

VA**U.S. Department
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Standard Claims and Appeals Forms Update

VA wants to make it as fast and easy as possible for Veterans and their survivors to file for and receive an accurate decision on their claim. VA is updating its regulations to require the use of standard claim and appeal forms, which brings VA processes in line with other government agency processes, such as those of the Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service, which also require submissions on standard forms before they can pay benefits or issue refunds. This update is necessary because the lack of standardization process contributes to claim processing delays, inaccuracy and frustration among claimants.

The update has three major components:

- It standardizes the traditional informal claims process by employing a new standard form, VA Form 21-0966, *Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or pension, survivors pension, or other benefits*, which an individual or his or her representative can submit in order to establish a potential effective date for benefits while they take up to a year to gather the evidence necessary to support the claim.
- The updated regulations allow VA to award increased benefits retroactive to the date of medical treatment as long as the *intent to file* form is filed within 1 year of the treatment and the required claim form is filed within the year after that.
- It mandates use of specified forms designed to capture information necessary to identify and support compensation, pension, and other benefit claims.
- Compensation claims may be filed by submitting a VA Form 21-526EZ, *Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits*.
- Pension claims must be filed on VA Form 21-527EZ, *Application for Pension*.
- Survivors claims for dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), survivors pension, and accrued benefits must be filed on VA Form 21-534EZ, *Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits*.
- It mandates use of a standardized notice of disagreement form in most cases when a claimant wishes to initiate an appeal of a VA decision.