



PACT ACT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



..... VIETNAM GULF WAR POST-9/11

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.

The Act **(1)** expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era, and **(2)** expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances.

What new or expanded presumptions will the Act create and when will they be in effect?

VETERANS AND SURVIVORS CAN FILE CLAIMS FOR ALL CONDITIONS OUTLINED IN THE PACT ACT IMMEDIATELY.

For Gulf War and post 9-11 Veterans, that includes:

Brain cancer, Glioblastoma, Respiratory (*breathing-related*) cancer of any type, Gastrointestinal cancer of any type, Head cancer of any type, Lymphoma of any type, Lymphomatic cancer of any type, Neck cancer, Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer of any type, Kidney cancer, Melanoma, Asthma (*diagnosed after service*), Chronic rhinitis, Chronic sinusitis, Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis,

Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease (*ILD*), Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis, Sarcoidosis, Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (*COPD*).

For Vietnam Veterans and other Veterans exposed to tactical herbicides, that includes two Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (*MGUS*), High blood pressure (*hypertension*).

How can Veterans apply for VA health care?

Apply **online** at [VA.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction](https://va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction).

Call our toll-free hotline at 877-222-8387, M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET.

Mail a completed, signed Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ).

Bring a completed, signed VA Form 10-10EZ with you to your nearest medical center or clinic or get help through your state's Department of Veterans Affairs Service Officer.

Get help filing your claim by working with an accredited representative.

What are the PACT Act key components?



The Act **expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic-exposures** and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.



VA **will improve the decision-making process** for determining what medical conditions will be considered for presumptive status.



Every enrolled Veteran will **receive an initial toxic exposure screening** and a follow-up screening at least every five years. Veterans who are not enrolled, but who are eligible to enroll, will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



VA health care staff and claims processors will receive **toxic exposure-related education and training**.



The Act requires **research studies** on mortality of Veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War, Post-9/11 Veteran health trends, and Veteran cancer rates.



The Act will help VA **build a stronger, more skilled workforce** to meet the growing demand for benefits and services.



The Act authorizes **31 new facilities** across the country, providing greater access to VA health care.

How can a Veteran file a claim?



Veterans who would like to file a claim must complete [VA Form 21-526EZ](https://va.gov/21-526EZ) to apply for benefits and submit any supportive evidence.



To learn about standard VA disability claims, supplemental claims, secondary claims, and more visit: [VA.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file](https://va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/when-to-file).

If a Veteran was previously denied a claim, what can they do?

VA will contact Veterans when a presumption of service connection is established or changed. However, **Veterans previously denied a toxic-exposure related claim** are encouraged to file a supplemental claim. Once a supplemental claim is received, VA will review the claim under the new law.

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Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT)
Download the VA Health and Benefits App
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](https://va.gov/find-locations/)

FAST FACTS:

NEW TOXIC EXPOSURE SCREENING FOR VETERANS

If you're enrolled in VA health care, you can now receive the toxic exposure screening at VA medical centers and clinics across the country. If you're not enrolled but meet eligibility requirements to [enroll](#), you will have an opportunity to receive the screening after you enroll.

During your screening, you'll be asked if you believe you experienced toxic exposures during your military service. If you answer yes, you may be connected to support and resources, including a review by your primary care team or provider.



HERE ARE SOME FAST FACTS TO GET TO KNOW THE PROCESS:

- » **It's quick.** The screening is a series of questions that takes around 5-10 minutes and can occur as part of a regular health care appointment.
- » **It documents a variety of exposures.** There are several types of possible exposures or hazards you may have experienced during your military service. This includes open burn pits and airborne hazards, Gulf War-related exposures, Agent Orange, radiation, Camp Lejeune contaminated water exposure, and others.
- » **It helps support your long-term care plan.** The toxic exposure screening aims to make your VA health care team aware of any potential exposures to toxins during your military service. This allows for ongoing care that ensures early diagnosis and treatment of any health concerns that may arise in the future related to your exposure(s).
- » **You'll receive additional information.** After your screening, you will also receive [information](#) about benefits, registry exams, and clinical resources to address any concerns you may have.
- » **You can ask about the toxic exposure screening at your next VA health care appointment.** If you don't have an upcoming appointment or want to be screened sooner, contact your local VA facility and ask to be screened by the Toxic Exposure Screening Navigator.
- » **You'll be screened at least once every 5 years.** Even if you don't have concerns today, you may in the future.
- » **You can decline.** If you choose not to be screened, you will have the option to decline until the following year.



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- » **It's not diagnostic.** The screening identifies and documents potential exposures. If there is a need, it will support you in connecting with your health care team. You can also always contact your local VA health care team through Secure Message or call 1-800-MyVA411 and press 8.
- » **It's not part of the VA benefits claims process.** For information about how to file a claim, visit <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/>.
- » **Being screened is separate from joining a VA environmental health registry.** You'll receive information about [registry participation](#) after your screening.



One of the best ways to manage your health is to proactively develop a long-term health care plan with your care team. The new toxic exposure screening can be an important part of that discussion.



For information about enrolling in VA health care, visit:

<https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction>.

