institution.

NOTE TO §17.85(a)(1) AND (a)(2): Veterans who are injured as a result of participation in such research may be eligible for care from VA under other provisions of this part.

(b) Except in the following situations, care for VA research subjects under this section shall be provided in VA medical facilities.

(1) If VA medical facilities are not capable of furnishing economical care or are not capable of furnishing the care or services required, VA medical facility directors shall contract for the needed care.

(2) If inpatient care must be provided to a non-veteran under this section, VA medical facility directors may contract for such care.

(3) If a research subject needs treatment in a medical emergency for a condition covered by this section, VA medical facility directors shall provide reasonable reimbursement for the emergency treatment in a non-VA facility.

(c) For purposes of this section, a disaster or emergency means:

(1) A major disaster or emergency declared by the President under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) (Stafford Act); or

(2) A disaster or emergency in which the National Disaster Medical System established pursuant to section 2811(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300hh–11(b)) is activated either by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under paragraph (3)(A) of that section or as otherwise authorized by law.

(d) For purposes of paragraph (b) of this section, the terms hospital care and medical services have the meanings given such terms by 38 U.S.C. 1701(5) and 1701(6).

(e) Unless the cost of care is charged at rates agreed upon in a sharing agreement as described in §17.102(e), the cost of hospital care and medical services provided under this section to an officer or employee of a department or agency of the United States (other than VA) or to a member of the Armed Forces shall be calculated in accordance with the provisions of §17.102(c) and (h). Other individuals who receive hospital care or medical services under this section are responsible for the cost of the hospital care or medical services when charges are mandated by Federal law (including applicable appropriation acts) or when the cost of care or services is not reimbursed by other-than-VA Federal departments or agencies. When individuals are responsible under this section for the cost of hospital care or medical services when charges are mandated by Federal law (including applicable appropriation acts) or when the cost of care or services is not reimbursed by other-than-VA Federal departments or agencies, VA will bill in the amounts calculated in accordance with the provisions of §17.102(h), without applying the exception provided in the first paragraph of §17.102.

(f) VA may furnish care and services under this section to a veteran without regard to whether that individual is enrolled in the VA healthcare system.
§ 17.90 Medical care for veterans receiving vocational training under 38 U.S.C. chapter 15.

Hospital care, nursing home care and medical services may be provided to any veteran who is participating in a vocational training program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 15.

(a) For purposes of determining eligibility for this medical benefit, the term participating in a vocational training program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 15 means the same as the term participating in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31 as defined in §17.47(j). Eligibility for such medical care will continue only while the veteran is participating in the vocational training program.

(b) The term hospital care and medical services means class V dental care, priority III medical services, nursing home care and non-VA hospital care and/or fee medical/dental care if VA is unable to provide the required medical care economically at VA or other government facilities because of geographic inaccessibility or because of the unavailability of the required services at VA facilities.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1524, 1525, 1516.


§ 17.91 Protection of health-care eligibility.

Any veteran whose entitlement to VA pension is terminated by reason of income from work or training shall, subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, retain for 3 years after the termination, the eligibility for hospital care, nursing home care and medical services (not including dental) which the veteran otherwise would have had if the pension had not been terminated as a result of the veteran's receipt of earnings from activity performed for remuneration or gain by the veteran but only if the veteran's annual income from sources other than such earnings would, taken alone, not result in the termination of the veteran's pension.

(a) A veteran who participates in a vocational training program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 15 is eligible for the one-time 3 year retention of hospital care, nursing home care and medical services benefits at any time that the veteran's pension is terminated by reason of income from the veteran's employment during the period February 1, 1985 through January 31, 1989.

(b) A veteran who does not participate in a vocational training program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 15 is eligible for the one-time 3 year retention of hospital care and medical services benefits only if the veteran's pension is terminated by reason of income from the veteran's employment during the period February 1, 1985 through January 31, 1989.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1524, 1525, 1516.


OUTPATIENT TREATMENT

§ 17.92 Outpatient care for research purposes.

Subject to the provisions of §17.101, any person who is a bona fide volunteer may be furnished outpatient treatment when the treatment to be rendered is part of an approved Department of Veterans Affairs research project and there are insufficient veteran-patients suitable for the project.


§ 17.93 Eligibility for outpatient services.

(a) VA shall furnish on an ambulatory or outpatient basis medical services as are needed, to the following applicants under the conditions stated, except that applications for dental treatment must also meet the provisions of §17.161.


(1) For compensation and pension examinations. A compensation and pension examination shall be performed...
for any veteran who is directed to have such an examination by VA.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 111 and 501)

(2) For adjunct treatment. Subject to the provisions of §§17.36 through 17.38, medical services on an ambulatory or outpatient basis shall be provided to veterans for an adjunct nonservice-connected condition associated with and held to be aggravating a disability from a disease or injury adjudicated as being service-connected.

(b) The term “shall furnish” in this section and 38 U.S.C. 1712 (a)(1) and (a)(2) means that, if the veteran is in immediate need of outpatient medical services, VA shall furnish care at the VA facility where the veteran applies. If the needed medical services are not available there, VA shall arrange for care at the nearest VA medical facility or Department of Defense facility (with which VA has a sharing agreement) that can provide the needed care. If VA and Department of Defense facilities are not available, VA shall arrange for care on a fee basis, but only if the veteran is eligible to receive medical services in non-VA facilities under §17.52. If the veteran is not in immediate need of outpatient medical services, VA shall schedule the veteran for care where the veteran applied, if the schedule there permits, or refer the veteran for scheduling to the nearest VA medical center or Department of Defense facility (with which VA has a sharing agreement).

(c) VA may furnish on an ambulatory or outpatient basis medical services as needed to the following applicants, except that applications for dental treatment must also meet the provisions of §17.123.

(1) For veterans participating in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31. Medical services on an ambulatory or outpatient basis may be provided as determined medically necessary for a veteran participating in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31 as defined in §17.47(j).

(2) [Reserved]

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1717)


§ 17.94 Outpatient medical services for military retirees and other beneficiaries.

Outpatient medical services for military retirees and other beneficiaries for which charges shall be made as required by §17.101, may be authorized for persons properly referred by authorized officials of other Federal agencies for which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may agree to render such service under the conditions stipulated by the Secretary and pensioners of nations allied with the United States in World War I and World War II when duly authorized.


§ 17.95 Outpatient medical services for Department of Veterans Affairs employees and others in emergencies.

Outpatient medical services for which charges shall be made as required by §17.101 may be authorized for employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, their families, and the general public in emergencies, subject to conditions stipulated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1711(c)(1))


§ 17.96 Medication prescribed by non-VA physicians.

Any prescription, which is not part of authorized Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or outpatient care, for drugs and medicines ordered by a private or non-Department of Veterans Affairs doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathy duly licensed to practice in the jurisdiction where the prescription is written, shall be filled by a Department of Veterans Affairs pharmacy or a non-VA pharmacy in a state home
under contract with VA for filling prescriptions for patients in state homes, provided:

(a) The prescription is for:

(1) A veteran who by reason of being permanently housebound or in need of regular aid and attendance is in receipt of increased compensation under 38 U.S.C. chapter 11, or increased pension under section 3.1(u) (Section 306 Pension) or section 3.1(w) (Improved Pension) of this title, as a veteran of the Mexican Border Period, World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict, or the Vietnam Era (or, although eligible for such pension, is in receipt of compensation as the greater benefit), or

(2) A veteran in need of regular aid and attendance who was formerly in receipt of increased pension as described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section whose pension has been discontinued solely by reason of excess income, but only so long as such veteran’s annual income does not exceed the maximum annual income limitation by more than $1,000, and

(b) The drugs and medicines are prescribed as specific therapy in the treatment of any of the veteran’s illnesses or injuries.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1706, 1710, 17.12(d)

§ 17.97 Prescriptions in Alaska, and territories and possessions.

In Alaska and territories and possessions, where there are no Department of Veterans Affairs pharmacies, the expenses of any prescriptions filled by a private pharmacist which otherwise could have been filled by a Department of Veterans Affairs pharmacy under 38 U.S.C. 1712(h), may be reimbursed.


§ 17.98 Mental health services.

(a) Following the death of a veteran, bereavement counseling involving services defined in 38 U.S.C. 1701(6)(B), may be furnished to persons who were receiving mental health services in connection with treatment of the veteran under 38 U.S.C. 1710, 1712, 1712A, 1713, or 1717, or 38 CFR 17.84 of this part, prior to the veteran’s death, but may only be furnished in instances where the veteran’s death had been unexpected or occurred while the veteran was participating in a VA hospice or similar program. Bereavement counseling may be provided only to assist individuals with the emotional and psychological stress accompanying the veteran’s death, and only for a limited period of time, as determined by the Medical Center Director, but not to exceed 60 days. The Medical Center Director may approve a longer period of time when medically indicated.

(b) For purposes of paragraph (a) of this section, an unexpected death is one which occurs when in the course of an illness the provider of care did not or could not have anticipated the timing of the death. Ordinarily, the provider of care can anticipate the patient’s death and can inform the patient and family of the immediacy and certainty of death. If that has not taken place, a death can be described as unexpected.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1701(6)(B))

§ 17.100 Refusal of treatment by unnecessarily breaking appointments.

A patient under medical treatment who breaks an appointment without a reasonable excuse will be informed that breaking an additional appointment will be deemed to be a refusal to accept VA treatment. If such a patient fails to keep a second appointment, without at least 24 hours notice, such action will be deemed as a refusal to accept VA treatment. Thereafter, no further treatment will be furnished until the veteran has agreed to cooperate by keeping appointments. Treatment will not be discontinued until the treating physician has reviewed the treatment files, concurred in the action and signed a statement to this effect in the record. Consideration will be given to the veteran’s ability to make a rational decision concerning the need for medical care and/or examination. The veteran will be advised of the final decision. Nothing in this section will be construed to prevent treatment for an emergent condition that
may arise during or subsequent to this action. Where an appointment is broken without notice and satisfactory reasons are advanced for breaking the appointment and circumstances were such that notice could not be given, the patient will not be deemed to have refused treatment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7304)


CHARGES, WAIVERS, AND COLLECTIONS

§ 17.101 Collection or recovery by VA for medical care or services provided or furnished to a veteran for a nonservice-connected disability.

(a)(1) General. This section covers collection or recovery by VA, under 38 U.S.C. 1729, for medical care or services provided or furnished to a veteran:

(i) For a nonservice-connected disability for which the veteran is entitled to care (or the payment of expenses of care) under a health plan contract; or

(ii) For a nonservice-connected disability incurred incident to the veteran’s employment and covered under a worker’s compensation law or plan that provides reimbursement or indemnification for such care and services; or

(iii) For a nonservice-connected disability incurred as a result of a motor vehicle accident in a State that requires automobile accident reparations insurance.

(2) Methodologies. Based on the methodologies set forth in this section, the charges billed will include the following types of charges, as appropriate:

Acute inpatient facility charges; skilled nursing facility/sub-acute inpatient facility charges; partial hospitalization facility charges; outpatient facility charges; physician and other professional charges, including professional charges for anesthesia services and dental services; pathology and laboratory charges; observation care facility charges; ambulance and other emergency transportation charges; and charges for durable medical equipment, drugs, injectables, and other medical services, items, and supplies identified by HCPCS Level II codes. In addition, the charges billed for prescription drugs not administered during treatment will be the amount determined under paragraph (m) of this section. Data for calculating actual charge amounts based on the methodologies set forth in this section will either be published in a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER or will be posted on the Internet site of the Veterans Health Administration Chief Business Office, currently at http://www.va.gov/cbo, under “Charge Data.” For care for which VA has established a charge, VA will bill using its most recent published or posted charge. For care for which VA has not established a charge, VA will bill according to the methodology set forth in paragraph (a)(8) of this section.

(3) Data sources. In this section, data sources are identified by name. The specific editions of these data sources used to calculate actual charge amounts, and information on where these data sources may be obtained, will be presented along with the data for calculating actual charge amounts, either in notices in the FEDERAL REGISTER or on the Internet site of the Veterans Health Administration Chief Business Office, currently at http://www.va.gov/cbo, under “Charge Data.”

(4) Amount of recovery or collection—third party liability. A third-party payer liable under a health plan contract has the option of paying either the billed charges described in this section or the amount the health plan demonstrates is the amount it would pay for care or services furnished by providers other than entities of the United States for the same care or services in the same geographic area. If the amount submitted by the health plan for payment is less than the amount billed, VA will accept the submission as payment, subject to verification at VA’s discretion in accordance with this section. A VA employee having responsibility for collection of such charges may request that the third party health plan submit evidence or information to substantiate the appropriateness of the payment amount (e.g., health plan or insurance policies, provider agreements, medical evidence, proof of payment to other providers in the same geographic area for the same care and services VA provided).
(5) Definitions. For purposes of this section:

- **APC** means Medicare Ambulatory Payment Classification.
- **CMS** means the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- **CPI-U** means Consumer Price Index—All Urban Consumers.
- **CPT code** and **CPT procedure code** mean Current Procedural Terminology code, a five-digit identifier defined by the American Medical Association for a specified physician service or procedure.
- **DME** means Durable Medical Equipment.
- **DRG** means Diagnosis Related Group.
- **Geographic area** means a three-digit ZIP Code area, where three-digit ZIP Codes are the first three digits of standard U.S. Postal Service ZIP Codes.
- **HCPCS code** means a Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System Level II identifier, consisting of a letter followed by four digits, defined by CMS for a specified physician service, procedure, test, supply, or other medical service.
- **ICU** means Intensive Care Unit, including coronary care units.
- **MDR** means Medical Data Research, a medical charge database published by Ingenix, Inc.
- **MedPAR** means the Medicare Provider Analysis and Review file.
- **Non-provider-based** means a VA health care entity (such as a small VA community-based outpatient clinic) that functions as the equivalent of a doctor’s office or for other reasons does not meet CMS provider-based criteria, and, therefore, is not entitled to bill outpatient facility charges.
- **Provider-based** means the outpatient department of a VA hospital or any other VA health care entity that meets CMS provider-based criteria. Provider-based entities are entitled to bill outpatient facility charges.
- **RBRVS** means Resource-Based Relative Value Scale.
- **RVU** means Relative Value Unit.
- **Unlisted procedures** mean procedures, services, items, and supplies that have not been defined or specified by the American Medical Association or CMS, and the CPT and HCPCS codes used to report such procedures, services, items, and supplies.

(6) **Provider-based and non-provider-based entities and charges.** Each VA health care entity (medical center, hospital, community-based outpatient clinic, independent outpatient clinic, etc.) is designated as either provider-based or non-provider-based. Provider-based entities are entitled to bill outpatient facility charges; non-provider-based entities are not. The charges for physician and other professional services provided at non-provider-based entities will be billed as professional charges only. Professional charges for both provider-based entities and non-provider-based entities are produced by the methodologies set forth in this section, with professional charges for provider-based entities based on facility practice expense RVUs, and professional charges for non-provider-based entities based on non-facility practice expense RVUs.

(7) **Charges for medical care or services provided by non-VA providers at VA expense.** When medical care or services are furnished at the expense of the VA by non-VA providers, the charges billed for such care or services will be the higher of the charges determined according to this section, or the amount VA paid to the non-VA provider.

(8) **Charges when a new DRG or CPT/HCPCS code identifier does not have an established charge.** When VA does not have an established charge for a new DRG or CPT/HCPCS code to be used in determining a billing charge under the applicable methodology in this section, then VA will establish an interim billing charge or establish an interim charge to be used for determining a billing charge under the applicable methodology in paragraphs (a)(8)(i) through (a)(8)(viii) of this section.

(i) If a new DRG or CPT/HCPCS code identifier replaces a DRG or CPT/HCPCS code identifier, the most recently established charge for the identifier being replaced will continue to be used for determining a billing charge under paragraphs (b), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (k), or (l) of this section until such time as VA establishes a charge for the new identifier.

(ii) If medical care or service is provided or furnished at VA expense by a
non-VA provider and a charge cannot be established under paragraph (a)(8)(i) of this section, then VA’s billing charge for such care or service will be the amount VA paid to the non-VA provider without additional calculations under this section.

(iii) If a new CPT/HCPCS code has been established for a prosthetic device or durable medical equipment subject to paragraph (l) of this section and a charge cannot be established under paragraphs (a)(8)(i) or (ii) of this section, VA’s billing charge for such prosthetic device or durable medical equipment will be 1 and 1⁄2 times VA’s average actual cost without additional calculations under this section.

(iv) If a new medical identifier DRG code has been assigned to a particular type of medical care or service and a charge cannot be established under paragraphs (a)(8)(i) through (iii) of this section, then until such time as VA establishes a charge for the new medical identifier DRG code, the interim charge for use in paragraph (b) of this section will be the average charge of all medical DRG codes that are within plus or minus 10 of the numerical relative weight assigned to the new medical identifier DRG code.

(v) If a new surgical identifier DRG code has been assigned to a particular type of medical care or service and a charge cannot be established under paragraphs (a)(8)(i) through (iv) of this section, then until such time as VA establishes a charge for the new surgical identifier DRG code, the interim charge for use in paragraph (b) of this section will be the average charge of all surgical DRG codes that are within plus or minus 10 of the numerical relative weight assigned to the new surgical identifier DRG code.

(vi) If a new identifier CPT/HCPCS code is assigned to a particular type or item of medical care or service and a charge cannot be established under paragraphs (a)(8)(i) through (vi) of this section, then until such time as VA establishes a charge for the new identifier, the interim charge for use in paragraphs (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (k), or (l) of this section will be the charge for the CPT/HCPCS code that is closest in characteristics to the new CPT/HCPCS code.

(vii) If a new identifier CPT/HCPCS code is assigned to a particular type or item of medical care or service and a charge cannot be established under paragraphs (a)(8)(i) through (a)(8)(vii) of this section, then until such time as VA establishes a charge for the new identifier, the interim charge for use in paragraphs (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (k), or (l) of this section will be the charge for the new identifier CPT/HCPCS code.

(viii) If a charge cannot be established under paragraphs (a)(8)(i) through (a)(8)(vii) of this section, then VA will not charge under this section for the care or service.

(b) Acute inpatient facility charges. When VA provides or furnishes acute inpatient services within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, acute inpatient facility charges billed for such services will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. Acute inpatient facility charges consist of per diem charges for room and board and for ancillary services that vary by geographic area and by DRG. These charges are calculated as follows:

(1) Formula. For each acute inpatient stay, or portion thereof, for which a particular DRG assignment applies, the total acute inpatient facility charge is the sum of the applicable charges determined pursuant to paragraphs (b)(1)(i), (ii), and (iii) of this section. For purposes of this section, standard room and board days and ICU room and board days are mutually exclusive: VA will bill either a standard room and board per diem charge or an ICU room and board per diem charge, as applicable, for each day of a given acute inpatient stay.

(i) Standard room and board charges. Multiply the nationwide standard room and board per diem charge determined pursuant to paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (b)(3)(i) of this section. The result constitutes the area-specific standard room and board per diem charge. Multiply this amount by the number of days for which standard
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room and board charges apply to obtain the total acute inpatient facility standard room and board charge.

(ii) ICU room and board charges. Multiply the nationwide ICU room and board per diem charge determined pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (b)(3) of this section. The result constitutes the area-specific ICU room and board per diem charge. Multiply this amount by the number of days for which ICU room and board per diem charges apply to obtain the total acute inpatient facility ICU room and board charge.

(iii) Ancillary charges. Multiply the nationwide ancillary per diem charge determined pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (b)(3) of this section. The result constitutes the area-specific ancillary per diem charge. Multiply this amount by the number of days of acute inpatient care to obtain the total acute inpatient facility ancillary charge.

Note to paragraph (b)(1): If there is a change in a patient’s condition and/or treatment during a single acute inpatient stay such that the DRG assignment changes (for example, a psychiatric patient who develops a medical or surgical problem), then calculations of acute inpatient facility charges will be made separately for each DRG, according to the number of days of care applicable for each DRG, and the total acute inpatient facility charge will be the sum of the total acute inpatient facility charges for the different DRGs.

(2) Per diem charges. To establish a baseline, two nationwide average per diem amounts for each DRG are calculated, one from the MedPAR file and one from the MedStat claims database, a database of nationwide commercial insurance claims. Average per diem charges are calculated based on all available charges, except for care reported for emergency room, ambulance, professional, and observation care. These two data sources may report charges for two differing periods of time; when this occurs, the data source charges with the earlier center date are trended forward to the center date of the other data source, based on changes to the inpatient hospital services component of the CPI-U. Results obtained from these two data sources are then combined into a single weighted average per diem charge for each DRG. The resulting charge for each DRG is then separated into its two components, a room and board component and an ancillary component, with the per diem charge for each component calculated by multiplying the weighted average per diem charge by the corresponding percentage determined pursuant to paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section. The room and board per diem charge is further differentiated into a standard room and board per diem charge and an ICU room and board per diem charge by multiplying the average room and board charge by the corresponding DRG-specific ratios determined pursuant to paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section. The resulting per diem charges for standard room and board, ICU room and board, and ancillary services for each DRG are then each multiplied by the final ratio determined pursuant to paragraph (b)(2)(iii) of this section to reflect the nationwide 80th percentile charges. Finally, the resulting amounts are each trended forward from the center date of the trended data sources to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (b)(2)(iv) of this section. The results constitute the nationwide 80th percentile standard room and board, ICU room and board, and ancillary per diem charges.

(i) Room and board charge and ancillary charge component percentages. Using only those cases from the MedPAR file for which a distinction between room and board charges and ancillary charges can be determined, the percentage of the total charges for room and board compared to the combined total charges for room and board and ancillary services, and the percentage of the total charges for ancillary services compared to the combined total charges for room and board and ancillary services, are calculated by DRG.

(ii) Standard room and board per diem charge and ICU room and board per diem charge ratios. Using only those cases
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from the MedPAR file for which a distinction between room and board and ancillary charges can be determined, overall average per diem room and board charges are calculated by DRG. Then, using the same cases, an average standard room and board per diem charge is calculated by dividing total non-ICU room and board charges by total non-ICU room and board days. Similarly, an average ICU room and board per diem charge is calculated by dividing total ICU room and board charges by total ICU room and board days. Finally, ratios of standard room and board per diem charges to average overall room and board per diem charges are calculated by DRG, as are ratios of ICU room and board per diem charges to average overall room and board per diem charges.

(iii) 80th percentile. Using cases from the MedPAR file with separately identifiable semi-private room rates, the ratio of the day-weighted 80th percentile semi-private room and board per diem charge to the average semi-private room and board per diem charge is obtained for each geographic area. The geographic area-based ratios are averaged to obtain a final 80th percentile ratio.

(iv) Trending forward. 80th percentile charges for each DRG, obtained as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, are trended forward based on changes to the inpatient hospital services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the center date of the trended data sources through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the 80th percentile charges.

(3) Geographic area adjustment factors. For each geographic area, the average per diem room and board charges and ancillary charges from the MedPAR file are calculated for each DRG. The DRGs are separated into two groups, surgical and non-surgical. For each of these groups of DRGs, for each geographic area, average room and board per diem charges and ancillary per diem charges are calculated, weighted by nationwide VA discharges and by average lengths of stay from the combined MedPAR file and MedStat claims database. This results in four average per diem charges for each geographic area: room and board for surgical DRGs, ancillary for surgical DRGs, room and board for non-surgical DRGs, and ancillary for non-surgical DRGs. Four corresponding national average per diem charges are obtained from the MedPAR file, weighted by nationwide VA discharges and by average lengths of stay from the combined MedPAR file and MedStat claims database. Four geographic area adjustment factors are then calculated for each geographic area by dividing each geographic area average per diem charge by the corresponding national average per diem charge.

(c) Skilled nursing facility/sub-acute inpatient facility charges. When VA provides or furnishes skilled nursing/sub-acute inpatient services within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, skilled nursing facility/sub-acute inpatient facility charges billed for such services will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. The skilled nursing facility/sub-acute inpatient facility charges are per diem charges that vary by geographic area. The facility charges cover care, including room and board, nursing care, pharmaceuticals, supplies, and skilled rehabilitation services (e.g., physical therapy, inhalation therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology), that is provided in a nursing home or hospital inpatient setting, is provided under a physician’s orders, and is performed by or under the general supervision of professional personnel such as registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and audiologists. These charges are calculated as follows:

(1) Formula. For each stay, multiply the nationwide per diem charge determined pursuant to paragraph (c)(2) of this section by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (c)(3) of
this section. The result constitutes the area-specific per diem charge. Finally, multiply the area-specific per diem charge by the number of days of care to obtain the total skilled nursing facility/sub-acute inpatient facility charge.

(2) Per diem charge. To establish a baseline, a nationwide average per diem billed charge is calculated based on charges reported in the MedPAR skilled nursing facility file. For this purpose, the following MedPAR charge categories are included: room and board (private, semi-private, and ward), physical therapy, occupational therapy, inhalation therapy, speech-language pathology, pharmacy, medical/surgical supplies, and "other" services. The following MedPAR charge categories are excluded from the calculation of the per diem charge and will be billed separately, using the charges determined as set forth in other applicable paragraphs of this section, when these services are provided to skilled nursing patients or sub-acute inpatients: ICU and CCU room and board, laboratory, radiology, cardiology, dialysis, operating room, blood and blood administration, ambulance, MRI, anesthesia, durable medical equipment, emergency room, clinic, outpatient, professional, lithotripsy, and organ acquisition services. The resulting average per diem billed charge is then multiplied by the 80th percentile adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section to obtain a nationwide 80th percentile charge level. Finally, the resulting amount is trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (c)(2)(ii) of this section.

(ii) 80th percentile adjustment factor. Using the MedPAR skilled nursing facility file, the ratio of the day-weighted 80th percentile room and board per diem charge to the day-weighted average room and board per diem charge is obtained for each geographic area. The geographic area-based ratios are averaged to obtain the 80th percentile adjustment factor.

(i) Trending forward. The 80th percentile charge is trended forward based on changes to the inpatient hospital services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the 80th percentile charge.

(3) Geographic area adjustment factors. The average billed per diem charge for each geographic area is calculated from the MedPAR skilled nursing facility file. This amount is divided by the nationwide average billed charge calculated in paragraph (c)(2) of this section. The geographic area adjustment factor for charges for each VA facility is the ratio for the geographic area in which the facility is located.

(d) Partial hospitalization facility charges. When VA provides or furnishes partial hospitalization services that are within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the facility charges billed for such services will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this section. Partial hospitalization facility charges are per diem charges that vary by geographic area. These charges are calculated as follows:

(1) Formula. For each partial hospitalization stay, multiply the nationwide per diem charge determined pursuant to paragraph (d)(2) of this section by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (d)(3) of this section. The result constitutes the area-specific per diem charge. Finally, multiply the area-specific per diem charge by the number of days of care to obtain the total partial hospitalization facility charge.

(2) Per diem charge. To establish a baseline, a nationwide median per diem billed charge is calculated based on charges associated with partial hospitalization from the outpatient facility component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample. That median per diem billed charge is then multiplied by the 80th percentile adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (d)(2)(i) of this section to obtain a nationwide 80th percentile
charge level. Finally, the resulting amount is trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (d)(2)(ii) of this section.

(i) 80th percentile adjustment factor. The 80th percentile adjustment factor for partial hospitalization facility charges is the same as that computed for skilled nursing facility/sub-acute inpatient facility charges under paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section.

(ii) Trending forward. The 80th percentile charge is trended forward based on changes to the outpatient hospital services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the 80th percentile charges, as described in paragraph (d)(2) of this section.

(3) Geographic area adjustment factors. The geographic area adjustment factors for partial hospitalization facility charges are the same as those computed for outpatient facility charges under paragraph (e)(4) of this section.

(e) Outpatient facility charges. When VA provides or furnishes outpatient facility services that are within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the charges billed for such services will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. Charges for outpatient facility services vary by geographic area and by CPT/HCPCS code. These charges apply in the situations set forth in paragraph (e)(1) of this section and are calculated as set forth in paragraph (e)(2) of this section.

(1) Settings and circumstances in which outpatient facility charges apply. Outpatient facility charges consist of facility charges for procedures, diagnostic tests, evaluation and management services, and other medical services, items, and supplies provided in the following settings and circumstances:

(i) Outpatient departments and clinics at VA medical centers;

(ii) Other VA provider-based entities;

(iii) VA non-provider-based entities, for procedures and tests for which no corresponding professional charge is established under the provisions of paragraph (f) of this section.

(2) Formula. For each outpatient facility charge CPT/HCPCS code, multiply the nationwide 80th percentile charge determined pursuant to paragraph (e)(3) of this section by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (e)(4) of this section. The result constitutes the area-specific outpatient facility charge. When multiple surgical procedures are performed during the same outpatient encounter by a provider or provider team, the outpatient facility charges for such procedures will be reduced as set forth in paragraph (e)(5) of this section.

(3) Nationwide 80th percentile charges by CPT/HCPCS code. For each CPT/HCPCS code for which outpatient facility charges apply, the nationwide 80th percentile charge is calculated as set forth in either paragraph (e)(3)(i) or (e)(3)(ii) of this section. The resulting amount is trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (e)(3)(iii) of this section. The results constitute the nationwide 80th percentile outpatient facility charges by CPT/HCPCS code.

