# INTRODUCTION TO APPEALS AND VACOLS LESSON PLAN

# PREREQUISITE TRAINING

Prior to completing this lesson, Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) should have 24 months of VSR experience.

# PURPOSE OF LESSON

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the *basic* concepts and terms involved in the appeals process. This lesson will also provide a basic understanding of how to read the available information in the Veteran Appeals Control and Locator System (VACOLS) system.

# Trainee Handout (HO) pg 1

PowerPoint (PP) #1-2

Given the appropriate manual and regulatory resources, the VSR will be able to:

- Define important appeals terms
- Identify the steps in the appeals process
- Utilize VACOLS to obtain information on an appeal

#### TIME REQUIRED

2.5 hours .5 hours practical exercise

# INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD

Participatory discussion and practical exercise

# MATERIALS/ TRAINING AIDS

Classroom or private area where a discussion may be held. Chairs and writing surfaces are required.

Large writing surface such as an easel pad, chalkboard, dry erase board, overhead projector, etc., with appropriate markers, or computer with projection equipment and PowerPoint software.

- Introduction to Appeals and VACOLS PowerPoint presentation
- Introduction to Appeals and VACOLS VSR Handouts
- Copies of VA Form 21-0958, Notice of Disagreement, ;VA Form 8, Certification of Appeal; and VA Form 9, Appeal to Board of

# Veterans' Appeals

# INSTRUCTOR PREPARATION

Instructors should have VSRs print (from the website) and bring the VSR handouts and forms to class or have enough VSR handouts and forms available for the VSRs. Instructors should also have claim numbers of several claimants with pending appeals to use to demonstrate the VACOLS system.

Providing the class with examples of claims files in different stages of the appeals process would also be useful.

**Critical:** Be sure to allow the VSRs to complete the review exercise at the end of this training session.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Introduce yourself and inform participants of the lesson topic.

The purpose of this lesson is to teach the class the basic appeals process and assist them in utilizing VACOLS to obtain information on the appeals process.

#### WHAT IS AN APPEAL?

# TOPIC OBJECTIVES

The VSR will able to:

- State what is an appeal
- State who can appeal a decision, and what issues can be appealed
- Identify the time limit to file an appeal on a claim

### TIME REQUIRED

#### 15 minutes

### **REFERENCES**

- M21-1MR I.5.A
- M21-1MR I.5.B
- 38 CFR 19.23
- 38 CFR 19.24
- 38 CFR 20.200
- 38 CFR 20.201
- 38 CFR 20.301
- **38 CFR 20.302**

January 2015 Page 2 of 19

- **38 CFR 20.501**
- FL 13-23

### **TEACHING POINTS**

Explain to VSRs what is an appeal and provide examples of appeals.

You may want to offer the class real examples of notice of disagreements.

What is an appeal and who can appeal?

HO pg 4

PP #3

An appeal is a request for a review by the Board of Veterans' Appeals of a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) determination on a claim for benefits issued by a local VA office. Anyone who has filed a claim for benefits with VA and has received a decision from a local VA office is entitled to appeal the decision to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. In addition, a claimant's Power of Attorney (POA) or other approved designated representatives can file an appeal.

What is BVA?

PP# 4

The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) is a part of VA located in Washington, DC. Its job is to review decisions made by local VA offices that have been appealed by claimants and issue decisions.

Members of the Board review the benefit claims decisions. These Law Judges are attorneys experienced in Veterans' law and in reviewing benefit claims, and they are the only ones who can issue Board decisions.

Ask

What are some decisions we make that you think can be appealed?

Brainstorm ideas. You may want to write the VSRs' responses on a whiteboard or flipchart. Answers include, but are not limited to:

- A complete or partial denial of a claim
- The level of benefit granted
- Service connection
- Increased disability compensation
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) by surviving spouse, eligible child or parent
- Aid and attendance or housebound
- Helpless child benefits
- Individual unemployability
- Some decisions by VA medical facilities, such as eligibility for medical treatment
- Vocational rehabilitation

Janaury 2015 Page 3 of 19

Any decision issued by a VA regional office (RO) on a claim for benefits would be an acceptable answer.

Ask

Do you think a proposed decision, such as a proposal of incompetency, can be appealed? Why or why not?

Provide feedback

No, a proposal cannot be appealed. It is a proposed action, not a final decision. The claimant still has an opportunity to submit evidence that may change the outcome of the proposal. Once a final decision is reached, the claimant is offered the opportunity to appeal.

How is an appeal filed?

A claimant submits a Notice of Disagreement (NOD), which is written communication from a claimant or their representative expressing dissatisfaction with a decision and a desire to contest the result.

PP #5

If a claim for compensation benefits and a VA Form 21-0958 was provided to the Veteran/claimant, then the NOD must be filed on the VA Form 21-0958. The VA Form 21-0958 is the standard notice of disagreement (SNOD) form for compensation claims.

If the compensation decision was made prior to March 24, 2015 or if the appeal is for a non-compensation related issued, then use of VAF 21-0958 is not required.

If the agency of original jurisdiction (AOJ) does not provide VA Form 21-0958 with the notification letter, then the VA Form 21-0958 is not required for the submission of the NOD. The written communication must use terms that can be reasonably interpreted as a disagreement with a decision and a desire to begin the appellate review. It must also specifically identify the conditions or issues with which the claimant disagrees.

A claimant cannot have the same issue on appeal and also as part of a pending claim at the same time.

**Ask** 

Can a claimant file an NOD on a properly documented VA Form 27-0820, Report of General Information? Why or why not?

Provide feedback

No, the appeal must be in writing or on a VA Form 21-0958..

Janaury 2015 Page 4 of 19

# Time limit to file an NOD

For most claims, NODs must be filed within one year from the date of the letter notifying a claimant of our decision.

For contested claims, which include apportionments, the claimant has only 60 days to file their NOD.

## Provide examples

If available, provide examples of NODs and ask questions regarding the NOD, such as:

- Is this a valid NOD (i.e. in writing and submitted by a claimant or their POA)?
- What are the issues the claimant wishes to appeal?
- Was the NOD timely filed? Why or why not?

## Check comprehension

Ask the class what they wrote down for the questions on page four of their handouts.

#### THE APPEALS PROCESS

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The VSR will:

- Identify the steps in the appeals process
- Define important appeals terms

#### TIME REQUIRED

1 hour, 15 minutes

#### **REFERENCES**

- M21-1MR I.5
- **38 CFR 20.200-20.202**
- 38 CFR 20.300-305
- **38 CFR 20.500-503**
- FL 13-23

#### TEACHING POINTS

Describe to the VSRs the general appeals process.

It is recommended that you provide examples of the items you

January 2015 Page 5 of 19

discuss.

De Novo election letter

PP #6-7

Once an NOD has been determined to be valid and timely filed, the Service Center will issue an appeal process request letter, also referred to as a *De Novo* election letter, or a Decision Review Officer (DRO) election letter, to the claimant.

HO pg 5

Refer to M21-1MR Part I.5.B.8.a for an example of this letter This letter will specifically state the issues the claimant disagreed with and allow the claimant to select how they want their NOD reviewed. The claimant can elect a DRO review or a traditional review. A claimant has 60 days from the date of the election letter to choose a DRO review (this time frame cannot be extended). If a response is received after the 60-day time limit, no response is received, or the claimant elects the traditional review, the NOD will be reviewed under the traditional process.

The differences between the two processes are explained below.

DRO Review

A DRO is a senior technical expert who normally has years of experience rating compensation and pension cases. DRO duties include reviewing and deciding appeal cases, holding personal hearings with claimants and serving as subject matter experts.

PP #8-9

A DRO review is also called a *De Novo* review. A *De Novo* review is a new and complete review of the appealed issue with no deference given to the decision being appealed. This review can lead to a new decision, which may be a full grant, partial grant, determination of a clear and unmistakable error (CUE), or continuation of the decision.

If the *De Novo* review results in a grant, a rating or administrative decision will be produced. The decision will be promulgated, the claimant notified and the appeal for that issue will be considered resolved.

If after the DRO examined all evidence in the file, conducted a *De Novo* review, and he or she cannot grant the benefit for which the claimant applied, the DRO will continue the decision. This denial is called a Statement of the Case (SOC), which will be discussed in more detail later.

It is possible that once a DRO completes the De Novo review, he or she can grant some or part of the issue(s) on appeal. When this happens, the DRO will prepare a decision granting some of the issues

Janaury 2015 Page 6 of 19

and an SOC explaining why we couldn't grant the other issues.

The decision process will be discussed in depth later in the lesson.

#### Traditional Review

#### PP #10

A traditional review process means that the issues under appeal and the evidence relating to them will be reviewed, but unlike a *De Novo* review, a Rating Veteran Service Representative (RVSR) (or the authorization activity, if it was an authorization issue) will review the prior decision.

Traditional reviews often result in a continuation of the denial and the issuance of a Statement of the Case (SOC), because **unless** there is new evidence submitted that alters the decision or there is a CUE, the prior decision cannot be overturned by the reviewer.

Who is responsible for a SOC in the traditional appeals process

Usually in the traditional appeals process, the activity responsible for the decision under appeal issues the SOC to the appellant.

For example, if the appealed decision was in regards to not adding a child onto the award, the authorization activity would be responsible for the issuance of the SOC.

#### **DECISIONS**

Once any missing evidence or required development is completed, an SOC, a partial grant and SOC, or a full grant of the issues will be processed.

Janaury 2015 Page 7 of 19

Full Grant

HO pg 6

**PP** #11

If the issue being appealed is entitlement to a benefit, and during the appeals process, we grant that entitlement, it is considered a full grant of the appeal.

For example, if the claimant appealed a decision that denied service connection for an issue, and the appeals process subsequently granted entitlement to service connection, it would be considered a full grant of benefits.

In order for an appeal regarding the evaluation of a service connected condition to be considered a *full grant of benefits*, we can not simply increase the evaluation; we must grant entitlement at the highest percentage allowable by law.

*Instructor note:* The maximum evaluation is dependent on what is listed for a specific condition in the Rating Schedule.

If the decision (either a rating or an administrative decision) is a full grant of benefits, the appeal is considered satisfied in full, closed out, and the claimant is notified of the decision.

What other types of benefit entitlement determinations would be considered a full grant of benefits?

Answers include but are not limited to:

- Adding a dependent onto an award
- The character of service is now considered honorable for VA purposes
- Entitlement to pension is established

January 2015 Page 8 of 19

Ask

#### Partial Grants

#### PP #12

Sometimes, a review of the appealed decision and the evidence will allow for a partial grant of the entitlement being sought.

We may issue a full grant of benefits on some issues, but not others, and therefore must continue our decision. For example, we may grant an increase to 100% on one issue, but only grant an increase to 30% on another. Because the full amount allowable by law on the second issue is 100%, it is considered only a partial grant.

This will require both an SOC to address the benefits that were not a full grant and a rating (or possibly a new administrative decision, if the issue is an authorization issue) addressing the issues that either were a full grant or had a change in the evaluation. This means there may be times when an SOC and a rating decision are done on the same issue.

#### Examples of Partial Grants:

- 1. A Veteran disagrees with our 30% evaluation of her service-connected PTSD. After a De Novo review, the DRO grants an increase to 50%; however, the maximum evaluation for PTSD is 100%. In this case, the DRO would prepare a rating decision to grant 50% AND an SOC explaining why we couldn't grant the maximum evaluation.
- 2. A Veteran disagrees with our denial of service connection for his hearing loss and right knee condition. After a De Novo review, the DRO is able to grant service connection for hearing loss, but continues the denial for the right knee condition. The DRO would prepare both a rating decision and an SOC.

### Statement of the Case

#### PP #13

A *Statement of the Case (SOC)* is an explanation of the decision made on the appellant's case, based on the initial review of the NOD. The purpose of an SOC is to provide the appellant with a complete understanding of the decision so the appellant can prepare an effective substantive appeal addressing the specific allegations of errors of fact or law.

If a review of the claim does not result in a complete grant of benefits, we will issue an SOC to the claimant and enclose a blank *VA Form 9, Appeal to Board of Veterans' Appeals*.

#### The SOC:

summarizes the evidence,

Janaury 2015 Page 9 of 19

- cites applicable laws and regulations, and
- explains the reasons for the decision(s).

The SOC is often very lengthy because it contains all the applicable laws and regulations.

# SUBSTANTIVE APPEAL

PP#14

HO pg 7

If an appellant receives his or her SOC and continues to disagree with our decision, he or she must file a substantive appeal to continue the appeal process. This will begin the process of preparing the claims file to be transferred to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) in Washington, DC, for further appellate review.

A substantive appeal indicates a desire to continue the appeals process after an SOC has been issued. Substantive appeals should indicate a desire to continue the appeal regarding *all* of the appealed issues, or specifically identify the issues appealed.

