



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Benefits Administration

VA Benefits for Service Members Considered for Medical Discharge

The following is important information about VA benefits for Service members who may be medically discharged from the military.

What is VA Disability Compensation?

Disability compensation is a monthly monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities related to their military service. A disability may be considered “service-connected” if it began in, was aggravated by, or was caused by military service.

The amount of compensation paid varies based on the severity of the service-connected disabilities. Service-connected Veterans with eligible dependent receive additional compensation. In some instances, VA Compensation payments must be adjusted due to payment of military benefits.

Service members who participate in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) can file a claim for VA compensation while service on active duty.

What is the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES)?

The IDES program was developed by VA and the Department of Defense to improve the experience of Service members facing potential medical discharges. By integrating the VA claims process into the DoD disability evaluation process, IDES provides participants with a single set of medical exams and a single-source disability rating that serves as the basis for both VA and DoD’s disability determinations. IDES ensures consistency in disability determinations and the timely award of VA Disability Compensation Benefits to Service members who are medically discharged.

How Can I Enroll in IDES?

To participate in IDES, your Military Service Department must refer you to the program. If you are not referred, it is not possible to enroll.

How Can I find out more about IDES?

If referred, you will be assigned a Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer (PEBLO) and a VA Military Services Coordinator (MSC). Your PEBLO and MSC will give you further information about the IDES program.

How Can I Apply for Compensation if I Am Not Referred To IDES?

If you aren't referred to IDES, you can apply for VA compensation once you are within 180 days of your separation or retirement date. You can also file a VA claim at any time after discharge. However, it is recommended that you initiate your VA claim with at least 90 days remaining on active duty, so that your claim can be processed via VA's Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) Program. For more information on the BDD Program and how to apply, visit

www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/general/BDDFactSheet.pdf.

Am I Eligible for Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Services?

If awaiting discharge due to a disability, you may be eligible for VR&E services. VR&E is a rehabilitation program based on each participant's specific needs and abilities. It helps disabled Veterans gain employment or achieve independence in daily living. Visit

www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp to learn more.

What VA Health Care Benefits Are Available?

VA provides free health care to Veterans with conditions likely related to military service for a period of five years. The five-year period begins on the date of separation from active military service. VA health care also includes a one-time dental treatment if you did not receive treatment within 90-days prior to separation. This must occur within 180 days following separation.

VA health care is also available while on active duty. This is for emergency situations or upon referral by military treatment facilities or TRICARE. Veterans with disabilities related to military service are entitled to free lifetime health care. You will be assigned to priority groupings in the VA health care system.

What is Important to Know About VA Insurance Benefits?

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) is low-cost life insurance. Service members and reservists qualify. Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) is post-separation insurance. It allows Service members to convert their SGLI coverage to renewable term insurance. If you are disabled, you may be able to keep your SGLI coverage for up to two years after separation. This would be at no cost. Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) is a disability rider to the SGLI program. It provides automatic coverage to Service members who experience severe losses due to traumatic injuries. If this applies to you, call 800-419-1473 to learn how to make a claim.

To learn more about applying for VA benefits, or to locate the nearest VA office, call 800-827-1000 or visit www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp.