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 compensation can file their claim before separation through the Veterans Affairs (VA) Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program. The BDD program allows Service members to apply for VA disability compensation benefits between 180 to 90 days prior to separation. This timeframe permits VA to schedule exams, review service treatment records and evaluate the claim before separation allowing VA to deliver a decision as soon as possible, sometimes as soon as 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 Records (STRs) for your current period of service when you file your claim
- 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 claims:

- Service members who do not meet the requirements above, or 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 members
- Claims that require a character of discharge determination

How Do You Get Started?

Apply online at VA.gov. You will need to create an account if you do not have one. You can access the *How to file a VA disability claim* portal at https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/. By filing your BDD Claim on VA.gov, your claim will be processed faster and more efficiently. Include the following in your claim:

- Any records, personnel or other, documenting the injuries, illnesses or events that contributed to your service-related disability
- A copy of your STRs 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. Refer to the ***What Else Should You Know?*** section below for more information about STRs
- 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 to include current period of service once issued

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 your complete application and any additional paper records and evidence to:

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

If you need further assistance, visit your local VA Regional Office or BDD Intake Site. You can find the closest location on the VA locator directory at https://www.va.gov/find-locations or call 800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411).

What Else Should You Know?

Service members who do not meet the BDD requirements can submit a claim through the Fully Developed Claim program or the Standard Claim Process.

When preparing to transition you will probably want a complete set of your STRs for your own records, in addition to submitting to VA as part of your BDD claim. As applicable, copies of STRs should include:

- Military entrance physical and all periodic health assessments
- Inpatient and outpatient records
- Military and private medical documents
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) records
- Behavior Health records
- Dental records

If you are determined ineligible to participate in the BDD program, consult with your nearest Military Treatment Facility (MTF) to obtain your separation health assessment. Learn more here: https://www.health.mil/SHPE.

How Can You Get More Information?

Use the following resources for more information:

- Contact your local Transition Assistance Program office on your military installation to attend VA benefits briefings and learn how to initiate your claim
- Call VA's toll-free number: 800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411)
- Visit the BDD website at https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file/pre-discharge-claim/
- Visit Military OneSource at https://www.militaryonesource.mil/