(i) Nationwide 80th percentile charges for CPT/HCPCS codes which have APC assignments. Using the outpatient facility charges reported in the outpatient facility component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample, claim records are selected for which all charges can be assigned to an APC. Using this subset of the 5 percent Sample data, nationwide median charge to Medicare APC payment amount ratios, by APC, and nationwide 80th percentile to median charge ratios, by APC, are computed according to the methodology set forth in paragraphs (e)(3)(i)(A) and (e)(3)(i)(B) of this section, respectively. The product of these two ratios by APC is then computed, resulting in a composite nationwide 80th percentile charge to Medicare APC payment amount ratio. This ratio is then compared to the alternate nationwide 80th percentile charge to Medicare...
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APC payment amount ratio computed in paragraph (e)(3)(i)(C) of this section, and the lesser amount is selected and multiplied by the current Medicare APC payment amount. The resulting product is the APC-specific nationwide 80th percentile charge amount for each applicable CPT/HCPCS code.

(A) Nationwide median charge to Medicare APC payment amount ratios. For each CPT/HCPCS code, the ratio of median billed charge to Medicare APC payment amount is determined. The weighted average of these ratios for each APC is then obtained, using the reported 5 percent Sample frequencies as weights. In addition, corresponding ratios are calculated for each of the APC categories set forth in paragraph (e)(3)(i)(D) of this section, again using the reported 5 percent Sample frequencies as weights. For APCs where the 5 percent Sample frequencies provide a statistically credible result, the APC-specific weighted average nationwide median charge to Medicare APC payment amount ratio so obtained is accepted without further adjustment. However, if the 5 percent Sample data do not produce statistically credible results for any specific APC, then the APC category-specific ratio is applied for that APC.

(B) Nationwide 80th percentile to median charge ratios. For each CPT/HCPCS code, a geographically normalized nationwide 80th percentile billed charge amount is divided by a similarly normalized nationwide median billed charge amount. The weighted average of these ratios for each APC is then obtained, using the reported 5 percent Sample frequencies as weights. In addition, corresponding ratios are calculated for each of the APC categories set forth in paragraph (e)(3)(i)(D) of this section, again using the reported 5 percent Sample frequencies as weights. For APCs where the 5 percent Sample frequencies provide a statistically credible result, the APC-specific weighted average nationwide 80th percentile to median charge ratio so obtained is accepted without further adjustment. However, if the 5 percent Sample data do not produce statistically credible results for any specific APC, then the APC category-specific ratio is applied for that APC.

(C) Alternate nationwide 80th percentile charge to Medicare APC payment amount ratios. A minimum 80th percentile charge to Medicare APC payment amount ratio is set at 2.0 for APCs with Medicare APC payment amounts of $25 or less. A maximum 80th percentile charge to Medicare APC payment amount ratio is set at 6.5 for APCs with Medicare APC payment amounts of $10,000 or more. Using linear interpolation with these endpoints, the alternate APC-specific nationwide 80th percentile charge to Medicare APC payment amount ratio is then computed, based on the Medicare APC payment amount.

(D) APC categories for the purpose of establishing 80th percentile to median factors. For the purpose of the statistical methodology set forth in paragraph (e)(3)(i) of this section, APCs are assigned to the following APC categories:

(1) Radiology.
(2) Drugs.
(3) Office, Home, and Urgent Care Visits.
(4) Cardiovascular.
(5) Emergency Room Visits.
(6) Outpatient Psychiatry, Alcohol and Drug Abuse.
(7) Pathology.
(8) Surgery.
(9) Allergy Immunotherapy, Allergy Testing, Immunizations, and Therapeutic Injections.
(10) All APCs not assigned to any of the above groups.

(ii) Nationwide 80th percentile charges for CPT/HCPCS codes which do not have APC assignments. Nationwide 80th percentile billed charge levels by CPT/HCPCS code are computed from the outpatient facility component of the MDR database, from the MedStat claims database, and from the outpatient facility component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample. If the MDR database contains sufficient data to provide a statistically credible 80th percentile charge, then that result is retained for this purpose. If the MDR database does not provide a statistically credible 80th percentile charge, then the result from the MedStat database is retained for this purpose, provided it is statistically credible. If neither the MDR nor the
MedStat databases provide statistically credible results, then the nationwide 80th percentile billed charge computed from the 5 percent Sample data is retained for this purpose. The nationwide 80th percentile charges retained from each of these data sources are trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (e)(3)(iii) of this section.

(iii) Trending forward. The charges for each CPT/HCPCS code, obtained as described in paragraph (e)(3) of this section, are trended forward based on changes to the outpatient hospital services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the 80th percentile charges, as described in paragraph (e)(3) of this section.

(f) Physician and other professional charges except for anesthesia services and certain dental services. When VA provides or furnishes physician and other professional services, other than professional anesthesia services and certain professional dental services, within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, physician and other professional charges billed for such services will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. Charges for professional dental services identified by CPT code are determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph; charges for professional dental services identified by HCPCS Level II code are determined in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (h) of this section. Physician and other professional charges consist of charges for professional services that vary by geographic area, by CPT/HCPCS code, by site of service, and by modifier, where applicable. These charges are calculated as follows:

(1) Formula. For each CPT/HCPCS code or, where applicable, each CPT/HCPCS code and modifier combination, multiply the total geographically-adjusted RVUs determined pursuant to paragraph (f)(2) of this section by the applicable geographically-adjusted conversion factor (a monetary amount) determined pursuant to paragraph (f)(3) of this section to obtain the physician charge for each CPT/HCPCS code in a particular geographic area. Then, multiply this charge by the appropriate factors for any charge-significant modifiers, determined pursuant to paragraph (f)(4) of this section.

(2)(i) Total geographically-adjusted RVUs for physician services that have Medicare RVUs. The work expense and practice expense RVUs for CPT/HCPCS codes, other than the codes described in paragraphs (f)(2)(ii) and (f)(2)(iii) of this section, are compiled using Medicare Physician Fee Schedule RVUs. The sum of the geographically-adjusted work expense RVUs determined pursuant to paragraph (f)(2)(i)(A) of this section and the geographically-adjusted practice expense RVUs determined pursuant to paragraph (f)(2)(i)(B) of this section equals the total geographically-adjusted RVUs.
(A) Geographically-adjusted work expense RVUs. For each CPT/HCPCS code for each geographic area, the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule work expense RVUs are multiplied by the work expense Medicare Geographic Practice Cost Index. The result constitutes the geographically-adjusted work expense RVUs.

(B) Geographically-adjusted practice expense RVUs. For each CPT/HCPCS code for each geographic area, the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule practice expense RVUs are multiplied by the practice expense Medicare Geographic Practice Cost Index. The result constitutes the geographically-adjusted practice expense RVUs. In these calculations, facility practice expense RVUs are used to obtain geographically-adjusted practice expense RVUs for use by provider-based entities, and non-facility practice expense RVUs are used to obtain geographically-adjusted practice expense RVUs for use by non-provider-based entities.

(ii) RVUs for CPT/HCPCS codes that do not have Medicare RVUs and are not designated as unlisted procedures. For CPT/HCPCS codes that are not assigned RVUs in paragraphs (f)(2)(i) or (f)(2)(iii) of this section, total RVUs are developed based on various charge data sources. For these CPT/HCPCS codes, the nationwide 80th percentile billed charges are obtained, where statistically credible, from the MDR database. For any remaining CPT/HCPCS codes, the nationwide 80th percentile billed charges are obtained, where statistically credible, from the Part B component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample. For any remaining CPT/HCPCS codes, the nationwide 80th percentile billed charges are obtained, where statistically credible, from the Prevailing Healthcare Charges System nationwide commercial insurance database. For each of these CPT/HCPCS codes, nationwide total RVUs are obtained by taking the nationwide 80th percentile billed charges obtained using the preceding three databases and dividing by the untrended nationwide conversion factor for the corresponding CPT/HCPCS code group determined pursuant to paragraphs (f)(3) and (f)(3)(i) of this section. For any remaining CPT/HCPCS codes that have not been assigned RVUs using the preceding data sources, the nationwide total RVUs are calculated by summing the work expense and non-facility practice expense RVUs found in Ingenix/St. Anthony’s RBRVS. The resulting nationwide total RVUs obtained using these four data sources are multiplied by the geographic area adjustment factors determined pursuant to paragraph (f)(2)(iv) of this section to obtain the area-specific total RVUs.

(iii) RVUs for CPT/HCPCS codes designated as unlisted procedures. For CPT/HCPCS codes designated as unlisted procedures, total RVUs are developed based on the weighted median of the total RVUs of CPT/HCPCS codes within the series in which the unlisted procedure code occurs. A nationwide VA distribution of procedures and services is used for the purpose of computing the weighted median. The resulting nationwide total RVUs are multiplied by the geographic area adjustment factors determined pursuant to paragraph (f)(2)(iv) of this section to obtain the area-specific total RVUs.

(iv) RVU geographic area adjustment factors for CPT/HCPCS codes that do not have Medicare RVUs, including codes that are designated as unlisted procedures. The adjustment factor for each geographic area consists of the weighted average of the work expense and practice expense Medicare Geographic Practice Cost Indices for each geographic area using charge data for representative CPT/HCPCS codes statistically selected and weighted for work expense and practice expense.

(3) Geographically-adjusted 80th percentile conversion factors. CPT/HCPCS codes are separated into the following 23 CPT/HCPCS code groups: allergy immunotherapy, allergy testing, cardiovascular, chiropractor, consults, emergency room visits and observation care, hearing/speech exams, immunizations, inpatient visits, maternity/cesarean deliveries, maternity/non-deliveries, maternity/normal deliveries, miscellaneous medical, office/home/urgent care visits, outpatient psychiatry/alcohol and drug abuse, pathology, physical exams, physical medicine, radiology, surgery, therapeutic injections, vision exams, and well baby
exams. For each of the 23 CPT/HCPCS code groups, representative CPT/HCPCS codes are statistically selected and weighted so as to give a weighted average RVU comparable to the weighted average RVU of the entire CPT/HCPCS code group (the selected CPT/HCPCS codes are set forth in the Milliman USA, Inc., Health Cost Guidelines fee survey); see paragraph (a)(3) of this section for Data Sources. The 80th percentile charge for each selected CPT/HCPCS code is obtained from the MDR database. A nationwide conversion factor (a monetary amount) is calculated for each CPT/HCPCS code group as set forth in paragraph (f)(3)(i) of this section. The nationwide conversion factors for each of the 23 CPT/HCPCS code groups are trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (f)(3)(ii) of this section. The resulting amounts for each of the 23 groups are multiplied by geographic area adjustment factors determined pursuant to paragraph (f)(3)(iii) of this section, resulting in geographically-adjusted 80th percentile conversion factors for each geographic area for the 23 CPT/HCPCS code groups for the effective charge period.

(i) Nationwide conversion factors. Using the nationwide 80th percentile charges for the selected CPT/HCPCS codes from paragraph (f)(3) of this section, a nationwide conversion factor is calculated for each of the 23 CPT/HCPCS code groups by dividing the weighted average charge by the weighted average RVU.

(ii) Trending forward. The nationwide conversion factors for each of the 23 CPT/HCPCS code groups, obtained as described in paragraph (f)(3)(i) of this section, are trended forward based on changes to the physicians’ services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then applied to the 23 conversion factors.

(iii) Geographic area adjustment factors. Using the 80th percentile charges for the selected CPT/HCPCS codes from paragraph (f)(3) of this section for each geographic area, a geographic area-specific conversion factor is calculated for each of the 23 CPT/HCPCS code groups by dividing the weighted average charge by the weighted average geographically-adjusted RVU. The resulting conversion factor for each geographic area for each of the 23 CPT/HCPCS code groups is divided by the corresponding nationwide conversion factor determined pursuant to paragraph (f)(3)(i) of this section. The resulting ratios are the geographic area adjustment factors for the conversion factors for each of the 23 CPT/HCPCS code groups for each geographic area.

(4) Charge adjustment factors for specified CPT/HCPCS code modifiers. Surcharges are calculated in the following manner: From the Part B component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample, the ratio of weighted average billed charges for CPT/HCPCS codes with the specified modifier to the weighted average billed charge for CPT/HCPCS codes with no charge modifier is calculated, using the frequency of procedure codes with the modifier as weights in both weighted average calculations. The resulting ratios constitute the surcharge factors for specified charge-significant CPT/HCPCS code modifiers.

(5) Certain charges for providers other than physicians. When services for which charges are established according to the preceding provisions of this paragraph (f) are performed by providers other than physicians, the charges for those services will be as determined by the preceding provisions of this paragraph, except as follows:

(i) Outpatient facility charges. When the services of providers other than physicians are furnished in outpatient facility settings or in other facilities designated as provider-based, and outpatient facility charges for those services have been established under paragraph (e) of this section, then the outpatient facility charges established under paragraph (e) will apply instead
of the charges established under this paragraph (f).

(ii) Charges for professional services. Charges for the professional services of the following providers will be 100 percent of the amount that would be charged if the care had been provided by a physician:

(A) Nurse practitioner.
(B) Clinical nurse specialist.
(C) Physician Assistant.
(D) Clinical psychologist.
(E) Clinical social worker.
(F) Dietitian.
(G) Clinical pharmacist.
(H) Marriage and family therapist.
(I) Licensed professional mental health counselor.

(g) Professional charges for anesthesia services. When VA provides or furnishes professional anesthesia services within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, professional anesthesia charges billed for such services will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. Charges for professional anesthesia services personally performed by anesthesiologists will be 100 percent of the charges determined as set forth in this paragraph. Charges for professional anesthesia services provided by non-medically directed certified registered nurse anesthetists will also be 100 percent of the charges determined as set forth in this paragraph. Charges for professional anesthesia services provided by medically directed certified registered nurse anesthetists will also be 100 percent of the charges determined as set forth in this paragraph. Charges for professional anesthesia services that vary by geographic area, by CPT/HCPCS code base units, and by number of time units. These charges are calculated as follows:

(1) Formula. For each anesthesia CPT/HCPCS code, multiply the total anesthesia RVUs determined pursuant to paragraph (g)(2) of this section by the applicable geographically-adjusted conversion factor (a monetary amount) determined pursuant to paragraph (g)(3) of this section to obtain the professional anesthesia charge for each CPT/HCPCS code in a particular geographic area.

(2) Total RVUs for professional anesthesia services. The total anesthesia RVUs for each anesthesia CPT/HCPCS code are the sum of the base units (as compiled by CMS) for that CPT/HCPCS code and the number of time units reported for the anesthesia service, where one time unit equals 15 minutes. For anesthesia CPT/HCPCS codes designated as unlisted procedures, base units are developed based on the weighted median base units for anesthesia CPT/HCPCS codes within the series in which the unlisted procedure code occurs. A nationwide VA distribution of procedures and services is used for the purpose of computing the weighted median base units.

(3) Geographically-adjusted 80th percentile conversion factors. A nationwide 80th percentile conversion factor is calculated according to the methodology set forth in paragraph (g)(3)(i) of this section. The nationwide conversion factor is then trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (g)(3)(ii) of this section. The resulting amount is multiplied by geographic area adjustment factors determined pursuant to paragraph (g)(3)(iii) of this section, resulting in geographically-adjusted 80th percentile conversion factors for each geographic area for the effective charge period.

(i) Nationwide conversion factor. Preliminary 80th percentile conversion factors for each area are compiled from the MDR database. Then, a preliminary nationwide weighted-average 80th percentile conversion factor is calculated, using as weights the population (census) frequencies for each geographic area as presented in the Milliman USA, Inc., Health Cost Guidelines (see paragraph (a)(3) of this section for Data Sources). A nationwide 80th percentile fee by CPT/HCPCS code is then computed by multiplying this conversion factor by the MDR base units for each CPT/HCPCS code. An adjusted 80th percentile conversion factor by CPT/HCPCS code is then calculated by dividing the nationwide 80th percentile fee for each procedure code by the anesthesia base units (as compiled by CMS) for that CPT/HCPCS code. Finally, a nationwide weighted average
80th percentile conversion factor is calculated using combined frequencies for billed base units and time units from the part B component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample as weights.

(ii) Trending forward. The nationwide conversion factor, obtained as described in paragraph (g)(3)(i) of this section, is trended forward based on changes to the physicians’ services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the conversion factor.

(iii) Geographic area adjustment factors. The preliminary 80th percentile conversion factors for each geographic area described in paragraph (g)(3)(i) of this section are divided by the corresponding preliminary nationwide 80th percentile conversion factor also described in paragraph (g)(3)(i). The resulting ratios are the adjustment factors for each geographic area.

(h) Professional charges for dental services identified by HCPCS Level II codes. When VA provides or furnishes outpatient dental professional services within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, and such services are identified by HCPCS code rather than CPT code, the charges billed for such services will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. The charges for dental services vary by geographic area and by HCPCS code. These charges are calculated as follows:

(1) Formula. For each HCPCS dental code, multiply the nationwide 80th percentile charge determined pursuant to paragraph (h)(2) of this section by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (h)(3) of this section. The result constitutes the area-specific dental charge.

(2) Nationwide 80th percentile charges by HCPCS code. For each HCPCS dental code, 80th percentile charges are extracted from three independent data sources: Prevailing Healthcare Charges System database; National Dental Advisory Service nationwide pricing index; and the Dental UCR Module of the Comprehensive Healthcare Payment System, a release from Ingenix from a nationwide database of dental charges (see paragraph (a)(3) of this section for Data Sources). Charges for each database are then trended forward to a common date, based on actual changes to the dental services component of the CPI-U. Charges for each HCPCS dental code from each data source are combined into an average 80th percentile charge by means of the methodology set forth in paragraph (h)(2)(i) of this section. HCPCS dental codes designated as unlisted are assigned 80th percentile charges by means of the methodology set forth in paragraph (h)(2)(ii) of this section. Finally, the resulting amounts are each trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (h)(2)(iii) of this section. The results constitute the nationwide 80th percentile charge for each HCPCS dental code.

(i) Averaging methodology. The average charge for any particular HCPCS dental code is calculated by first computing a preliminary mean average of the three charges for each code. Statistical outliers are identified and removed by testing whether any charge differs from the preliminary mean charge by more than 50 percent of the preliminary mean charge. In such cases, the charge most distant from the preliminary mean is removed as an outlier, and the average charge is calculated as a mean of the two remaining charges. In cases where none of the charges differ from the preliminary mean charge by more than 50 percent of the preliminary mean charge, the average charge is calculated as a mean of all three reported charges.

(ii) Nationwide 80th percentile charges for HCPCS dental codes designated as unlisted procedures. For HCPCS dental codes designated as unlisted procedures, 80th percentile charges are developed based on the weighted median 80th percentile charge of HCPCS dental codes within the series in which the
unlisted procedure code occurs. The distribution of procedures and services from the Prevailing Healthcare Charges System nationwide commercial insurance database is used for the purpose of computing the weighted median.

(iii) Trending forward. 80th percentile charges for each dental procedure code, obtained as described in paragraph (h)(2) of this section, are trended forward based on the dental services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the 80th percentile charges.

(3) Geographic area adjustment factors. A geographic adjustment factor (consisting of the ratio of the level of charges in a given geographic area to the nationwide level of charges) for each geographic area and dental class of service is obtained from Milliman USA, Inc., Dental Health Cost Guidelines, a database of nationwide commercial insurance charges and relative costs; and a normalized geographic adjustment factor computed from the Dental UCR Module of the Comprehensive Healthcare Payment System compiled by Ingenix, as follows: Using local and nationwide average charges reported in the Ingenix data, a local weighted average charge for each dental class of procedure codes is calculated using utilization frequencies from the Milliman USA, Inc., Dental Health Cost Guidelines as weights (see paragraph (a)(3) of this section for Data Sources). Similarly, using nationwide average charge levels, a nationwide average charge by dental class of procedure codes is calculated. The normalized geographic adjustment factor for each dental class of procedure codes and for each geographic area is the ratio of the local average charge divided by the corresponding nationwide average charge. Finally, the geographic area adjustment factor is the arithmetic average of the corresponding factors from the data sources mentioned in the first sentence of this paragraph (h)(3).

(i) Pathology and laboratory charges. When VA provides or furnishes pathology and laboratory services within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, charges billed for such services will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. Pathology and laboratory charges consist of charges for services that vary by geographic area and by CPT/HCPCS code. These charges are calculated as follows:

(1) Formula. For each CPT/HCPCS code, multiply the total geographically-adjusted RVUs determined pursuant to paragraph (i)(2) of this section by the applicable geographically-adjusted conversion factor (a monetary amount) determined pursuant to paragraph (i)(3) of this section to obtain the pathology/laboratory charge for each CPT/HCPCS code in a particular geographic area.

(2) Total geographically-adjusted RVUs for pathology and laboratory services that have Medicare-based RVUs. Total RVUs are developed based on the Medicare Clinical Diagnostic Laboratory Fee Schedule (CLAB). The CLAB payment amounts are upwardly adjusted such that the adjusted payment amounts are, on average, equivalent to Medicare Physician Fee Schedule payment levels, using statistical comparisons to the 80th percentile derived from the MDR database. These adjusted payment amounts are then divided by the corresponding Medicare conversion factor to derive RVUs for each CPT/HCPCS code. The resulting nationwide total RVUs are multiplied by the geographic adjustment factors determined pursuant to paragraph (i)(2)(iv) of this section to obtain the area-specific total RVUs.

(ii) RVUs for CPT/HCPCS codes that do not have Medicare-based RVUs and are not designated as unlisted procedures. For CPT/HCPCS codes that are not assigned RVUs in paragraphs (i)(2)(i) or (i)(2)(ii) of this section, total RVUs are developed based on various charge data sources. For these CPT/HCPCS codes, the nationwide 80th percentile billed
charges are obtained, where statistically credible, from the MDR database. For any remaining CPT/HCPCS codes, the nationwide 80th percentile billed charges are obtained, where statistically credible, from the Part B component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample. For any remaining CPT/HCPCS codes, the nationwide 80th percentile billed charges are obtained, where statistically credible, from the Prevailing Healthcare Charges System nationwide commercial insurance database. For each of these CPT/HCPCS codes, nationwide total RVUs are obtained by taking the nationwide 80th percentile billed charges obtained using the preceding three databases and dividing by the untrended nationwide conversion factor determined pursuant to paragraphs (i)(3) and (i)(3)(i) of this section. For any remaining CPT/HCPCS codes that have not been assigned RVUs using the preceding data sources, the nationwide total RVUs are calculated by summing the work expense and non-facility practice expense RVUs found in Ingenix/St. Anthony’s RBRVS. The resulting nationwide total RVUs obtained using these four data sources are multiplied by the area-specific utility factors determined pursuant to paragraph (i)(2)(iv) of this section to obtain the area-specific total RVUs.

(iii) RVUs for CPT/HCPCS codes designated as unlisted procedures. For CPT/HCPCS codes designated as unlisted procedures, total RVUs are developed based on the weighted median of the total RVUs of CPT/HCPCS codes within the series in which the unlisted procedure code occurs. A nationwide VA distribution of procedures and services is used for the purpose of computing the weighted median. The resulting nationwide total RVUs are multiplied by the geographic area adjustment factors determined pursuant to paragraph (i)(2)(iv) of this section to obtain the area-specific total RVUs.

(iv) RVU geographic area adjustment factors for CPT/HCPCS codes that do not have Medicare RVUs, including codes that are designated as unlisted procedures. The adjustment factor for each geographic area consists of the weighted average of the work expense and practice expense Medicare Geographic Practice Cost Indices for each geographic area using charge data for representative CPT/HCPCS codes statistically selected and weighted for work expense and practice expense.

(3) Geographically-adjusted 80th percentile conversion factors. Representative CPT/HCPCS codes are statistically selected and weighted so as to give a weighted average RVU comparable to the weighted average RVU of the entire pathology/laboratory CPT/HCPCS code group (the selected CPT/HCPCS codes are set forth in the Milliman USA, Inc., Health Cost Guidelines fee survey). The 80th percentile charge for each selected CPT/HCPCS code is obtained from the MDR database. A nationwide conversion factor (a monetary amount) is calculated as set forth in paragraph (i)(3)(i) of this section. The nationwide conversion factor is trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (i)(3)(ii) of this section. The resulting amount is multiplied by a geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (i)(3)(iv) of this section, resulting in the geographically-adjusted 80th percentile conversion factor for the effective charge period.

(i) Nationwide conversion factors. Using the nationwide 80th percentile charges for the selected CPT/HCPCS codes from paragraph (i)(3) of this section, a nationwide conversion factor is calculated by dividing the weighted average charge by the weighted average RVU.

(ii) Trending forward. The nationwide conversion factor, obtained as described in paragraph (i)(3) of this section, is trended forward based on changes to the physicians’ services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the pathology/laboratory conversion factor.
(iii) Geographic area adjustment factor. Using the 80th percentile charges for the selected CPT/HCPCS codes from paragraph (i)(3) of this section for each geographic area, a geographic area-specific conversion factor is calculated by dividing the weighted average charge by the weighted average geographically-adjusted RVU. The resulting geographic area conversion factor is divided by the corresponding nationwide conversion factor determined pursuant to paragraph (i)(3)(i) of this section. The resulting ratios are the geographic area adjustment factors for pathology and laboratory services for each geographic area.

(j) Observation care facility charges. When VA provides observation care within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the facility charges billed for such care will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. The charges for this care vary by geographic area and number of hours of care. These charges are calculated as follows:

1. Formula. For each occurrence of observation care, add the nationwide base charge determined pursuant to paragraph (j)(2) of this section to the product of the number of hours in observation care and the hourly charge also determined pursuant to paragraph (j)(2) of this section. Then multiply this amount by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (j)(3) of this section. The result constitutes the area-specific observation care facility charge.

2. (i) Nationwide 80th percentile observation care facility charges. To calculate nationwide base and hourly facility charges, all claims with observation care line items are selected from the outpatient facility component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample. Then, using the 80th percentile observation care line item charges for each unique hourly length of stay, a standard linear regression technique is used to calculate the nationwide 80th percentile base charge and 80th percentile hourly charge. Finally, the resulting amounts are each trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (j)(2)(i) of this section. The results constitute the nationwide 80th percentile base and hourly facility charges for observation care.

(ii) Trending forward. The nationwide 80th percentile base and hourly facility charges for observation care, obtained as described in paragraph (j)(2)(i) of this section, are trended forward based on changes to the outpatient hospital services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the 80th percentile charges.

3. Geographic area adjustment factors. The geographic area adjustment factors for observation care facility charges are the same as those computed for outpatient facility charges under paragraph (e)(4) of this section.

(k) Ambulance and other emergency transportation charges. When VA provides ambulance and other emergency transportation services that are within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the charges billed for such services will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. The charges for these services vary by HCPCS code, length of trip, and geographic area. These charges are calculated as follows:

1. Formula. For each occasion of ambulance or other emergency transportation service, add the nationwide base charge for the appropriate HCPCS code determined pursuant to paragraph (k)(2)(i) of this section to the product of the number of miles traveled and the appropriate HCPCS code mileage charge determined pursuant to paragraph (k)(2)(ii) of this section. Then multiply this amount by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (k)(3) of this section. The result constitutes the area-specific ambulance or other emergency transportation service charge.
(2)(i) Nationwide 80th percentile all-inclusive base charge. To calculate a nationwide all-inclusive base charge, all ambulance and other emergency transportation claims are selected from the outpatient facility component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample. Excluding professional and mileage charges, as well as all-inclusive charges which are reported on such claims, the total charge per claim, including incidental supplies, is computed. Finally, the resulting amounts are each trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (k)(2)(iii) of this section. The results constitute the nationwide 80th percentile all-inclusive base charge for each HCPCS base charge code.

(ii) Nationwide 80th percentile mileage charge. To calculate a nationwide mileage charge, all ambulance and other emergency transportation claims are selected from the outpatient facility component of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample. Excluding professional, incidental, and base charges, as well as claims with all-inclusive charges, the total mileage charge per claim is computed. This amount is divided by the number of miles reported on the claim. Then, the 80th percentile amount for each HCPCS code is computed. Finally, the resulting amounts are each trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (k)(2)(iii) of this section. The results constitute the nationwide 80th percentile mileage charge for each HCPCS mileage code.

(iii) Trending forward. The nationwide 80th percentile all-inclusive base charge, obtained as described in paragraphs (k)(2)(i) and (k)(2)(ii) of this section, is trended forward based on changes to the outpatient hospital services component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the 80th percentile charges.

(3) Geographic area adjustment factors. The geographic area adjustment factors for ambulance and other emergency transportation charges are the same as those computed for outpatient facility charges under paragraph (e)(4) of this section.

(l) Charges for durable medical equipment, drugs, injectables, and other medical services, items, and supplies identified by HCPCS Level II codes. When VA provides DME, drugs, injectables, or other medical services, items, or supplies that are identified by HCPCS Level II codes and that are within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the charges billed for such services, items, and supplies will be determined in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph. The charges for these services, items, and supplies vary by geographic area, by HCPCS code, and by modifier, when applicable. These charges are calculated as follows:

(1) Formula. For each HCPCS code, multiply the nationwide charge determined pursuant to paragraphs (l)(2), (l)(3), and (l)(4) of this section by the appropriate geographic area adjustment factor determined pursuant to paragraph (l)(5) of this section. The result constitutes the area-specific charge.