VA Form 9

Often a substantive appeal is filed on a *VA Form 9, Appeal to Board of Veterans' Appeals*, or its equivalent. A claimant is not required to use the Form 9 to file a substantive appeal. A statement indicating a desire to continue the appeal is also acceptable as long as it contains the necessary information needed to substantiate the appeal. (See M21-1MR I.5.E.22.b for the necessary information needed.)

Allow the VSRs to review an example of a completed VA Form 9 and ask them questions regarding the information provided on the form.

Time limit

The appellant must file the substantive appeal within 60 days of the date we issued the SOC, or within one year of the original notification date, whichever is later.

#### **EXAMPLE**:

A claimant received his or her original notification letter dated March 3, 2008. He or she received an SOC dated October 10, 2008. To continue the appeal, the claimant must file a substantive appeal by March 2, 2009.

If the claimant does not send in a substantive appeal within these time limits, the appeal will closeout automatically.

NOTE: A claimant has only 30 days to file a Form 9 in contested claims (such as apportionments).

January 2015 Page 10 of 19

SSOC

A *Supplemental Statement of the Case* (SSOC) may be completed after an SOC is issued.

PP #15

Be sure to emphasize what it means to have an issue still on appeal When we receive new evidence for an issue that is *still on appeal* (i.e. the time limit to file a substantive appeal hasn't expired or a substantive appeal is in file) and we have already released an SOC, the new evidence will be thoroughly reviewed.

If the new evidence provides the information we need to grant the benefits, we will issue a rating/administrative decision.

If the new evidence does not permit us to grant the benefit, we will issue a Supplemental Statement of the Case (SSOC). An SSOC is similar to the SOC, but it addresses the new information or evidence submitted.

There is no limit on the number of SSOCs we can issue.

Substantive Appeal of Record

A response to the SSOC is optional and is not required if a substantive appeal has already been filed. A claimant may choose to respond to the SSOC before the appeal is certified to BVA. They have 30 days to respond before the case can be certified. At the expiration of the 30-day control period the appeal can be certified and the Veteran notified of the intention to send the appeal to BVA.

Substantive Appeal
Not of Record

If a substantive appeal is NOT in file when an SSOC is sent, the claimant is allowed another 60 days (or the remainder of the one year notification period, whichever is later) to file a substantive appeal.

Check comprehension

Ask the class what they wrote down for the questions on page seven of their handouts.

VA Form 646

Once the file is ready to be sent to BVA, the RO sends the appellant's file to his or her appointed representative or POA, if they have one, for completion and return of *VA Form 646*, *Statement of Accredited Representative in Appealed Case*, prior to certification.

**PP** #16

We allow five days for completion of this form before we follow up with the POA, and in approximately two working days from the follow up, if no response is received from the POA, we will continue to certify the case to BVA. We do not want to cause unwarranted delays in the certification.

HO pg 8

Certification process

The DRO or a designated Rating Specialist will thoroughly review the claims file and complete *VA Form 8, Certification of Appeal*. By completing this certification, the DRO or Rating Specialist is confirming that the record is complete, free from errors and ready for

January 2015 Page 11 of 19

BVA review.

If any deficiencies are noted, they must be addressed and corrected prior to certification to BVA.

Review a certification worksheet with the VSRs and discuss the evidence/actions that are reviewed.

Once the review is complete and the Veteran has been notified of the intent to transfer the file to BVA, the file is temporarily transferred to BVA.

**BVA** Decisions

BVA may grant, deny or remand an appeal. It is possible that appeals with multiple issues could have all three.

PP #17

The file is examined by a Board member and a staff attorney who will:

HO pg 9

- check the file for completeness,
- review the evidence and arguments, and
- examine the transcript of hearings (if held).

After review of the case, the Board will render a decision. At that time, the Board will notify the claimant of the decision, and route the claims file and a copy of the decision to the Regional Office for promulgation and/or development of the decision.

**BVA Remands** 

PP #18

Sometimes the Board will review an appeal and find that the case isn't ready for a final decision. In these cases, the appeal will be returned to the local VA office with instructions of the required actions needed. This action of sending a case back for additional development is called a **remand**.

The remand is a step-by-step explanation of what the claimant and the RO need to do before the appeal is returned to BVA.

