



DISABILITY COMPENSATION

PRE-DISCHARGE PROGRAMS

VA and DoD offer two specific pre-discharge programs that allow a Servicemember to apply for disability compensation benefits up to 180 days prior to separation, retirement, or release from active duty or demobilization, which can help you receive VA disability compensation benefits sooner:

BENEFITS DELIVERY AT DISCHARGE PROGRAM

Allows a Servicemember to submit a claim for disability compensation 60 to 180 days prior to separation, retirement, or release from active duty or demobilization. To see if you qualify for Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD), see *Requirements to Participate*.

QUICK START PROGRAM

Allows a Servicemember to submit a claim for disability compensation 1 to 59 days prior to separation, retirement, or release from active duty or demobilization. To see if you qualify for Quick Start, see *Requirements to Participate*.

Disability compensation is a tax-free benefit paid to Veterans who are at least 10% disabled because of injuries or diseases that happened while on active duty, or were made worse by active military service.

REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE

	BDD Program	Quick Start Program
Do I have a known separation date?	Yes	Yes
How far away is my known separation date?	60 - 180 days	1 - 59 days
When must I submit my service treatment records to VA?	At the time claim is submitted	At the time claim is submitted
When and where must I complete all phases of my VA/DoD medical separation examination process?	At your point of separation, prior to release from the military	At your point of separation or home of record either prior to or after separation
When may I apply?	If you meet all of the BDD requirements above, you may apply for BDD 60-180 days prior to separation. See the <i>Application Process</i> section.	If you meet all of the Quick Start requirements above, you may apply for Quick Start 1-59 days from separation. See the <i>Application Process</i> section.



Pre-discharge programs are time-sensitive and are offered to accelerate receipt of VA disability compensation benefits. The BDD and Quick Start processes, as outlined in *Application Process*, are identical. The only difference is when you are able to apply based on the requirements listed in *Requirements to Participate*.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

ACCESS YOUR COMPENSATION BENEFITS SOONER VIA PRE-DISCHARGE PROGRAMS

You may submit a disability compensation claim at any time following your separation, retirement, or release from active duty or demobilization. Because processing times tend to be much shorter for claims submitted pre-discharge than after discharge, it is to your advantage to submit your disability compensation claim prior to separation, retirement, or release from active duty or demobilization.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To complete your disability compensation application in either pre-discharge program, you will need:

- » A known date of separation, retirement, or release from active duty or demobilization;
- » Application form **21-526 (Compensation)**, if filing electronically via eBenefits, or application form **21-526C (Pre-Discharge Compensation Claim)**;
- » Your service treatment records (originals or copies); and
- » To complete the VA/DoD medical separation examination process.

STEP 1 Obtain and complete VA claim form 21-526 via your eBenefits account VA claim form 21-526C

Compensation form 21-526

- » Apply via eBenefits at www.ebenefits.va.gov, your one-stop shop to apply for and learn about your benefits

Pre-Discharge Compensation Claim form 21-526C

- » Download application form 21-526C from <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>, or
- » Call VA toll free at 1-800-827-1000 to have a claim form mailed to you, or
- » Visit your local VA regional office. For the VA regional office nearest you, call VA toll free at 1-800-827-1000.

VA representatives on military installations and Veterans Service Organizations are available to assist in filing a pre-discharge claim.

STEP 2 File application and submit service treatment records

If using eBenefits

- » Submit your application and follow the instructions about where to submit your service treatment records (originals or copies)

If not filing online

- » Deliver your application and service treatment records to your VA intake site on a military installation, or
- » Mail, fax, or deliver them to your VA regional office, or
- » Bring them to your demobilization briefing scheduled by your National Guard or Reserve unit.

STEP 3 Attend and complete all phases of your VA/DoD medical separation examination process

For More Information about Pre-Discharge Programs

- » Go to eBenefits at www.ebenefits.va.gov, your one-stop shop to apply for and learn about your benefits,
- » Visit our Web site located at www.vba.va.gov/predischarge,
- » Call VA's toll free number at 1-800-827-1000,
- » Visit the nearest VA regional office. For the VA regional office nearest you, call VA toll free at 1-800-827-1000, and/or
- » Contact your local Transition Assistance Office or Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) Center if you are on a military installation, to schedule appointments to attend VA benefits briefings and learn how to initiate your claim.



Disabilities determined by VA to be related to your military service can lead to monthly non-taxable compensation, enrollment in the VA health care system, a 10-point hiring preference for federal employment, and other important benefits. Ask your VA representative or Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representative about Disability Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Caregiver Program, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services, Educational Assistance, Home Loan Guaranty, Insurance, and/or Dependents' and Survivors' Benefits. You can search for a VSO representative online at www.ebenefits.va.gov.