



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Benefits Administration

Benefits Delivery at Discharge

VA Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) Program

Service members who are separating and plan to file for disability can file their claim before separation. This is done through the Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program. This program allows Service members to apply for VA disability compensation benefits prior to separation. Claims must be filed between 180 to 90 days prior to separation.

How Can BDD Help Me?

The BDD program allows Service members to apply for their disability benefits before separation. This provides time for VA to schedule exams, review treatment records and evaluate the claim before separation, with most claimants receiving their decision the day after leaving active duty.

Program Requirements

To be eligible for BDD, Service members must:

- Know their separation date
- File their claim between 180 and 90 days prior to separation
- Provide a copy of their service treatment record
- Be available for 45 days from the date the claim is submitted to attend VA exams

The following issues and conditions are excluded from BDD:

- Service members who do not meet the requirements above,
- Claims requiring case management, such as Service members who:
 - Are seriously ill or injured
 - Lost a body part
 - Are terminally ill

- Claims requiring a VA exam in a foreign country, except those that can be processed through Landstuhl, Germany or Camp Humphreys, Korea,
- Claims for Service members awaiting discharge while hospitalized in a VA or military treatment facility,
- Claims for pregnant service women, or
- Claims that require a character of discharge determination.

How Do You Get Started?

Submit your application and service treatment records online through your VA.gov account. You can access the *How to file a VA disability claim* portal at <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/>. This helps process your claim faster and more efficiently. Include the following in your claim:

- Any personnel or other records that document the injuries, illnesses or events that contributed to your service-related disability
- A copy of your service treatment records from the current period of service. Note: if you have electronic service treatment records, contact your local BDD intake site to receive instructions on how to send them securely.
- Dental records
- Mental health records, if applicable
- Marriage Certificate/Divorce Decrees (for self and spouse)
- Birth certificate (for spouse and dependent children, if applicable)
- Direct Deposit Information (account number, name of financial institution and routing or transit number are required for direct deposit)
- DD Form 214 Member-4 or Service-2 Copy, for all periods of service
- Buddy statements, if applicable.

You can also fill out and mail VA Form 21-526EZ, "Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits." Access this form at <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-526EZ-ARE.pdf>. Submit it and any additional paper records to:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Claims Intake Center
PO Box 4444
Janesville, WI 53547-4444

Or, you can fax it to:

- 844-531-7818 (inside the U.S.)
- 248-524-4260 (outside the U.S.)

If you need further assistance, visit your local VA regional office or Benefits Delivery at Discharge Intake Site. Use the VA locator directory at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations> or call 800-827-1000.

What Else Should You Know?

BDD is a time-sensitive process. You must submit your claim 180 to 90 days prior to your release from active duty. This is necessary to complete the exams and rate your claim before discharge. File your claim as close to the 180-day mark as possible to ensure VA can make a decision the day after your discharge.

Service members who do not meet the BDD requirements can submit a claim through the Fully Developed Claim program or the standard VA claims process.

How Can You Get More Information?

Use the following resources for more information:

- If you are on a military installation, contact your local Transition Assistance Program office to attend VA benefits briefings and learn how to initiate your claim.
- Call VA's toll-free number: 800-827-1000.
- Visit Military OneSource at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>.
- Visit the BDD website at <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file/pre-discharge-claim/>.