(2) Nationwide 80th percentile charges for HCPCS codes with RVUs. For each applicable HCPCS code, RVUs are compiled from the data sources set forth in paragraph (l)(2)(i) of this section. The RVUs are multiplied by the charge amount for each incremental RVU determined pursuant to paragraph (l)(2)(ii) of this section, and this amount is added to the fixed charge amount also determined pursuant to paragraph (l)(2)(ii) of this section. Then, for each HCPCS code, this charge is multiplied by the appropriate 80th percentile to median charge ratio determined pursuant to paragraph (l)(2)(iii) of this section. Finally, the resulting amount is trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph...
(1)(2)(iv) of this section to obtain the nationwide 80th percentile charge.

(ii) Charge amounts. Using combined Part B and DME components of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample, the median billed charge is calculated for each HCPCS code. A mathematical approximation methodology based on least squares techniques is applied to the RVUs specified for each of the groups set forth in paragraph (1)(2)(i) of this section, yielding two charge amounts for each HCPCS code group: a charge amount per incremental RVU, and a fixed charge amount.

(iii) 80th Percentile to median charge ratios. Two ratios are obtained for each HCPCS code group set forth in paragraph (1)(2)(i) of this section by dividing the weighted average 80th percentile charge by the weighted average median charge derived from two data sources: Medicare data, as represented by the combined Part B and DME components of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample; and the MDR database. Charge frequencies from the Medicare data are used as weights when calculating all weighted averages. For each HCPCS code group, the smaller of the two ratios is selected as the adjustment from median to 80th percentile charges.

(iv) Trending forward. The charges for each HCPCS code, obtained as described in paragraph (1)(2)(iii) of this section, are trended forward based on changes to the medical care commodities component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of the source data through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the 80th percentile charges, as described in paragraph (1)(2)(iii) of this section.

(3) Nationwide 80th percentile charges for HCPCS codes without RVUs. For each applicable HCPCS code, 80th percentile charges are extracted from three independent data sources: the MDR database; Medicare, as represented by the combined Part B and DME components of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample; and Milliman USA, Inc., Optimized HMO (Health Maintenance Organization) Data Sets (see paragraph (a)(3) of this section for Data Sources). Charges from each database are then trended forward to the effective time period for the charges, as set forth in paragraph (1)(3)(i) of this section. Charges for each HCPCS code from each data source are combined into an average 80th percentile charge by means of the methodology set forth in paragraph (1)(3)(ii) of this section. The results constitute the nationwide 80th percentile charge for each applicable HCPCS code.
(1) **Trending forward.** The charges from each database for each HCPCS code, obtained as described in paragraph (1)(3) of this section, are trended forward based on changes to the medical care commodities component of the CPI-U. Actual CPI-U changes are used from the time period of each source database through the latest available month as of the time the calculations are performed. The three-month average annual trend rate as of the latest available month is then held constant to the midpoint of the calendar year in which the charges are primarily expected to be used. The projected total CPI-U change so obtained is then applied to the 80th percentile charges, as described in paragraph (1)(3) of this section.

(ii) **Averaging methodology.** The average 80th percentile trended charge for any particular HCPCS code is calculated by first computing a preliminary mean average of the three charges for each HCPCS code. Statistical outliers are identified and removed by testing whether any charge differs from the preliminary mean charge by more than 5 times the preliminary mean charge, or by less than 0.2 times the preliminary mean charge. In such cases, the charge most distant from the preliminary mean is removed as an outlier, and the average charge is calculated as a mean of the two remaining charges. In cases where none of the charges differ from the preliminary mean charge by more than 5 times the preliminary mean charge, or less than 0.2 times the preliminary mean charge, the average charge is calculated as a mean of all three reported charges.

(4) **Nationwide 80th percentile charges for HCPCS codes designated as unlisted or unspecified.** For HCPCS codes designated as unlisted or unspecified procedures, services, items, or supplies, 80th percentile charges are developed based on the weighted median 80th percentile charges of HCPCS codes within the series in which the unlisted or unspecified code occurs. A nationwide VA distribution of procedures, services, items, and supplies is used for the purpose of computing the weighted median.

(5) **Geographic area adjustment factors.** For the purpose of geographic adjustment, HCPCS codes are combined into two groups: drugs and DME/supplies, as set forth in paragraph (1)(5)(i) of this section. The geographic area adjustment factor for each of these groups is calculated as the ratio of the area-specific weighted average charge determined pursuant to paragraph (1)(5)(i) of this section divided by the nationwide weighted average charge determined pursuant to paragraph (1)(5)(iii) of this section.

(i) **Combined HCPCS code groups for geographic area adjustment factors for DME, drugs, injectables, and other medical services, items, and supplies.** For the purpose of the statistical methodology set forth in paragraph (1)(5) of this section, each of the HCPCS code groups set forth in paragraph (1)(2)(i) of this section is assigned to one of two combined HCPCS code groups, as follows:

(A) Chemotherapy Drugs: Drugs.

(B) Other Drugs: Drugs.

(C) DME—Hospital Beds: DME/supplies.

(D) DME—Medical/Surgical Supplies: DME/supplies.

(E) DME—Orthotic Devices: DME/supplies.

(F) DME—Oxygen and Supplies: DME/supplies.

(G) DME—Wheelchairs: DME/supplies.

(H) Other DME: DME/supplies.

(I) Enteral/Parenteral Supplies: DME/supplies.

(J) Surgical Dressings and Supplies: DME/supplies.

(K) Vision Items—Other Than Lenses: DME/supplies.

(L) Vision Items—Lenses: DME/supplies.

(M) Hearing Items: DME/supplies.

(ii) **Area-specific weighted average charges.** Using the median charges by HCPCS code from the MDR database for each geographic area and utilization frequencies by HCPCS code from the combined Part B and DME components of the Medicare Standard Analytical File 5 percent Sample, an area-specific weighted average charge is calculated for each combined HCPCS code group.
(iii) Nationwide weighted average charges. Using the area-specific weighted average charges determined pursuant to paragraph (l)(5)(ii) of this section, a nationwide weighted average charge is calculated for each combined HCPCS code group, using as weights the population (census) frequencies for each geographic area as presented in the Milliman USA, Inc., Health Cost Guidelines (see paragraph (a)(3) of this section for Data Sources).

(m) Charges for prescription drugs not administered during treatment. Notwithstanding other provisions of this section regarding VA charges, when VA provides or furnishes prescription drugs not administered during treatment, within the scope of care referred to in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, charges billed separately for such prescription drugs will consist of the amount that equals the total of the actual cost to VA for the drugs and the national average of VA administrative costs associated with dispensing the drugs for each prescription. The actual VA cost of a drug will be the actual amount expended by the VA facility for the purchase of the specific drug. The administrative cost will be determined annually using VA's managerial cost accounting system. Under this accounting system, the average administrative cost is determined by adding the total VA national drug general overhead costs (such as costs of buildings and maintenance, utilities, billing, and collections) to the total VA national drug dispensing costs (such as costs of the labor of the pharmacy department, packaging, and mailing) with the sum divided by the actual number of VA prescriptions filled nationally. Based on this accounting system, VA will determine the amount of the average administrative cost annually for the prior fiscal year (October through September) and then apply the charge at the start of the next calendar year.

NOTE TO §17.101: The charges generated by the methodology set forth in this section are the same charges prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget for use under the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. 2651–2653.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 501, 1701, 1705, 1710, 1721, 1722, 1729)

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0606)

§17.102 Charges for care or services.

Except as provided in §17.101, charges at the indicated rates shall be made for Department of Veterans Affairs hospital care or medical services (including, but not limited to, dental services, supplies, medicines, orthopedic and prosthetic appliances, and domiciliary or nursing home care) as follows:

(a) Furnished in error or on tentative eligibility. Charges at rates prescribed by the Under Secretary for Health shall be made for inpatient or outpatient care or services (including domiciliary care) authorized for any person on the basis of eligibility as a veteran or a tentative eligibility determination under §17.34 but he or she was subsequently found to have been ineligible for such care or services as a veteran because the military service or any other eligibility requirement was not met, or

(b) Furnished in a medical emergency. Charges at rates prescribed by the Under Secretary for Health shall be made for any inpatient or outpatient care or services rendered any person in a medical emergency who was not eligible for such care or services as a veteran because the military service or any other eligibility requirement was not met, if:

1) The care or services were rendered as a humanitarian service, under §17.43(b)(1) or §17.95 to a person neither claiming eligibility as a veteran nor for whom the establishment of eligibility as a veteran was expected, or

2) The person for whom care or services were rendered was a Department of Veterans Affairs employee or a member of a Department of Veterans Affairs employee’s family; or

(c) Furnished beneficiaries of the Department of Defense or other Federal agencies. Except as provided for in paragraph (f) of this section and the second sentence of this paragraph,
charges at rates prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget shall be made for any inpatient or outpatient care or services authorized for a member of the Armed Forces on active duty or for any beneficiary or designee of any other Federal agency. Charges for services provided a member or former member of a uniformed service who is entitled to retired or survivor pay, or equivalent pay, will be at rates prescribed by the Secretary (E.O. 11609, dated July 22, 1971, 36 FR 13747), or

(d) Furnished pensioners of allied nations. Charges at rates prescribed by the Under Secretary for Health shall be made for any inpatient or outpatient care or services rendered a pensioner of a nation allied with the United States in World War I and World War II; or

(e) Furnished under sharing agreements. Charges at rates agreed upon in an agreement for sharing specialized medical resources shall be made for all medical care or services, either on an inpatient or outpatient basis, rendered to a person designated by the other party to the agreement as a patient to be benefitted under the agreement; or

(f) Furnished military retirees with chronic disability. Charges for subsistence at rates prescribed by the Under Secretary for Health shall be made for the period during which hospital care is rendered when such care is rendered to a member or former member of the Armed Forces required to pay the subsistence rate under §17.47 (b)(2) and (c)(2).

(g) Furnished for research purposes. Charges will not be made for medical services, including transportation, furnished as part of an approved Department of Veterans Affairs research project, except that if the services are furnished to a person who is not eligible for the services as a veteran, the medical care appropriation shall be reimbursed from the research appropriation at the same rates used for billings under paragraph (b) of this section.

(h) Computation of charges. The method for computing the charges under §17.86 and under paragraphs (a), (b), (d), (f), and (g) and the last sentence of paragraph (c) of this section is based on the Monthly Program Cost Report (MPCR), which sets forth the actual basic costs and per diem rates by type of inpatient care, and actual basic costs and rates for outpatient care visits or prescriptions filled. Factors for depreciation of buildings and equipment and Central Office overhead are added, based on accounting manual instructions. Additional factors are added for interest on capital investment and for standard fringe benefit costs covering government employee retirement and disability costs. The current year billing rates are projected on prior year actual rates by applying the budgeted percentage increase. In addition, based on the detail available in the MPCR, VA intends to, on each bill break down the all-inclusive rate into its three principal components; namely, physician cost, ancillary services cost, and nursing, room and board cost. The rates generated by the foregoing methodology will be published by either VA or OMB in the ‘Notices’ section of the Federal Register.


§17.103 Referrals of compromise settlement offers.

Any offer to compromise or settle any charges or claim for $20,000 or less asserted by the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with the medical program shall be referred as follows:

(a) To Chiefs of Fiscal activities. If the debt represents charges made under §17.101(a), the compromise offer shall be referred to the Chief of the Fiscal activity of the facility for application of the collection standards in §1.900 et seq. of this chapter, provided:

1. The debt does not exceed $1,000, and

2. There has been a previous denial of waiver of the debt by a field station Committee on Waivers and Compromises.
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(b) To Regional Counsel. If the debt in any amount represents charges for medical services for which there is or may be a claim against a third party tort-feasor or under workers' compensation laws or Pub. L. 87–693, 76 Stat. 593 (see §1.903 of this chapter) or involves a claim contemplated by §1.902 of this chapter over which the Department of Veterans Affairs lacks jurisdiction, the compromise offer (or request for waiver or proposal to terminate or suspend collection action) shall be promptly referred to the field station Regional Counsel having jurisdiction in the area in which the claim arose, or

(c) To Committee on Waivers and Compromises. If one of the following situations contemplated in paragraph (c)(1) through (3) of this section applies:

(1) If the debt represents charges made under §17.101(a), but is not of a type contemplated in paragraph (a) of this section, or

(2) If the debt represents charges for medical services made under §17.101(b), or

(3) A claim arising in connection with any transaction of the Veterans Health Administration for which the instructions in paragraph (a) or (b) of this section or in §17.105(c) are not applicable, then, the compromise offer should be referred for disposition under §1.900 et seq. of this chapter to the field station Committee on Waivers and Compromises which shall take final action.


§ 17.105 Waivers.

Applications or requests for waiver of debts or claims asserted by the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with the medical program generally will be denied by the facility Fiscal activity on the basis there is no legal authority to waive debts, unless the question of waiver should be referred as follows:

(a) Of charges for medical services. If the debt represents charges made under §17.102, the application or request for waiver should be referred for disposition under §1.900 et seq. of this chapter to the field facility Committee on Waivers and Compromises which shall take final action, or

(b) Of claims against third persons and other claims. If the debt is of a type contemplated in §17.103(b), the waiver question should be referred in accordance with the same referral procedures for compromise offers in such categories of claims, or

(c) Of charges for copayments. If the debt represents charges for outpatient medical care, inpatient hospital care, medication or extended care services copayments made under §§17.108, 17.110 or 17.111 of this chapter, the claimant must request a waiver by submitting VA Form 5655 (Financial Status Report) to a Fiscal Officer at a VA medical facility where all or part of the debt was incurred. The claimant must submit this form within the time period provided in §1.963(b) of this chapter and may request a hearing under §1.966(a) of this chapter. The Fiscal Officer may extend the time period for

§ 17.106 Terminations and suspensions.

Any proposal to suspend or terminate collection action on any charges or claim for $20,000 or less asserted by the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with the medical program shall be referred as follows:

(a) Of charges for medical services. If the debt represents charges made under §17.101(a) or (b) questions concerning suspension or termination of collection action shall be referred to the Chief of the Fiscal activity of the station for application of the collection standards in §1.900 et seq. of this chapter, or

(b) Of other debts. If the debt is of a type other than those contemplated in paragraph (a) of this section, questions concerning suspension or termination of collection action shall be referred in accordance with the same referral procedures for compromise offers (except the Fiscal activity shall make final determinations in terminations or suspensions involving claims of $150 or less pursuant to the provisions of §1.900 et seq. of this chapter.)

submitting a claim if the Chairperson of the Committee on Waivers and Compromises could do so under §1.963(b) of this chapter. The Fiscal Officer will apply the standard “equity and good conscience” in accordance with §§1.965 and 1.966(a) of this chapter, and may waive all or part of the claimant’s debts. A decision by the Fiscal Officer under this provision is final (except that the decision may be reversed or modified based on new and material evidence, fraud, a change in law or interpretation of law, or clear and unmistakable error shown by the evidence in the file at the time of the prior decision as provided in §1.969 of this chapter) and may be appealed in accordance with 38 CFR parts 19 and 20.

(d) Other debts. If the debt represents any claim or charges other than those contemplated in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, and is a debt for which waiver has been specifically provided for by law or under the terms of a contract, initial action shall be taken at the station level for referral of the request for waiver through channels for action by the appropriate designated official. If, however, the question of waiver may also involve a concurrent opportunity to negotiate a compromise settlement, the application shall be referred to the Committee on Waivers and Compromises.

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0165)

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1721, 1722A, 1724)

§17.106 VA response to disruptive behavior of patients.

(a) Definition. For the purposes of this section:

VA medical facility means VA medical centers, outpatient clinics, and domiciliaries.

(b) Response to disruptive patients. The time, place, and/or manner of the provision of a patient’s medical care may be restricted by written order of the Chief of Staff of the VA Medical Center of jurisdiction or his or her designee if:

(1) The Chief of Staff or designee determines pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section that the patient’s behavior at a VA medical facility has jeopardized or could jeopardize the health or safety of other patients, VA staff, or guests at the facility, or otherwise interfere with the delivery of safe medical care to another patient at the facility;

(2) The order is narrowly tailored to address the patient’s disruptive behavior and avoid undue interference with the patient’s care;

(3) The order is signed by the Chief of Staff or designee, and a copy is entered into the patient’s permanent medical record;

(4) The patient receives a copy of the order and written notice of the procedure for appealing the order to the Network Director of jurisdiction as soon as possible after issuance; and

(5) The order contains an effective date and any appropriate limits on the duration of or conditions for continuing the restrictions. The Chief of Staff or designee may order restrictions for a definite period or until the conditions for removing conditions specified in the order are satisfied. Unless otherwise stated, the restrictions imposed by an order will take effect upon issuance by the Chief of Staff or designee. Any order issued by the Chief of Staff or designee shall include a summary of the pertinent facts and the bases for the Chief of Staff’s or designee’s determination regarding the need for restrictions.

(c) Evaluation of disruptive behavior. In making determinations under paragraph (b) of this section, the Chief of Staff or designee must consider all pertinent facts, including any prior counseling of the patient regarding his or her disruptive behavior or any pattern of such behavior, and whether the disruptive behavior is a result of the patient’s individual fears, preferences, or perceived needs. A patient’s disruptive behavior must be assessed in connection with VA’s duty to provide good quality care, including care designed to reduce or otherwise clinically address the patient’s behavior.

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§ 17.106 VA collection rules; third-party payers.

(a)(1) General rule. VA has the right to recover or collect reasonable charges from a third-party payer for medical care and services provided for a nonservice-connected disability in or through any VA facility to a veteran who is also a beneficiary under the third-party payer’s plan. VA’s right to recover or collect is limited to the extent that the beneficiary or a nongovernment provider of care or services would be eligible to receive reimbursement or indemnification from the third-party payer if the beneficiary were to incur the costs on the beneficiary’s own behalf.

(2) Definitions. For the purposes of this section:

Automobile liability insurance means insurance against legal liability for health and medical expenses resulting from personal injuries arising from operation of a motor vehicle. Automobile liability insurance includes:

(A) Circumstances in which liability benefits are paid to an injured party only when the insured party’s tortious acts are the cause of the injuries; and

(B) Uninsured and underinsured coverage, in which there is a third-party tortfeasor who caused the injuries (i.e., benefits are not paid on a no-fault basis), but the insured party is not the tortfeasor.

Health-plan contract means any plan, policy, program, contract, or liability arrangement that provides compensation, coverage, or indemnification for expenses incurred by a beneficiary for medical care or services, items, products, and supplies. It includes but is not limited to:

(A) Any plan offered by an insurer, reinsurer, employer, corporation, organization, trust, organized health care group or other entity.

(B) Any plan for which the beneficiary pays a premium to an issuing agent as well as any plan to which the beneficiary is entitled as a result of employment or membership in or association with an organization or group.

(C) Any Employee Retirement Income and Security Act (ERISA) plan.

(D) Any Multiple Employer Trust (MET).

(E) Any Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangement (MEWA).

(F) Any Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) plan, including any such plan with a point-of-service provision or option.

(G) Any individual practice association (IPA) plan.

(H) Any exclusive provider organization (EPO) plan.

(I) Any physician hospital organization (PHO) plan.

(J) Any integrated delivery system (IDS) plan.

(K) Any management service organization (MSO) plan.

(L) Any group or individual medical services account.
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(M) Any participating provider organization (PPO) plan or any PPO provision or option of any third-party payer plan.

(N) Any Medicare supplemental insurance plan.

(O) Any automobile liability insurance plan.

(P) Any no fault insurance plan, including any personal injury protection plan or medical payments benefit plan for personal injuries arising from the operation of a motor vehicle.

Medicare supplemental insurance plan means an insurance, medical service or health-plan contract primarily for the purpose of supplementing an eligible person's benefit under Medicare. The term has the same meaning as “Medicare supplemental policy” in section 1882(g)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395, et seq.) and 42 CFR part 403, subpart B.

No-fault insurance means an insurance contract providing compensation for medical expenses relating to personal injury arising from the operation of a motor vehicle in which the compensation is not premised on who may have been responsible for causing such injury. No-fault insurance includes personal injury protection and medical payments benefits in cases involving personal injuries resulting from operation of a motor vehicle.

Participating provider organization means any arrangement in a third-party payer plan under which coverage is limited to services provided by a select group of providers who are members of the PPO or incentives (for example, reduced copayments) are provided for beneficiaries under the plan to receive health care services from the members of the PPO rather than from other providers who, although authorized to be paid, are not included in the PPO. However, a PPO does not include any organization that is recognized as a health maintenance organization.

Third-party payer means an entity, other than the person who received the medical care or services at issue (first party) and VA who provided the care or services (second party), responsible for the payment of medical expenses on behalf of a person through insurance, agreement or contract. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

(A) State and local governments that provide such plans other than Medicaid.

(B) Insurance underwriters or carriers.

(C) Private employers or employer groups offering self-insured or partially self-insured medical service or health plans.

(D) Automobile liability insurance underwriter or carrier.

(E) No fault insurance underwriter or carrier.

(F) Workers’ compensation program or plan sponsor, underwriter, carrier, or self-insurer.

(G) Any other plan or program that is designed to provide compensation or coverage for expenses incurred by a beneficiary for healthcare services or products.

(H) A third-party administrator.

(b) Calculating reasonable charges. (1) The “reasonable charges” subject to recovery or collection by VA under this section are calculated using the applicable method for such charges established by VA in 38 CFR 17.101.

(2) If the third-party payer’s plan includes a requirement for a deductible or copayment by the beneficiary of the plan, VA will recover or collect reasonable charges less that deductible or copayment amount.

(c) VA’s right to recover or collect is exclusive. The only way for a third-party payer to satisfy its obligation under this section is to pay the VA facility or other authorized representative of the United States. Payment by a third-party payer to the beneficiary does not satisfy the third-party’s obligation under this section.

(1) Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1729(b)(2), the United States may file a claim or institute and prosecute legal proceedings against a third-party payer to enforce a right of the United States under 38 U.S.C. 1729 and this section. Such filing or proceedings must be instituted within six years after the last day of the provision of the medical care or services for which recovery or collection is sought.

(2) An authorized representative of the United States may compromise, settle or waive a claim of the United States under this section.


(4) A third-party payer may not, without the consent of a U.S. Government official authorized to take action under 38 U.S.C. 1729 and this part, offset or reduce any payment due under 38 U.S.C. 1729 or this part on the grounds that the payer considers itself due a refund from a VA facility. A written request for a refund must be submitted and adjudicated separately from any other claims submitted to the third-party payer under 38 U.S.C. 1729 or this part.

(d) Assignment of benefits or other submission by beneficiary not necessary. The obligation of the third-party payer to pay is not dependent upon the beneficiary executing an assignment of benefits to the United States. Nor is the obligation to pay dependent upon any other submission by the beneficiary to the third-party payer, including any claim or appeal. In any case in which VA makes a claim, appeal, representation, or other filing under the authority of this part, any procedural requirement in any third-party payer plan for the beneficiary of such plan to make
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the claim, appeal, representation, or other filing must be deemed to be satisfied. A copy of the completed VA Form 10–10EZ or VA Form 10–10EZRI that includes a veteran’s insurance declaration will be provided to payers upon request, in lieu of a claimant’s statement or coordination of benefits form.

(e) Preemption of conflicting State laws and contracts. Any provision of a law or regulation of a State or political subdivision thereof and any provision of any contract or agreement that purports to establish any requirement on a third-party payer that would have the effect of excluding from coverage or limiting payment for any medical care or services for which payment by the third-party payer under 38 U.S.C. 1729 or this part is required, is preempted by 38 U.S.C. 1729(f) and shall have no force or effect in connection with the third-party payer’s obligations under 38 U.S.C. 1729 or this part.

(f) Impermissible exclusions by third-party payers. (1) Statutory requirement. Under 38 U.S.C. 1729(f), no provision of any third-party payer’s plan having the effect of excluding from coverage or limiting payment for certain care if that care is provided in or through any VA facility shall operate to prevent collection by the United States.

(2) General rules. The following are general rules for the administration of 38 U.S.C. 1729 and this part, with examples provided for clarification. The examples provided are not exclusive. A third-party payer may not reduce, offset, or request a refund for payments made to VA under the following conditions:

(i) Express exclusions or limitations in third-party payer plans that are inconsistent with 38 U.S.C. 1729 are inoperative. For example, a provision in a third-party payer’s plan that purports to disallow or limit payment for services provided by a government entity or paid for by a government program (or similar exclusion) is not a permissible ground for refusing or reducing third-party payment.

(ii) No objection, precondition or limitation may be asserted that defeats the statutory purpose of collecting from third-party payers. For example, a provision in a third-party payer’s plan that purports to disallow or limit payment for services for which the patient has no obligation to pay (or similar exclusion) is not a permissible ground for refusing or reducing third-party payment.

(iii) Third-party payers may not treat claims arising from services provided in or through VA facilities less favorably than they treat claims arising from services provided in other hospitals. For example, no provision of a payer sponsored program or plan that purports to make ineligible for coverage individuals who are eligible to receive VA medical care and services shall be permissible.

(iv) The lack of a participation agreement or the absence of privity of contract between a third-party payer and VA is not a permissible ground for refusing or reducing third-party payment.

(v) A provision in a third-party payer plan, other than a Medicare supplemental plan, that seeks to make Medicare the primary payer and the plan the secondary payer or that would operate to carve out of the plan’s coverage an amount equivalent to the Medicare payment that would be made if the services were provided by a provider to whom payment would be made under Part A or Part B of Medicare is not a permissible ground for refusing or reducing payment as the primary payer to VA by the third-party payer unless the provision expressly disallows payment as the primary payer to all providers to whom payment would not be made under Medicare (including payment under Part A, Part B, a Medicare HMO, or a Medicare Advantage plan).

(vi) A third-party payer may not refuse or reduce third-party payment to VA because VA’s claim form did not report hospital acquired conditions (HAC) or present on admission conditions (POA). VA is exempt from the Medicare Inpatient prospective payment system and the Medicare rules for reporting POA or HAC information to third-party payers.

(vii) Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) may not exclude claims or refuse to certify emergent and urgent services provided within the HMO’s service area or otherwise covered non-emergency services provided out of the HMO’s service area. In addition, opt-out or point-of-service options available under an HMO plan may not exclude services otherwise payable under 38 U.S.C. 1729 or this part.

(g) Records. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1729(h), VA shall make available for inspection and review to representatives of third-party payers, from which the United States seeks payment, recovery, or collection under 38 U.S.C. 1729, appropriate health care records (or copies of such records) of patients. However, the appropriate records will be made available only for the purposes of verifying the care and services which are the subject of the claim(s) for payment under 38 U.S.C. 1729, and for verifying that the care and services met the permissible criteria of the terms and conditions of the third-party payer’s plan. Patient care records will not be made available under any other circumstances to any other entity. VA will not make available to a third-party payer any other patient or VA records.

§ 17.108 Copayments for inpatient hospital care and outpatient medical care.

(a) General. This section sets forth requirements regarding copayments for inpatient hospital care and outpatient medical care provided to veterans by VA.

(b) Copayments for inpatient hospital care. (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (d) or (e) of this section, a veteran, as a condition of receiving inpatient hospital care provided by VA (provided either directly by VA or obtained by VA by contract), must agree to pay VA (and is obligated to pay VA) the applicable copayment, as set forth in paragraph (b)(2) or (b)(3) of this section.

(2) The copayment for inpatient hospital care shall be, during any 365-day period, a copayment equaling the sum of:
   (i) $10 for every day the veteran receives inpatient hospital care, and
   (ii) The lesser of:
       (A) The sum of the inpatient Medicare deductible for the first 90 days of care and one-half of the inpatient Medicare deductible for each subsequent 90 days of care (or fraction thereof) after the first 90 days of such care during such 365-day period, or
       (B) VA’s cost of providing the care.

(3) The copayment for inpatient hospital care for veterans enrolled in priority category 7 shall be 20 percent of the amount computed under paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(c) Copayments for outpatient medical care. (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (d), (e) or (f) of this section, a veteran, as a condition of receiving outpatient medical care provided by VA, must agree to pay VA (and is obligated to pay VA) a copayment as set forth in paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(2) The copayment for outpatient medical care is $15 for a primary care outpatient visit and $50 for a specialty care outpatient visit. If a veteran has more than one primary care encounter on the same day and no specialty care encounter on that day, the copayment amount is the copayment for one primary care outpatient visit. If a veteran has one or more primary care encounters and one or more specialty care encounters on the same day, the copayment amount is the copayment for one specialty care outpatient visit.

(3) For purposes of this section, a primary care visit is an episode of care furnished in a clinic that provides integrated, accessible healthcare services by clinicians who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal healthcare needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of family and community. Primary care includes, but is not limited to, diagnosis and management of acute and chronic biopsychosocial conditions, health promotion, disease prevention, overall care management, and patient and caregiver education. Each patient’s identified primary care clinician delivers services in the context of a larger interdisciplinary primary care team. Patients have access to the primary care clinician and much of the primary care team without need of a referral. In contrast, specialty care is generally provided through referral. A specialty care outpatient visit is an episode of care furnished in a clinic that does not provide primary care, and is only provided through a referral. Some examples of specialty care provided at a specialty care clinic are radiology services requiring the immediate presence of a physician, audiology, optometry, magnetic resonance imagery (MRI), computerized axial tomography (CAT) scan, nuclear medicine studies, surgical consultative services, and ambulatory surgery.

