

# VA CLAIM EXAM

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)



### #1 Q: What is a VA claim exam, also known as a Compensation and Pension (C&P) exam?

If you've filed a claim with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for disability compensation or pension benefits, VA may ask you to go to an examination as part of the claim process. For disability compensation, this exam helps VA determine if your disability is service connected, and the severity of your condition if you are already service-connected. In the case of pension claims, the exam documents the level of your disability.

A VA claim exam is different from a regular medical appointment because the examiner won't prescribe any medicine or treat you – for instance, you won't receive a referral to a specialist. The examiner will only address the claimed disabilities that VA determined warrant an examination. Following your exam, your exam results will be uploaded to your VA claims file. These results will be used along with the evidence of record to make a decision on your claim.

### #2 Q: Is everyone scheduled for a VA claim exam?

No, not everyone is required to attend a VA exam. After you apply for disability compensation and/or pension, you may receive a phone call or a letter from VA or a VA contract examiner to schedule you for your C&P exam. If you claimed benefits for several disabilities, you may be asked to report for one or more exams, so each disability can be assessed by an appropriate examiner. The C&P exams may be completed at a VA facility or with a VA contract examiner. Not every claim will require an exam; it depends on what medical evidence was included with the application.

### #3 Q: How is the VA claim exam or C&P exam scheduled?

VA or a VA contract examiner will either mail you a letter or call you with your appointment date and time. If you are receiving treatment at a VA medical center, make sure the facility has your current address, phone number and email information. The wrong information could cause your appointment letter to be delayed and not reach you in time.

You can request the specific sex of your medical provider for gynecological, breast, anal/rectal and mental health examinations during the scheduling process. Also, if your claim is related to a mental or physical health condition resulting from Military Sexual Trauma (MST), the law permits that you may choose the sex of your examiner.

Please notify your scheduler if you have a preference for the sex of your examiner.

Prior to your exam, contact the VA or VA contract examiner to confirm your exam date, time and location. If you don't show up to your exam, it may delay your claim. Additionally, your claim may be decided based on the evidence of record.

### #4 Q: The date and/or time of my C&P exam doesn't work for me. Can I reschedule my exam?

If your scheduled exam date or time does not work due to some other life event, immediately call the number provided and try to reschedule. Unless it is an emergency situation, requests to reschedule should be completed at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled appointment. Not responding to a phone or letter request for scheduling an exam or missing the exam could cause VA to delay its decision on your claim.



### #5 Q: How early should I arrive for my VA claim exam?

It is recommended you arrive at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled exam time. Please note, many examiners will not perform your exam if you are late, due to scheduling restrictions.

### #6 Q: What can I expect during my VA claim exam?

Unlike a typical medical exam, the VA claim exam will not give you any treatment or prescribe any medicine. The examiner may ask you questions, observe you, and/or perform a limited physical exam.

The purpose of the exam is to have an examiner evaluate your condition and review claim-related medical records and your claim file (c-file/e-file). The c-file typically includes medical records from Department of Defense (DoD), DoD personnel records, treatment records from your health care providers and any other documents submitted.

### #7 Q: How long will my VA claim exam take?

The length of your VA claim exam depends how much information the examiner needs to review and the type of examination being completed. You can expect to spend anywhere from 15 minutes to over an hour.

Following your exam, the examiner completes a report that includes any test results and opinions that were requested. You have the right to request and receive copies of your exam results by contacting your VA regional office.

### #8 Q: Where does the VA claim exam fit within the claim process?

After you submit your claim, VA reviews it and begins to gather information pertinent to your claim. If an examination is needed, one will be requested. After your exam, results are uploaded to your c-file/e-file. Once all development for pertinent records are completed, VA then performs a final review of your claim package and makes a decision on your claim.

### #9 Q: Can the VA examiner or VA contract examiner tell me the status of my claim?

No, the examiner only performs the exam and provides the results to VA; they are not part of the decision-making process and they do not make the decisions. The examiner will never know the outcome of your pending claim. Only a VA regional representative can answer questions regarding your application or claim status. To get a claim status update, contact VA at **1-800-827-1000**; a representative will answer your questions.

To ensure that claimants have access to responsible and qualified representation on their VA benefits claims, VA's Office of General Counsel accredits attorneys, agents and Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representatives. For more information about VA-accredited representatives, go to [Accredited Representatives Home \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/accrued-representatives); to conduct a state-by-state search for an accredited representative, go to [OGC - Accreditation Search \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/ogc-accr-search).

