PACT ACT

What is the **PACT ACT?**

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.

What does it mean to have a presumptive condition?

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.

VA
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
VA Puget Sound Health Care System

PACT Act: Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act

Quick Guide

What are the presumptive conditions?

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 and diseases are among those 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, and respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type.

Some of the illnesses now presumptive, include: 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, and sarcoidosis.

Additionally, we've added two new Agent Orange presumptive conditions: High blood pressure (also called hypertension) and monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS).

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. For more information on the types of exposures and presumptive conditions, please visit www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/.

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Will applying for PACT ACT benefits impact my current benefits?

If you file a claim, there is a 97% chance that your benefits will either increase or stay the same.

Can the VA deny a presumptive disability?

Any disabilities must have a clear connection to presumed exposure during active-duty service.

Is there a deadline to file a claim?

No. However, if you apply for PACT Act-related benefits before August 10, 2023, then your benefits will be backdated to August 10, 2022 – the day the bill was signed into law.

What is the toxic exposure screening being offered to enrolled Veterans?

The Toxic Exposure Screening available for enrolled Veterans is a voluntary series of questions asked by your provider about your history of possible toxic exposure. It takes about 5-10 minutes. It does not involve physical examinations or other diagnostic procedures.

Do I need a toxic exposure screening before filing a claim?

No. The screening is NOT a requirement to get PACT Act related benefits process started.

If the toxic exposure screening isn't required to start my PCT ACT claim, why should I get one?

While not required before to file your PACT Act claim, it does help identify potential exposures to toxins during your military service. This allows for ongoing care that ensures early diagnosis and treatment of any health concerns that may arise in the future related to your exposure(s). It takes around 5-10 minutes and can be part of a regular health care appointment.

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Can I get health care related to a toxic exposure without filing a claim?

In most cases, yes. Here are steps to take.

Enrolled

- If I have questions about current or new symptoms and how they relate to exposure, please bring this up at your next routine appointment.
- If you have new, worsening and unexplained symptoms, please see a VA provider more urgently.

Not enrolled

- Veterans who are not enroll and who meet eligibility requirement will have an opportunity to enroll and receive this screening.
- Contact VA Puget Sound's Eligibility, Enrollment, and Benefits Office at 1-800-329-8387, extension 76542.
- Contact VA's national Enrollment Help Desk: (877) 222-8387 (Monday through Friday 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. PT)

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Do I need to be enrolled to file a claim?

No. You do not need to be enrolled to file a claim. After you file the claim, if you'd like to enroll, you can apply in any of these 4 ways:

1. Apply by phone ▸ Call our toll-free hotline at 877-222-8387, Monday through Friday, 5 a.m. to p.m. PT to get help with your application.
2. Apply by mail ▸ Fill out an Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ - www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-10-10ez/)
   You or someone acting as your power of attorney must sign and date the form. And if you're using a power of attorney, you'll need to submit a copy of the Power of Attorney form along with your application.
   If you sign with an "X," 2 people you know must witness your signature. They'll also need to sign and print their names on the form.
   Send your completed application to Health Eligibility Center, 2957 Clairmont Rd., Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30329.
3. Apply in person at our Seattle or American Lake Eligibility Offices (800-329-8387 x 76542) by bringing in a signed Application for Health Benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ) with you (see guidance in 2. above).
4. Apply with the help from Veteran Service Organization or Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs (206-341-8295).

Do I need to be in a registry program to file a PACT CLAIM?

No. The registry program is for research only to help with Veterans with the development of future presumptive conditions. It is not a requirement to sign up for a registry to file a PACT Act claim. And not all Veterans are eligible to participate in the registry program. For more information on registries and to participate, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/benefits/registry-evaluation.asp

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How do I file a claim?

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.

If you haven't filed a claim yet

- You can also file online, by mail, in person, or with the help of a trained professional.
- File a new claim online now – www.va.gov/PACT
- Make an appointment with one of our counselors at www.benefits.va.gov/seattle
- Call Veterans Benefits Administration hotline at 1-800-827-1000 (press 8 for PACT Act)
- Work with a Veterans Service Organization or the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs 206-341-8295.
- Call 1-800-MY-VA-411 to learn more.
- Once you've initiated your claim, contact your primary care team to schedule your toxic exposure screening if not already completed.

If previous disability claim was denied and your condition is now presumptive

- Veterans previously denied a toxic-exposure related claim are encouraged to file a supplemental claim. Once a supplemental claim is received, VA will review the claim under the new law.
- Go to www.va.gov/PACT to file.
- Once you've initiated your supplemental claim, contact your primary care team to schedule your toxic exposure screening if not already completed.
- Learn more about the PACT Act – and apply – anytime by visiting VA.gov/PACT or calling 1-800-MY-VA-411.

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What about health issues related to camp Lejeune?

You may be eligible for disability benefits. Both of these must be true:

1. You served at Camp Lejeune or MCAS New River for at least 30 cumulative days from August 1953 through December 1987, and
2. You didn't receive a dishonorable discharge when you separated from the military.

And you must have a diagnosis of one or more of these presumptive conditions: adult leukemia, aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma or Parkinson's disease.

Veterans' survivors get compensation payment 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

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

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

Should I have a lawyer file?

There are many people out there who will try to convince you that you need to pay someone or use a lawyer to apply for VA benefits – but that's not true. To report fraudulent activity, contact the VA OIG at vaoighotline@va.gov or call 1-800-488-8244.

Applying for PACT Act benefits is free, it's easy, and you can do it by working directly with VA or a Veteran Service Organization.

VA
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Exposure QR codes

Agent Orange

Gulf War

Camp Lejeune

Radiation

Airborne Hazards & Open Burn Pits

Toxic Exposure Screening

VA MOBILE EXPOSURE APP

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
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