(d) Veterans not subject to copayment requirements for inpatient hospital care or outpatient medical care. The following
veterans are not subject to the copayment requirements of this section:

1. A veteran with a compensable service-connected disability;
2. A veteran who is a former prisoner of war;
3. A veteran awarded a Purple Heart;
4. A veteran who was discharged or released from active military service for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty;
5. A veteran who receives disability compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1151;
6. A veteran whose entitlement to disability compensation is suspended pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1151, but only to the extent that the veteran’s continuing eligibility for care is provided for in the judgment or settlement described in 38 U.S.C. 1151;
7. A veteran whose entitlement to disability compensation is suspended because of the receipt of military retirement pay;
8. A veteran of the Mexican border period or of World War I;
9. A military retiree provided care under an interagency agreement as defined in section 113 of Public Law 106–117, 113 Stat. 1545; or
10. A veteran who VA determines to be unable to defray the expenses of necessary care under 38 U.S.C. 1722(a).

(e) Services not subject to copayment requirements for inpatient hospital care or outpatient medical care. The following are not subject to the copayment requirements under this section:

1. Care provided to a veteran for a noncompensable zero percent service-connected disability;
2. Care authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1710(e) for Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed veterans, radiation-exposed veterans, Gulf War veterans, or post–Gulf War combat-exposed veterans;
3. Special registry examinations (including any follow-up examinations or testing ordered as part of the special registry examination) offered by VA to evaluate possible health risks associated with military service;
4. Counseling and care for sexual trauma as authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720D;
5. Compensation and pension examinations requested by the Veterans Benefits Administration;
6. Care provided as part of a VA-approved research project authorized by 38 U.S.C. 7303;
7. Outpatient dental care provided under 38 U.S.C. 1712;
8. Readjustment counseling and related mental health services authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1712A;
9. Emergency treatment paid for under 38 U.S.C. 1725 or 1728;
10. Care or services authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720E for certain veterans regarding cancer of the head or neck;
11. Publicly announced VA public health initiatives (e.g., health fairs) or an outpatient visit solely consisting of preventive screening and immunizations (e.g., influenza immunization, pneumococcal immunization, hypertension screening, hepatitis C screening, tobacco screening, alcohol screening, hyperlipidemia screening, breast cancer screening, cervical cancer screening, screening for colorectal cancer by fecal occult blood testing, and education about the risks and benefits of prostate cancer screening);
12. Weight management counseling (individual and group);
13. Smoking cessation counseling (individual and group);
14. Laboratory services, flat film radiology services, and electrocardiograms; and
15. Hospice care.

(f) Additional care not subject to outpatient copayment. Outpatient care is not subject to the outpatient copayment requirements under this section when provided to a veteran during a day for which the veteran is required to make a copayment for extended care services that were provided either directly by VA or obtained for VA by contract.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1710)
pay VA a copayment for each 30-day or less supply of medication provided by VA on an outpatient basis (other than medication administered during treatment).

(i) For the period from January 1, 2010, through June 30, 2010, the copayment amount is $8.

(ii) For the period from July 1, 2010, through December 31, 2011, the copayment amount for veterans in priority categories 2 through 6 of VA’s health care system (see §17.36) is $8.

(iii) For veterans in priority categories 7 and 8 of VA’s health care system (see §17.36), the copayment amount from July 1, 2010, through December 31, 2011, is $9.

(iv) The copayment amount for all affected veterans for each calendar year after December 31, 2011, will be established by using the prescription drug component of the Medical Consumer Price Index as follows: For each calendar year, the Index as of the previous September 30 will be divided by the Index as of September 30, 2001 which was 304.8. The ratio so obtained will be multiplied by the original copayment amount of $7. The copayment amount for the new calendar year will be this result, rounded down to the whole dollar amount.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (b)(1)(iv): Example for determining copayment amount. The ratio of the prescription drug component of the Medical Consumer Price Index for September 30, 2005, to the corresponding Index for September 30, 2001 (304.8) was 1.1542. This ratio, when multiplied by the original copayment amount of $7 equals $8.08, and the copayment amount beginning in calendar year 2006, rounded down to the whole dollar amount, was set at $8.

(2) The total amount of copayments in a calendar year for a veteran enrolled in one of the priority categories 2 through 6 of VA’s health care system (see §17.36) shall not exceed the cap established for the calendar year. During the period from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011, the cap will be $900. If the copayment amount increases after December 31, 2011, the cap of $900 shall be increased by $120 for each $1 increase in the copayment amount.

(3) Information on copayment/cap amounts. Current copayment and cap amounts are available at any VA Medical Center and on our Web site, http://www.va.gov. Notice of any increases to the copayment and corresponding increases to annual cap amount will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(c) Medication not subject to the copayment requirements. The following are exempt from the copayment requirements of this section:

(1) Medication for a veteran who has a service-connected disability rated 50% or more based on a service-connected disability or unemployability;

(2) Medication for a veteran’s service-connected disability;

(3) Medication for a veteran whose annual income (as determined under 38 U.S.C. 1503) does not exceed the maximum annual rate of VA pension which would be payable to such veteran if such veteran were eligible for pension under 38 U.S.C. 1521;

(4) Medication authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1710(e) for Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed veterans, radiation-exposed veterans, Persian Gulf War veterans, or post-Persian Gulf War combat-exposed veterans;

(5) Medication for treatment of sexual trauma as authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720D;

(6) Medication for treatment of cancer of the head or neck authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720E;

(7) Medications provided as part of a VA approved research project authorized by 38 U.S.C. 7303; and

(8) Medication for a veteran who is a former prisoner of war.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1710, 1720D, 1722A)

§17.111 Copayments for extended care services.

(a) General. This section sets forth requirements regarding copayments for extended care services provided to veterans by VA (either directly by VA or paid for by VA).

(b) Copayments. (1) Unless exempted under paragraph (f) of this section, as a condition of receiving extended care services from VA, a veteran must agree to pay VA and is obligated to pay VA a copayment as specified by this section. A veteran has no obligation to pay a copayment for the first 21 days of
extended care services that VA provided the veteran in any 12-month period (the 12-month period begins on the date that VA first provided extended care services to the veteran). However, for each day that extended care services are provided beyond the first 21 days, a veteran is obligated to pay VA the copayment amount set forth below to the extent the veteran has available resources. Available resources are based on monthly calculations, as determined under paragraph (d) of this section. The following sets forth the extended care services provided by VA and the corresponding copayment amount per day:

(i) Adult day health care—$15.
(ii) Domiciliary care—$5.
(iii) Institutional respite care—$97.
(iv) Institutional geriatric evaluation—$97.
(v) Non-institutional geriatric evaluation—$15.
(vi) Non-institutional respite care—$15.
(vii) Nursing home care—$97.

(2) For purposes of counting the number of days for which a veteran is obligated to make a copayment under this section, VA will count each day that adult day health care, non-institutional geriatric evaluation, and non-institutional respite care are provided and will count each full day and partial day for each inpatient stay except for the day of discharge.

(c) Definitions. For purposes of this section:

(1) Adult day health care is a therapeutic outpatient care program that provides medical services, rehabilitation, therapeutic activities, socialization, nutrition and transportation services to disabled veterans in a congregate setting.

(2) Domiciliary care is defined in §17.30(b).

(3) Extended care services means adult day health care, domiciliary care, institutional geriatric evaluation, non-institutional geriatric evaluation, nursing home care, institutional respite care, and noninstitutional respite care.

(4) Geriatric evaluation is a specialized, diagnostic/consultative service provided by an interdisciplinary team that is for the purpose of providing a comprehensive assessment, care plan, and extended care service recommendations.

(5) Institutional means a setting in a hospital, domiciliary, or nursing home of overnight stays of one or more days.

(6) Noninstitutional means a service that does not include an overnight stay.

(7) Nursing home care means the accommodation of convalescents or other persons who are not acutely ill and not in need of hospital care, but who require nursing care and related medical services, if such nursing care and medical services are prescribed by, or are performed under the general direction of, persons duly licensed to provide such care (nursing services must be provided 24 hours a day). Such term includes services furnished in skilled nursing care facilities. Such term excludes hospice care.

(8) Respite care means care which is of limited duration, is furnished on an intermittent basis to a veteran who is suffering from a chronic illness and who resides primarily at home, and is furnished for the purpose of helping the veteran to continue residing primarily at home. (Respite providers temporarily replace the caregivers to provide services ranging from supervision to skilled care needs.)

(d) Effect of the veteran’s financial resources on obligation to pay copayment. (1) A veteran is obligated to pay the copayment to the extent the veteran and the veteran’s spouse have available resources. For veterans who have been receiving extended care services for 180 days or less, their available resources are the sum of the income of the veteran and the veteran’s spouse, minus the sum of the veterans allowance, the spousal allowance, and expenses. For veterans who have been receiving extended care services for 181 days or more, their available resources are the sum of the value of the liquid assets, the fixed assets, and the income of the veteran and the veteran’s spouse, minus the sum of the veterans allowance, the spousal allowance, the spousal resource protection amount, and (but only if the veteran—has a spouse
or dependents residing in the community who is not institutionalized) expenses. When a veteran is legally separated from a spouse, available resources do not include spousal income, expenses, and assets or a spousal allowance.

(2) For purposes of determining available resources under this section:

(i) **Income** means current income (including, but not limited to, wages and income from a business (minus business expenses), bonuses, tips, severance pay, accrued benefits, cash gifts, inheritance amounts, interest income, standard dividend income from non-tax deferred annuities, retirement income, pension income, unemployment payments, worker's compensation payments, black lung payments, tort settlement payments, social security payments, court mandated payments, payments from VA or any other Federal programs, and any other income). The amount of current income will be stated in frequency of receipt, e.g., per week, per month.

(ii) **Expenses** means basic subsistence expenses, including current expenses for the following: rent/mortgage for primary residence; vehicle payment for one vehicle; food for veteran, veteran’s spouse, and veteran’s dependents; education for veteran, veteran’s spouse, and veteran’s dependents; court-ordered payments of veteran or veteran’s spouse (e.g., alimony, child-support); and including the average monthly expenses during the past year for the following: utilities and insurance for the primary residence; out-of-pocket medical care costs not otherwise covered by health insurance; health insurance premiums for the veteran, veteran’s spouse, and veteran’s dependents; and taxes paid on income and personal property.

(iii) **Fixed Assets** means:

(A) Real property and other non-liquid assets; except that this does not include—

(1) Burial plots;

(2) A residence if the residence is:

(i) The primary residence of the veteran and the veteran is receiving only institutional extended care service; or

(ii) The primary residence of the veteran’s spouse or the veteran’s dependents (if the veteran does not have a spouse) if the veteran is receiving institutional extended care service.

(3) A vehicle if the vehicle is:

(i) The vehicle of the veteran and the veteran is receiving only non-institutional extended care service; or

(ii) The vehicle of the veteran’s spouse or the veteran’s dependents (if the veteran does not have a spouse) if the veteran is receiving institutional extended care service.

(B) **Liquid assets** means cash, stocks, dividends received from IRA, 401K’s and other tax deferred annuities, bonds, mutual funds, retirement accounts (e.g., IRA, 401Ks, annuities), art, rare coins, stamp collections, and collectibles of the veteran, spouse, and dependents. This includes household and personal items (e.g., furniture, clothing, and jewelry) except when the veteran’s spouse or dependents are living in the community.

(v) **Spousal allowance** is an allowance of $20 per day that is included only if the spouse resides in the community (not institutionalized).

(vi) **Spousal resource protection amount** means the value of liquid assets but not to exceed $89,280 if the spouse is residing in the community (not institutionalized).

(vii) **Veterans allowance** is an allowance of $20 per day.

(3) The maximum amount of a copayment for any month equals the copayment amount specified in paragraph (b)(1) of this section multiplied by the number of days in the month. The copayment for any month may be less than the amount specified in paragraph (b)(1) of this section if the veteran provides information in accordance with this section to establish that the copayment should be reduced or eliminated.

(e) **Requirement to submit information.**

(1) Unless exempted under paragraph (f) of this section, a veteran must submit to a VA medical facility a completed VA Form 10–10EC and documentation requested by the Form at the following times:

(i) At the time of initial request for an episode of extended care services;

(ii) At the time of request for extended care services after a break in
provision of extended care services for more than 30 days; and
(iii) Each year at the time of submission to VA of VA Form 10–10EZ.

(2) When there are changes that might change the copayment obligation (i.e., changes regarding marital status, fixed assets, liquid assets, expenses, income (when received), or whether the veteran has a spouse or dependents residing in the community), the veteran must report those changes to a VA medical facility within 10 days of the change.

(f) Veterans and care that are not subject to the copayment requirements. The following veterans and care are not subject to the copayment requirements of this section:

(1) A veteran with a compensable service-connected disability;

(2) A veteran whose annual income (determined under 38 U.S.C. 1503) is less than the amount in effect under 38 U.S.C. 1521(b);

(3) Care for a veteran’s noncompensable zero percent service-connected disability;

(4) An episode of extended care services that began on or before November 30, 1999;

(5) Care authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1710(e) for Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed veterans, radiation-exposed veterans, Persian Gulf War veterans, or post-Persian Gulf War combat-exposed veterans;

(6) Care for treatment of sexual trauma as authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720D; or

(7) Care or services authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1720E for certain veterans regarding cancer of the head or neck.

(g) VA Form 10–10EC.
# Application for Extended Care Services

## Section I - General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>SSN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last, First, MD</td>
<td>Social Security Number</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Answer Yes or No Where Applicable (Otherwise Provide the Requested Information)

1. Are you eligible for Medicare?  
   - Yes  
   - No  

2. Are you enrolled in Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance)?  
   - Yes  
   - No  

3. Are you covered by health insurance (including coverage through a spouse)?  
   - Yes  
   - No  

## Section II - Insurance Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insurance Company</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<th>Policy Holder</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Policy Number</th>
<th>Group Name/Member Number</th>
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<td>Name</td>
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<td>Name</td>
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## Section III - Spouse/Dependent Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spouse/Dependent Name</th>
<th>Social Security Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last, First, MD</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
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</table>

We need to collect information regarding income, assets and expenses for you and your spouse. If you do not wish to provide this information, you must sign agreeing to make copayments and will be charged the maximum copayment amount for all services. See the top of page 2, read, sign, and date.
§ 17.111 38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition)

APPLICATION FOR EXTENDED CARE SERVICES, Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER</th>
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</table>

I do not wish to provide my detailed financial information. I understand that I will be assessed the maximum copayment amount for extended care services and agree to pay the applicable VA copayment as required by law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION IV - FIXED ASSETS (VETERAN AND SPOUSE)</th>
<th>VETERAN</th>
<th>SPOUSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Primary Residence (Market value minus mortgages or liens. Exclude if veteran receiving only non-institutional extended care services or spouse or dependent residing in the community.)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Other Residence (Land/Farm or Ranch) (Market value minus mortgages or liens. This would include a second home, vacation home, rental property)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vehicles (Value minus any outstanding loan. Exclude primary vehicle of veteran receiving only non-institutional extended care services or spouse or dependent residing in the community.)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Cash, Amount in Bank Accounts (e.g., checking and savings accounts, certificates of deposit, individual retirement accounts, stocks and bonds)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Value of Other Liquid Assets (e.g., art, rare coins, stamp collections, collectibles) Minus the amount you owe on these items. Exclude household effects, clothing, jewelry, and personal items if veteran receiving only non-institutional extended care services or spouse or dependent residing in the community.)</td>
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SUM OF ALL LINES FIXED AND LIQUID ASSETS | TOTAL ASSETS
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SECTION VI - CURRENT GROSS INCOME OF VETERAN AND SPOUSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>VETERAN</th>
<th>SPOUSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gross annual income from employment (e.g., wages, bonuses, tips, severance pay, accrued benefits)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Net income from your farm/ranch, property or business.</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. List other income amounts (e.g., social security, retirement and pension, interest, dividends) Refer to instructions.</td>
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</table>

SECTION VII - DEDUCTIBLE EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>VETERAN</th>
<th>SPOUSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Educational expenses of veterans, spouse or dependent (e.g., tuition, books, fees, material, etc.)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Funeral and Burial (spouse or child, amount you pay for funeral and burial expenses, including prepaid arrangements)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Rent Mortgage (monthly, annual or special amount)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Utilities (calculate by average monthly amounts over the past 12 months)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Car Payment (if you have one vehicle only - excludes auto, automobile insurance, parking fees, repairs)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Food (for veteran, spouse and dependents)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Non-reimbursable medical expenses paid by you or spouse (e.g., copayments for physicians, dentists, medications, Medicare, health insurance, hospital and nursing home expenses)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Court-ordered payments (e.g., alimony, child support)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Hospitable (e.g., automobile insurance, homeowner's insurance) Exclude Life Insurance</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Taxes (e.g., personal property for home, automobiles) Include average monthly expense for taxes paid on income over the past 12 months.</td>
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<td>$</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TOTALS | $        |

SECTION VII - CONSENT FOR ASSIGNMENT OF BENEFITS

I hereby authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to disclose any such history, diagnostic and treatment information from my medical records to the contractor of any health plan contract under which I am apparently eligible for medical care or payment of the expense of care or to any other party against whom liability is asserted. I understand that I may revoke this authorization at any time. I further consent to the assignment of all benefits to VA for any services for which payment is accepted.

SIGNATURE | DATE

A FORM
DEC 2002
10-10EC
Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 17.111

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPLICATION FOR EXTENDED CARE SERVICES, Continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VETERANS NAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION III. - CONSENT TO AGREEMENT TO MAKE COPIEYS

Completion of this form with signature of the Veteran or veteran's representative is certification that the veteran/representative has received a copy of the Privacy Act Statement and agrees to make appropriate copysights.

I certify the foregoing statement(s) are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and agree to make the applicable copysight for extended care services as required by law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNATURE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

SECTION IV. - PAPERWORK PRIVACY ACT INFORMATION

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires us to notify you that this information collection is in accordance with the clearance requirements of section 3507 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. You may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The time estimate associated with this collection is an average of 90 minutes. This includes the time it will take to read instructions, gather the necessary facts and fill out the form. If you have comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection, call 202.273.8247 for mailing information on where to send your comments.

Privacy Act Information: The VA is asking you to provide the information on this form under Title 38, United States Code, sections 1701, 1702, 1722 and 1729 as order for VA to determine your eligibility for extended care benefits and to establish financial eligibility, if applicable, when placed in extended care services. The information you supply for this program may be disclosed to the extent permitted by law. VA may use the information you provide in the operation of a computer-managing program, VA may disclose the information that you put on this form as permitted by law. VA may use the information you provide in the operation of a computer managing program. VA may disclose the information that you put on this form as permitted by law. VA may use this information to identify veterans and persons claiming or receiving VA benefits and their records, and for other purposes authorized or required by law.

ADDITIONAL COMMENT:

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101(28), 501, 1701(7), 1710, 1710B, 1720B, 1720D, 1722A)

[67 FR 35040, May 17, 2002; as amended at 69 FR 38846, July 1, 2004]

719
§ 17.112 Services or ceremonies on Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or center reservations.

(a) Services or ceremonies on Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or center reservations are subject to the following limitations:

(1) All activities must be conducted with proper decorum, and not interfere with the care and treatment of patients. Organizations must provide assurance that their members will obey all rules in effect at the hospital or center involved, and act in a dignified and proper manner.

(2) Partisan activities are inappropriate and all activities must be non-partisan in nature. An activity will be considered partisan and therefore inappropriate if it includes commentary in support of, or in opposition to, or attempts to influence, any current policy of the Government of the United States or any State of the United States. If the activity is closely related to partisan activities being conducted outside the hospital or center reservations, it will be considered partisan and therefore inappropriate.

(b) Requests for permission to hold services or ceremonies will be addressed to the Secretary, or the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or center involved. Such applications will describe the proposed activity in sufficient detail to enable a determination as to whether it meets the standards set forth in paragraph (a) of this section. If permission is granted, the Director of the hospital or center involved will assign an appropriate time, and render assistance where appropriate. No organization will be given exclusive permission to use the hospital or center reservation on any particular occasion. Where several requests are received for separate activities, the Director will schedule each so as to avoid overlapping or interference, or require appropriate modifications in the scope or timing of the activity.


§ 17.113 Conditions of custody.

When the personal effects of a patient who has been or is hospitalized or receiving nursing home care in a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital or center were or are duly delivered to a designated location for custody and loss of such personal effects has occurred or occurs by fire, earthquake, or other natural disaster, either during such storage or during laundering, reimbursement will be made as provided in §§17.113 and 17.114.


§ 17.114 Submittal of claim for reimbursement.

The claim for reimbursement for personal effects damaged or destroyed will be submitted by the patient to the Director. The patient will separately list and evaluate each article with a notation as to its condition at the time of the fire, earthquake, or other natural disaster i.e., whether new, worn, etc. The date of the fire, earthquake, or other natural disaster will be stated. It will be certified by a responsible official that each article listed was stored in a designated location at the time of loss by fire, earthquake, or other natural disaster or was in process of laundering. The patient will further state whether the loss of each article was complete or partial, permitting of some further use of the article. The responsible official will certify that the amount of reimbursement claimed on each article of personal effects is not in excess of the fair value thereof at time of loss. The certification will be prepared in triplicate, signed by the responsible officer who made it, and countersigned by the Director of the medical center. After the above papers
§ 17.120 Payment or reimbursement of the expenses of hospital care and other medical services not previously authorized.

To the extent allowable, payment or reimbursement of the expenses of care, not previously authorized, in a private or public (or Federal) hospital not operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, or of any medical services not previously authorized including transportation (except prosthetic appliances, similar devices, and repairs) may be paid on the basis of a claim timely filed, under the following circumstances:

(a) For veterans with service connected disabilities. Care or services not previously authorized were rendered to a veteran in need of such care or services:

(1) For an adjudicated service-connected disability;

(2) For nonservice-connected disabilities associated with and held to be aggravating an adjudicated service-connected disability;

(3) For any disability of a veteran who has a total disability permanent in nature resulting from a service-connected disability (does not apply outside of the States, Territories, and possessions of the United State, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico);
§ 17.121 Limitations on payment or reimbursement of the costs of emergency hospital care and medical services not previously authorized.

Claims for payment or reimbursement of the costs of emergency hospital care or medical services not previously authorized will not be approved for any period beyond the date on which the medical emergency ended. For the purpose of payment or reimbursement of the expense of emergency hospital care or medical services not previously authorized, an emergency shall be deemed to have ended at that point when a VA physician has determined that, based on sound medical judgment, a veteran:

(a) Who received emergency hospital care could have been transferred from the non-VA facility to a VA medical center for continuation of treatment for the disability, or

(b) Who received emergency medical services, could have reported to a VA medical center for continuation of treatment for the disability.

From that point on, no additional care in a non-VA facility will be approved for payment by VA.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(c)(1))

§ 17.122 Payment or reimbursement of the expenses of repairs to prosthetic appliances and similar devices furnished without prior authorization.

The expenses of repairs to prosthetic appliances, or similar appliances, therapeutic or rehabilitative aids or devices, furnished without prior authorization, but incurred in the care of an adjudicated service-connected disability (or, in the case of a veteran who is participating in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. ch. 31 and who is determined to be in need of the repairs for any of the reasons enumerated in §17.47(g)) may be paid or reimbursed on the basis of a timely filed claim, if

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1728)

(a) Obtaining the repairs locally was necessary, expedient, and not a matter of preference to using authorized sources, and

(b) The costs were reasonable, except that where it is determined the costs were excessive or unreasonable, the claim may be allowed to the extent the costs were deemed reasonable and disallowed as to the remainder. In no circumstances will any claim for repairs be allowed to the extent the costs exceed $125.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1728, 7304)

§ 17.123 Claimants.

A claim for payment or reimbursement of services not previously authorized may be filed by the veteran who received the services (or his/her guardian) or by the hospital, clinic, or community resource which provided the services, or by a person other than the veteran who paid for the services.

§ 17.124 Preparation of claims.

Claims for costs of services not previously authorized shall be on such forms as shall be prescribed and shall include the following:

(a) The claimant shall specify the amount claimed and furnish bills, vouchers, invoices, or receipts or other documentary evidence establishing that such amount was paid or is owed, and

(b) The claimant shall provide an explanation of the circumstances necessitating the use of community medical care, services, or supplies instead of Department of Veterans Affairs care, services, or supplies, and

(c) The claimant shall furnish such other evidence or statements as are deemed necessary and requested for adjudication of the claim.


§ 17.125 Where to file claims.

Claims for payment or reimbursement of the expenses of services not previously authorized should be filed as follows:

(a) For services rendered in the U.S. Claims for the expenses of care or services rendered in the United States, including the Territories or possessions of the United States, should be filed with the Chief, Outpatient Service, or Clinic Director of the VA facility designated as a clinic or jurisdiction which serves the region in which the care or services were rendered.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7304)

(b) For services rendered in the Philippines. Claims for the expenses of care or services rendered in the Republic of the Philippines should be filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic (358/00), 2201 Roxas Blvd., Pasay City, 1300, Republic of the Philippines.

(c) For services rendered in other foreign countries. Claims for the expenses of care or services rendered in other foreign countries must be mailed to the Health Administration Center, P.O. Box 489063, Denver, CO 80246-9063.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7304)

(d) For services rendered in Puerto Rico. Claims for the expenses of care or services rendered in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico should be filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical and Regional Office Center, San Juan, PR.


§ 17.126 Timely filing.

Claims for payment or reimbursement of the expenses of medical care or services not previously authorized must be filed within the following time limits:

(a) A claim must be filed within 2 years after the date the care or services were rendered (and in the case of continuous care, payment will not be made for any part of the care rendered more than 2 years prior to filing claim), or

(b) In the case of case or services rendered prior to a VA adjudication allowing service-connection:

(1) The claim must be filed within 2 years of the date the veteran was notified by VA of the allowance of the award of service-connection.

(2) VA payment may be made for care related to the service-connected disability received only within a 2-year period prior to the date the veteran filed the original or reopened claim which resulted in the award of service-connection but never prior to the effective date of the award of service-connection within that 2-year period.

(3) VA payment will never be made for any care received beyond this 2-year period whether service connected or not.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7304)


§ 17.127 Date of filing claims.

The date of filing any claim for payment or reimbursement of the expenses of medical care and services not previously authorized shall be the postmark date of a formal claim, or the date of any preceding telephone call,
§ 17.128 Allowable rates and fees.

When it has been determined that a veteran has received public or private hospital care or outpatient medical services, the expenses of which may be paid under §17.120 of this part, the payment of such expenses shall be paid in accordance with §§17.55 and 17.56 of this part.

(Authority: Section 233, Pub. L. 99–576)

[63 FR 39515, July 23, 1998]

§ 17.129 Retroactive payments prohibited.

When a claim for payment or reimbursement of expenses of services not previously authorized has not been timely filed in accordance with the provisions of §17.126, the expenses of any such care or services rendered prior to the date of filing the claim shall not be paid or reimbursed. In no event will a bill or claim be paid or allowed for any care or services rendered prior to the effective date of any law, or amendment to the law, under which eligibility for the medical services at Department of Veterans Affairs expense has been established.


§ 17.130 Payment for treatment dependent upon preference prohibited.

No reimbursement or payment of services not previously authorized will be made when such treatment was procured through private sources in preference to available Government facilities.


§ 17.131 Payment of abandoned claims prohibited.

Any informal claim for the payment or reimbursement of medical expenses which is not followed by a formal claim, or any formal claim which is not followed by necessary supporting evidence, within 1 year from the date of the request for a formal claim or supporting evidence shall be deemed abandoned, and payment or reimbursement shall not be authorized on the basis of such abandoned claim or any future claim for the same expenses. For the purpose of this section, time limitations shall be computed from the date following the date of request for a formal claim or supporting evidence.


§ 17.132 Appeals.

When any claim for payment or reimbursement of expenses of medical care or services rendered in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities or from non-Department of Veterans Affairs resources has been disallowed, the claimant shall be notified of the reasons for the disallowance and of the right to initiate an appeal to the Board of Veterans Appeals by filing a Notice of Disagreement, and shall be furnished such other notices or statements as are required by part 19 of this chapter, governing appeals.


RECONSIDERATION OF DENIED CLAIMS

§ 17.133 Procedures.

(a) Scope. This section sets forth reconsideration procedures regarding claims for benefits administered by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These procedures apply to claims for VHA benefits regarding decisions that are appealable to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (e.g., reimbursement for non-VA care not authorized in advance, reimbursement for beneficiary travel expenses, reimbursement for home improvements or structural alterations, etc.). These procedures do not apply when other regulations providing reconsideration procedures do apply (this includes CHAMPVA (38 CFR 17.270 through 17.278) and spina bifida (38 CFR 17.904) and any other regulations that contain reconsideration procedures). Also, these procedures do not apply to decisions made outside of VHA, such as decisions made by the Veterans Benefits Administration and adopted by VHA for decisionmaking. These procedures are not mandatory,
and a claimant may choose to appeal the denied claim to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 7105 without utilizing the provisions of this section. Submitting a request for reconsideration shall constitute a notice of disagreement for purposes of filing a timely notice of disagreement under 38 U.S.C. 7105(b).

