



Intent to File

Veterans and survivors can use the intent to file process if they need additional time to gather support for their claim. The intent to file process can be used for VA compensation and pension benefits. This includes Survivors Pension and Dependency and indemnity Compensation.

What is the intent to file process?

This process allows you more time to collect information to support your claim. It also protects the earliest possible effective date for any benefits resulting from your claim. The date VA receives your intent to file will be protected as your effective date. However, the correct application form must be submitted within one year.

What does an Intent to File claim contain?

Your intent to file must contain:

- Enough personal information to identify the Veteran or claimant
- The general benefit you are seeking
- You or your representative's signature

How Do Veterans or Survivors Notify VA of Their Intent to File?

There are three ways you can notify VA of your intent to file a claim.

1. Go online through eBenefits at www.va.gov. Use the support of a VSO through the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal. You must follow this process:
 - Initiate a claim.
 - Complete the personal information page.
 - Hit save to establish your effective date. This allows one year to complete the application.

2. Mail paper VA Form 21-0966, "Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC." You can access this form at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0966-ARE.pdf.

3. Over the phone or in person:

- Call our National Call Center at 800-827-1000.
- Tell a representative in person at one of VA's regional benefit offices. Locate a regional office at www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp.

You may also appoint a recognized representative to notify us on your behalf.

Intent to File Preserves the Effective Date of a Potential Claim

You will have up to one year from the date VA receives your intent to file to submit a formal claim. This process also allows VA to award backdated benefits from the date of your diagnosis or treatment. Your intent to file just needs to be filed within one year of the diagnosis or treatment. Then, your required claim form needs to be filed within one year.

Other Important Information About Intent to File

- You can only submit one intent to file at a time.
- After you submit a completed claim, your intent to file will no longer be active. If you expect to file an intent to file for another general benefit, you must submit a new form.

Consider this sample process:

1. VA receives an intent to file for compensation benefits on April 1, 2015.
2. VA receives an application for compensation benefits on Aug. 1, 2015.
3. You file another application for compensation benefits on Jan. 1, 2016.

In this case, VA considers an effective date of April 1, 2015 for any benefits awarded as a result of the Aug. 1, 2015 application. However, the April 1, 2015 intent to file date will not be used for any benefits awarded as a result of the Jan. 1, **2016** application.

If a second intent to file for compensation benefits is received on Oct. 1, 2015, VA considers an effective date of April 1, 2015. This is the date VA received the intent to file

for any benefits as a result of the Aug. 1, 2015 application. VA will also consider an effective date of Oct. 1, 2015 for any benefits as a result of the Jan. 1, 2016 application. For more Information, call 800-827-1000. or visit explore.va.gov/intent-to-file.