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# The PACT Act and your VA benefits


The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances.

The PACT Act adds to the list of health conditions that we assume (or “presume”) are caused by exposure to these substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors

(<https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/#information-for-survivors>)—with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve.

This page will help answer your questions about what the PACT Act means for you or your loved ones. You can also call us at [800-698-2411](tel:800-698-2411) ([TTY: 711](tel:711)). And you can file a claim for PACT Act-related disability compensation or apply for VA health care now.

 [File a disability claim online \(https://www.va.gov/disability/file-disability-claim-form-21-526ez/\)](https://www.va.gov/disability/file-disability-claim-form-21-526ez/)

 **[Apply for VA health care \(https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/\)](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/)**

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# What's the PACT Act and how will it affect my VA benefits and care?

The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history. The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

## The PACT Act will bring these changes:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- Adds 20+ more presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation

- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- Helps us improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

If you're a Veteran or survivor, you can file claims now to apply for PACT Act-related benefits.

## **\*What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure?**

To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition.

But for some conditions, we automatically assume (or “presume”) that your service caused your condition. We call these “presumptive conditions.”

We consider a condition presumptive when it's established by law or regulation.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

## **Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veteran eligibility**

**Collapse all -**

### **What burn pit and other toxic exposure conditions are now presumptive?**

We've added more than 20 burn pit and other toxic exposure presumptive conditions based on the PACT Act. This change expands benefits for Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veterans.

### **These cancers are now presumptive:**

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Head cancer of any type
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphatic cancer of any type
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer of any type
- Pancreatic cancer
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type

### **These illnesses are now presumptive:**

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis

Learn about other hazardous materials presumptive conditions that may make you eligible for care or benefits

(<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/>)

## **How do I know if I have a presumptive exposure to burn pits?**

If you served in any of these locations and time periods, we've determined that you had exposure to burn pits or other toxins. We call this having a presumption of exposure.

### **On or after September 11, 2001, in any of these locations:**

- Afghanistan
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria
- Uzbekistan
- Yemen
- The airspace above any of these locations

### **On or after August 2, 1990, in any of these locations:**

- Bahrain
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- The United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- The airspace above any of these locations

## **Are there more exposure-related presumptive conditions?**

Yes. The PACT Act adds new presumptive conditions. But there are also many other health conditions that we presume are caused by exposure to toxic (or hazardous) materials. If you have any of these other conditions, you may be eligible for health care or benefits.

[Learn about other presumptive conditions based on exposure to hazardous materials \(https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/\).](https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/)

### **Am I eligible for free VA health care as a post-9/11 combat Veteran?**

We're extending and expanding VA health care eligibility based on the PACT Act. **We encourage you to apply, no matter your separation date.** Your eligibility depends on your service history and other factors.

If you meet the requirements listed here, you can get free VA health care for any condition related to your service for up to 10 years from the date of your most recent discharge or separation. You can also enroll at any time during this period and get any care you need, but you may owe a copay for some care.

#### **At least one of these must be true of your active-duty service:**

- You served in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, **or**
- You served in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998

#### **And this must be true for you:**

- You were discharged or released on or after October 1, 2013

We encourage you to enroll now so we can provide any care you may need now or in the future. Enrollment is free.

### **What if I was discharged or released before October 1, 2013?**

If you meet the requirements listed here, you can receive care and enroll during a special enrollment period between **October 1, 2022**, and **October 1, 2023**.

**At least one of these must be true of your active-duty service:**

- You served in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, **or**
- You served in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998

**And both of these must be true for you:**

- You were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, **and**
- You haven't enrolled in VA health care before

We encourage you to apply during this 1-year period so we can provide you with any care you may need now or in the future. Enrollment is free. And your care may be free as well.

## **Vietnam era Veteran eligibility**

**Collapse all -**

### **What new Agent Orange presumptive conditions will VA add?**

Based on the PACT Act, we've added 2 new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

- High blood pressure (also called hypertension)
- Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)

You may also be eligible for disability compensation based on other Agent Orange presumptive conditions. These conditions include certain cancers, type 2 diabetes, and other illnesses.