(b) Process. An individual who disagrees with the initial decision denying the claim in whole or in part may obtain reconsideration under this section by submitting a reconsideration request in writing to the Director of the healthcare facility of jurisdiction within one year of the date of the initial decision. The reconsideration decision will be made by the immediate supervisor of the initial VA decision-maker. The request must state why it is concluded that the decision is in error and must include any new and relevant information not previously considered. Any request for reconsideration that does not identify the reason for the dispute will be returned to the sender without further consideration. The request for reconsideration may include a request for a meeting with the immediate supervisor of the initial VA decision-maker, the claimant, and the claimant’s representative (if the claimant wishes to have a representative present). Such a meeting shall only be for the purpose of discussing the issues and shall not include formal procedures (e.g., presentation, cross-examination of witnesses, etc.). The meeting will be taped and transcribed by VA if requested by the claimant and a copy of the transcription shall be provided to the claimant. After reviewing the matter, the immediate supervisor of the initial VA decision-maker shall issue a written decision that affirms, reverses, or modifies the initial decision.

Note to §17.133: The final decision of the immediate supervisor of the initial VA decision-maker will inform the claimant of further appellate rights for an appeal to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0600)


[64 FR 44660, Aug. 17, 1999]
§ 17.149  Sensori-neural aids.

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, VA will furnish needed sensori-neural aids (i.e., eyeglasses, contact lenses, hearing aids) only to veterans otherwise receiving VA care or services and only as provided in this section.

(b) VA will furnish needed sensori-neural aids (i.e., eyeglasses, contact lenses, hearing aids) to the following veterans:

1. Those with a compensable service-connected disability;
2. Those who are former prisoners of war;
3. Those awarded a Purple Heart;
4. Those in receipt of benefits under 38 U.S.C. 1151;
5. Those in receipt of increased pension based on the need for regular aid and attendance or by reason of being permanently housebound;
6. Those who have a visual or hearing impairment that resulted from the existence of another medical condition for which the veteran is receiving VA care, or which resulted from treatment of that medical condition;
7. Those with a significant functional or cognitive impairment evidenced by deficiencies in activities of daily living, but not including normally occurring visual or hearing impairments; and
8. Those visually or hearing impaired so severely that the provision of sensori-neural aids is necessary to permit active participation in their own medical treatment.

(c) VA will furnish needed hearing aids to those veterans who have service-connected hearing disabilities rated 0 percent if there is organic conductive, mixed, or sensory hearing impairment, and loss of pure tone hearing sensitivity in the low, mid, or high-frequency range or a combination of frequency ranges which contribute to a loss of communication ability; however hearing aids are to be provided only as needed for the service-connected hearing disability.


§ 17.150  Prosthetic and similar appliances.

Artificial limbs, braces, orthopedic shoes, hearing aids, wheelchairs, medical accessories, similar appliances including invalid lifts and therapeutic and rehabilitative devices, and special clothing made necessary by the wearing of such appliances, may be purchased, made or repaired for any veteran upon a determination of feasibility and medical need, provided:

(a) As part of outpatient care. The appliances or repairs are a necessary part of outpatient care for which the veteran is eligible under 38 U.S.C. 1712 and 38 CFR 17.93 (or a necessary part of outpatient care authorized under §17.94) or

(b) As part of hospital care. The appliances or repairs are a necessary part of inpatient care for any service-connected disability or any nonservice-connected disability, if:

1. The nonservice-connected disability is associated with an aggravating a service-connected disability, or
2. The nonservice-connected disability is one for which hospital admission was authorized, or
3. The nonservice-connected disability is associated with and aggravating a nonservice-connected disability for which hospital admission was authorized, or
4. The nonservice-connected disability is one for which treatment may
be authorized under the provisions of § 17.48(f), or
(c) As part of domiciliary care. The appliances or repairs are necessary for continued domiciliary care, or are necessary to treat a member’s service-connected disability, or nonservice-connected disability associated with and aggravating a service-connected disability, or
(d) As part of nursing home care. The appliances or repairs are a necessary part of nursing home care furnished in facilities under the direct and exclusive jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

§ 17.151 Invalid lifts for recipients of aid and attendance allowance or special monthly compensation.

An invalid lift may be furnished if:
(a) The applicant is a veteran who is receiving (1) special monthly compensation (including special monthly compensation based on the need for aid and attendance) under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1114(r), or (2) comparable compensation benefits at the rates prescribed under 38 U.S.C. 1134, or (3) increased pension based on the need for aid and attendance or a greater compensation benefit rather than aid and attendance pension to which he or she has been adjudicated to be presently eligible; and
(b) The veteran has loss, or loss of use, of both lower extremities and at least one upper extremity (loss of use may result from paralysis or other impairment to muscle power and includes all cases in which the veteran cannot use his or her extremities or is medically prohibited from doing so because of a serious disease or disability); and
(c) The veteran has been medically determined incapable of moving himself or herself from his or her bed to a wheelchair, or from his or her wheelchair to his or her bed, without the aid of an attendant, because of the disability involving the use of his or her extremities; and
(d) An invalid lift would be a feasible means by which the veteran could accomplish the necessary maneuvers between bed and wheelchair, and is medically determined necessary.

§ 17.152 Devices to assist in overcoming the handicap of deafness.

Devices for assisting in overcoming the handicap of deafness (including telecaptioning television decoders) may be furnished to any veteran who is profoundly deaf (rated 80% or more disabled for hearing impairment by the Department of Veterans Affairs) and is entitled to compensation on account of such hearing impairment.

§ 17.153 Training in the use of appliances.

Beneficiaries supplied prosthetic and similar appliances will be additionally entitled to fitting and training in the use of the appliances. Such training will usually be given in Department of Veterans Affairs facilities and by Department of Veterans Affairs employees, but may be obtained under contract if determined necessary.

§ 17.154 Dog-guides and equipment for blind.

(a) Blind ex-members of the Armed Forces entitled to disability compensation for a service-connected disability may be furnished a trained dog-guide. In addition, they may be furnished necessary travel expense to and from their places of residence to the point where adjustment to the dog-guide is available and meals and lodging during the period of adjustment, provided they are required to be away from their usual places of residence during the period of adjustment.
(b) Mechanical and/or electronic equipment considered necessary as aids
§ 17.155

Automotive Equipment and Driver Training

§ 17.155 Minimum standards of safety and quality for automotive adaptive equipment.

(a) The Under Secretary for Health or designee is authorized to develop and establish minimum standards of safety and quality for adaptive equipment provided under 38 U.S.C. chapter 39.

(b) In the performance of this function, the following considerations will apply:

(1) Minimum standards of safety and quality will be developed and promulgated for basic adaptive equipment specifically designed to facilitate operation and use of standard passenger motor vehicles by persons who have specified types of disablement and for the installation of such equipment.

(2) In those instances where custom-built adaptive equipment is designed and installed to meet the peculiar needs of uniquely disabled persons and where the incidence of probable usage is not such as to justify development of formal standards, such equipment will be inspected and, if in order, approved for use by a qualified designee of the Under Secretary for Health.

(3) Adaptive equipment, available to the general public, which is manufactured under standards of safety imposed by a Federal agency having authority to establish the same, shall be deemed to meet required standards for use as adaptive equipment. These include such items as automatic transmissions, power brakes, power steering and other automotive options.

(c) For those items where specific Department of Veterans Affairs standards of safety and quality have not as yet been developed, or where such standards are otherwise provided as with custom-designed or factory option items, authorization of suitable adaptive equipment will not be delayed. Approval of such adaptive equipment, however, shall be subject to the judgment of designated certifying officials that it meets implicit standards of safety and quality adopted by the industry or as later developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

§ 17.156 Eligibility for automobile adaptive equipment.

Automobile adaptive equipment may be authorized if the Under Secretary for Health or designee determines that such equipment is deemed necessary to insure that the eligible person will be able to operate the automobile or other conveyance in a manner consistent with such person's safety and so as to satisfy the applicable standards of licensure established by the State of such person's residency or other proper licensing authority.

(a) Persons eligible for adaptive equipment are:

(1) Veterans who are entitled to receive compensation for the loss or permanent loss of use of one or both feet; or the loss or permanent loss of use of one or both hands; or ankylosis of one or both knees, or one of both hips if the disability is the result of injury incurred or disease contracted in or aggravated by active military, naval or air service.

(2) Members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who are suffering from any disability described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section incurred or contracted during or aggravated by active military service are eligible to receive automobile adaptive equipment.

(b) Payment or reimbursement of reasonable costs for the repair, replacement, or reinstallation of adaptive equipment deemed necessary for the operation of the automobile may be authorized by the Under Secretary for Health or designee.
§ 17.157 Definition—adaptive equipment.

The term, adaptive equipment, means equipment which must be part of or added to a conveyance manufactured for sale to the general public to make it safe for use by the claimant, and enable that person to meet the applicable standards of licensure. Adaptive equipment includes any term specified by the Under Secretary for Health or designee as ordinarily necessary for any of the classes of losses or combination of such losses specified in §17.156 of this part, or as deemed necessary in an individual case. Adaptive equipment includes, but is not limited to, a basic automatic transmission, power steering, power brakes, power window lifts, power seats, air-conditioning equipment when necessary for the health and safety of the veteran, and special equipment necessary to assist the eligible person into or out of the automobile or other conveyance, regardless of whether the automobile or other conveyance is to be operated by the eligible person or is to be operated for such person by another person; and any modification of the interior space of the automobile or other conveyance if needed because of the physical condition of such person in order for such person to enter or operate the vehicle.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3901, 3902)


§ 17.158 Limitations on assistance.

(a) An eligible person shall not be entitled to adaptive equipment for more than two automobiles or other conveyances at any one time or during any four-year period except when due to circumstances beyond control of such person, one of the automobiles or other conveyances for which adaptive equipment was provided during the applicable four-year period is no longer available for the use of such person.

(1) Circumstances beyond the control of the eligible person are those where the vehicle was lost due to fire, theft, accident, court action, or when repairs are so costly as to be prohibitive or a different vehicle is required due to a change in the eligible person’s physical condition.

(2) For purposes of paragraph (a)(1) of this section, an eligible person shall be deemed to have access to and use of an automobile or other conveyance for which the Department of Veterans Affairs has provided adaptive equipment if that person has sold, given or transferred the vehicle to a spouse, family member or other person residing in the same household as the eligible person, or to a business owned by such person.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3903)

(b) Eligible persons may be reimbursed for the actual cost of adaptive equipment subject to a dollar amount for specific items established from time to time by the Under Secretary for Health.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3902)

(c) Reimbursement for a repair to an item of adaptive equipment is limited to the current vehicles of record and only to the basic components authorized as automobile adaptive equipment. Reimbursable amounts for repairs are limited to the cost of parts and labor based on the amounts published in generally acceptable commercial estimating guides for domestic automobiles.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3902)


§ 17.159 Obtaining vehicles for special driver training courses.

The Secretary may obtain by purchase, lease, gift or otherwise, any automobile, motor vehicle, or other conveyance deemed necessary to conduct special driver training courses at Department of Veterans Affairs health care facilities. The Secretary may sell, assign, transfer or convey any such automobile, vehicle or conveyance to which the Department of Veterans Affairs holds title for such price or under such terms deemed appropriate by the Secretary. Any proceeds received from such disposition shall be credited to
§ 17.160 Authorization of dental examinations.

When a detailed report of dental examination is essential for a determination of eligibility for benefits, dental examinations may be authorized for the following classes of claimants or beneficiaries:

(a) Those having a dental disability adjudicated as incurred or aggravated in active military, naval, or air service or those requiring examination to determine whether the dental disability is service connected.

(b) Those having disability from disease or injury other than dental, adjudicated as incurred or aggravated in active military, naval, or air service but with an associated dental condition that is considered to be aggravating the basic service-connected disorder.

(c) Those for whom a dental examination is ordered as a part of a general physical examination.

(d) Those requiring dental examination during hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care.

(e) Those held to have suffered dental injury or aggravation of an existing dental injury, as the result of examination, hospitalization, or medical or surgical (including dental) treatment that had been awarded.

(f) Veterans who are participating in a rehabilitation program under 38 U.S.C. chapter 31 are entitled to such dental services as are professionally determined necessary for any of the reasons enumerated in §17.47(g).

(h) Persons defined in §17.60(d).


Outpatient dental treatment may be authorized by the Chief, Dental Service, for beneficiaries defined in 38 U.S.C. 1712(b) and 38 CFR 17.93 to the extent prescribed and in accordance with the applicable classification and provisions set forth in this section.

(a) Class I. Those having a service-connected compensable dental disability or condition, may be authorized any dental treatment indicated as reasonably necessary to maintain oral health and masticatory function. There is no time limitation for making application for treatment and no restriction as to the number of repeat episodes of treatment.

(b) Class II. (1)(i) Those having a service-connected noncompensable dental condition or disability shown to have been in existence at time of discharge or release from active service, which took place after September 30, 1981, may be authorized any treatment indicated as reasonably necessary for the one-time correction of the service-connected noncompensable condition, but only if:

(A) They served on active duty during the Persian Gulf War and were discharged or released, under conditions other than dishonorable, from a period of active military, naval, or air service of not less than 90 days, or they were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, from any other period of active military, naval, or air service of not less than 180 days;

(B) Application for treatment is made within 180 days after such discharge or release.

(C) The certificate of discharge or release does not bear a certification that the veteran was provided, within the 90-day period immediately before such discharge or release, a complete dental examination (including dental X-rays) and all appropriate dental treatment.
(D) Department of Veterans Affairs dental examination is completed within six months after discharge or release, unless delayed through no fault of the veteran.

(ii) Those veterans discharged from their final period of service after August 12, 1981, who had reentered active military service within 90 days after the date of a discharge or release from a prior period of active military service, may apply for treatment of service-connected noncompensable dental conditions relating to any such periods of service within 180 days from the date of their final discharge or release.

(iii) If a disqualifying discharge or release has been corrected by competent authority, application may be made within 180 days after the date of correction.

(2)(i) Those having a service-connected noncompensable dental condition or disability shown to have been in existence at time of discharge or release from active service, which took place before October 1, 1981, may be authorized any treatment indicated as reasonably necessary for the one-time correction of the service-connected noncompensable condition, but only if:

(A) They were discharged or released, under conditions other than dishonorable, from a period of active military, naval or air service of not less than 180 days.

(B) Application for treatment is made within one year after such discharge or release.

(C) Department of Veterans Affairs dental examination is completed within one year after such discharge or release.

(2)(ii) Those veterans discharged from their final period of service before August 13, 1981, who had reentered active military service within one year from the date of a prior discharge or release, may apply for treatment of service-connected noncompensable dental conditions relating to any such prior periods of service within one year of their final discharge or release.

(iii) If a disqualifying discharge or release has been corrected by competent authority, application may be made within one year after the date of correction.

(class=section) §17.161

(c) Class II (a). Those having a service-connected noncompensable dental condition or disability adjudicated as resulting from combat wounds or service trauma may be authorized any treatment indicated as reasonably necessary for the correction of such service-connected noncompensable condition or disability.

(class=section) §17.161

(d) Class II(b). Certain homeless and other enrolled veterans eligible for a one-time course of dental care under 38 U.S.C. 2062.

(class=section) §17.161

(e) Class II(c). Those who were prisoners of war, as determined by the concerned military service department, may be authorized any needed outpatient dental treatment.

(1) Class IIR (Retroactive). Any veteran who had made prior application for and received dental treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs for non-compensable dental conditions, but was denied replacement of missing teeth which were lost during any period of service prior to his/her last period of service may be authorized such previously denied benefits under the following conditions:

(1) Application for such retroactive benefits is made within one year of April 5, 1983.

(2) Existing Department of Veterans Affairs records reflect the prior denial of the claim.

All Class IIR (Retroactive) treatment authorized will be completed on a fee basis status.

(g) Class III. Those having a dental condition professionally determined to be aggravating disability from an associated service-connected condition or disability may be authorized dental
§17.162 Eligibility for Class II dental treatment without rating action.

When an application has been made for class II dental treatment under §17.161(b), the applicant may be deemed eligible and dental treatment authorized on a one-time basis without rating action if:

(a) The examination to determine the need for dental care has been accomplished within the specified time limit after date of discharge or release unless delayed through no fault of the veteran, and sound dental judgment warrants a conclusion the condition originated in or was aggravated during service and the condition existed at the time of discharge or release from active service, and

(b) The treatment will not involve replacement of a missing tooth noted at the time of Department of Veterans Affairs examination except:

(1) In conjunction with authorized extraction replacement, or

(2) When a determination can be made on the basis of sound professional judgment that a tooth was extracted or lost on active duty.

(c) Individuals whose entire tour of duty consisted of active or inactive duty for training shall not be eligible for treatment under this section.


§17.163 Posthospital outpatient dental treatment.

The Chief, Dental Service may authorize outpatient dental care which is reasonably necessary to complete treatment of a nonservice-connected dental condition which was begun while the veteran was receiving Department of Veterans Affairs authorized hospital care.


§17.164 Patient responsibility in making and keeping dental appointments.

Any veteran eligible for dental treatment on a one-time completion basis only and who has not received such treatment within 3 years after filing the application shall be presumed to have abandoned the claim for dental treatment.


§17.165 Emergency outpatient dental treatment.

When outpatient emergency dental care is provided, as a humanitarian service, to individuals who have no established eligibility for outpatient dental care, the treatment will be restricted to the alleviation of pain or extreme discomfort, or the remediation
of a dental condition which is determined to be endangering life or health. The provision of emergency treatment to persons found ineligible for dental care will not entitle the applicant to further dental treatment. Individuals provided emergency dental care who are found to be ineligible for such care will be billed.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)


§ 17.166 Dental services for hospital or nursing home patients and domiciled members.

Persons receiving hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care pursuant to the provisions of §§17.46 and 17.47, will be furnished such dental services as are professionally determined necessary to the patients' or members' overall hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care.


AUTOPSIES

§ 17.170 Autopsies.

(a) Except as provided in this section, no autopsy will be performed by the Department of Veterans Affairs unless there is no known surviving spouse or known next of kin; or without the consent of the surviving spouse or, in a proper case, the next of kin, unless the patient or domiciled person was abandoned by the spouse, if any, or, if no spouse, by the next of kin for a period of not less than 6 months next preceding death. Where no inquiry has been made for or in regard to the decedent for a period of 6 months next preceding his death, he or she shall be deemed to have been abandoned.

(b) If there is no known surviving spouse or known next of kin, or if the decedent shall have been abandoned or if the request is sent and the spouse or, in proper cases, the next of kin fails to reply within the reasonable time stated in such request of the Department of Veterans Affairs for permission to perform the autopsy, the Director is hereby authorized to cause an autopsy to be performed if in the Director's discretion he or she concludes that such autopsy is reasonably required for any necessary purpose of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the completion of official records and advancement of medical knowledge.

(c) If it is suspected that death resulted from crime and if the United States has jurisdiction over the area where the body is found, the Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs facility will inform the Office of Inspector General of the known facts concerning the death. Thereupon the Office of Inspector General will transmit all such information to the United States Attorney for such action as may be deemed appropriate and will inquire whether the United States Attorney objects to an autopsy if otherwise it be appropriate. If the United States Attorney has no objection, the procedure as to autopsy will be the same as if the death had not been reported to him or her.

(d) If the United States does not have exclusive jurisdiction over the area where the body is found the local medical examiner/coroner will be informed. If the local medical examiner/coroner declines to assume jurisdiction the procedure will be the same as is provided in paragraph (c) of this section. If a Federal crime is indicated by the evidence, the procedure of paragraph (c) of this section will also be followed.

(e) The laws of the decedent’s domicile are determinative as to whether the spouse or the next of kin is the proper person to grant permission to perform an autopsy and of the question as to the order of preference among such persons. Usually the spouse is first entitled, except in some situations of separation; followed by children, parents, brothers and sisters, etc. When the next of kin as defined by the laws of decedent’s domicile consists of a number of persons as children, parents, brothers and sisters, etc., permission to perform an autopsy may be accepted when granted by the person in the appropriate class who assumes the right and duty of burial.

(f) The Director of a Department of Veterans Affairs facility is authorized to cause an autopsy to be performed on a veteran who dies outside of a Department of Veterans Affairs facility while undergoing post-hospital care under
the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1712 and 38 CFR 17.93, if the Director determines such autopsy is reasonably required for any necessary purpose of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the completion of official records and advancement of medical knowledge. Such authority also encompasses the furnishing of transportation of the body at Department of Veterans Affairs expense to the Department of Veterans Affairs facility and return of the body. Consent for the autopsy will be obtained as provided for in paragraph (e) of this section.


VETERANS CANTEEN SERVICE

§ 17.180 Delegation of authority.

In connection with the Veterans Canteen Service, the Under Secretary for Health is hereby delegated authority as follows:

(a) To exercise the powers and functions of the Secretary with respect to the maintenance and operation of the Veterans Canteen Service.

(b) To designate the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Administration to administer the overall operation of the Veterans Canteen Service and to designate selected employees of the Veterans Canteen Service to perform the functions described in the enabling statute, 38 U.S.C. ch. 75, so as to effectively maintain and operate the Veterans Canteen Service.


AID TO STATES FOR CARE OF VETERANS IN STATE HOMES

NOTE: Sections 17.190 through 17.200 do not apply to nursing home care in State homes. The provisions for nursing home care in State homes are set forth in 38 CFR part 51.

§ 17.190 Recognition of a State home.

A State-operated facility which provides hospital or domiciliary care to veterans must be formally recognized by the Secretary as a State home before Federal aid payments can be made for the care of such veterans. Any agency of a State (exclusive of a territory or possession) responsible for the maintenance or administration of a State home may apply for recognition by the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of receiving aid for the care of veterans in such State home. A State home may be recognized if:

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1741)

(a) The State home is a facility which exists primarily for the accommodation of veterans incapable of earning a living and who are in need of domiciliary, and

(b) The majority of such veterans who are domiciliary members in the home are veterans who may be included in the computation of the amount of aid payable from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and

(c) The personnel, building and other facilities and improvements at the home are devoted primarily to the care of veterans.


§ 17.191 Filing applications.

Applications for Department of Veterans Affairs recognition of a State home may be filed with the Under Secretary for Health, Department of Veterans Affairs. After arranging for an inspection of the State home’s facilities for furnishing domiciliary or hospital care, the Under Secretary for Health will make a recommendation to the Secretary who will notify the State official in writing of a decision.


§ 17.192 Approval of annexes and new facilities.

Separate applications for recognition must be filed for any annex, branch, enlargement, expansion, or relocation of a recognized home which is not on the same or contiguous grounds on which the parent facility is located.
When a recognized State home establishes hospital care facilities which have not been inspected and approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs, a request for separate approval of such facilities must be made.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1741, 501)

§ 17.193 Prerequisites for payments to State homes.

No payment or grant may be made to any State home unless the State home meets the standards prescribed by the Secretary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1742(a))

§ 17.194 Aid for domiciliary care.

Aid may be paid to the designated State official for domiciliary care furnished in a recognized State home for any veteran if the veteran is eligible for domiciliary care in a Department of Veterans Affairs facility.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1741)

§ 17.195 Aid for hospital care.

Aid may be paid to the designated State official for hospital care furnished in a recognized State home for any veteran if:

(a) The veteran is eligible for hospital care in a Department of Veterans Affairs facility, and

(b) The quarters in which the hospital care is carried out are in an area clearly designated for such care, specifically established, staffed and equipped to provide hospital type care, are not intermingled with the quarters of nursing home care patients or domiciliary members, and meet such other minimum standards as the Department of Veterans Affairs may prescribe.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1743)

§ 17.196 Amount of aid payable.

The amount of aid payable to a recognized State home shall be at the per diem rates established by title 38 U.S.C., section 1741(a)(1) for domiciliary care; and section 1741(a)(3) for hospital care. In no case shall the payments made with respect to any veteran exceed one-half of the cost of the veteran's care in the State home. VA will publish the actual per diem rates, whenever they change, in a FEDERAL REGISTER notice.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1741)

§ 17.197 Inspection of recognized State homes.

Representatives of the Department of Veterans Affairs may inspect any State home at such times as are deemed necessary. Such inspections shall be concerned with the physical plant; records relating to admissions, discharges and occupancy; fiscal records; and all other areas of interest necessary to a determination of compliance with applicable laws and regulations relating to the payment of Federal aid. The authority...
§ 17.200 Audit of State homes.

The State must comply with the Single Audit Act of 1984 (part 41 of this chapter).

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 7501–7507)


§ 17.230 Contingency backup to the Department of Defense.

(a) Priority care to active duty personnel. The Secretary, during and/or immediately following a period of war or national emergency declared by the Congress or the President that involves the use of United States Armed Forces in armed conflict, is authorized to furnish hospital care, nursing home care, and medical services to members of the Armed Forces on active duty. The Secretary may give higher priority in the furnishing of such care and services in VA facilities to members of the Armed Forces on active duty than to any other group of persons eligible for such care and services with the exception of veterans with service-connected disabilities.


(b) Contract authority. During a period in which the Secretary is authorized to furnish care and services to members of the Armed Forces under paragraph (a) of this section, the Secretary, to the extent authorized by the President and subject to the availability of appropriations or reimbursements, may authorize VA facilities to enter into contracts with private facilities for the provision during such period of hospital care and medical services for certain veterans. These veterans include only those who are receiving hospital care under 38 U.S.C. 1712 or, in emergencies, for those who are eligible for treatment under that section, or who are receiving care under 38 U.S.C. 1712 (f) and (g). This authorization pertains only to circumstances in which VA facilities are not capable of furnishing or continuing to furnish the care or services required because of the furnishing of care and services to members of the Armed Forces.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 8111A)

(Authority: Sec. 501 and 1720(a) of Title 38, U.S.C.)

§ 17.242
Coordination of programs with Department of Health and Human Services.

Programs for sharing specialized medical resources or medical information services shall be coordinated to a
§ 17.250 Scope of the grant program.

The provisions of §17.250 through §17.266 are applicable to grants under 38 U.S.C. 8155 for programs for the exchange of medical information. The purpose of these grants is to assist medical schools, hospitals, and research centers in planning and carrying out agreements for the exchange of medical information, techniques, and information services. The grant funds may be used for the employment of personnel, the construction of facilities, the purchasing of equipment, research, training or demonstration activities when necessary to implement exchange of information agreements.

§ 17.251 The Subcommittee on Academic Affairs.

There is established within the Special Medical Advisory Group authorized under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 7312 a Subcommittee on Academic Affairs, and the Subcommittee shall advise the Secretary, through the Under Secretary for Health, in matters pertinent to achieving the objectives of programs for exchange of medical information. The Subcommittee shall review each application for a grant and prepare a written report setting forth recommendations as to the final action to be taken on the application.

§ 17.252 Ex officio member of subcommittee.

The Assistant Chief Medical Director for Academic Affairs shall be an ex officio member of the Subcommittee on Academic Affairs.
sufficient assurances that the applicant shall keep records which fully disclose the amount and disposition of the proceeds of the grant, the total cost of the project or undertaking in connection with which the grant is made or used, the portion of the costs supplied by non-Federal sources, and such other records as will facilitate an effective audit. All such records shall be retained by the applicant (grantee) for a period of 3 years after the submission of the final expenditure report, or if litigation, claim or audit is started before the expiration of the 3-year period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims or audit findings involving the records have been resolved, and

(f) To include assurance records will be made available. Each application shall include sufficient assurances the applicant will give the Secretary and the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their authorized representatives, access to its books, documents, papers, and records which are pertinent to the grant for the purposes of audit and examination, and

(g) To include assurance progress reports will be made. Each application shall include sufficient assurances the applicant will furnish the Under Secretary for Health periodic progress reports in sufficient detail showing the status of the project, planning program, or system funded by the grant for which application is made, and the extent to which the stated objectives will have been achieved, and

(h) To include civil rights assurances. Each application shall include sufficient assurances that no part of the grant funds will be used either by the grantee or by any contractor or subcontractor to be paid from grant funds for any purpose which is inconsistent with regulations promulgated by the Secretary (part 18 of this chapter) implementing title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or inconsistent with Executive Order 11246 (30 FR 12319) and any implementing regulations the Secretary of Labor may promulgate.


§ 17.256 Amended or supplemental applications.

An amended application, or an application for a supplemental grant, may be considered either before or after final action has been taken on the original application. Amended applications and applications for supplemental grants shall be subject to the same terms, conditions and requirements necessary for original applications.


§ 17.257 Awards procedures.

Applications for grants for planning or implementing agreements for the exchange of medical information or information facilities shall be reviewed by the Under Secretary for Health or designee. If it is determined approval of the grant is warranted, recommendations to that effect shall be made to the Secretary in writing and shall be accompanied by the following:

(a) The recommendation for approval shall be accompanied by the written evidence required by § 17.254, any application for a grant for the construction of any facility, structure or system which is part of an exchange of information program shall include the following:

(b) Each application shall include complete plans and specifications for the construction project, and where applicable, sufficient explanations of technical applications so that they may be understood by the layman, and

(c) Each application shall contain assurance that the rates of pay for laborers and mechanics engaged in construction activities will not be less than the prevailing local wage rates for similar work as determined in accordance with the provisions of 40 U.S.C. 276a—276a-5 (The Davis-Bacon Act).
§ 17.258

recommendation of the Subcommittee on Academic Affairs, and

(b) The recommendation for approval shall be accompanied by the written draft of the certificate of award stating all conditions which the grantee is required to agree to under the provisions of §17.258 and all other conditions to which it has been determined the grant will be subject, and

(c) The recommendation shall include a certification that sufficient appropriated funds are available, and that the application for the grant is sufficient in all details as specified in §§17.254 through 17.256.


