

This checklist will take you through five simple steps to filing a claim for benefits with the VA. This checklist will be most helpful for compensation and pension claims. Claims for education benefits, insurance products and home loans may not fit this checklist.

Step 1: What benefit are you trying to receive? If you are unsure of what benefit you need to apply for see our list of [VA Benefits](#).

Step 2: Find an accredited representative. It is very important to get help from an accredited representative with your claim for VA benefits. A representative can offer advice on what benefits you are eligible for, check the status of your claim and can help you file an appeal if you are unhappy with the results.

Organization: _____

Appointment: _____

Address: _____

Step 3: Gather your evidence. Page two of this document lists types of evidence you need.

Evidence Gathered

Step 4: File your claim. Take the evidence that you gathered with you to your appointment. The more prepared you are you the easier the process will be. If you have all of your evidence you can file a [Fully Developed Claim](#), which is faster than the traditional claims process.

Informal Claim: _____

Formal Claim: _____

Step 5: Follow up. This is very important. Do not wait too long to check the status of your claim. This doesn't mean that you call your representative every day, but you should check in every 30 days or so. Also if you have a premium [eBenefits](#) account you can check the status on your own.

30 Days: _____

60 Days: _____

Claim Status: _____

Claim Status: _____

90 Days: _____

120 Days: _____

Claim Status: _____

Claim Status: _____

Contact Information: If you served under a different name than the name you go by currently, make sure you provide both for your claim. You also must supply your social security number. Not sure if you have everything? Review the forms that your representative will fill out on your behalf: [VA 21-526](#) [VA 21-527](#) [VA 21-526EZ](#) [VA 21-527EZ](#) [VA 21-534](#) [VA 21-534EZ](#)

- Your name, address, phone number, email address and social security number.

Dependency information: Certain benefits pay at a higher rate if you have a spouse and/or dependent children (or parents). Not sure if you have everything? Review the form that your representative will fill out on your behalf: [VA 21-686c](#)

- Spouse or Dependent name, address, social security number or taxpayer identification number, birthdate, birth certificate.
- Your marriage certificate, and divorce decrees or death certificates if applicable.

Service Information: Before you are eligible for VA benefits, you must prove that you are a veteran or the spouse/dependent of an eligible veteran. Veteran status is different for different VA benefits. Contact the [NPRC](#) for military records. See our [Preparing for the Process Page](#).

- DD-214 or other separation documents for each period of service.
- Other service records. If you claim involves proving an incident at a certain location any orders, ship logs or unit history information would help your claim.

Medical Records: If you have your original medical records or copies you should submit them to the VA (keep copies). If you do not have them, you will have to let the VA know where to look for them. If you are a National Guard or Reserve member you must track down your own medical records for any period you were not on Title 10 orders. Not sure if you have everything? Review the forms that your representative will fill out on your behalf: [VA 21-4142](#) [VA 10-10EZ](#) [VA 28-1900](#)

- Copies of medical records in your possession.
- Hospitalizations (location, date, treatment, doctor, unit you were attached to).
- VA medical care (locations, dates, treatment, doctor).

Information related to a certain incident in service: In order to receive compensation for a disability incurred in or due to service you must demonstrate a link between an in service event and your current disability. If you do not have access to the other service records mentioned above, you should try to contact someone you served with to corroborate your claim.

- Buddy statements or letters home during service that supports your claim.

Bank / Income Information: You are required to accept direct deposit of VA payments. If you do not have a bank account you must sign up for the [Go Direct](#) program.

- Name of bank, address and phone number of bank, account and routing numbers.
- All sources of income (if applying for pension or death pension).
- Deductible medical expenses (if applying for pension or death pension).