[Get a list of other Agent Orange presumptive conditions \(https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/#requirements-for-agent-orange-\)](https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/#requirements-for-agent-orange-)

If you think you're eligible for VA health care and benefits, we encourage you to apply now.

### **Are there more exposure-related presumptive conditions?**

Yes. The PACT Act adds new presumptive conditions. But there are also many other health conditions that we presume are caused by exposure to toxic (or hazardous) materials. If you have any of these other conditions, you may be eligible for health care or benefits.

[Learn about other presumptive conditions based on exposure to hazardous materials \(https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/\)](https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/)

### **What new Agent Orange presumptive locations will VA add?**

We've added these 5 new locations to the list of presumptive locations:

- Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from January 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976
- Laos from December 1, 1965, through September 30, 1969
- Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969
- Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, through July 31, 1980
- Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977

If you served on active duty in any of these locations, we'll automatically assume (or "presume") that you had exposure to Agent Orange.



## What new radiation presumptive locations will VA add?

We've added these 3 new response efforts to the list of presumptive locations:

- Cleanup of **Enewetak Atoll**, from January 1, 1977, through December 31, 1980
- Cleanup of the Air Force B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons off the coast of **Palomares, Spain**, from January 17, 1966, through March 31, 1967
- Response to the fire onboard an Air Force B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons near **Thule Air Force Base in Greenland** from January 21, 1968, to September 25, 1968

If you took part in any of these efforts, we'll automatically assume (or "presume") that you had exposure to radiation.

There are also other locations where we presume that you had exposure to radiation. If you served in any of these locations, you may be eligible for health care or benefits.

✗ Get a list of other radiation presumptive locations

(<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/#requirements-for-agent-orange->)

## Am I eligible for VA health care as a Vietnam Veteran?

If you served on active duty in any of these locations during these time periods, you're now eligible to apply for VA health care:

- **The Republic of Vietnam** between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975
- **Thailand at any U.S. or Royal Thai base** between January 9, 1962, and June 30, 1976
- **Laos** between December 1, 1965, and September 30, 1969
- **Certain provinces in Cambodia** between April 16, 1969, and April 30, 1969

- **Guam or American Samoa (or their territorial waters)** between January 9, 1962, and July 31, 1980
- **Johnston Atoll (or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll)** between January 1, 1972, and September 30, 1977

## Getting benefits

Collapse all -

### How do I file a disability claim for a new presumptive condition?

**If you haven't filed a claim yet for the presumptive condition,** you can file a new claim online now. You can also file by mail, in person, or with the help of a trained professional.

[File for VA disability compensation online](https://www.va.gov/disability/file-disability-claim-form-21-526ez/)

(<https://www.va.gov/disability/file-disability-claim-form-21-526ez/>)

[Learn more about how to file a disability compensation claim](https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim)

(<https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim>)

**If we denied your disability claim in the past and we now consider your condition presumptive,** you can submit a Supplemental Claim. We'll review your case again.

[Find out how to file a Supplemental Claim \(https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/supplemental-claim\)](https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/supplemental-claim)

### What if VA denied my claim but now considers my condition presumptive?

We encourage you to file a Supplemental Claim. When we receive a Supplemental Claim, we'll review the claim again.

[Find out how to file a Supplemental Claim \(https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/supplemental-claim\)](https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/supplemental-claim)

**Note:** If we denied your claim in the past and we think you may be eligible now, we'll try to contact you. But you don't need to wait for us to contact you before you file a Supplemental Claim.

### **What if I have a pending claim for a condition that's now presumptive?**

You don't need to do anything. If we added your condition after you filed your claim, we'll still consider it presumptive. We'll send you a decision notice when we complete our review.

### **Can I apply now?**

Yes. We're considering all presumptive conditions established by the PACT Act presumptive on the date the bill becomes law.

If you think you may be eligible for VA health care or benefits, we encourage you to apply now.

### **When can I expect VA to make a decision on my PACT Act claim?**

We encourage all Veterans and survivors to file for benefits now. We'll start to process PACT Act-related benefits in January 2023. We must wait for funding approval from Congress and put the needed systems in place before we can process these claims.

