

## Compensation Claim

### A) Fully Develop Claim (FDC)

1. *Can I submit a FDC?*
  - You can submit a fully developed disability claim if you're applying for compensation for an illness or injury (also called a condition) that was caused by-or got worse because of-your active-duty service, **or**
  - A condition that was caused-or made worse-by a disability we've already determined is a service-connected
2. *What do I need to submit a FDC?*
  - For VA to consider your claim fully developed you will need to submit a completed application VA Form 21-526EZ, **and**
  - Submit all evidence, supporting document you have-or can easily get- along with your claim, **and**
  - Certify that there is no more evidence that VA might need to decide your claim, **and**
  - Attend any VA medical exam required for VA to decide your claim. VA will let you know if you need any exam by phone or letter.
3. *What evidence will I need to submit along with my disability claim?*
  - All private medical records related to the claim condition, like reports from your own doctor or X-rays or other test results from a non-VA hospital or other treatment center, **and**
  - Any records of medical treatment you've received for the claimed condition while serving in the military, **and**
  - Any military personnel records you have that relate to the claimed condition, **and**
  - Information about any related health records that you don't have but that we can request on your behalf from a federal facility like a VA medical center or clinic

**\*Note:** If you think your service records do not include a description of your disability, you can also submit letters from family members, friends, clergy members, law enforcement personnel, or those you served with that can tell us more about your claimed condition and how and when it happened.

4. *Are there any risk to using the FDC program?*
  - No. Filing a FDC claim will not affect the attention we give to your claim or the benefits you are entitle to receive.
  - If VA determine that other non-federal records is need to make a decision on your claim, VA will simply remove the claim from FDC to a standard claim.
  - Once you start a FDC, you will have up to 1 year to complete it. If approve, your claim will be paid back to the day you started it.
5. *Can VA help me gather evidence?*
  - Yes. VA can help you through the FDC program.
  - VA will request your military service records (with your permission), **and**

- Request relevant Social Security benefits information and medical records that you identify and authorize us to get from a federal facility, like a VA medical center, **and**
  - Schedule a health exam for you or get a medical opinion from a health care provider if VA decide it is needed for the claim.
6. *When should I turn in my evidence?*
- To submit your claim through the FDC program, you'll need to turn in the information and evidence at the same time as you file your claim. If you turn in more information or evidence after you send in your fully developed claim, we'll remove your claim from the FDC program and process it as a standard claim.
  - If VA decide your claim before 1 year from the date VA receive the claim, you'll have the rest of that 1 year period to turn in additional information or evidence to support your claim.
7. *How do I get started filing my FDC?*
- You can start your online application right now, or find out how to file a FDC by mail, in person, or with the help of a trained professional.
8. *Should I work with a Veteran Service Officer to file my claim?*
- You do not have to, but it is encourage that you work with an accredited Veteran Service Officer, and trained professionals Veteran Claim Representative to help file your claim and gather the needed medical records and evidence.

## **B) Standard Claim**

1. *What do I need to do to submit a standard disability claim?*
- You can submit your completed application for disability compensation and related compensation benefits with VA Form 21-526EZ, **and**
  - Let VA know about related records not held by a federal agency, and give VA any information that may need in order to get them, **and**
  - Go to any medical exams that the VA schedule, if VA decide that exams are needed to make a decision on your claim
  - If a person or agency refuses to turn over the evidence VA needs, asks money for the evidence, or can't get the evidence, VA will ask you to get it. It is your responsibility to make sure VA receive all requested records that aren't at a federal agency or office.
2. *What kinds of record might VA need that are not held by a federal agency?*
- VA needs any records related to your claim from sources like state or local governments,
  - Any private (non-VA) doctors who've treated you,
  - Any private (non-VA) hospitals or other health facilities where you've been treated, **and**
  - Your current or former employers
3. *What evidence will VA gather when I file a standard disability claim?*
- With your permission, VA will get related records from any federal agency (including the military),
  - VA medical centers (including private facilities where VA have authorized treatment),
  - And the Social Security Administration

