Introduction to COVERS

Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 1.5 Hours

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| Lesson Description | |
| The information below provides the instructor with an overview of the lesson and the materials that are required to effectively present this instruction. | |
| TMS # | 4176502 |
| Prerequisites | Prior to this lesson, the Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) or Claims Assistants (CA) should have less than 6 months of experience. |
| target audience | The target audience for Introduction to COVERS is Entry Level VSR, CAs or Challenge VSRs.  Although this lesson is targeted to teach the Entry Level VSR, CAs or Challenge VSRs employee, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher type training. |
| Time Required | 1.5 hours |
| Materials/ TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:   * Introduction to COVERS PowerPoint Presentation * Introduction to COVERS Trainee Handout * COVERS User Guide |
| Training Area/Tools | The following are required to ensure the trainees are able to meet the lesson objectives:   * Classroom or private area suitable for participatory discussions * Seating, writing materials, and writing surfaces for trainee note taking and participation * Trainee Handout * Large writing surface (easel pad, chalkboard, dry erase board, overhead projector, etc.) with appropriate writing materials * Computer with PowerPoint software to present the lesson material * Connection to the LAN applications including permissions to COVERS and SHARE   Trainees require access to the following tools:   * VA TMS to complete the assessment |
| Pre-Planning | * Become familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Lesson Plan while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding PowerPoint slides. This will provide you the opportunity to see the connection between the Lesson Plan and the slides, which will allow for a more structured presentation during the training session. * Become familiar with the content of the trainee handouts and their association to the Lesson Plan. * Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between this Lesson Plan, the trainee handouts, and the PowerPoint slides and ensure your timing is on track with the length of the lesson. * Ensure that there are copies of all handouts before the training session. * When required, reserve the training room. * Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (as needed). * Talk to people in your office who are most familiar with this topic to collect experiences that you can include as examples in the lesson. * This lesson plan belongs to you. Feel free to highlight headings, key phrases, or other information to help the instruction flow smoothly. Feel free to add any notes or information that you need in the margins. |
| Training Day | * Arrive as early as possible to ensure access to the facility and computers. * Become familiar with the location of restrooms and other facilities that the trainees will require. * Test the computer and projector to ensure they are working properly. * Before class begins, open the PowerPoint presentation to the first slide. This will help to ensure the presentation is functioning properly. * Make sure that a whiteboard or flip chart and the associated markers are available. * The instructor completes a roll call attendance sheet or provides a sign-in sheet to the students. The attendance records are forwarded to the Regional Office Training Managers. |

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| Introduction to Introduction to COVERS | | |
| INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION | | Complete the following:   * Introduce yourself * Orient learners to the facilities * Ensure that all learners have the required handouts |
| time required | | 15 minutes |
| Purpose of Lesson  Explain the following: | | This lesson is intended to introduce the trainees to the COVERS application by identifying the purpose of COVERS and general features of COVERS and differentiating between the functions of COVERS. This lesson will contain discussions and exercises that will allow you to gain a better understanding of:   * General Features and Functions of COVERS |
| Lesson Objectives  Discuss the following:  Slide 2  Handout 2 | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the VSR or CA will be required to complete an assessment that covers the following lesson objectives:  TheVSR or CAwill be able to:   * Identify the purpose and general features of COVERS. * Differentiate between the functions of COVERS. | |
| Explain the following: | Each learning objective is covered in the associated topic. At the conclusion of the lesson, the learning objectives will be reviewed. | |
| Motivation | The Control of Veterans Record System (COVERS) is a “receive-based” system that is used for temporary transfer and receipt of paper claims folders. Proper use of COVERS will reduce the possibility of “lost” claims folders and ensure that you can account for the proper transfer and receipt of Veteran’s claims folders for which you are responsible. Additionally, the smooth transfer and receipt of claim folders will provide more efficient service to our Veterans resulting in a positive experience. | |
| STAR Error code(s) | The Systematic Technical Accuracy Review (STAR) Program reviews cases and considers them either “accurate” or “in error” for the purpose of measuring technical accuracy. The following are examples of errors called during the 2010 STAR review.  Please discuss the common errors for Introduction to COVERS with the trainees. | |
| References  Slide 3  Handout 3 | Explain where these references are located in the workplace.   * COVERS User Guide | |