If you apply for benefits at any time in the next year and we grant your application, we'll likely backdate your benefits to the date of the bill signing. This means we'll pay you the amount you would have received from August 10, 2022, to the date we grant your application.

## **Toxic exposure screenings**

## **Can I get a toxic exposure screening at VA?**

Toxic exposure screenings are available at VA health facilities across the country.

Every Veteran enrolled in VA health care will receive an initial screening and a follow-up screening at least once every 5 years. Veterans who are not enrolled and who meet eligibility requirements will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.

The screening will ask you if you think you were exposed to any of these hazards while serving:

- Open burn pits and other airborne hazards
- Gulf War-related exposures
- Agent Orange
- Radiation
- Camp Lejeune contaminated water exposure
- Other exposures

We'll then give you information about any benefits, registry exams, and clinical resources you may need.

Ask about the screening at your next VA health care appointment. If you don't have an upcoming appointment, or if you want to get the screening sooner, contact your local VA health facility. Ask to get screened by the toxic exposure screening navigator.

## **Information for survivors**

### **Can Veterans' survivors get compensation payments under the PACT Act?**

Yes. If you're a surviving family member of a Veteran, you may be eligible for these benefits:

- **A monthly VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA DIC) payment.** You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse, dependent child, or parent of a Veteran who died from a service-connected disability.

[Learn how to apply for VA DIC](#)

<https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation>

- **A one-time accrued benefits payment.** You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse, dependent child, or dependent parent of a Veteran who we owed unpaid benefits at the time of their death.

[Learn about evidence needed for accrued benefits](#)

<https://www.va.gov/resources/evidence-to-support-va-pension-dic-or-accrued-benefits-claims>

- **A Survivors Pension.** You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse or child of a Veteran with wartime service.

[Learn how to apply for a Survivors Pension](#)

<https://www.va.gov/pension/survivors-pension>

### **What if VA denied my DIC claim and I think I'm now eligible?**

You can submit a new application for VA dependency and indemnity compensation (VA DIC).

[Learn about VA DIC and how to apply.](#)

<https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation>


**Note:** If we denied your claim in the past and we think you may be eligible now, we'll try to contact you. We may be able to reevaluate your claim. But you don't need to wait for us to contact you before you reapply.


### **What other VA benefits are survivors eligible for?**

You may be eligible for these VA benefits as the surviving family member of a Veteran:

- **Burial benefits and memorial items** such as a gravesite in a VA national cemetery or a free headstone, marker, or medallion.
- **A burial allowance** to help with the Veteran's burial and funeral costs. You may qualify if you're the Veteran's surviving spouse, partner, child, or parent.
- **Education and training.** You may qualify if you're the survivor of a Veteran who died in the line of duty or as a result of service-connected disabilities.
- **Health care through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA).** You may qualify if you're the survivor or dependent of a Veteran with a service-connected disability.
- **A VA-backed home loan.** You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse of a Veteran.

[Learn more about family member benefits \(https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits\)](https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits)

 **[File a disability claim online \(https://www.va.gov/disability/file-disability-claim-form-21-526ez/\)](https://www.va.gov/disability/file-disability-claim-form-21-526ez/)**

 **[Apply for VA health care \(https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/\)](https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/)**

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**Tags** All Veterans (<https://www.va.gov/resources/tag/all-veterans>)

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## Related information

### Exposure to hazardous chemicals and materials \*

(<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure>)

### Airborne hazards and open burn pit registry \*

(<https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home>)

### Environmental health registry evaluation for Veterans \*

(<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/benefits/registry-evaluation.asp>)

### Camp Lejeune water contamination health issues \*

(<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/camp-lejeune-water-contamination/>)

### VA benefits for spouses, dependents, survivors, and family caregivers \*

(<https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits>)

## VA benefits

### Health care (<https://www.va.gov/health-care>)

Apply for VA health care, find out how to access services, and manage your health and benefits online.

### Disability (<https://www.va.gov/disability>)

File a claim for disability compensation for conditions related to your military service, and manage your benefits over time.

## Need more help?

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MyVA411 main information line: [800-698-2411](tel:800-698-2411)