Janaury 2015 Page 12 of 19

# Appeals Management Center (AMC)

PP #19

The Appeals Management Center (AMC), station number 397, is located in Washington, DC and is responsible for processing the majority of Compensation and Pension (C&P) remanded appeals for the nation.

However, there are cases which the AMC does not process:

- Remands involving income issues for pension and COWC requests
- Remands with private attorney representation
- Remands involving Spina Bifida (these cases are all worked in Denver)
- Remands involving personal hearing requests, whether for an RO or BVA hearing
- Remands due to the record being incomplete prior to the RO transferring the case to the BVA.

NOTE: The AMC does not handle non-C&P issues, such as hospital, education or loan guaranty appeals, and the AMC does not work any new claims, unless explicitly directed by BVA.

What do you think may be some reasons a case is remanded?

You may want to discuss some remands your station recently received.

The remand may show that—

- A VA examination is needed
- Additional evidence must be requested and reviewed by the local VA Office
- Not all issues were addressed by the VA office

Just like in earlier phases of the appeal process, if we can grant entitlement, a decision (rating or administrative) will be prepared. If it is a full grant of benefits, the appeal is closed.

If we must continue the denial, we will issue an SSOC explaining the reason(s) to the claimant. The claimant is allowed 30 days from the SSOC and then the appeal can be recertified to BVA.

Appealing a BVA

PP #20

Decision

Once BVA renders a decision, if the claimant is dissatisfied with the Board's decision, he or she can appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). The CAVC is an independent court and is not part of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Ask

January 2015

Time limit

The claimant must file a Notice of Appeal with the Court within 120 days from the date when BVA's decision is mailed.

CAVC Remands

CAVC may vacate the earlier decision by BVA. BVA will then remand the appeal to the AMC or RO for action. Remanded cases to the AMC or RO require careful attention and expeditious handling.

If you have examples of CAVC remands, review and discuss them with the class.

**CAVC Decisions** 

Once CAVC makes a decision, the decision is considered final. If a claimant loses his or her appeal, he or she may appeal the CAVC decision to the Federal Circuit Court. A loss at the Federal Circuit Court level leaves the claimant the option to appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States.

Check comprehension

Ask the class what they wrote down for the questions on pages five through nine of their handouts.

### **HEARINGS**

**OBJECTIVES** 

The VSR will be able to:

Identify the different types of hearings available to a claimant

TIME REQUIRED

20 minutes

REFERENCES

M21-1MR I.4

**38 CFR 20.700-20.717** 

**TEACHING POINTS** 

Hearings are another important aspect of the appeal process and there are a number of different types.

PP #21

HO pg 10

Hearings provide claimants with an opportunity to speak with VA representatives in person to provide testimony, bring witness(es) to speak on his or her behalf and to submit evidence to support his or her appeal.

Hearings are optional and it is important to note that any costs incurred by the claimant to attend a hearing are the claimant's responsibility.

Janaury 2015 Page 14 of 19

There are local hearings and BVA hearings. Provide a general overview of the hearings available to a claimant.

# Hearing Officer Hearings

Claimants can request a local hearing with a DRO at the regional office.

These hearings are completely separate from BVA hearings. Claimants can ask for a local hearing at any time. To request a hearing, claimants must send a request in writing to their local regional office. The RO will arrange a time and place for the hearing, provide space, assign someone to hear the evidence, and create a written record of the hearing (often called the transcript).

# Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) Hearings

Claimants can only request a hearing with BVA after they have filed a substantive appeal.

On the *VA Form 9*, there is an option for a claimant to request a hearing; however, a request for a hearing can be made anytime after the *VA Form 9* is received. To request a hearing, a claimant must send his or her request to the regional office of jurisdiction.

Just like local hearings, BVA hearings will provide appellants with the opportunity to present testimony, bring a witness to provide testimony on their behalf and submit written evidence. BVA will also create a written record of the hearing. The difference is this evidence is submitted directly to BVA personnel.

# Three types of BVA hearings

# BVA In Person Hearing

This BVA hearing takes place in Washington, DC, at the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Appellants are responsible for all travel costs.

### **BVA Travel Board Hearings**

BVA Travel Board hearings are conducted with BVA Judges at regional offices. Once or twice a year, BVA Judges travel to regional offices to conduct in-person hearings with appellants.

Because BVA Travel Board hearings are dependent on Judges traveling to regional offices, it can be a lengthy process due to scheduling and availability.