§ 17.258 Terms and conditions to which awards are subject.

Each certificate of award of a grant for planning or implementing an agreement for the exchange of information or information facilities shall specify that the grant is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(a) Grants subject to terms of agreement for exchange of information. Each grant shall be subject to, and the certificate shall incorporate by reference, all terms, conditions, and obligations specified in the agreement or planning protocols which the grant will implement, and

(b) Grants subject to assurances in application. Each grant shall be subject to all assurances made by the grantee in its application for the grant as required by §§17.254 through 17.256, and

(c) Grants subject to limitations on use of funds. Each grant shall be subject to the limitations on the use of grant funds, either for direct or indirect costs, as prescribed in §§17.259 through 17.261, and

(d) Grants subject to special provisions. Each grant shall be subject to any special terms or conditions which may be warranted by circumstances applicable to individual applications, and specified in the certificate of award.


§ 17.259 Direct costs.

Direct costs to which grant funds may be applied may include in proportion to time and effort spent, but are not limited to, fees and costs directly paid to personnel or for fringe benefits, rent, publications, educational programs, training, research, demonstration activities, or construction carried out in connection with pilot programs for planning or exchange of information.


§ 17.260 Patient care costs to be excluded from direct costs.

Grant funds for planning or implementing agreements for the exchange of medical information shall not be available for the payment of any hospital, medical, or other costs involving the care of patients except to the extent that such costs are determined to be incident to research, training, or demonstration activities carried out in connection with an exchange of information program.


§ 17.261 Indirect costs.

The grantee shall allocate expenditures as between direct and indirect costs according to generally accepted accounting procedures. The amount allocated for indirect costs may be computed on a percentage basis or on the basis of a negotiated lump-sum allowance. In the method of computation used, only indirect costs shall be included which bear a reasonable relationship to the planning or program funded by the grant and shall not exceed a percentage greater than the percentage the total institutional indirect cost is of the total direct salaries and wages paid by the institution.


§ 17.262 Authority to approve applications discretionary.

Notwithstanding any recommendation by the Subcommittee on Academic Affairs of the Special Medical Advisory Group, or any recommendation by the Under Secretary for Health or designee, the final determination on
any application for a grant rests solely with the Secretary.


§ 17.263 Suspension and termination procedures.

Termination of a grant means the cancellation of Department of Veterans Affairs sponsorship, in whole or in part, under an agreement at any time prior to the date of completion. Suspension of a grant is an action by the Department of Veterans Affairs which temporarily suspends Department of Veterans Affairs sponsorship under the grant pending corrective action by the grantee or pending a decision to terminate the grant by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(a) Posttermination appeal. The following procedures are applicable for reviewing postaward disputes which may arise in the administration of or carrying out of the Exchange of Medical Information Grant Program.

(1) Reviewable decisions. The Department of Veterans Affairs reserves the right to terminate any grant in whole or in part at any time before the date of completion, whenever it determines that the grantee has failed to comply with conditions of the agreement, or otherwise failed to comply with any law, regulation, assurance, term, or condition applicable to the grant.

(2) Notice. The Department of Veterans Affairs shall promptly notify the grantee in writing of the determination. The notice shall set forth the reason for the determination in sufficient detail to enable the grantee to respond, and shall inform the grantee of his or her opportunity for review by the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Academic Affairs as provided in this section.

(3) Request for appeal. A grantee with respect to whom a determination described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section has been made, and who desires review, may file with the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Academic Affairs an application for review of such determination. The grantee’s application for review must be post-marked no later than 30 days after the postmarked date of notification provided pursuant to paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(4) Contents of request. The application for review must clearly identify the question or questions in dispute, contain a full statement of the grantee’s position in respect to such question or questions, and provide pertinent facts and reasons in support of his or her position. The Assistant Chief Medical Director for Academic Affairs will promptly send a copy of the grantee’s application to the Department of Veterans Affairs official responsible for the determination which is to be reviewed.

(5) Effect of submission. When an application for review has been filed no action may be taken by the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to such determination until such application has been disposed of, except that the filing of the application shall not affect the authority which the constituent agency may have to suspend the system under a grant during proceedings under this section or otherwise to withhold or defer payments under the grant.

(6) Consideration of request. When an application for review has been filed with the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Academic Affairs, and it has been determined that the application meets the requirements stated in this paragraph, all background material of the issues shall be reviewed. If the application does not meet the requirements, the grantee shall be notified of the deficiencies.

(7) Presentation of case. If the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Academic Affairs believes there is no dispute as to material fact, the resolution of which would be materially assisted by oral testimony, both parties shall be notified of the issues to be considered, and take steps to afford both parties the opportunity for presenting their cases, at the option of the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Academic Affairs, in whole or in part in writing, or in an informal conference. Where it is concluded that oral testimony is required to resolve a dispute over a material fact, both parties shall be afforded an opportunity to present and cross-examine witnesses at a hearing.

(8) Decision. After both parties have presented their cases, the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Academic Affairs

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§ 17.264 Recoupments and releases.

In any case where the Department of Veterans Affairs or a grantee’s obligations under an exchange of information agreement implemented by grant funds are terminated, or where grant-financed equipment or facilities cease to be used for the purposes for which grant support was given, or when grant-financed property is transferred, the grantee shall return the proportionate value of such equipment or facility as was financed by the grant. When it is determined the Department of Veterans Affairs equitable interest is greater than the proportionate value, then a claim in such greater amount shall be asserted. If it is determined an amount less than proportionate value or less than the Department of Veterans Affairs equitable interest should be recouped, or that the Department of Veterans Affairs should execute any releases, then a proposal concerning such a settlement or releases complete with explanations and justifications shall be submitted to the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Academic Affairs for a final determination.


§ 17.265 Payments.

Payments of grant funds are made to grantees through a letter-of-credit, an advance by Treasury check, or a reimbursement by Treasury check, as appropriate. A letter-of-credit is an instrument certified by an authorized official of the Department of Veterans Affairs which authorizes the grantee to draw funds when needed from the Treasury, through a Federal Reserve bank and the grantee’s commercial bank and shall be used by the Department of Veterans Affairs where all the following conditions exist:

(a) When there is or will be a continuing relationship between the grantee and the Department of Veterans Affairs for at least a 12-month period and the total amount of advance payments expected to be received within that period is $250,000, or more;

(b) When the grantee has established or demonstrated the willingness and ability to maintain procedures that will minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and their disbursement by the grantee; and

(c) When the grantee’s financial management meets the standards for fund control and accountability. An advance by Treasury check is a payment made to a grantee upon its request before outlays are made by the grantee, or through use of predetermined payment schedules and shall be used by the Department of Veterans Affairs when the grantee meets all of the above requirements of this section except that advances will be less than $250,000, or for a period less than 12 months. Reimbursement by Treasury check is a payment made to a grantee upon request for reimbursement from the grantee and shall be the preferred method when the grantee does not meet the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section. This method may be used on any construction agreement, or if the major portion of the program is accomplished through private market financing or Federal loans, and the Federal assistance constitutes a minor portion of the program. When the reimbursement method is used, the Department of Veterans Affairs shall make payment within 30 days after receipt of the billing, unless billing is improper. Unless otherwise required by law, payments shall not be withheld for proper charges at any time during the grant period unless a grantee has failed to comply with the program objectives, award conditions, or Federal reporting requirements; or the grantee is indebted.


§ 17.266 Copyrights and patents.

If a grant-supported program results in copyrightable material or patentable inventions or discoveries, the United States Government shall have the right to use such publications or inventions on a royalty-free basis.


Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)—Medical Care for Survivors and Dependents of Certain Veterans

Source: 63 FR 48102, Sept. 9, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

§ 17.270 General provisions.

(a) CHAMPVA is the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs and is administered by the Health Administration Center, Denver, Colorado. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1781, VA is authorized to provide medical care in the same or similar manner and subject to the same or similar limitations as medical care furnished to certain dependents and survivors of active duty and retired members of the Armed Forces. The CHAMPVA program is designed to accomplish this purpose. Under CHAMPVA, VA shares the cost of medically necessary services and supplies for eligible beneficiaries as set forth in §§17.271 through 17.278.

(b) For purposes of §§17.270 through 17.278, the definitions of “child,” “service-connected condition/disability,” “spouse,” and “surviving spouse” must be those set forth further in 38 U.S.C. 101. The term “fiscal year” refers to October 1, through September 30.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1781)

[63 FR 48102, Sept. 9, 1998, as amended at 73 FR 65553, Nov. 4, 2008]

§ 17.271 Eligibility.

(a) General entitlement. The following persons are eligible for CHAMPVA benefits provided that they are not eligible under Title 10 for the TRICARE Program or Part A of Title XVIII of the Social Security Act (Medicare) except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

(1) The spouse or child of a veteran who has been adjudicated by VA as having a permanent and total service-connected disability:
§ 17.272 Benefits limitations/exclusions.

(a) Benefits cover allowable expenses for medical services and supplies that are medically necessary and appropriate for the treatment of a condition and that are not specifically excluded from program coverage. Covered benefits may have limitations. The fact that a physician may prescribe, order, recommend, or approve a service or supply does not, of itself, make it medically necessary or make the charge an allowable expense, even though it is not listed specifically as an exclusion. The following are specifically excluded from program coverage:

(1) Services, procedures or supplies for which the beneficiary has no legal obligation to pay, or for which no charge would be made in the absence of coverage under a health benefits plan.

(2) Services and supplies required as a result of an occupational disease or injury for which benefits are payable under workers' compensation or similar protection plan (whether or not such benefits have been applied for or
paid) except when such benefits are exhausted and are otherwise not excluded from CHAMPVA coverage.

(3) Services and supplies that are paid directly or indirectly by a local, State or Federal government agency (Medicaid excluded), including court-ordered treatment. In the case of the following exceptions, CHAMPVA assumes primary payer status:

(i) Medicaid.

(ii) State Victims of Crime Compensation Programs.

(4) Services and supplies that are not medically or psychologically necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of a covered condition (including mental disorder) or injury.

(5) Radiology, laboratory, and pathological services and machine diagnostic testing not related to a specific illness or injury or a definitive set of symptoms.

(6) Services and supplies above the appropriate level required to provide necessary medical care.

(7) Services and supplies related to an inpatient admission primarily to perform diagnostic tests, examinations, and procedures that could have been and are performed routinely on an outpatient basis.

(8) Postpartum inpatient stay of a mother for purposes of staying with the newborn infant (primarily for the purpose of breast feeding the infant) when the infant (but not the mother) requires the extended stay; or continued inpatient stay of a newborn infant primarily for purposes of remaining with the mother when the mother (but not the newborn infant) requires extended postpartum inpatient stay.

(9) Therapeutic absences from an inpatient facility or residential treatment center (RTC).

(10) Custodial care.

(11) Inpatient stays primarily for domiciliary care purposes.

(12) Inpatient stays primarily for rest or rest cures.

(13) Services and supplies provided as a part of, or under, a scientific or medical study, grant, or research program.

(14) Services and supplies not provided in accordance with accepted professional medical standards or related to experimental or investigational procedures or treatment regimens.

(15) Services or supplies prescribed or provided by a member of the beneficiary’s immediate family, or a person living in the beneficiary’s or sponsor’s household.

(16) Services and supplies that are (or are eligible to be) payable under another medical insurance or program, either private or governmental, such as coverage through employment or Medicare.

(17) Services or supplies subject to preauthorization (see §17.273) that were obtained without the required preauthorization; and services and supplies that were not provided according to the terms of the preauthorization.

(18) Inpatient stays primarily to control or detain a runaway child, whether or not admission is to an authorized institution.

(19) Services and supplies (to include prescription medications) in connection with cosmetic surgery which is performed to primarily improve physical appearance or for psychological purposes or to restore form without correcting or materially improving a bodily function.

(20) Electrolysis.

(21) Dental care with the following exceptions:

(i) Dental care that is medically necessary in the treatment of an otherwise covered medical condition, is an integral part of the treatment of such medical condition, and is essential to the control of the primary medical condition.

(ii) Dental care required in preparation for, or as a result of, radiation therapy for oral or facial cancer.

(iii) Gingival Hyperplasia.

(iv) Loss of jaw substance due to direct trauma to the jaw or due to treatment of neoplasm.

(v) Intraoral abscess when it extends beyond the dental alveolus.

(vi) Extraoral abscess.

(vii) Cellulitis and osteitis which is clearly exacerbating and directly affecting a medical condition currently under treatment.

(viii) Repair of fracture, dislocation, and other injuries of the jaw, to include removal of teeth and tooth fragments only when such removal is incidental to the repair of the jaw.
(ix) Treatment for stabilization of myofascial pain dysfunction syndrome, also referred to as temporomandibular joint (TMJ) syndrome. Authorization is limited to initial radiographs, up to four office visits, and the construction of an occlusal splint.

(x) Total or complete ankyloglossia.

(xi) Adjunctive dental and orthodontic support for cleft palate.

(xii) Prosthetic replacement of jaw due to trauma or cancer.

(22) Nonsurgical treatment of obesity or morbid obesity for dietary control or weight reduction (with the exception of gastric bypass, gastric stapling, or gastroplasty procedures in connection with morbid obesity when determined to be medically necessary) including prescription medications.

(23) Services and supplies related to transsexualism or other similar conditions such as gender dysphoria (including, but not limited to, intersex surgery and psychotherapy, except for ambiguous genitalia which was documented to be present at birth).

(24) Sex therapy, sexual advice, sexual counseling, sex behavior modification, psychotherapy for mental disorders involving sexual deviations (e.g., transvestic fetish), or other similar services, and any supplies provided in connection with therapy for sexual dysfunctions or inadequacies.

(25) Removal of corns or calluses or trimming of toenails and other routine foot care services, except those required as a result of a diagnosed systemic medical disease affecting the lower limbs, such as severe diabetes.

(26) Services and supplies, to include psychological testing, provided in connection with a specific developmental disorder. The following exception applies: Diagnostic and evaluative services required to arrive at a differential diagnosis for an otherwise eligible child unless the state is required to provide those services under Public Law 94–142, *Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975* as amended, see 20 U.S.C. chapter 33.

(27) Surgery to reverse voluntary surgical sterilization procedures.

(28) Services and supplies related to artificial insemination (including semen donors and semen banks), in vitro fertilization, gamete intrafallopian transfer and all other noncoital reproductive technologies.

(29) Nonprescription contraceptives.

(30) Diagnostic tests to establish paternity of a child; or tests to determine sex of an unborn child.

(31) Preventive care (such as routine, annual, or employment-requested physical examinations; routine screening procedures; and immunizations). The following exceptions apply:

1. Well-child care from birth to age six. Periodic health examinations designed for prevention, early detection, and treatment of disease are covered to include screening procedures, immunizations, and risk counseling. The following services are payable when required as part of a well-child care program and when rendered by the attending pediatrician, family physician, or a pediatric nurse practitioner.

   A. Newborn examination, heredity and metabolic screening, and newborn circumcision.

   B. Periodic health supervision visits intended to promote optimal health for infants and children to include the following services:

      1. History and physical examination.

   C. Developmental appraisal to include body measurement.

   D. Immunizations as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

   E. Pediatric blood lead level test.

   F. Tuberculosis screening.

   G. Blood pressure screening.

   H. Measurement of hemoglobin and hematocrit for anemia.

   I. Urinalysis.

   J. Additional services or visits required because of specific findings or because the particular circumstances of the individual case are covered if medically necessary and otherwise authorized for benefits under CHAMPVA.

   K. Rabies vaccine following an animal bite.

   L. Tetanus vaccine following an accidental injury.

   M. Rh immune globulin.

   N. Pap smears.

   O. Mammography tests.

   P. Genetic testing and counseling determined to be medically necessary.
(viii) Chromosome analysis in cases of habitual abortion or infertility.
(ix) Gamma globulin.
(x) School-required physical examinations for beneficiaries through age 17 that are provided on or after October 1, 2001.
(32) Chiropractic and naturopathic services.
(33) Counseling services that are not medically necessary in the treatment of a diagnosed medical condition (such as educational counseling; vocational counseling; and counseling for socioeconomic purposes, stress management, life style modification, etc.).
(34) Acupuncture, whether used as a therapeutic agent or as an anesthetic.
(35) Hair transplants, wigs, or hairpieces, except that benefits may be extended for one wig or hairpiece per beneficiary (lifetime maximum) when the attending physician certifies that alopecia has resulted from treatment of malignant disease and the beneficiary certifies that a wig or hairpiece has not been obtained previously through the U.S. Government (including the Department of Veterans Affairs). The wig or hairpiece benefit does not include coverage for the following:
   (i) Maintenance, wig or hairpiece supplies, or replacement of the wig or hairpiece.
   (ii) Hair transplant or any other surgical procedure involving the attachment of hair or a wig or hairpiece to the scalp.
   (iii) Any diagnostic or therapeutic method or supply intended to encourage hair growth.
(36) Self-help, academic education or vocational training services and supplies.
(37) Exercise equipment, spas, whirlpools, hot tubs, swimming pools, health club membership or other such charges or items.
(38) General exercise programs, even if recommended by a physician.
(39) Services of an audiologist or speech therapist, except when prescribed by a physician and rendered as a part of treatment addressed to the physical defect itself and not to any educational or occupational deficit.
(40) Eye exercises or visual training (orthoptics).
(41) Eye and hearing examinations except when rendered in connection with medical or surgical treatment of a covered illness or injury or in connection with well-child care.
(42) Eyeglasses, spectacles, contact lenses, or other optical devices with the following exceptions:
   (i) When necessary to perform the function of the human lens, lost as a result of intraocular surgery, ocular injury or congenital absence.
   (ii) Pinhole glasses prescribed for use after surgery for detached retina.
   (iii) Lenses prescribed as “treatment” instead of surgery for the following conditions:
      (A) Contact lenses used for treatment of infantile glaucoma.
      (B) Corneal or scleral lenses prescribed in connection with treatment of keratoconus.
      (C) Scleral lenses prescribed to retain moisture when normal tearing is not present or is inadequate.
      (D) Corneal or scleral lenses prescribed to reduce a corneal irregularity other than astigmatism.
   (iv) The specified benefits are limited to one set of lenses related to one qualifying eye condition as set forth in paragraphs (a)(42)(iii)(A) through (D) of this section. If there is a prescription change requiring a new set of lenses, but still related to the qualifying eye condition, benefits may be extended for a second set of lenses, subject to medical review.
(43) Hearing aids or other auditory sensory enhancing devices.
(44) Prostheses with the following exceptions:
   (i) Dental prostheses specifically required in connection with otherwise covered orthodontia directly related to the surgical correction of a cleft palate anomaly.
   (ii) Any prostheses, other than dental prostheses, determined to be medically necessary because of significant conditions resulting from trauma, congenital anomalies, or disease, including, but not limited to:
      (A) Artificial limbs.
      (B) Voice prostheses.
      (C) Eyes.
      (D) Items surgically inserted in the body as an integral part of a surgical procedure.
(E) Ears, noses, and fingers.

(45) Orthopedic shoes, arch supports, shoe inserts, and other supportive devices for the feet, including special ordered, custom-made built-up shoes, or regular shoes later built up with the following exceptions:
   (i) Shoes that are an integral part of an orthopedic brace, and which cannot be used separately from the brace.
   (ii) Extra-depth shoes with inserts or custom molded shoes with inserts for individuals with diabetes.

(46) Services or advice rendered by telephone are excluded except that a diagnostic or monitoring procedure which incorporates electronic transmission of data or remote detection and measurement of a condition, activity, or function (biotelemetry) is covered when:
   (i) The procedure, without electronic data transmission, is a covered benefit; and
   (ii) The addition of electronic data transmission or biotelemetry improves the management of a clinical condition in defined circumstances; and
   (iii) The electronic data or biotelemetry device has been classified by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, either separately or as part of a system, for use consistent with the medical condition and clinical management of such condition.

(47) Air conditioners, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, and purifiers.

(48) Elevators.

(49) Alterations to living spaces or permanent features attached thereto, even when necessary to accommodate installation of covered durable medical equipment or to facilitate entrance or exit.

(50) Items of clothing, even if required by virtue of an allergy (such as cotton fabric versus synthetic fabric and vegetable-dyed shoes).

(51) Food, food substitutes, vitamins or other nutritional supplements, including those related to prenatal care for a home patient whose condition permits oral feeding.

(52) Enuretic (bed-wetting) conditioning programs.

(53) Autopsy and post-mortem examinations.

(54) All camping, even when organized for a specific therapeutic purpose (such as diabetic camp or a camp for emotionally disturbed children), or when offered as a part of an otherwise covered treatment plan.

(55) Housekeeping, homemaker, or attendant services, including a sitter or companion.

(56) Personal comfort or convenience items, such as beauty and barber services, radio, television, and telephone.

(57) Smoking cessation services and supplies.

(58) Megavitamin psychiatric therapy; orthomolecular psychiatric therapy.

(59) All transportation except for specialized transportation with life sustaining equipment, when medically required for the treatment of a covered condition.

(60) Inpatient mental health services in excess of 30 days in any fiscal year (or in an admission), in the case of a patient nineteen years of age or older; 45 days in any fiscal year (or in an admission), in the case of a patient under 19 years of age; or 150 days of residential treatment care in any fiscal year (or in an admission) unless a waiver for extended coverage is granted in advance.

(61) Outpatient mental health services in excess of 23 visits in a fiscal year unless a waiver for extended coverage is granted in advance.

(62) Institutional services for partial hospitalization in excess of 60 treatment days in any fiscal year (or in an admission) unless a waiver for extended coverage is granted in advance.

(63) Detoxification in a hospital setting or rehabilitation facility in excess of seven days.

(64) Outpatient substance abuse services in excess of 60 visits during a benefit period. A benefit period begins with the first date of covered service and ends 365 days later.

(65) Family therapy for substance abuse in excess of 15 visits during a benefit period. A benefit period begins with the first date of covered service and ends 365 days later.

(66) Services that are provided to a beneficiary who is referred to a provider of such services by a provider who has an economic interest in the facility to which the patient is referred, unless a waiver is granted.
(67) Abortion except when a physician certifies that the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term.
(68) Abortion counseling.
(69) Aversion therapy.
(70) Rental or purchase of biofeedback equipment.
(71) Biofeedback therapy for treatment of ordinary muscle tension states (including tension headaches) or for psychosomatic conditions.
(72) Drug maintenance programs where one addictive drug is substituted for another, such as methadone substituted for heroin.
(73) Immunotherapy for malignant diseases except for treatment of Stage 0 and Stage A carcinoma of the bladder.
(74) Services and supplies provided by other than a hospital, such as non-skilled nursing homes, intermediate care facilities, halfway houses, homes for the aged, or other institutions of similar purpose.
(75) Services performed when the patient is not physically present.
(76) Medical photography.
(77) Special tutoring.
(78) Surgery for psychological reasons.
(79) Treatment of premenstrual syndrome (PMS).
(80) Medications not requiring a prescription, except for insulin and related diabetic testing supplies and syringes.
(81) Thermography.
(82) Removal of tattoos.
(83) Penile implant/testicular prosthesis procedures and related supplies for psychological impotence.
(84) Dermabrasion of the face except in those cases where coverage has been authorized for reconstructive or plastic surgery required to restore body form following an accidental injury or to revise disfiguring and extensive scars resulting from neoplastic surgery.
(85) Chemical peeling for facial wrinkles.
(86) Panniculectomy, body sculpting procedures.
(b) CHAMPVA-determined allowable amount.
   (1) The term allowable amount is the maximum CHAMPVA-determined level of payment to a hospital or other authorized institutional provider, a physician or other authorized individual professional provider, or other authorized provider for covered services. The CHAMPVA allowable amount is determined prior to cost sharing and the application of deductibles and/or other health insurance.
(2) A Medicare-participating hospital must accept the CHAMPVA-determined allowable amount for inpatient services as payment-in-full. (Reference 42 CFR parts 489 and 1003).
(3) An authorized provider of covered medical services or supplies must accept the CHAMPVA-determined allowable amount as payment-in-full.
(4) A provider who has collected and not made appropriate refund, or attempts to collect from the beneficiary, any amount in excess of the CHAMPVA-determined allowable amount may be subject to exclusion from Federal benefit programs.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1781

§ 17.273 Preauthorization.
Preauthorization or advance approval is required for any of the following:
(a) Non-emergent inpatient mental health and substance abuse care including admission of emotionally disturbed children and adolescents to residential treatment centers.
(b) All admissions to a partial hospitalization program (including alcohol rehabilitation).
(c) Outpatient mental health visits in excess of 23 per calendar year and/or more than two (2) sessions per week.
(d) Dental care.
(e) Durable medical equipment with a purchase or total rental price in excess of $2,000.
(f) Organ transplants.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1781

§ 17.274 Cost sharing.
(a) With the exception of services obtained through VA facilities, CHAMPVA is a cost-sharing program in which the cost of covered services is shared with the beneficiary.
CHAMPVA pays the CHAMPVA-determined allowable amount less the deductible, if applicable, and less the beneficiary cost share.

(b) In addition to the beneficiary cost share, an annual (calendar year) outpatient deductible requirement ($50 per beneficiary or $100 per family) must be satisfied prior to the payment of outpatient benefits. There is no deductible requirement for inpatient services or for services provided through VA facilities.

(c) To provide financial protection against the impact of a long-term illness or injury, a calendar year cost limit or “catastrophic cap” has been placed on the beneficiary cost-share amount for covered services and supplies. Credits to the annual catastrophic cap are limited to the applied annual deductible(s) and the beneficiary cost-share amount. Costs above the CHAMPVA-allowable amount, as well as costs associated with non-covered services are not credited to the catastrophic cap computation. After a family has paid the maximum cost-share and deductibles, CHAMPVA will pay allowable amounts for the remaining covered services through the end of that calendar year.

(i) Through December 31, 2001, the annual cap on cost sharing is $7,500 per CHAMPVA-eligible family.

(ii) Effective January 1, 2002, the cap on cost sharing is $3,000 per CHAMPVA-eligible family.

(d) If the CHAMPVA benefit payment is under $1.00, payment will not be issued. Catastrophic cap and deductible will, however, be credited.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1781)

§ 17.275 Claim filing deadline.

(a) Unless an exception is granted under paragraph (b) of this section, claims for medical services and supplies must be filed with the Center no later than:

(1) One year after the date of service; or

(2) In the case of inpatient care, one year after the date of discharge; or

(3) In the case of retroactive approval for medical services/supplies, 180 days following beneficiary notification of authorization; or

(4) In the case of retroactive approval of CHAMPVA eligibility, 180 days following notification to the beneficiary of authorization for services occurring on or after the date of first eligibility.

(b) Requests for an exception to the claim filing deadline must be submitted, in writing, to the Center and include a complete explanation of the circumstances resulting in late filing along with all available supporting documentation. Each request for an exception to the claim filing deadline will be reviewed individually and considered on its own merit. The Director, Health Administration Center, or his or her designee may grant exceptions to the requirements in paragraph (a) of this section if he or she determines that there was good cause for missing the filing deadline. For example, when dual coverage exists CHAMPVA payment, if any, cannot be determined until after the primary insurance carrier has adjudicated the claim. In such circumstances an exception may be granted provided that the delay on the part of the primary insurance carrier is not attributable to the beneficiary. Delays due to provider billing procedures do not constitute a valid basis for an exception.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1781)

[63 FR 48102, Sept. 9, 1998, as amended at 73 FR 65553, Nov. 4, 2008]

§ 17.276 Appeal/review process.

Notice of the initial determination regarding payment of CHAMPVA benefits will be provided to the beneficiary on a CHAMPVA Explanation of Benefits (EOB) form. The EOB form is generated by the CHAMPVA automated payment processing system. If a beneficiary disagrees with the determination concerning covered services or calculation of benefits, he or she may request reconsideration. Such requests must be submitted to the Center in writing within one year of the date of the initial determination. The request must state why the beneficiary believes the decision is in error and must
include any new and relevant information not previously considered. Any request for reconsideration that does not identify the reason for dispute will be returned to the claimant without further consideration. After reviewing the claim and any relevant supporting documentation, a CHAMPVA benefits advisor will issue a written determination to the beneficiary that affirms, reverses or modifies the previous decision. If the beneficiary is still dissatisfied, within 90 days of the date of the decision he or she may make a written request for review by the Director, Health Administration Center, or his or her designee. The Director, Health Administration Center, or his or her designee will review the claim, and any relevant supporting documentation, and issue a decision in writing that affirms, reverses or modifies the previous decision. The decision of the Director, Health Administration Center, or his or her designee with respect to benefit coverage and computation of benefits is final. (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 1781)

NOTE TO §17.276: Denial of CHAMPVA benefits based on legal eligibility requirements may be appealed to the Board of Veterans' Appeals in accordance with 38 CFR part 20. Medical determinations are not appealable to the Board. 38 CFR 20.101.

§ 17.277 Third-party liability/medical care cost recovery.

The Center will actively pursue third-party liability/medical care cost recovery in accordance with applicable law. (Authority: 28 U.S.C. 2651; 38 U.S.C. 501, 1781)

§ 17.278 Confidentiality of records.

Confidentiality of records will be maintained in accordance with 38 CFR 1.460 through 1.582. (Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552, 552a; 38 U.S.C. 501, 1781, 5701, 7332)

§ 17.351 Grants for the replacement and upgrading of equipment at Veterans Memorial Medical Center.

