

Fully Developed Claim (FDC) Guidance (EZ Forms)

IMPORTANT:

The VA will not accept a Fully Developed Claim if there is already a claim or appeal pending.

Submit All Information:

The key to filing the claim is providing ALL the information/evidence needed at the initial submission. The VA is still responsible for gathering any Federal records, service treatment records, VA medical records, etc. They will do this even if the Vet submits his copies.

Veteran is Responsible for Documentation:

It is critical that the veteran take the initiative and ensure all documentation required to complete the claim is part of the initial submission. When you work with the veteran, emphasize that when they provide all the documentation, the adjudication should only take about 100 days. This compares to almost a year using the old process.

Medical Records:

If the veteran received VA medical treatment, state the name of the facility and the dates the veteran received services on the claim form. If the veteran had private medical providers treating the claimed disability, the veteran must gather and submit all relevant private medical treatment records with the initial claim.

National Guard and Reserve Members:

For National Guard and Reserve personnel, the service member MUST provide a COMPLETE copy of their service treatment records; not just evidence about a particular claim or a deployment. The VA considers these State, not Federal, records.

Once Submitted – Do Not Submit Additional Information:

If you add anything after the initial claim submission, it will be pulled out of the fast track. *Ensure that you have submitted everything with the initial claim.*

No Acknowledgement / VCAA:

With the FDC, there is no acknowledgement/duty to assist or VCAA Notice Response letters sent to the veteran. However, the Regional Office will notify the Veteran whenever a Compensation & Pension (C&P) examination is requested. The VA Medical Center will contact the veteran about the appointment. *If the veteran does not report to a scheduled C&P examination, the claim will be removed from the fast track.*

Signature:

Please have the veteran sign all the appropriate forms. One of the major reasons a claim is rejected is missing signature.

Forms Required:

VA Form 21-22 - With every claim submitted, include the Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative, VA Form 21-22 (POA).

Dependents - If the veteran has dependents, submit VA Form 21-686c with copies of the marriage certificate and birth certificate(s) for children.

Discharge Paperwork – A DD 214, if available. If a discharge is not available at submission, provide the date of entry, release date and branch of service. If there are multiple periods of service, attach a VA Form 21-4138 Statement in Support of Claim to provide details.

Disability Benefit Questionnaire (DBQ) - The VA has Disability Benefit Questionnaires (DBQs) that if filled out thoroughly by the Vet's private physician, it can be a substitute for a C&P exam and reduce the claim process time. They can be found using this link <http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/DBQ/default.asp>

Informal Claim:

If it is going to take the Vet time to gather evidence, the Vet can file an Informal FDC Claim by using a 21-4138 stating the claimant intends to file an FDC (EZ) claim and that he already has the EZ form. The veteran must specify what he is filing for such as Hearing Loss, Diabetes, etc. You should file the 21-22 and supply a copy of the DD 214 if the Veteran has never filed a claim with the VA. This enables the VA to request his records immediately. **By filing an Informal Claim, it establishes the date of claim so the Veteran has one year to gather all evidence and submit the actual claim.**

Revision of VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits:

VA revised VA Form 21-526EZ, *Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits*. The new form, dated January 2013, is designed to provide a single application for use by both veterans and service members. The new VA Form 21-526EZ will replace VA Forms 21-526, *Veterans Application for Compensation and/or Pension*, 21-526b, *Veteran's Supplemental Claim for Compensation*, and 21-526c, *Pre-Discharge Compensation Claim*. Significant changes include:

- Adding Service member to the form title and revising language to address pre-discharge claims.
- Adding a "forwarding address" block for pre-discharge claimants.
- Revising the "list of disabilities" block to allow for separate contention entries.
- Revising "military retired pay language" for clarity.

VA Form 21-526EZ is for **all** compensation claims. It should also be used for claims for increases, claims secondary to a disability such as radiculopathy as it relates to diabetes and to reopen a claim with new and material evidence.

Individual Unemployability:

Two additional forms are required; the VA Form 21-8940 and the 21-4192.

PTSD Claim:

Complete and submit VA Form 21-0781 when claiming PTSD.

Important: Please make sure ALL claims have direct deposit information....the Federal government is no longer issuing paper checks!

VA Form 21-527EZ is for pension only. If Aid and Attendance is requested with the pension, complete and submit VA Form 21-2680 with the claim. Remember all pensions are based on income. Link to the Veterans Pension Rate Table:

http://benefits.va.gov/PENSIONANDFIDUCIARY/pension/rates_veteran_pen12.asp

VA Form 21-534EZ is for Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC), widow's pension and/ or accrued benefits. Keep in mind that you can use the one claim for DIC and if the veteran had a claim pending – accrued benefits. Link to the Surviving Spouse Pension Table:

http://benefits.va.gov/PENSIONANDFIDUCIARY/pension/rates_survivor_pen12.asp

Links to the forms:

21-526EZ Compensation

<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-526EZ-ARE.pdf>

21-527EZ Pension

<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-527EZ-ARE.pdf>

21-534EZ DIC, Widow's Pension, Accrued Benefits

<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-534EZ-ARE.pdf>

21-686c Status of Dependents

<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-686c-ARE.pdf>

21-2680 Aid & Attendance

<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-2680-ARE.pdf>

21-8940 Application for Individual Unemployability

<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-8940-ARE.pdf>

21-4192 Request for Employment Information

<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-4192-ARE.pdf>

21-0781 Statement in Support of Claim for PTSD

<http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-0781-ARE.PDF>

Note: Download the latest version of the VA form from VA.GOV. This way you are ensured of having the latest and correct version.

(MVS 8/20/2013)