Janaury 2015 Page 15 of 19

# **BVA Travel Board Videoconference Hearings**

BVA Travel Board Videoconference hearings are conducted with BVA Judges using video teleconference technology. The Judges are located in their Washington offices and the appellants are at the regional office.

Because travel is not involved, scheduling a video hearing usually does not take as long as a traditional Travel Board hearing.

#### Check comprehension

Ask the class what they wrote down on to the question on page ten of their handouts.

Review the flowchart found on page eleven of the handouts.

#### **VACOLS**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The VSR will be able to:

Utilize VACOLS to obtain information on appeals

# TIME REQUIRED

40 minutes

#### REFERENCES

- M21-1MR I.5.K
- VACOLS User Guide

#### **TEACHING POINTS**

This section of the lesson will require demonstration of accessing the VACOLS records of a Veteran:

The Veteran's record will be used to demonstrate the VACOLS system to the class. The Veteran's record should be made available for the class to view to answer questions regarding the claimant's appeal.

Provide a brief overview of the essential information available in VACOLS. This should be taught as a "for information purposes only" lesson on VACOLS. You do not need to discuss such things as updating VACOLS records.

January 2015 Page 16 of 19

What is VACOLS?

VACOLS is an acronym for Veteran Appeals Control and Locator System.

PP #22

HO pg 12

VACOLS is a VA automated system to track claimants' appeals from receipt of the notice of disagreement (NOD) to the final disposition.

Log-in screen

Demonstrate to the class the pathway to access the VACOLS, and the log on process.

**PP** #23

In the "Logon ID" field, key in "RO" and the last two digits of your regional office station number. Tab to the "Password" field. Type in your station's assigned password. Click on the "Logon" button.

HO pg 12-14

Demonstrate the two different ways to locate an appeal record; by the appellant's claim number, or their name.

Select an appeal record to look at and discuss.

Explain that the status code located next to the claimant's name could be any of the following:

- ADV Advanced (NOD Appeal Filed and/or on Docket— Case in RO)
- **ACT** Active (case at BVA)
- **REM** Remand (case has been Remanded to VBA)
- CAV CAVC (U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Action pending -case in transit to BVA)
- **HIS** History (BVA action is complete and/or appeal is closed)

January 2015 Page 17 of 19

# "Docket" Tab HO pg 15

The "Docket" tab displays statistical information about the appeal.

Discuss information that is displayed on this screen that is most pertinent to understanding the appeals process, including:

- Hearing request information
- Travel Board information
- DRO election information, including the date of DRO election
- The "Dates" section, and what each of the dates mean to the appeals process

Inform the class that blue text next to the SOC field indicates the outcome of the decision.

# "Issues" tab HO pg 16

The Issues tab displays the inputted issues on appeal and their current status. The number in parentheses indicates the number of issues on appeal.

Point out the following information that can be obtained from the Issues tab:

- The type of benefit sought under "Program"
- Issue, usually listed with a disability or condition
- Disposition/Date

"Diaries" tab

HO pg 17

The Diaries tab displays all assigned suspense items for a particular appeal. It shows the description of the diary, who it is assigned to, the date assigned, the due date for completion, the status of the diary and whether the diary was added at the RO or at the BVA. The number within the parenthesis indicates the number of diary items.

Explain that this tab is used to track development and other required actions for pending appeals. It shows the diary code, which is the action taken, who it was assigned to, the date assigned, etc.

Point out the following information that can be obtained from the Diary tab:

Type of request under "Diary Code"

Janaury 2015 Page 18 of 19

- Who is assigned the diary and when under "Assigned To/On"
- Due date
- If the diary is open or closed.
  - NOTE: Overdue diaries show due dates in red.
- Who established the diary under "BVA/RO"

Discuss some commonly used diary codes and what they mean.

VACOLS codes

The complete listing of VACOLS Codes is found in Part 7 of the VACOLS User Guide, and several codes are listed in the handouts.

HO pg 18-21

Briefly, review the codes with the class, then, using demonstration cases, locate codes in live records to explain where they are used and what they mean.

### PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Distribute VACOLS records numbers to the class, allow them to access the system and answer the questions found on the last page of the handouts. Allow 15 minutes to complete the exercise. Once complete, review everyone's answers and discuss them.

Janaury 2015 Page 19 of 19