Grants to assist the Republic of the Philippines in the replacement and upgrading of equipment and in rehabilitating the physical plant and facilities of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, which the Secretary may make under the authority cited in §17.350, shall be subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary may prescribe. Among such terms and conditions to which the grants will be subject, will be advance approval by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs of equipment purchases, maintenance or repair projects. The awarding of such grants is further subject to the limitations on available funds in §17.352. (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1732, as amended by Pub. L. 97–72, sec. 107(c)(1))

§ 17.352 Amounts and use of grant funds for the replacement and upgrading of equipment.

Grants awarded under § 17.351 shall not exceed the amounts provided by the appropriation acts of the Congress of the United States for the purpose. Funds appropriated for the upgrading and replacement of equipment at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, or for rehabilitating its equipment, shall remain available in consecutive fiscal years until expanded, but in no event shall exceed the amount of $500,000 per year. It is not intended that such funds will be utilized to expand the medical center facilities. Upgrading of equipment, however, would permit purchase of new and additional equipment not now possessed by the medical center.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1732)
[47 FR 58250, Dec. 30, 1982]

§ 17.355 Awards procedures.

All applications for grants to the Republic of the Philippines under the provisions of § 17.351 shall be submitted to the Under Secretary for Health or a designee for consideration.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1732)

§ 17.362 Acceptance of medical supplies as payment.

Upon request of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, payment for medical and nursing home services provided to eligible United States veterans may consist in whole or in part, of available medicines, medical supplies, or equipment furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center at valuations determined by the Secretary. Such valuations shall not be less than the cost of the items and shall include the cost of transportation, arrastre, brokerage, shipping and handling charges.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1732(a)(2))
[47 FR 58250, Dec. 30, 1982]

§ 17.363 Length of stay.

In computing the length of stay for which payment will be made, the day of admission will be counted, but not the day of discharge, death, or transfer. Where a veteran for whom hospitalization has been authorized in Veterans Memorial Medical Center or a contract facility, is absent from the hospital for a period longer than 24 hours, no payment will be made for hospital care during that absence.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1732)
[47 FR 58250, Dec. 30, 1982]

§ 17.364 Eligibility determinations.

Determinations of legal eligibility and medical need for hospitalization of United States veterans for treatment rest exclusively with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Determinations as to various factors upon which eligibility may depend shall be made as follows:

(a) Determinations of service connection. For the purpose of meeting any requirement in 38 U.S.C. 1724 and 1732, and 38 CFR 17.36 through 17.37 for service-connected disability, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs shall determine that under laws it administers the disability in question was incurred in or aggravated by service, and

(b) Determinations of valid service. For the purpose of determining the necessary prerequisite service, determinations by the Department of Defense of the United States as to military service shall be accepted. In those cases in which the United States Department of Veterans Affairs shall have information which it deems reliable and in conflict with the information upon which the Department of Defense determination was made, the conflicting information shall be referred to the Department of Defense for reconsideration and redetermination. Such determinations and redeterminations as to military service shall be conclusive.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1712)

§ 17.365 Admission priorities.

Appropriate provisions of § 17.49 apply.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1712)
[47 FR 58251, Dec. 30, 1982]
§ 17.366 Authorization of emergency admissions.

The Secretary of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines shall make determinations as to whether any patient should be admitted in emergency circumstances before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has made a legal determination of eligibility, except that liability for payment will not accrue to the United States until such eligibility determination has been made. Eligibility determinations will be given effect retroactively to the date of admission when the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has been notified by telephone, telegram, letter, or other communication of the emergency admission within 72 hours of the hour of admission. The Clinic Director of the VA Regional Office, Manila, may make an exception to the 72-hour limitation when it is determined that the delay in notification was fully justified. When any authorization cannot be made effective retroactively to the date of admission, it shall be effective from the date of receipt of notification.

§ 17.367 Republic of the Philippines to print forms.

The Secretary of National Defense of the Republic of the Philippines will, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, print all forms for applications for hospitalization, forms for physical examination reports, forms for billings for services rendered, and such other forms as may be necessary and incident to the efficient execution of the program governed by the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1724 and 1732, and 38 CFR 17.36 through 17.40 and §§17.350 through 17.370. The forms will be used whenever applicable in the general operation of the program.

§ 17.370 Termination of payments.

Payments may be terminated if the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines the Veterans Memorial Medical Center has not replaced and upgraded as needed equipment during the period in which the agreements cited in §17.50 are in effect or has not rehabilitated the existing physical plant and facilities to place the medical center on a sound and effective operating basis, or has not maintained the medical center in a well-equipped and effective operating condition. Payments, however, will not be stopped unless the Veterans Memorial Medical Center has been given at least 60 days advance written notice of intent to stop payments.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1732

§ 17.500 General.

(a) Section 5705, title 38, United States Code was enacted to protect the integrity of the VA’s medical quality assurance program by making confidential and privileged certain records and documents generated by this program and information contained therein. Disclosure of quality assurance records and documents made confidential and privileged by 38 U.S.C. 5705 and the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 may only be made in accordance with the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5705 and those regulations.

(b) The purpose of the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 is to specify and provide for the limited disclosure of
§ 17.501 Confidential and privileged documents.

(a) Documents and parts of documents are considered confidential and privileged if they were produced by or for the VA in the process of conducting systematic healthcare reviews for the purpose of improving the quality of health care or improving the utilization of healthcare resources in VA healthcare facilities and meet the criteria in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section. The four classes of healthcare quality assurance reviews with examples are:

(i) Monitoring and evaluation reviews conducted by a facility;
(ii) Drug usage evaluations;
(iii) Blood usage reviews;
(iv) Surgical case/invasive procedure reviews;
(v) Service and program monitoring including monitoring performed by individual services or programs, several services or programs working together, or individuals from several services or programs working together as a team;
(vi) Mortality and morbidity reviews;
(vii) Infection control review and surveillance;
(viii) Occurrence screening;
(ix) Tort claims peer reviews (except reviews performed to satisfy the requirements of a governmental body or a professional health care organization which is licensing practitioners or monitoring their professional performance);
(x) Admission and continued stay reviews;
(xi) Diagnostic studies utilization reviews;
(xii) Reports of special incidents (VA Form 10–2633 or similar forms) and follow-up documents unless developed during or as a result of a Board of Investigation;

(d) Nothing in the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 shall be construed as authority to withhold any record or document from a committee or subcommittee of either House of Congress or any joint committee or subcommittee of Congress, if such record or document pertains to any matter within the jurisdiction of such committee or joint committee.

(e) The regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 do not waive the sovereign immunity of the United States, and do not waive the confidentiality provisions and disclosure restrictions of 38 U.S.C. 5705.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5705)
Regional policy document, this requirement may be satisfied at the facility level by description in advance of the activity and its designation as protected in the facility quality assurance plan or other policy document.

(c) Documents and parts of documents generated by activities which meet the criteria in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section shall be confidential and privileged only if they:

(1) Identify, either implicitly or explicitly, individual practitioners, patients, or reviewers except as provided in paragraph (g)(6) of this section; or

(2) Contain discussions relating to the quality of VA medical care or utilization of VA medical resources by healthcare evaluators during the course of a review of quality assurance information or data, even if they do not identify practitioners, patients, or reviewers; or

(3) Are individual committee, service, or study team minutes, notes, reports, memoranda, or other documents either produced by healthcare evaluators in deliberating on the findings of healthcare reviews, or prepared for purposes of discussion or consideration by healthcare evaluators during a quality assurance review; or

(4) Are memoranda, letters, or other documents from the medical facility to the Regional Director or VA Central Office which contain information generated by a quality assurance activity meeting the criteria in §17.501 (a) and (b); or

(5) Are memoranda, letters, or other documents produced by the Regional Director or VA Central Office which either respond to or contain information generated by a quality assurance activity meeting the criteria in §17.501 (a) and (b).

(d) Documents which meet the criteria in this section are confidential and privileged whether they are produced at the medical facility, Regional or VA Central Office levels, or by external contractors performing healthcare quality assurance reviews.

(e) Documents which are confidential and privileged may be in written, computer, electronic, photographic or any other form.

(f) Documents which contain confidential and privileged material in one part, but not in others, such as Clinical Executive Board minutes, should be filed and maintained as if the entire document was protected by 38 U.S.C. 5705. This is not required if the confidential and privileged material is deleted.

(g) The following records and documents and parts of records and documents are not confidential even if they meet the criteria in paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section:

(1) Statistical information regarding VA healthcare programs or activities that does not implicitly or explicitly identify individual VA patients or VA employees or individuals involved in the quality assurance process;

(2) Summary documents or records which only identify study topics, the period of time covered by the study, criteria, norms, and/or major overall findings, but which do not identify individual healthcare practitioners, even by implication;

(3) The contents of Credentialing and Privileging folders as described in VACO policy documents (38 U.S.C. 5705-protected records shall not be filed in Credentialing and Privileging folders);

(4) Records and documents developed during or as a result of Boards of Investigations;

(5) Completed patient satisfaction survey questionnaires and findings from patient satisfaction surveys;

(6) Records and documents which only indicate the number of patients treated by a practitioner, either by diagnosis or in aggregate, or number of procedures performed by a practitioner, either by procedure or in aggregate;

(7) Records and documents developed during or as a result of reviews performed to satisfy the requirements of a governmental body or a professional healthcare organization which is licensing practitioners or monitoring their professional performance, e.g., National Practitioner Data Bank, Federation of State Medical Boards, and National Council of State Boards of Nursing;

(8) Documents and reports developed during or as a result of site visits by the Office of the Medical Inspector except to the extent that the documents and reports contain information that...
§ 17.502 Applicability of other statutes.

(a) Disclosure of quality assurance records and documents which are not confidential and privileged under 38 U.S.C. 5705 and the confidentiality regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 will be governed by the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, and, if applicable, the Privacy Act and any other VA or federal confidentiality statutes.

(b) When included in a quality assurance review, confidential records protected by other confidentiality statutes such as 5 U.S.C. 552a (the Privacy Act), 38 U.S.C. 7332 (drug and alcohol abuse, sickle cell anemia, HIV infection), and 38 U.S.C. 5701 (veterans’ names and addresses) retain whatever confidentiality protection they have under these laws and applicable regulations and will be handled accordingly. To the extent that information protected by 38 U.S.C. 5701 or 7332 or the Privacy Act is incorporated into quality assurance records, the information in the quality assurance records is still protected by these statutes.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5705)

§ 17.503 Improper disclosure.

(a) Improper disclosure is the disclosure of confidential and privileged healthcare quality assurance review records or documents (or information contained therein), as defined in §17.501, to any person who is not authorized access to the records or documents under the statute and the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511.

(b) “Disclosure” means the communication, transmission, or conveyance in any way of any confidential and privileged quality assurance records or documents or information contained in them to any individual or organization in any form by any means.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5705)

§ 17.504 Disclosure methods.

(a) Disclosure of confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents or the information contained therein outside VA, where permitted by the statute and the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511, will always be by copies, abstracts, summaries, or similar records or documents prepared by the Department of Veterans Affairs and released to the requester. The original confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents will not be removed from the VA facility by any person, VA
§ 17.508 Access to quality assurance records and documents within the agency.

(a) Access to confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents within the Department pursuant to this section is restricted to VA employees (including consultants and contractors of VA) who have a need for such information to perform their government duties or contractual responsibilities and who are authorized access by the VA medical facility Director, Regional Director, the Under Secretary for Health, or their designees or by the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511.

(b) To foster continuous quality improvement, practitioners on VA rolls, whether paid or not, will have access to confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents relating to evaluation of the care they provided.

(c) Any quality assurance record or document, whether confidential and privileged or not, may be provided to a Department of Justice (DOJ) attorney who is investigating a claim or potential claim against the VA or who is preparing for litigation involving the VA. If necessary, such a record or document may be removed from the VA medical facility to the site where the General Counsel or any attorney within the Office of General Counsel, wherever located. These documents may also be provided to a Department of Justice (DOJ) attorney who is investigating a claim or potential claim against the VA or who is preparing for litigation involving the VA. If necessary, such a record or document may be removed from the VA medical facility to the site where the General Counsel or any attorney within the Office of General Counsel, or the DOJ attorney is conducting an investigation or preparing for litigation.

(d) Any quality assurance record or document or the information contained in §§17.500 through 17.511 will treat the findings, views, and actions relating to quality assurance in a confidential manner.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5705)
§ 17.509 Authorized disclosure: Non-Department of Veterans Affairs requests.

(a) Requests for confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents from organizations or individuals outside VA must be made to the Department and must specify the nature and content of the information requested, to whom the information should be transmitted or disclosed, and the purpose listed in paragraphs (b) through (j) of this section for which the information requested will be used. In addition, the requestor must specify to the extent possible the beginning and final dates of the period for which disclosure or access is requested. The request must be in writing and signed by the requestor. Except as specified in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, these requests should be forwarded to the Director of the facility in possession of the records or documents for response. The procedures outlined in 38 CFR 1.500 through 1.584 will be followed where applicable.

(b) Disclosure shall be made to Federal agencies upon their written request to permit VA's participation in healthcare programs including healthcare delivery, research, planning, and related activities with the requesting agencies. Any Federal agency may apply to the Under Secretary for Health for approval. If the VA decides to participate in the healthcare program with the requestor, the requesting agency will enter into an agreement with VA to ensure that the agency and its staff will ensure the confidentiality of any quality assurance records or documents shared with the agency.

(c) Qualified persons or organizations, including academic institutions, engaged in healthcare program activities shall, upon request to and approval by the Under Secretary for Health, Regional Director, medical facility Director, or their designees, have access to confidential and privileged medical quality assurance records and documents to permit VA participation in a healthcare activity with the requestor, provided that no records or documents are removed from the VA facility in possession of the records.

(d) When a request under paragraphs (b) or (c) of this section concerns access for research purposes, the request, together with the research plan or protocol, shall first be submitted to and approved by an appropriate VA medical facility Research and Development Committee and then approved by the Director of the VA medical facility. The VA medical facility staff together with the qualified person(s) conducting the research shall be responsible for the preservation of the anonymity of the patients, clients, and providers and shall not disseminate any records or documents which identify such individuals directly or indirectly without the individual's consent. This applies to the handling of data or information as well as reporting or publication of findings. These requirements are in addition to other applicable protections for the research.

(e) Individually identified patient medical record information which is therein, whether confidential and privileged or not, will be provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General upon request. A written request is not required.

(e) To the extent practicable, documents accessed under paragraph (b) of this section will not include the identities of peer reviewers. Reasonable efforts will be made to edit documents so as to protect the identities of reviewers, but the inability to completely do so will not bar access under paragraph (b).

(f) No individual shall be permitted access to confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents identified in §17.501 unless such individual has been informed of the penalties for unauthorized disclosure. Any misuse of confidential and privileged quality assurance records or documents shall be reported to the appropriate VHA official, e.g., Service Chief, Medical Center Director.

(g) In general, confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents will be maintained for a minimum of 3 years and may be held longer if needed for research studies or quality assurance or legal purposes.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5705)
protected by another statute as provided in §17.502 may not be disclosed to a non-VA person or organization, including disclosures for research purposes under paragraph (d), except as provided in that statute.

(f) Under paragraph (b), the Under Secretary for Health or designee or under paragraph (c), the Under Secretary for Health, Regional Director, medical facility Director, or their designees may approve a written request if it meets the following criteria:

(1) Participation by VA will benefit VA patient care; or
(2) Participation by VA will enhance VA medical research; or
(3) Participation by VA will enhance VA health services research; or
(4) Participation by VA will enhance VA healthcare planning or program development activities; or
(5) Participation by VA will enhance related VA healthcare program activities; and
(6) Access to the record by the requester is required for VA to participate in a healthcare program with the requester.

(g) Protected quality assurance records or documents, including records pertaining to a specific individual, will for purposes authorized under law be disclosed to a civil or criminal law enforcement governmental agency or instrumentality charged under applicable law with the protection of public health or safety, including state licensing and disciplinary agencies, if a written request for such records or documents is received from an official of such an organization. The request must state the purpose for which the records will be used. The Under Secretary for Health, Regional Director, medical facility Director, or their designees will determine the extent to which the information is disclosable.

(i) JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) survey teams and similar national accreditation agencies or boards and other organizations requested by VA to assess the effectiveness of quality assurance program activities or to consult regarding these programs are entitled to disclosure of confidential and privileged quality assurance documents with the following qualifications:

(1) Accreditation agencies which are charged with assessing all aspects of medical facility patient care, e.g., JCAHO, may have access only to such confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents as are relevant to their respective focus.
(2) Accreditation agencies charged with more narrowly focused review (e.g., College of American Pathologists, American Association of Blood Banks, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, etc.) may have access only to such confidential and privileged records and documents as are relevant to their respective focus.

(j) Confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents shall be released to the General Accounting Office if such records or documents pertain to any matter within its jurisdiction.

(k) Confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents shall be released to both VA and non-VA healthcare personnel upon request to the extent necessary to meet a medical emergency affecting the health or safety of any individual.

(l) For any disclosure made under paragraphs (a) through (i) of this section, the name of and other identifying information regarding any individual VA patient, employee, or other individual associated with VA shall be deleted from any confidential and privileged quality assurance record or document before any disclosure under these quality assurance regulations in
§ 17.510

§§ 17.500 through 17.511 is made, if disclosure of such name and identifying information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

(m) Disclosure of the confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents identified in § 17.501 will not be made to any individual or agency until that individual or agency has been informed of the penalties for unauthorized disclosure or redisclosure.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5705)

§ 17.510 Redisclosure.

No person or entity to whom a quality assurance record or document has been disclosed under § 17.508 or § 17.509 shall make further disclosure of such record or document except as provided for in 38 U.S.C. 5705 and the regulations in §§ 17.500 through 17.511.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5705)

§ 17.511 Penalties for violations.

Any person who knows that a document or record is a confidential and privileged quality assurance record or document described in §§ 17.500 through 17.511 and willfully discloses such confidential and privileged quality assurance record or document or information contained therein, except as authorized by 38 U.S.C. 5705 or the regulations in §§ 17.500 through 17.511, shall be fined not more than $5,000 in the case of a first offense and not more than $20,000 in the case of each subsequent offense.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5705)

VA HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM


§ 17.600 Purpose.

The purpose of §§ 17.600 through 17.612 is to set forth the requirements for the award of scholarships under the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Professional Scholarship Program to students receiving education or training in a direct or indirect health-care services discipline to assist in providing an adequate supply of such personnel for VA and for the Nation. Disciplines include nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and other specified direct or indirect health-care disciplines if needed by VA.

[55 FR 40170, Oct. 2, 1990]

§ 17.601 Definitions.

For the purpose of these regulations:

(a) Acceptable level of academic standing means the level at which a student retains eligibility to continue in attendance in school under the school’s standards and practices in the course of study for which the scholarship was awarded.


(c) Affiliation agreement means a Memorandum of Affiliation between a Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility and a school of medicine or osteopathy.

(d) Advanced clinical training means those programs of graduate training in medicine including osteopathy which (1) lead to eligibility for board certification or which provide other evidence of completion, and (2) have been approved by the appropriate body as determined by the Administrator.

(e) Secretary means the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or designee.

(f) Under Secretary for Health means the Under Secretary for Health for Veterans Health Administration or designee.

(g) Citizen of the United States means any person born, or lawfully naturalized in the United States, subject to its jurisdiction and protection, and owing allegiance thereto.

(h) Degree means a course of study leading to a doctor of medicine, doctor of osteopathy, doctor of dentistry, doctor of optometry, doctor of podiatry, or
§ 17.602 Eligibility.

(a) To be eligible for a scholarship under this program an applicant must—

(1) Be accepted for enrollment or be enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited school located in a State;

(2) Be pursuing a degree annually designated by the Secretary for participation in the Scholarship Program;

(3) Be in a discipline or program annually designated by the Secretary.

(p) School year means, for purposes of the stipend payment, all or part of the 12-month period from September 1 through August 31 during which a participant is enrolled in the school as a full-time student.

(q) State means one of the several States, Territories and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(r) Part-time student means an individual who is a Department of Veterans Affairs employee permanently assigned to a Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility who has been accepted for enrollment or enrolled for study leading to a degree on a less than full-time but not less than half-time basis.

(s) Department of Veterans Affairs employee means an individual employed and permanently assigned to a VA health care facility.

(t) Degree completion date means the date on which a participant completes all requirements of the degree program.

(u) VA health care facility means Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, medical and regional office centers, domiciliaries, independent outpatient clinics, and outpatient clinics in regional offices.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7452

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900–0352)

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§ 17.603 Availability of scholarships.

Scholarships will be awarded only when necessary to assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in alleviating shortages or anticipated shortages of personnel in particular health professions. The existence of a shortage of personnel will be determined in accordance with specific criteria for each health profession, promulgated by the Under Secretary for Health. The Secretary has the authority to determine the number of scholarships to be awarded in a fiscal year, and the number that will be awarded to full-time and part-time students.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7612(b)(4) and 7603(b)(1))

§ 17.604 Application for the scholarship program.

Each individual desiring a scholarship under this program must submit an accurate and complete application in the form and at the time prescribed by the Secretary. Included with the application will be a signed written contract to accept payment of a scholarship and to serve a period of obligated service (as defined in §17.607) if the application is approved and if the contract is accepted by the Secretary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7612(c)(1)(B))

§ 17.605 Selection of participants.

(a) General. In deciding which Scholarship Program applications will be approved by the Secretary, priority will be given to applicants entering their final year of education or training and priority will be given to applicants who previously received scholarship awards and who meet the conditions of paragraph (d) of this section. Except for continuation awards (see paragraph (d) of this section), applicants will be evaluated under the criteria specified in paragraph (b) of this section. A situation may occur in which there are a larger number of equally qualified applicants than there are awards to be made. In such cases, a random method may be used as the basis for selection.

In selecting participants to receive awards as part-time students, the Secretary may, at the Secretary’s discretion—

(1) Award scholarships geographically to part-time students so that available scholarships may be distributed on a relatively equal basis to students working throughout the VA health care system, and/or

(2) Award scholarships on the basis of retention needs within the VA health care system.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7603(d))

(b) Selection. In evaluating and selecting participants, the Secretary will take into consideration those factors determined necessary to assure effective participation in the Scholarship Program.
Program. The factors may include, but not be limited to—

(1) Work/volunteer experience, including prior health care employment and Department of Veterans Affairs employment;

(2) Faculty and employer recommendations;

(3) Academic performance; and

(4) Career goals.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7633)

(c) Selection of part-time students. Factors in addition to those specified in paragraph (b) of this section, which may be considered in awarding scholarships to part-time students may include, but are not limited to:

(1) Length of service of a VA employee in a health care facility;

(2) Honors and awards received from VA, and other sources;

(3) VA work performance evaluation;

(4) A recommendation for selection for a part-time scholarship from a VA Medical District.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7452(d)(1))

(d) Duration of scholarship award. Subject to the availability of funds for the Scholarship Program, the Secretary will award a participant a full-time scholarship under these regulations for a period of from 1 to 4 school years and a participant of a part-time scholarship for a period of 1 to 6 school years.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7612(c)(1)(A) and 7614(3))

(e) Continuation awards. Subject to the availability of funds for the Scholarship Program and selection, the Secretary will award a continuation scholarship for completion of the degree for which the scholarship was awarded if—

(1) The award will not extend the total period of Scholarship Program support beyond 4 years for a full-time scholarship, and beyond 6 years for a part-time scholarship; and

(2) The participant remains eligible for continued participation in the Scholarship Program.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7603(d))

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900–0352)


§ 17.606 Award procedures.

(a) Amount of scholarship. (1) A scholarship award will consist of (i) tuition and required fees, (ii) other educational expenses, including books and laboratory equipment, and (iii) except as provided in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, a monthly stipend, for the duration of the scholarship award. All such payments to scholarship participants are exempt from Federal taxation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7636)

(2) No stipend may be paid to a participant who is a full-time VA employee.

(3) The Secretary may determine the amount of the stipend paid to participants, whether part-time students or full-time students, but that amount may not exceed the maximum amount provided for in 38 U.S.C. 7613(b).

(4) In the case of a part-time student who is a part-time employee, the maximum stipend, if more than a nominal stipend is paid, will be reduced in accordance with the proportion that the number of credit hours carried by such participant bears to the number of credit hours required to be carried by a full-time student in the course of training being pursued by the participant.

(5) A full stipend may be paid only for the months the part-time student is attending classes.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7614(2))

(6) The Secretary may make arrangements with the school in which the participant is enrolled for the direct payment of the amount of tuition and/or reasonable educational expenses on the participant’s behalf.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7613(c))

(7) A participant’s eligibility for a stipend ends at the close of the month in which degree requirements are met.
(b) Leave-of-absence, repeated course work. The Secretary may suspend scholarship payments to or on behalf of a participant if the school (1) approves a leave-of-absence for the participant for health, personal, or other reasons, or (2) requires the participant to repeat course work for which the Secretary previously has made payments under the Scholarship Program. Additional costs relating to the repeated course work will not be paid under this program. Any scholarship payments suspended under this section will be resumed by the Secretary upon notification by the school that the participant has returned from the leave-of-absence or has satisfactorily completed the repeated course work and is proceeding as a full-time student in the course of study for which the scholarship was awarded.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7633)


§ 17.607 Obligated service.

(a) General. Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, each participant is obligated to provide service as a Department of Veterans Affairs employee in full-time clinical practice in the participant’s discipline in an assignment or location determined by the Secretary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7616(a))

(b) Beginning of service. (1) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, a participant’s obligated service shall begin on the date the Secretary appoints the participant as a full-time VA employee in the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration in a position for which the degree program prepared the participant. The Secretary shall appoint the participant to such position within 60 days after the participant’s degree completion date, or the date the participant becomes licensed in a State to practice in the discipline for which the degree program prepared the participant, whichever is later. At least 60 days prior to the appointment date, the Secretary shall notify the participant of the work assignment, its location, and the date work must begin.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7616(b)(1)(B) and (3)(A))

(d) Location for service. The Secretary reserves the right to make final decisions on location for service obligation. A participant who received a scholarship as a full-time student must be willing to move to another geographic location for service obligation. A participant who received a scholarship as a part-time student may be allowed to serve the period of obligated service at the health care facility where the individual was assigned when the scholarship was authorized.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7616(a))

(e) Creditability of advanced clinical training. No period of advanced clinical training will be credited toward satisfying the period of obligated service incurred under the Scholarship Program.


§ 17.608 Deferment of obligated service.

(a) Request for deferment. A participant receiving a degree from a school
of medicine, osteopathy, dentistry, optometry, or podiatry, may request deferment of obligated service to complete an approved program of advanced clinical training. The Secretary may defer the beginning date of the obligated service to allow the participant to complete the advanced clinical training program. The period of this deferment will be the time designated for the specialty training.

(b) Deferment requirements. Any participant whose period of obligated service is deferred shall be required to take all or part of the advanced clinical training in an accredited program in an educational institution having an Affiliation Agreement with a Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility, and such training will be undertaken in a Department of Veterans Affairs health-care facility.

(c) Additional service obligation. A participant who has requested and received deferment for approved advanced clinical training may, at the time of approval of such deferment and at the discretion of the Secretary and upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary for Health, incur an additional period of obligated service—

1. At the rate of one-half of a calendar year for each year of approved clinical training (or a proportionate ratio thereof) if the training is in a specialty determined to be necessary to meet health care requirements of the Veterans Health Administration; Department of Veterans Affairs; or

2. At the rate of three-quarters of a calendar year for each year of approved graduate training (or a proportionate ratio thereof) if the training is in a medical specialty determined not to be necessary to meet the health care requirements of the Veterans Health Administration. Specialties necessary to meet the health care requirements of the Veterans Health Administration will be prescribed periodically by the Secretary when, and if, this provision for an additional period of obligated service is to be used.

(d) Altering deferment. Before altering the length or type of approved advanced clinical training for which the period of obligated service was deferred under paragraphs (a) or (b) of this section, the participant must request and obtain the Secretary’s written approval of the alteration.

(e) Beginning of service after deferment. Any participant whose period of obligated service has been deferred under paragraph (a) or (b) of this section must begin the obligated service effective on the date of appointment under title 38 in full-time clinical practice in an assignment or location in a Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility as determined by the Secretary. The assignment will be made by the Secretary within 120 days prior to or no later than 30 days following the completion of the requested graduate training for which the deferment was granted. Travel and relocation regulations will apply.

§ 17.609 Pay during period of obligated service.

The initial appointment of physicians for obligated service will be made in a grade commensurate with qualifications as determined in section 7404(b)(1) of title 38 U.S.C. A physician serving a period of obligated service is not eligible for incentive special pay during the first three years of such obligated service. A physician may be paid primary special pay at the discretion of the Secretary upon the recommendation of the Under Secretary for Health.


