

## Department of Veterans Affairs

## § 3.59

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)

CROSS REFERENCES: Improved pension rates. See § 3.23. Improved pension rates; surviving children. See § 3.24. Child's relationship. See § 3.210. Helplessness. See § 3.403(a)(1). Helplessness. See § 3.503(a)(3). School attendance. See § 3.667. Helpless children—Spanish-American and prior wars. See § 3.950.

[44 FR 45935, Aug. 6, 1979 and 45 FR 1878, Jan. 9, 1980, as amended at 45 FR 25391, Apr. 15, 1980; 49 FR 47003, Nov. 30, 1984; 65 FR 12116, Mar. 8, 2000; 72 FR 6959, Feb. 14, 2007]

### § 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))

[26 FR 1568, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 44 FR 45935, Aug. 6, 1979]

### § 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))

[44 FR 45935, Aug. 6, 1979]

## ADMINISTRATIVE

### § 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 the Compensation Service or the Pension and Fiduciary Service.

(b) Authority is delegated to the Director, Compensation Service, and the Director, Pension and Fiduciary Service, and to personnel of each service designated by its Director to determine whether a claimant or payee has forfeited the right to gratuitous benefits or to remit a prior forfeiture pursuant

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to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 6103 or 6104. See § 3.905.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 512(a))

[29 FR 7547, June 12, 1964, as amended at 31 FR 14455, Nov. 10, 1966; 37 FR 10442, May 23, 1972; 53 FR 3207, Feb. 4, 1988; 60 FR 18355, Apr. 11, 1995; 61 FR 20727, May 8, 1996; 78 FR 2100, Jan. 13, 2014]

### § 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)

[50 FR 34458, Aug. 26, 1985, as amended at 66 FR 45630, Aug. 29, 2001]

### § 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