For more information about the screening and toxic exposures, check out these additional resources:

[Military Exposures—Public Health](#)

www.VA.gov/PACT



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COMPENSATION & PENSION EXAM, TOXIC EXPOSURE SCREENING, AND REGISTRY EXAMS

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

With the new toxic exposure screening required by section 603 of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (the PACT Act), Veterans may have some questions about which exams and screenings they need, when they need them, and what purposes these exams and screenings serve. This comparison chart breaks down some key differences:

EVALUATION TYPE	PURPOSE	DESCRIPTION
 Compensation and Pension (C&P) Exam	Part of the claim decision process to help determine service connection and rate a disability for purposes of compensation.	» Exams administered as part of the VBA claims process but performed by VHA or contracted providers. » Enrollment in VA care is not required to receive VA benefits, but the exams may provide a basis for eligibility to enroll in VA care.
 Toxic Exposure Screening	Helps identify Veterans with exposure concerns and advises them how to connect with benefits, resources, and services. Not part of the VA benefits claims process.	» VA must offer the toxic exposure screening to all enrolled Veterans as required by section 603 of the PACT Act. » The screening will be repeated at least once every 5 years. » Screenings will take 5-10 minutes. » If a Veteran has exposure concerns, VA staff will provide them with additional information and resources and advise them on next steps.
 Registry Evaluation	Information collected is used for research and quality improvement purposes and is not for clinical care, nor to determine eligibility for health care or benefits.	» VA has six registries: Agent Orange, Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits, Depleted Uranium, Gulf War, Ionizing Radiation, and Toxic Embedded Fragments. » VA's health registry evaluations are free, voluntary medical assessments for Veterans who may have been exposed to certain environmental hazards during military service. » There is no requirement to be enrolled in VA health care or receive other VA benefits to participate in a registry. » Exams take approximately 60 minutes and are performed by a VA or military health provider. Veterans can contact the nearest local VA medical facility Environmental Health Coordinator about getting a registry evaluation.
 Million Veteran Program (MVP)	Information collected is used for research, not for clinical care or to determine eligibility for health care or benefits. No direct, in-person toxic exposure screening is involved.	» VA will use information to learn how genes, lifestyle, and military experiences and exposures affect health. » Participants provide informed consent, a blood sample, and secure access to their health records with MVP. » There is no requirement to be enrolled in VA health care to enroll in MVP. Participation is entirely voluntary. » Join online at mvp.va.gov or call 866-441-6075 to schedule an appointment.

For more information visit:

www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/

www.VA.gov/PACT



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BE VIGILANT OF PACT ACT SCAMS

On August 10, President Biden signed the [Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act \(PACT Act\) into law](#). This law helps millions of Veterans and their survivors by:

- Extending VA health care eligibility for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 (Post-September 11, 2001) eras
- Expanding benefits eligibility for Veterans exposed to toxic substances and their survivors



Tips to Avoid PACT Act Scams

Scammers are taking advantage of new opportunities to commit fraud. There's been an increase in PACT Act-related [phishing \(email\)](#), vishing (phone), and [social media scams](#) targeting Veterans to access their PACT Act benefits or submit claims on their behalf.

Veterans should be cautious of anyone who guarantees a lucrative financial benefit or service.

Do's

- ✓ You may submit your application securely [online](#) via VA.GOV or in person at any Regional Office. You may file your claim directly with VA and then, VA will assist in gathering evidence necessary to support it. There are no costs or hidden fees to apply.
- ✓ Be cautious of companies who advertise VA benefits can only be obtained with their help. These companies may not be recognized by VA and may be attempting to charge illegal fees.
- ✓ Be cautious of aggressive companies who may try to pressure you to sign their contract through frequent communications or by insisting "you must act now or lose your chance for benefits."
- ✓ Be cautious of companies who claim to be contacting you on behalf of VA or to have a special relationship with VA. Contact VA at 1-800-827-1000 if you are unsure about the authenticity of any message received.
- ✓ Validate: If you are interested in working with a Veteran Service Organization (VSO), agent, or attorney, use the Office of General Counsel [Accreditation tool](#) to confirm and validate their credentials.

Don'ts

- ✗ Do not sign a contract agreeing to pay an unauthorized company a percentage of your benefit payment in exchange for their assistance with your VA claim. If you need help filing a claim, there are representatives of VSOs, agents, and attorneys who have been [accredited by VA](#) to assist you.
- ✗ Do not sign a blank form for someone else to complete later. Always review the completed form before signing and keep a copy for yourself.
- ✗ Do not be fooled by companies who advertise they have special relationships with medical professionals and can guarantee your benefits award. If they are defrauding the Federal government, you could be held responsible for paying those benefits back.
- ✗ Do not provide your social security number, medical records, or other personally identifiable information to anyone offering claims assistance before confirming their credentials using the Office of General Counsel [Accreditation tool](#).
- ✗ Do not sign forms that are not [VA generated](#) or third-party authorization for someone to provide "behind-the-scenes" claims assistance.

[www.VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT) is the official source of PACT Act information.

We want Veterans and survivors to apply now for their PACT Act-related benefits.

To report suspected scams, please contact the VA Office of Inspector General ([OIG Hotline \(va.gov\)](#)). File a complaint with the [Federal Trade Commission](#). Visit the [Cybercrime Support Network](#) for additional [resources](#) to help Veterans, service members, and their families combat cybercrime.

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