

# VA STANDARD FORMS FOR CLAIMS AND APPEALS



## 3 EASY WAYS TO FILE CLAIMS

1

ONLINE THROUGH  
eBENEFITS.VA.GOV

2

WITH A VETERANS SERVICE  
ORGANIZATION (VSO)

3

USING VA  
STANDARD FORMS

### VA is streamlining how Veterans and Survivors apply for benefits.

VA encourages Veterans to file their disability compensation claims online through the eBenefits portal. As of March 24, 2015, Survivors and Veterans who are not filing online must use standard forms to identify the benefit they are seeking. This gives Veterans and Survivors faster, more accurate claim decisions.

#### HOW DOES FILING ONLINE, WORKING WITH A VSO, OR USING STANDARD FORMS HELP VETERANS?

SIMPLIFIES  
INFORMATION  
PROVIDED TO VA

PROVIDES ALL REQUIRED  
INFORMATION UP FRONT TO  
BEGIN PROCESSING THE CLAIM

DELIVERS  
ACCURATE CLAIM  
DECISIONS FASTER

HELPS  
ELIMINATE THE  
CLAIMS BACKLOG

### FILE COMPENSATION CLAIMS ONLINE WITH

**eBenefits**  
www.ebenefits.va.gov

### IF NOT FILING ELECTRONICALLY, USE VA'S STANDARD APPLICATION FORMS:

**VA FORM  
21-526EZ**  
FOR VETERAN'S  
COMPENSATION

ALSO ON  
eBENEFITS

**VA FORM  
21-527EZ**  
FOR VETERAN'S  
PENSION

**VA FORM  
21-534EZ**  
FOR SURVIVOR'S DIC,  
DEATH PENSION,  
AND/OR ACCRUED  
BENEFITS



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# OPTIONAL "INTENT TO FILE" PROCESS

For Veterans and Survivors who need additional time to gather their claim information, but want to save the earliest possible effective date, VA is using a new "intent to file" process. A Veteran or Survivor, or his or her authorized representative, can submit minimal information to establish a potential effective date for benefits and then take up to one year to gather evidence and submit the required standard form.

**Remember: Only one "intent to file" per general benefit can be active at any given time, and only one standard claim form will correspond to the active "intent to file."**

"INTENT TO FILE" OPTIONS



## WITH A VSO

By working closely with an accredited Veterans Service Officer (VSO) to file electronically through the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP)



## ELECTRONICALLY (VETERANS COMPENSATION ONLY)

By initiating and completing the personal information page and saving (but not submitting) the online application for compensation through eBenefits



## BY PHONE/IN PERSON

By calling the VA National Call Center at 1-800-827-1000 or visiting a public contact representative at a VA Regional Office



## BY PAPER

By completing VA Form 21-0966, *Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC*, and mailing or faxing to VA


If a Veteran or Survivor chooses to submit an "intent to file," he or she may complete the standard claim form electronically or via a paper application, regardless of what "intent to file" method is used. VA encourages Veterans to file their compensation claims online through the eBenefits web portal.

Veterans and Survivors are encouraged to work with a Veterans Service Officer who can file the information online through the **Stakeholder Enterprise Portal**. Forms may be downloaded at [www.va.gov/vaforms](http://www.va.gov/vaforms). Claimants may call **1-800-827-1000** to have the correct form sent to their homes. Completed forms should be mailed or faxed back to VA.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit [www.benefits.va.gov](http://www.benefits.va.gov) or call 1-800-827-1000





## STANDARD CLAIMS AND APPEALS FORMS UPDATE

### VA WANTS TO MAKE CLAIMS FILING FASTER AND EASIER

VA wants to make it as fast and easy as possible for Veterans and Survivors to file their claims for compensation, pension and survivors benefits and receive a timely and accurate decision on their claims. As of March 24, 2015, VA required Veterans and Survivors to use standardized forms when filing their claims and appeals. The standardized forms enable claimants to clearly identify the symptoms or conditions for which they are seeking while helping to ensure VA receives the information needed to process their claims. Veterans Service Organizations, state and county agencies, and other stakeholders are vital partners in the benefit claims process, providing assistance to Veterans and survivors in submitting their claims, both online and in paper form.

#### ANYONE SUBMITTING A CLAIM IS NOW REQUIRED TO USE A FORM

**These forms are designed to capture the specific information VA needs to process compensation, pension, and other benefit claims.**

- Veterans may file disability compensation claims online through eBenefits, or by submitting **VA Form 21-526EZ**, *Application for Disability Compensation and Related Benefits*.
- Wartime Veterans may file for needs-based pension using **VA Form 21-527EZ**, *Application for Pension*.
- Survivors filing claims for dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), survivors' pension, and accrued benefits must complete **VA Form 21-534EZ**, *Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits*.
- Veterans and Survivors who need additional time to gather the information needed to support their claims may use the optional *intent to file* process. Submission of the new VA FORM 21-0966, *Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC*, protects the claimant's effective date while allowing the claimant up to 1 year to collect supporting information and submit the appropriate application form. (see our fact sheet on the intent to file process)

Disabilities determined by VA to be related to your military service can lead to monthly non-taxable compensation, enrollment in the VA health care system, a 10-point hiring preference for federal employment and other important benefits. Ask your VA representative or Veterans Service Organization representative about Disability Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Caregiver Program, Career Services, Educational Assistance, Home Loan Guaranty, Insurance and/or Dependents and Survivors' Benefits.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## **Standardized notice of disagreement forms now required as the first step in the process of appealing a VA compensation decision**

Veterans wishing to initiate appeal of a VA disability compensation decision issued after March 24, 2105, are now required to express their disagreement through submission of [VA Form 21-0958 Notice of Disagreement](#). Veterans and their representatives previously used the form on an optional basis. Veterans must now use this form whenever VA provides it to them along with the decision on their disability claim. Veterans and Survivors are not required to use a standardized notice of disagreement form for pension or survivors benefits at this time.

### **HOW WILL USE OF STANDARDIZED FORMS HELP VETERANS?**

- Standardization of the filing process will lead to faster claim decisions and less uncertainty when filing claims and appeals. Use of standard forms will enable Veterans to more clearly identify the benefit they are seeking, making the filing process much more efficient.
- Submission of the required forms will help to ensure VA receives the information it needs to process the claim. The forms clearly identify what the Veteran must provide to support their claims – no more guessing games.
- VA encourages Veterans to file their compensation claims online through the eBenefits web portal. eBenefits guides claimants through the application process with a series of questions that elicit the information that would otherwise be captured on the paper standard claim form. Veterans who cannot file online, or choose not to file online, can work with a Veterans Service Organization or state or county representative that can file the information online through the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal. Veterans may also download the forms from [www.va.gov/vaforms](http://www.va.gov/vaforms) or call 800-827-1000 to have the correct form sent to their home. Completed forms may be mailed or faxed back to VA.
- Standardized forms are a key component of VA's claims transformation and will help achieve the Department's goal of eliminating the claims backlog by the end of this year.

