

Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 20.1304

to transmit copies for other official purposes.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5701)

[61 FR 29028, June 7, 1996]

§ 20.1301 Rule 1301. Disclosure of information.

(a) *Policy.* It is the policy of the Board of Veterans' Appeals for the full text of appellate decisions, Statements of the Case, and Supplemental Statements of the Case to be disclosed to appellants. In those situations where disclosing certain information directly to the appellant would not be in conformance with 38 U.S.C. 5701, that information will be removed from the decision, Statement of the Case, or Supplemental Statement of the Case and the remaining text will be furnished to the appellant. A full-text appellate decision, Statement of the Case, or Supplemental Statement of the Case will be disclosed to the designated representative, however, unless the relationship between the appellant and representative is such (for example, a parent or spouse) that disclosure to the representative would be as harmful as if made to the appellant.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7105(d)(2))

(b) *Public availability of Board decisions*—(1) *Decisions issued on or after January 1, 1992.* Decisions rendered by the Board of Veterans' Appeals on or after January 1, 1992, are electronically available for public inspection and copying on the Internet at <http://www.index.va.gov/search/va/bva.html>. All personal identifiers are redacted from the decisions prior to publication. Specific decisions may be identified by a word and/or topic search, or by the Board docket number. Board decisions will continue to be provided in a widely-used format as future advances in technology occur.

(2) *Decisions issued prior to January 1, 1992.* Decisions rendered by the Board of Veterans' Appeals prior to January 1, 1992, have been indexed to facilitate access to the contents of the decisions (BVA Index I-01-1). The index, which was published quarterly in microfiche form with an annual cumulation, is available for review at Department of Veterans Affairs regional offices and at

the Research Center at the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, DC. Information on obtaining a microfiche copy of the index is also available from the Board's Research Center. The index can be used to locate citations to decisions with issues similar to those of concern to an appellant. Each indexed decision has a locator number assigned to it. The manner in which the locator number is written depends upon the age of the decision. Decisions archived prior to late 1989 have a number such as 82-07-0001. Decisions archived at a later date have a number such as BVA-90-12345. This number must be used when requesting a paper copy of that decision. These requests must be directed to the Research Center (01C1), Board of Veterans' Appeals, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2), 38 U.S.C. 501(a))

[57 FR 4109, Feb. 3, 1992, as amended at 71 FR 18009, Apr. 10, 2006]

§ 20.1302 Rule 1302. Death of appellant during pendency of appeal.

An appeal pending before the Board of Veterans' Appeals when the appellant dies will be dismissed.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7104(a))

[62 FR 55170, Oct. 23, 1997]

§ 20.1303 Rule 1303. Nonprecedential nature of Board decisions.

Although the Board strives for consistency in issuing its decisions, previously issued Board decisions will be considered binding only with regard to the specific case decided. Prior decisions in other appeals may be considered in a case to the extent that they reasonably relate to the case, but each case presented to the Board will be decided on the basis of the individual facts of the case in light of applicable procedure and substantive law.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7104(a))

§ 20.1304 Rule 1304. Request for change in representation, request for personal hearing, or submission of additional evidence following certification of an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(a) *Request for a change in representation, request for a personal hearing, or*