### #10 Q: Can I bring new medical records that I did not submit with my claim to my VA claim exam?

If you have new non-VA medical records, please submit them to VA before your appointment. The examiner is not able to submit these records to VA for you. The examiner may review the records you bring, but they will not be part of your claim file if you do not submit them to VA. All new information should be uploaded online, submitted to your accredited VSO representative or mailed to VA using the appropriate address found at [How To File A VA Disability Claim | Veterans Affairs](https://www.va.gov/claim-records) or [Mailing Address for Disability Compensation Claims - Compensation \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/claim-records).



### #11 Q: Can I bring my spouse or family member to my VA claim exam?

Based on the approval of the examiner, a caregiver may be allowed to join you during the examination but may not participate in the examination process. Service animals are also permitted.

### #12 Q: I missed my scheduled claim exam, what should I do?

Veterans may request that their appointment be rescheduled directly with the contract vendor identified in their appointment letter (not directly with the doctor, nor the medical facility). If you have any questions concerning your claim exam or need to cancel or reschedule your appointment(s), please contact the contract vendor that scheduled your appointment(s) directly, or call the VA Hotline at 1-800-827-1000 for assistance.

### #13 Q: My claim exam is scheduled far away from where I live. Does VA cover travel costs?

Veterans traveling to a claim exam in the United States are eligible for travel reimbursement to and from the examination. Veterans scheduled for a claim exam or C&P exam with a contract vendor will receive mileage reimbursement from the contract vendor. You should expect to receive reimbursement within 14 days of the completed appointment. The current mileage reimbursement rate is 41.5 cents per mile.

**Note:** Active duty Service members are not eligible for mileage reimbursement.

### #14 Q: The examiner didn't touch me during my VA claim exam. Is this normal?

The purpose of the VA claim exam is not to provide treatment, but to evaluate your condition. Based on the information in your claim file, such as medical documents from current providers, and completed Disability Benefit Questionnaires (DBQs), the examiner will determine what additional questions and information are needed to evaluate your condition and complete the exam. In some instances, your file may be so complete that only a few additional questions are needed. Your claim will be carefully reviewed, and VA's decision will not depend on the length of your exam visit.

The in-person part of your claim exam is only one part of what examiners do as part of their evaluation. They also spend time reviewing your claim file to ensure they are providing the most complete and accurate information possible. All of the documents you provide to support your claim play an important part in the examiner's report.

If you have a question about what is happening during your claim exam, ask the examiner about what he or she is doing. Remember, VA examiners and VA contract examiners are not involved in deciding your claim. They are not always familiar with the full claim process and cannot tell you when a decision will be made. All claims-related questions should be directed to the VA regional office nearest you.

### #15 Q: I am unhappy with the treatment I received from the person doing my VA claim exam. What should I do?

If you attend your VA claim exam and have a negative experience with a VA examiner or VA contract examiner, VA encourages you to share feedback immediately. You may contact the C&P exam supervisor or VA patient advocate at the VA medical center. You may also contact the supervisor at the VA contract facility, or call the number on your original appointment letter.



It is helpful to write out a statement of concern that can be submitted as part of your claim file. Share concerns immediately. Do not wait until your claim decision has been made. This will help ensure any issues are handled as quickly as possible.

### **#16 Q: My claim was denied without a VA claim exam or C&P exam. Is this normal?**

VA grants service connection when the claim file shows three things:

1. Current diagnosis of a disability
2. Record of an event that happened during military service that could have resulted in the disability
3. An opinion that the current disability is related to military service, also called a “nexus opinion.”

If there is no evidence of a current diagnosis and no evidence showing an event in service, an examination may not be warranted. If there is evidence of a diagnosis and evidence of an event in service, an examination is usually requested so an examiner can provide an opinion regarding the probability that the condition is related to active duty service. For this reason, it is important you submit all relevant military and treatment records when you initially file your claim.

### **#17 Q: Why is a contractor conducting my VA claim exam and not a VA examiner?**

VA may use contractors to expedite the claim process. VA contractors are medical experts with experience working with Veterans. Depending on scheduling, your local VA medical center may not have timely availability to complete your VA claim exam. For this reason, VA contracts with private providers, allowing claimants to have their VA claim exams completed sooner, rather than waiting for availability at a VA medical center.

VA contract examiners follow the same HIPAA policies as VA, so you are guaranteed that your privacy is protected.

### **#18 Q: Are there organizations that can help me with my claim?**

VA recommends you work with an accredited representative, such as a Veterans Service Officer (VSO), to help guide you through the entire claims process. VSOs do not charge for services and can help you gather evidence in support of your claim, help file your claim and address issues as you move through the claim process. Additional information about VA-accredited representatives can be found at [Accredited Representatives Home \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/accrued-representatives); to conduct a state-by-state search for an accredited representative, go to [OGC - Accreditation Search \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/accrued-representatives).