- VA will also make every reasonable effort to request relevant records that you authorize VA to get that are not at a federal facility (including records from non-VA doctors **and** hospitals), **and**
  - Provide a medical exam for you, or get a doctors opinion if VA need it to make a decision on your claim
4. *What should the evidence show to support my disability claim?*
    - VA will look for evidence that shows you have a current physical or mental disability (damage to your body or mind that makes you less able-or totally unable-to do everyday tasks, including meaningful work), **and**
    - An event, injury, or illness that happened while you were serving in the military to cause this disability
  5. *When do I turn in my evidence to support my standard claim?*
    - You will need to turn in the information and evidence as soon as you can.
    - You have up to 1 year from the date VA received your claim to turn in any information and evidence. If VA decide your claim before this, you will have the rest of the one-year period to turn in more information or evidence to support your claim.
  6. *How do I get started filing my standard claim?*
    - You can start your online application right now, or find out how to file a claim by mail, in person, or with the help of a trained professional
  7. *Does it take longer to get a decision from VA on a Standard Claim than a Fully Developed Claim (FDC)?*
    - Yes. The process is slower for getting a decision on a standard disability claim. It is because VA need time to gather evidence for your claim.
    - For faster decision on your claim, you can submit a Fully Developed Claim.
  8. *Should I work with a Veteran Service Officer to file my standard claim?*
    - You do not have to, but it is encourage that you work with an accredited Veteran Service Officer, and trained professionals Veteran Claim Representative to help file your claim and gather the needed medical records and evidence.

### **C) Before Discharge Date Claim (BDD)**

1. *Who can file a BDD claim?*
  - If you have, an illness or injury that you believe was caused—or made worse—by your active-duty service, you can file a claim for disability benefits 180 to 90 days before you leave the military. This may help speed up the claim decision process so you can get your benefits sooner. Find out how to file a claim through the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program—and what to do if you have less than 90 days left on active duty
  - You're a service member of full-time active duty (including a member of the National Guard, Reserves, or Coast Guard), **and**
  - You have a known separation date, **and**
  - Your separation date is in the next 180 to 90 days

2. *What if I have less than 90 days left on active duty?*
  - You can't file a BDD claim or add more medical conditions to your initial claim, but you can still begin the process of filing your claim before discharge.
3. *Are there any other reasons as to why I can't use the BDD claim?*
  - You can't use the BDD program if your claim requires special handling—even if you're on full-time active duty, with more than 90 days left of service.
  - You can't use the BDD program if any of these are true. You:
    - Need case management for a serious injury or illness, or
    - Have suffered the loss of a body part, or
    - Are terminally ill, or
    - Are waiting to be discharged while being treated at a VA hospital or other military treatment facility, or
    - Need to have a VA exam done in a foreign country (except if the exam can be requested by the overseas BDD office in either Landstuhl, Germany, or Yongsan, Korea), or
    - Are pregnant, or
    - Are waiting for us to determine your Character of Discharge, or
    - Can't go to a VA exam during the 45 day period after you submit your claim, or
    - Didn't submit copies of your treatment records for your current period of service, or
    - Added a medical condition to your original claim when you had less than 90 days left on active duty (Note: We'll process the added conditions after your discharge.)
4. *What kind of disability benefits can I get after filing a BDD claim?*
  - Compensation monthly payments.

#### **D) Intent to File**

1. *What is Intent to File?*
  - Intent to file a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC. VA Form 21-0966 is used if you're still gathering information to support your claim, and want to start the filing process. Submitting an intent to file can secure the earliest possible effective date for any retroactive payments you may be eligible to receive.
2. *Is filing an intent to file, filing your claim?*
  - No. Filing VA Form 21-0966 secure the earliest possible effective date for any retroactive payments. You will still need to file your Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC Claim.
3. *How long do I have to file my claim after filing my intent to file?*
  - You will have one year of the date VA receives the intent to file, to file your claim for benefits.
4. *Can I submit more than one intent to file?*
  - You can only submit one intent to file at a time.
  - After you submit a completed claim, your intent to file will no longer be active. If you expect to file an intent to file for another general benefit, you must submit a new form.
    - Consider this example:

1. VA receives an intent to file for compensation benefits on April 1, 2015.
2. VA receives an application for compensation benefits on Aug 1, 2015.
3. You file another application for compensation benefits on Jan 1, 2016.

In this case, VA considers an effective date of April 1, 2015 for any benefits awarded as a result of the Aug 1, 2015 application. However, the April 1, 2015 intent to file date will not be used for any benefits awarded as a result of the Jan 1, 2016 application.

If a second intent to file for compensation benefits is received on Oct 1, 2015, VA considers an effective date of April 1, 2015. This is the date VA received the intent to file for any benefits as a result of the Aug 1, 2015 application. VA will also consider effective date of Oct 1, 2015 for any benefits as a result of the Jan 1, 2016 application.

5. *For more information about compensation disability, please see link below.*
  - [Eligibility for VA Disability Benefits](#)
  - [Intent to File](#)
  - [Types of VA Disability Claims and when to File](#)