

General Information Detailing Claims Process It's not that difficult!

The things you'll need to get started are the following:



Filing a VA claim shouldn't be difficult. These simple steps will walk you through the process and hopefully assist you in getting any benefits you deserve.

If you want to file a claim but feel for any reason you may not be submitting the actual claim forms for a few months, the VA has provided a solution for you to follow. Form 21-0966 <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0966-ARE.pdf>

This is the **Intent to File form**. Use VA Form 21-0966 if you're still gathering information to support your claim and want to start the filing process. Submitting an intent to file can secure the earliest possible effective date for any retroactive payments you may be eligible to receive.

Once this form is filed, you then have up to one year in which to submit all the other documentation. It places a stake in the ground anchoring the submission date of the 21-0966 rather than the actual submission of the 21-526 form (see below for further descriptions) etc. In other words, you file the 21-0966 now and the date is January (for illustration purposes) for instance. Several months later, in August you get around to filing all the other forms. Should the VA award a compensation determination, the award date is January (when the 21-0966 was filed) rather than August (when the last of the claim forms were filed). **Along with this Intent to File form you will still need to file the 21-22 (see below) to make the American Legion (AL) your Power of Attorney (POA).** These forms should be filed together if you intend to have the American Legion represent you, otherwise the 21-0966 can be filed online as a standalone form.

- Use VA Form 21-22 when you want to have a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) help you with VA benefits or claims.
 - A POA form 21-22 allows the American Legion (AL) to represent you and allows them to access your records to provide guidance. They cannot make decisions for you, only you can do that, but they can discuss options etc. The form can be found here <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-22-ARE.pdf>
 - Fill it out and make sure your SSN is at the top of each page
 - Sign and date 22a and b
- The actual claim form itself is <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-526ez-ARE.pdf>
 - Fill in the form according to the instruction provided on the 21-526ez form.
 - On box 16 – list everything you wish to claim, including PTSD (There is also a separate claim form for PTSD listed below. Use this 21-526ez and the PTSD form in this case). All ailments need to be on this 21-526ez form. Whatever you feel is a result of your service-connected disability. The instructions for this portion are very informative, but if you do have any questions, just contact an AL Service Officer and we'll be more than happy to assist you.
 - You can use another sheet of paper if you need additional explanations, just put on the 526 form to "see attached explanation"

- Make sure you put your SSN on the top of every page
- For your dependents you'll need the additional forms described below
- Sign and date the form
- If you intend to claim **PTSD**, you will also need [form https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21-0781/](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-21-0781/)
 - Use VA Form 21-0781 if you've been diagnosed with PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder) and want to apply for related benefits or services.
- You'll need form 21-686c for **dependents** <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-686c-ARE.pdf>
 - Use VA Form 21-686c to submit a claim for additional benefits for a dependent, or to request to remove a dependent from your benefits.
- You'll need form 21-4142 <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4142-ARE.pdf>

Authorization to Disclose Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

 - Use of VA Form 21-4142 to gives the VA permission to obtain your personal information from a non-VA source like a private doctor or hospital. Examples of personal information may include your medical treatment, hospitalizations, psychotherapy, or outpatient care.
 - Fill it out and make sure your SSN is at the top of each page.
 - List every office practice / doctor you saw, including chiropractors. If you're still being treated, just fill out the from and say present for ending date

Simple huh? It's not so bad. Once you have filled in all the forms, you can email the completed forms to our Regional Certified Service Officer for the American Legion - **Robert Gardner**, Robert.gardner4@va.gov **215 381-3032**

The next step is to wait for the VA to contact you and give you instructions. Do not miss any appointments they may request you attend. If you need to, call them, and discuss appointment options. There will be contact phone numbers on their correspondence.

Accredited Regional Service Officer for the American Legion is Robert Gardner, 215 381-3032
Robert.gardner4@va.gov

American Legion Post 210 Service Officer is Bill Malone and can be reached through this website.

Some helpful links to the American Legion Service Officer site:

- <https://www.legion.org/veteransbenefits/departmentsofficers>
- <https://www.legion.org/legiontv/PLC3EF50DFA2BCA630/M3ohb7sw18>