76 CFR Ch. I (7–1–11 Edition) § 17.610  Failure to comply with terms and conditions of participation.

(a) If a participant, other than one described in paragraph (b) of this section fails to accept payment or instructs the school not to accept payment of the scholarship provided by the Secretary, the participant must, in addition to any service or other obligation incurred under the contract, pay to the United States the amount of $1,500 liquidated damages. Payment of this amount must be made within 90 days of the date on which the participant fails to accept payment of the scholarship award or instructs the school not to accept payment.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7617(a))

(b) If a participant:

(1) Fails to maintain an acceptable level of academic standing;
(2) Is dismissed from the school for disciplinary reasons;
(3) Voluntarily terminates the course of study or program for which the scholarship was awarded including in the case of a full-time student, a reduction of course load from full-time to part-time before completing the course of study or program;
(4) Fails to become licensed to practice in the discipline for which the degree program prepared the participant, if applicable, in a State within 1 year from the date such person becomes eligible to apply for State licensure; or

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7617(b)(4))

(5) Is a part-time student and fails to maintain employment in a permanent assignment in a VA health care facility while enrolled in the course of training being pursued; the participant must instead of performing any service obligation, pay to the United States an amount equal to all scholarship funds awarded under the written contract executed in accordance with §17.602. Payment of this amount must be made within 1 year from the date academic training terminates unless a longer period is necessary to avoid hardship. No interest will be charged on any part of this indebtedness.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7617(b))

(c) Participants who breach their contracts by failing to begin or complete their service obligation (for any reason) other than as provided for under paragraph (b) of this section are liable to repay the amount of all scholarship funds paid to them and to the school on their behalf, plus interest, multiplied by three, minus months of service obligation satisfied, as determined by the following formula:

\[ A = 3\Phi \left( \frac{t-s}{t} \right) \]

in which:

‘\( A \)’ is the amount the United States is entitled to recover;
‘\( \Phi \)’ is the sum of the amounts paid to or on behalf of the applicant and the interest on such amounts which would be payable if, at the time the amounts were paid, they were loans bearing interest at the maximum legal prevailing rate, as determined by the Treasurer of the United States;
‘\( t \)’ is the total number of months in the applicant’s period of obligated service; and
‘\( s \)’ is the number of months of the period of obligated service served by the participant.

The amount which the United States is entitled to recover shall be paid within 1 year of the date on which the applicant failed to begin or complete the period of obligated service, as determined by the Secretary.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7617(c)(1)(2))

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2900–0352)


§ 17.611 Bankruptcy.

Any payment obligation incurred may not be discharged in bankruptcy under title 11 U.S.C. until 5 years after the date on which the payment obligation is due.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7634(c))

[47 FR 10810, Mar. 12, 1982]
§ 17.612 Cancellation, waiver, or suspension of obligation.

(a) Any obligation of a participant for service or payment will be canceled upon the death of the participant.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7634(a))

(b)(1) A participant may seek a waiver or suspension of the service or payment obligation incurred under this program by written request to the Secretary setting forth the basis, circumstances, and causes which support the requested action. The Secretary may approve an initial request for a suspension for a period of up to 1 year. A renewal of this suspension may also be granted.

(2) The Secretary may waive or suspend any service or payment obligation incurred by a participant whenever compliance by the participant (i) is impossible, due to circumstances beyond the control of the participant or (ii) whenever the Secretary concludes that a waiver or suspension of compliance would be in the best interest of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7634(b))

(c) Compliance by a participant with a service or payment obligation will be considered impossible due to circumstances beyond the control of the participant if the Secretary determines, on the basis of such information and documentation as may be required, that the participant suffers from a physical or mental disability resulting in permanent inability to perform the service or other activities which would be necessary to comply with the obligation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7634(b))

(d) Waivers or suspensions of service or payment obligations, when not related to paragraph (c) of this section, and when considered in the best interest of the Department of Veterans Affairs, will be determined by the Secretary on an individual basis.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7634(b))

[47 FR 10810, Mar. 12, 1982]
submitted by the applicant in the form prescribed by VA in the application package. The completed application package must be submitted to the Deputy Associate Director for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, (302/111C), VA Medical Center, 100 Emancipation Drive, Hampton, VA 23667. An application package may be obtained by writing to the proceeding address or telephoning (804) 722–9961 x3628. (This is not a toll-free number)

(b) The application package includes exhibits to be prepared and submitted, including:

(1) Information concerning the applicant’s income, assets, liabilities and credit history,

(2) Information for VA to verify the applicant’s financial information,

(3) Identification of the official(s) authorized to make financial transactions on behalf of the applicant,

(4) Information concerning:

(i) The history, purpose and composition of the applicant,

(ii) The applicant’s involvement with recovering substance abusers, including:

(A) Type of services provided,

(B) Number of persons served,

(C) Dates during which each type of service was provided,

(D) Names of at least two references of government or community groups whom the organization has worked with in assisting substance abusers,

(iii) The applicant’s plan for the provision of transitional housing to veterans including:

(A) Means of identifying and screening potential residents,

(B) Number of occupants intended to live in the residence for which the loan assistance is requested,

(C) Residence operating policies addressing structure for democratic self-government, expulsion policies for nonpayment, alcohol or illegal drug use or disruptive behavior,

(D) Type of technical assistance available to residents in the event of house management problems,

(E) Anticipated cost of maintaining the residence, including rent and utilities,

(F) Anticipated charge, per veteran, for residing in the residence,

(G) Anticipated means of collecting rent and utilities payments from residents,

(H) A description of the housing unit for which the loan is sought to support, including location, type of neighborhood, brief floor plan description, etc., and why this residence was selected for this endeavor.

(iv) The applicant’s plans for use of the loan proceeds.


§ 17.803 Order of consideration.

Loan applications will be considered on a first-come-first-serve basis, subject to availability of funds for loans and awards will be made on a first-come-first-serve basis to applicants who meet the criteria for receiving a loan. If no funds are available for loans, applications will be retained in the order of receipt for consideration as funds become available.


§ 17.804 Loan approval criteria.

Upon consideration of the application package, loan approval will be based on the following:

(a) Favorable financial history and status,

(1) A minimum of a two-year credit history,

(2) No open liens, judgments, and no unpaid collection accounts,

(3) No more than two instances where payments were ever delinquent beyond 60 days,

(4) Net ratio: (monthly expenses divided by monthly cash flow) that does not exceed 40%,

(5) Gross ratio: (total indebtedness divided by gross annual cash flow) that does not exceed 35%,

(6) At least two favorable credit references,

(b) Demonstrated ability to successfully address the needs of substance abusers as determined by a minimum of one year of successful experience in providing services, such as, provision of housing, vocational training, structured job seeking assistance, organized relapse prevention services, or similar
activity. Such experience would involve at least twenty-five substance abusers, and would be experience which could be verified by VA inquiries of government or community groups with whom the applicant has worked in providing these services.

(c) An acceptable plan for operating a residence designed to meet the conditions of a loan under this program, which will include:

(1) Measures to ensure that residents are eligible for residency, i.e., are veterans, are in (or have recently been in) a program for the treatment of substance abuse, are financially able to pay their share of costs of maintaining the residence, and agree to abide by house rules and rent/utilities payment provisions,

(2) Adequate rent/utilities collections to cover cost of maintaining the residence,

(3) Policies that ensure democratic self-run government, including expulsion policies, and

(4) Available technical assistance to residents in the event of house management problems.

(d) Selection of a suitable housing unit for use as a transitional residence in a neighborhood with no known illegal drug activity, and with adequate living space for number of veterans planned for residence (at least one large bedroom for every three veterans, at least one bathroom for every four veterans, adequate common space for entire household)

(e) Agreements, signed by an official authorized to bind the recipient, which include:

(1) The loan payment schedule in accordance with the requirements of Pub. L. 102-54, with the interest rate being the same as the rate the VA is charged to borrow these funds from the U.S. Department of Treasury and with a penalty of 4% of the amount due for each failure to pay an installment by the date specified in the loan agreement involved, and

(2) The applicant’s intent to use proceeds of loan only to cover initial startup costs associated with the residence, such as security deposit, furnishings, household supplies, and any other initial startup costs.


§ 17.805 Additional terms of loans.

In the operation of each residence established with the assistance of the loan, the recipient must agree to the following:

(a) The use of alcohol or any illegal drugs in the residence will be prohibited;

(b) Any resident who violates the prohibition of alcohol or any illegal drugs will be expelled from the residence;

(c) The cost of maintaining the residence, including fees for rent and utilities, will be paid by residents;

(d) The residents will, through a majority vote of the residents, otherwise establish policies governing the conditions of the residence, including the manner in which applications for residence are approved;

(e) The residence will be operated solely as a residence for not less than six veterans.


HEALTH CARE BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN CHILDREN OF VIETNAM VETERANS AND VETERANS WITH COVERED SERVICE IN KOREA—SPINA BIFIDA AND COVERED BIRTH DEFECTS

SOURCE: 68 FR 1010, Jan. 8, 2003, unless otherwise noted.

§ 17.900 Definitions.

For purposes of §§17.900 through 17.905—

Approved health care provider means a health care provider currently approved by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Department of Defense TRICARE Program, Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA), Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO), or currently approved for providing health care under a license or certificate issued by a governmental entity with jurisdiction. An entity or individual will be deemed to be an approved health care provider only
§ 17.901 Provision of health care.

(a) Spina bifida. VA will provide a Vietnam veteran or veteran with covered service in Korea’s child who has been determined under §3.814 or §3.815 of this title to suffer from spina bifida with health care as the Secretary determines is needed. VA may inform spina bifida patients, parents, or guardians that health care may be available at not-for-profit charitable entities.

(b) Covered birth defects. VA will provide a woman Vietnam veteran’s child who has been determined under §3.815 of this title to suffer from covered birth defects.
birth defects (other than spina bifida) with such health care as the Secretary determines is needed by the child for the covered birth defects. However, if VA has determined for a particular covered birth defect that §3.815(a)(2) of this title applies (concerning affirmative evidence of cause other than the mother’s service during the Vietnam era), no benefits or assistance will be provided under this section with respect to that particular birth defect.

(c) Providers of care. Health care provided under this section will be provided directly by VA, by contract with an approved health care provider, or by other arrangement with an approved health care provider.

(d) Submission of information. For purposes of §§17.900 through 17.905:

(1) The telephone number of the Health Administration Center is (888) 820–1756;

(2) The facsimile number of the Health Administration Center is (303) 331–7807;

(3) The hand-delivery address of the Health Administration Center is 3773 Cherry Creek Drive North, Denver, CO 80246; and

(4) The mailing address of the Health Administration Center for claims submitted pursuant to either paragraph (a) or (b) of this section is P.O. Box 469065, Denver, CO 80246–9065.


NOTE TO §17.901: Under this program, beneficiaries with spina bifida will receive comprehensive care through the Department of Veterans Affairs. However, the health care benefits available under this section to children with other covered birth defects are not comprehensive, and VA will furnish them only health care services that are related to their covered birth defects. With respect to covered children suffering from spina bifida, VA is the exclusive payer for services paid under 17.900 through 17.905, regardless of any third party insurer, Medicare, Medicaid, health plan, or any other plan or program providing health care coverage. As to children with other covered birth defects, any third party insurer, Medicare, Medicaid, health plan, or any other plan or program providing health care coverage would be responsible according to its provisions for payment for health care not relating to the covered birth defects.

§17.902 Preauthorization.

(a) Preauthorization from a customer service representative of the Health Administration Center is required for the following services or benefits under §§17.900 through 17.905: rental or purchase of durable medical equipment with a total rental or purchase price in excess of $300, respectively; transplantation services; mental health services; training; substance abuse treatment; dental services; and travel (other than mileage at the General Services Administration rate for privately owned automobiles). Authorization will only be given in spina bifida cases where there is a demonstrated medical need. In cases of other covered birth defects, authorization will only be given where there is a demonstrated medical need related to the covered birth defects. Requests for provision of health care requiring preauthorization shall be made to the Health Administration Center and may be made by telephone, facsimile, mail, or hand delivery. The application must contain the following:

(1) Name of child,

(2) Child’s Social Security number,

(3) Name of veteran,

(4) Veteran’s Social Security number,

(5) Type of service requested,

(6) Medical justification,

(7) Estimated cost, and

(8) Name, address, and telephone number of provider.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section, preauthorization is not required for a condition for which failure to receive immediate treatment poses a serious threat to life or health. Such emergency care should be reported by telephone to the Health Administration Center within 72 hours of the emergency.


(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0578)

§17.903 Payment.

(a)(1) Payment for services or benefits under §§17.900 through 17.905 will be
determined utilizing the same payment methodologies as provided for under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) (see §17.270).

(2) As a condition of payment, the services must have occurred:

(i) For spina bifida, on or after October 1, 1997, and must have occurred on or after the date the child was determined eligible for benefits under §3.814 of this title.

(ii) For covered birth defects, on or after December 1, 2001, and must have occurred on or after the date the child was determined eligible for benefits under §3.815 of this title.

(3) Claims from approved health care providers must be filed with the Health Administration Center in writing (facsimile, mail, hand delivery, or electronically) no later than:

(i) One year after the date of service; or

(ii) In the case of inpatient care, one year after the date of discharge; or

(iii) In the case of retroactive approval for health care, 180 days following beneficiary notification of eligibility.

(4) Claims for health care provided under the provisions of §§17.900 through 17.905 must contain, as appropriate, the information set forth in paragraphs (a)(4)(i) through (a)(4)(v) of this section.

(i) Patient identification information:

(A) Full name,

(B) Address,

(C) Date of birth, and

(D) Social Security number.

(ii) Provider identification information (inpatient and outpatient services):

(A) Full name and address (such as hospital or physician),

(B) Remittance address,

(C) Address where services were rendered,

(D) Individual provider’s professional status (M.D., Ph.D., R.N., etc.), and

(E) Provider tax identification number (TIN) or Social Security number.

(iii) Patient treatment information (long-term care or institutional services):

(A) Dates of service (specific and inclusive),

(B) Summary level itemization (by revenue code),

(C) Dates of service for all absences from a hospital or other approved institution during a period for which inpatient benefits are being claimed,

(D) Principal diagnosis established, after study, to be chiefly responsible for causing the patient’s hospitalization,

(E) All secondary diagnoses,

(F) All procedures performed,

(G) Discharge status of the patient, and

(H) Institution’s Medicare provider number.

(iv) Patient treatment information for all other health care providers and ancillary outpatient services such as durable medical equipment, medical requisites, and independent laboratories:

(A) Diagnosis,

(B) Procedure code for each procedure, service, or supply for each date of service, and

(C) Individual billed charge for each procedure, service, or supply for each date of service.

(v) Prescription drugs and medicines and pharmacy supplies:

(A) Name and address of pharmacy where drug was dispensed,

(B) Name of drug,

(C) National Drug Code (NDC) for drug provided,

(D) Strength,

(E) Quantity,

(F) Date dispensed,

(G) Pharmacy receipt for each drug dispensed (including billed charge), and

(H) Diagnosis for which each drug is prescribed.

(b) Health care payment will be provided in accordance with the provisions of §§17.900 through 17.905. However, the following are specifically excluded from payment:

(1) Care as part of a grant study or research program.

(2) Care considered experimental or investigational.

(3) Drugs not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for commercial marketing.

(4) Services, procedures, or supplies for which the beneficiary has no legal obligation to pay, such as services obtained at a health fair,
(5) Services provided outside the scope of the provider's license or certification, and

(6) Services rendered by providers suspended or sanctioned by a Federal agency.

(c) Payments made in accordance with the provisions of §§ 17.900 through 17.905 shall constitute payment in full. Accordingly, the health care provider or agent for the health care provider may not impose any additional charge for any services for which payment is made by VA.

(d) Explanation of benefits (EOB)—(1) When a claim under the provisions of §§ 17.900 through 17.905 is adjudicated, an EOB will be sent to the beneficiary or guardian and the provider. The EOB provides, at a minimum, the following information:

   (i) Name and address of recipient,

   (ii) Description of services and/or supplies provided,

   (iii) Dates of services or supplies provided,

   (iv) Amount billed,

   (v) Determined allowable amount,

   (vi) To whom payment, if any, was made, and

   (vii) Reasons for denial (if applicable).

(2) [Reserved]


(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0578)

[68 FR 1010, Jan. 8, 2003, as amended at 76 FR 4249, Jan. 25, 2011]

§ 17.904 Review and appeal process.

For purposes of §§ 17.900 through 17.905, if a health care provider, child, or representative disagrees with a determination concerning provision of health care or with a determination concerning payment, the person or entity may request reconsideration. Such request must be submitted in writing (by facsimile, mail, or hand delivery) within one year of the date of the initial determination to the Health Administration Center (Attention: Chief, Benefit and Provider Services). The request must state why it is believed that the decision is in error and must include any new and relevant information not previously considered. Any request for reconsideration that does not identify the reason for dispute will be returned to the sender without further consideration. After reviewing the matter, including any relevant supporting documentation, a benefits advisor will issue a written determination (with a statement of findings and reasons) to the person or entity seeking reconsideration that affirms, reverses, or modifies the previous decision. If the person or entity seeking reconsideration is still dissatisfied, within 90 days of the date of the decision he or she may submit in writing (by facsimile, mail, or hand delivery) to the Health Administration Center (Attention: Director) a request for review by the Director, Health Administration Center. The Director will review the claim and any relevant supporting documentation and issue a decision in writing (with a statement of findings and reasons) that affirms, reverses, or modifies the previous decision. An appeal under this section would be considered as filed at the time it was delivered to the VA or at the time it was released for submission to the VA (for example, this could be evidenced by the postmark, if mailed).

Note to § 17.904: The final decision of the Director will inform the claimant of further appellate rights for an appeal to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.


(The Office of Management and Budget has approved the information collection requirements in this section under control number 2900–0578)

[68 FR 1010, Jan. 8, 2003, as amended at 76 FR 4250, Jan. 25, 2011]

§ 17.905 Medical records.

Copies of medical records generated outside VA that relate to activities for which VA is asked to provide payment or that VA determines are necessary to adjudicate claims under §§ 17.900 through 17.905 must be provided to VA at no cost.


[68 FR 1010, Jan. 8, 2003, as amended at 76 FR 4250, Jan. 25, 2011]
§ 17.1000 Payment or reimbursement for emergency services for non-service-connected conditions in non-VA facilities

Source: 66 FR 36470, July 12, 2001, unless otherwise noted.

§ 17.1000 Payment or reimbursement for emergency services for non-service-connected conditions in non-VA facilities.

Sections 17.1000 through 17.1008 constitute the requirements under 38 U.S.C. 1725 that govern VA payment or reimbursement for non-VA emergency services furnished to a veteran for non-service-connected conditions.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1725)

NOTE TO § 17.1000: In cases where a patient is admitted for inpatient care, health care providers furnishing emergency treatment who believe they may have a basis for filing a claim with VA for payment under 38 U.S.C. 1725 should contact VA within 48-hours after admission for emergency treatment. Such contact is not a condition of VA payment. However, the contact will assist the provider in understanding the conditions for payment. The contact may also assist the provider in planning for transfer of the veteran after stabilization.


§ 17.1001 Definitions.

For purposes of §§17.1000 through 17.1008:

(a) The term health-plan contract means any of the following:

(1) An insurance policy or contract, medical or hospital service agreement, membership or subscription contract, or similar arrangement under which health services for individuals are provided or the expenses of such services are paid;

(2) An insurance program described in section 1811 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395c) or established by section 1831 of that Act (42 U.S.C. 1395j);

(3) A State plan for medical assistance approved under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

(4) A workers’ compensation law or plan described in section 38 U.S.C. 1729(a)(2)(A); or

(5) A law of a State or political subdivision described in 38 U.S.C. 1729(a)(2)(B) (concerning motor vehicle accidents).

(b) The term third party means any of the following:

(1) A Federal entity;

(2) A State or political subdivision of a State;

(3) An employer or an employer’s insurance carrier;

(4) An automobile accident repairs insurance carrier; or

(5) A person or entity obligated to provide, or to pay the expenses of, health services under a health-plan contract.

(c) The term duplicate payment means payment made, in whole or in part, for the same emergency services for which VA reimbursed or made payment.

(d) The term stabilized means that no material deterioration of the emergency medical condition is likely, within reasonable medical probability, to occur if the veteran is discharged or transferred to a VA or other Federal facility.

(e) The term VA medical facility of jurisdiction means the nearest VA medical facility to where the emergency service was provided.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1725)

§ 17.1002 Substantive conditions for payment or reimbursement.

Payment or reimbursement under 38 U.S.C. 1725 for emergency services may be made only if all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The emergency services were provided in a hospital emergency department or a similar facility held out as providing emergency care to the public;

(b) The claim for payment or reimbursement for the initial evaluation and treatment is for a condition of such a nature that a prudent layperson would have reasonably expected that delay in seeking immediate medical attention would have been hazardous to life or health (this standard would be met if there were an emergency medical condition manifesting itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) that a prudent layperson who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine
could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in placing the health of the individual in serious jeopardy, serious impairment to bodily functions, or serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part);  
(c) A VA or other Federal facility/provider was not feasibly available and an attempt to use them beforehand would not have been considered reasonable by a prudent layperson (as an example, these conditions would be met by evidence establishing that a veteran was brought to a hospital in an ambulance and the ambulance personnel determined that the nearest available appropriate level of care was at a non-VA medical center);  
(d) The claim for payment or reimbursement for any medical care beyond the initial emergency evaluation and treatment is for a continued medical emergency of such a nature that the veteran could not have been safely discharged or transferred to a VA or other Federal facility (the medical emergency lasts only until the time the veteran becomes stabilized);  
(e) At the time the emergency treatment was furnished, the veteran was enrolled in the VA health care system and had received medical services under authority of 38 U.S.C. chapter 17 within the 24-month period preceding the furnishing of such emergency treatment;  
(f) The veteran is financially liable to the provider of emergency treatment for that treatment;  
(g) The veteran has no coverage under a health-plan contract for payment or reimbursement, in whole or in part, for the emergency treatment (this condition cannot be met if the veteran has coverage under a health-plan contract but payment is barred because of a failure by the veteran or the provider to comply with the provisions of that health-plan contract, e.g., failure to submit a bill or medical records within specified time limits, or failure to exhaust appeals of the denial of payment);  
(h) If the condition for which the emergency treatment was furnished was caused by an accident or work-related injury, the claimant has exhausted without success all claims and remedies reasonably available to the veteran or provider against a third party for payment of such treatment; and the veteran has no contractual or legal recourse against a third party that could reasonably be pursued for the purpose of extinguishing, in whole or in part, the veteran’s liability to the provider; and  
(i) The veteran is not eligible for reimbursement under 38 U.S.C. 1728 for the emergency treatment provided (38 U.S.C. 1728 authorizes VA payment or reimbursement for emergency treatment to a limited group of veterans, primarily those who receive emergency treatment for a service-connected disability).  

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1725)  

§ 17.1003 Emergency transportation.  
Notwithstanding the provisions of §17.1002, payment or reimbursement under 38 U.S.C. 1725 for ambulance services, including air ambulance services, may be made for transporting a veteran to a facility only if the following conditions are met:  
(a) Payment or reimbursement is authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1725 for emergency transportation provided at such facility (or payment or reimbursement could have been authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1725 for emergency treatment if death had not occurred before emergency treatment could be provided);  
(b) The veteran is financially liable to the provider of the emergency transportation;  
(c) The veteran has no coverage under a health-plan contract for reimbursement or payment, in whole or in part, for the emergency transportation or any emergency treatment authorized under 38 U.S.C. 1728 (this condition is not met if the veteran has coverage under a health-plan contract but payment is barred because of a failure by the veteran or the provider to comply with the provisions of that health-plan contract); and  
(d) If the condition for which the emergency transportation was furnished was caused by an accident or work-related injury, the claimant has exhausted without success all claims and remedies reasonably available to the veteran or provider against a third party for payment of such treatment; and the veteran has no contractual or legal recourse against a third party that could reasonably be pursued for the purpose of extinguishing, in whole or in part, the veteran’s liability to the provider; and  

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1725)
§ 17.1004 Filing claims.

(a) A claimant for payment or reimbursement under 38 U.S.C. 1725 must be the entity that furnished the treatment, the veteran who paid for the treatment, or the person or organization that paid for such treatment on behalf of the veteran.

(b) To obtain payment or reimbursement for emergency treatment under 38 U.S.C. 1725, a claimant must submit to the VA medical facility of jurisdiction a completed standard billing form (such as a UB92 or a HCFA 1500). Where the form used does not contain a false claims notice, the completed form must also be accompanied by a signed, written statement declaring that “I hereby certify that this claim meets all of the conditions for payment by VA for emergency medical services under 38 CFR 17.1002 (except for paragraph (e)) and 17.1003. I am aware that 38 U.S.C. 6102(b) provides that one who obtains payment without being entitled to it and with intent to defraud the United States shall be fined in accordance with title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.”

NOTE TO §17.1004(b): These regulations regarding payment or reimbursement for emergency services for nonservice-connected conditions in non-VA facilities also can be found on the internet at http://www.va.gov/health/elig.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section, no specific form is required for a claimant (or duly authorized representative) to claim payment or reimbursement for emergency transportation charges under 38 U.S.C. 1725. The claimant need only submit a signed and dated request for such payment or reimbursement to the VA medical facility of jurisdiction, together with a bill showing the services provided and charges for which the veteran is personally liable and a signed statement explaining who requested such transportation services and why they were necessary.

(d) To receive payment or reimbursement for emergency services, a claimant must file a claim within 90 days after the latest of the following:

(2) The date that the veteran was discharged from the facility that furnished the emergency treatment;
(3) The date of death, but only if the death occurred during transportation to a facility for emergency treatment or if the death occurred during the stay in the facility that included the provision of the emergency treatment; or
(4) The date the veteran finally exhausted, without success, action to obtain payment or reimbursement for the treatment from a third party.

(e) If after reviewing a claim the decisionmaker determines that additional information is needed to make a determination regarding the claim, such official will contact the claimant in writing and request additional information. The additional information must be submitted to the decisionmaker within 30 days of receipt of the request or the claim will be treated as abandoned, except that if the claimant within the 30-day period requests in writing additional time, the time period for submission of the information may be extended as reasonably necessary for the requested information to be obtained.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1725)


§ 17.1005 Payment limitations.

(a) Payment or reimbursement for emergency treatment under 38 U.S.C. 1725 shall be the lesser of the amount for which the veteran is personally liable or 70 percent of the amount under the applicable Medicare fee schedule for such treatment.

(b) Reimbursement or payment for emergency treatment may be made only for the period from the beginning of the initial evaluation treatment until such time as the veteran could be safely discharged or transferred to a
VA facility or other Federal facility. For purposes of payment or reimbursement under 38 U.S.C. 1725, VA deems it safe for the veteran to be transferred once the veteran has become stabilized. (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1725)


§ 17.1006 Decisionmakers.

The Chief of the Health Administration Service or an equivalent official at the VA medical facility of jurisdiction will make all determinations regarding payment or reimbursement under 38 U.S.C. 1725, except that the Fee Service Review Physician or equivalent officer at the VA medical facility of jurisdiction will make determinations regarding §17.1002(b), (c), and (d). Any decision denying a benefit must be in writing and inform the claimant of VA reconsideration and appeal rights. (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1725)

§ 17.1007 Independent right of recovery.

(a) VA has the right to recover its payment under this section when, and to the extent that, a third party makes payment for all or part of the same emergency treatment for which VA reimbursed or made payment under this section. (1) Under 38 U.S.C. 1725(d)(4), the veteran (or the veteran’s personal representative, successor, dependents, or survivors) or claimant shall ensure that the Secretary is promptly notified of any payment received from any third party for emergency treatment furnished to the veteran. The veteran (or the veteran’s personal representative, successor, dependents, or survivors) or claimant shall immediately forward all documents relating to such payment, cooperate with the Secretary in the investigation of such payment and assist the Secretary in enforcing the United States’ right to recover any payment made and accepted under this section. The required notification and submission of documentation must be provided by the veteran or claimant to the VA medical facility of jurisdiction within three working days of receipt of notice of the duplicate payment.

(2) If the Chief Financial Officer or equivalent official at the VA medical facility of jurisdiction concludes that payment from a third party was made for all or part of the same emergency treatment for which VA reimbursed or made payment under this section, such VA official shall, except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, initiate action to collect or recover the amount of the duplicate payment in the same manner as for any other debt owed the United States.

(b) (1) Any amount paid by the United States to the veteran (or the veteran’s personal representative, successor, dependents, or survivors) or to any other person or organization paying for such treatment shall constitute a lien in favor of the United States against any recovery the payee subsequently receives from a third party for the same treatment.

(2) Any amount paid by the United States, and accepted by the provider that furnished the veteran’s emergency treatment, shall constitute a lien against any subsequent amount the provider receives from a third party for the same emergency treatment for which the United States made payment.

(c) If it is determined that a duplicate payment was made, the Chief Financial Officer or equivalent official at the VA medical facility of jurisdiction may waive recovery of a VA payment made under this section to a veteran upon determining that the veteran has substantially complied with the provisions of paragraph (a)(1) of this section and that actions to recover the payment would not be cost-effective or would conflict with other litigative interests of the United States. (Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1725)

§ 17.1008 Balance billing prohibited.

Payment by VA under 38 U.S.C. 1725 on behalf of a veteran to a provider of emergency treatment shall, unless rejected and refunded by the provider within 30 days of receipt, extinguish all liability on the part of the veteran for that emergency treatment. Neither the absence of a contract or agreement between VA and the provider nor any provision of a contract, agreement, or assignment to the contrary shall operate
to modify, limit, or negate this requirement.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1725)
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(Regulations published from January 1, 2011, through July 1, 2011)

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