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| Topic 1: General Features and Functions of COVERS | |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to identify the purpose and general features of COVERS and to differentiate between the functions of COVERS. |
| Time Required | 1 hour |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * Using the trainee handout packet and references, identify the purpose and general features of COVERS, with 85% accuracy. * Using the trainee handout packet and references, differentiate between the functions of COVERS with 85% accuracy.   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * Purpose of COVERS * General Features of COVERS * General Functions of COVERS * Permission Protected Functions |
| Purpose of COVERS  Slide 4  Handout 4 | The Control of Veterans Record System (COVERS) application is a “receive” based system. It is the primary tool used in tracking internal movement of paper claims folders. Internal movement refers to movement of the claims folders within the station. Regional Offices are no longer transferring paper claims files through COVERS. COVERS tracks two types of folders—claims folders and notice of death (NOD) folders.  **Note:** Paperless files should not be transferred in COVERS.  With the implementation of VBMS, COVERS is also used to verify if the file has been scanned into VBMS. The location to which a file is covered will help determine if the file is in VBMS or if a paper file still exists. |
| General Features of COVERS  Slide 5  Handout 4 | The COVERS application possesses various features. COVERS:   * Provides a history of folder movement * Uses barcode technology to support regional office and record management center (RMC) folder activities, including requests, mail, search, and external transfers * Provides an electronic means by which to establish an on-line alert for folder requests, pending mail, or messages directed to the user * Interfaces with the Beneficiary Identification and Record Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) through the SHARE (BDN) system * Can be operated with a keyboard and mouse, or with a scanner (for the barcode label) serving in lieu of the keyboard for entering claims folder data |
| General Functions of COVERS  Slide 6  Handout 5 | The COVERS application contains numerous functions. Use the following table as guidance when explaining the general functions.   | **General Functions** | | | --- | --- | | Function | Description | | Folders | * Used for either inquiries or actions when actually working with claims | | Search | * Initiates a “search” for a folder * Initiates an internal “request” for a folder * Changes or closes out a previous request or search | | BIRLS | * Links directly to the BIRLS system | | Labels | * Generates or prints previously generated barcodes | | Transfers | * Requests transfers of folders to one’s station * Transfers folder to other locations * Prints and generates transfer request forms | | Messages | * Provides specific messages as indicated for specific functions depending on permissions assigned to individual users | | Miscellaneous | * Generally limited to specific functions of limited individuals * Restart button is enabled to all if COVERS is down | |

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| Permission Protected Functions  Slide 7  Handout 5 | The function buttons on the main screen are protected by permissions. If the user does not have permission assigned to access that function, the button will not be enabled for them. In the event that the button is not enabled, the button will appear grayed out.  The lower task bar buttons can be permissioned for access. Sometimes the access requires a specific screen be accessed first. The following table explains the lower task bar functions:   | **Lower Task Bar Functions** | | | --- | --- | | Buttons | Description | | (station number) UP | * Indicates that the application is up and running at that station * If illuminated in red and “DOWN”, click on COVERS Restart button | | Next Block | * Reflects the COVERS location of the user based on logon and password * Locations- individually assigned based on local policy * Illuminated in yellow, indicates that current location has been changed from the one assigned | | Help | * Provides general computer-assisted help for the application | | Act as SO | * Permits the user to mimic a Service Organization (SO) to “receive” a file (SO employees are not permitted this function.) * Can be enabled depending on permissions assigned * Can only be accessed from the “Receive” screen | | Chg Loc | * Used for changing COVERS location assuming adequate permissions | | Qk Print | * Permits user to generate an on-demand set of barcode label prints when adequate permissions are assigned * Enabled from “Receive” or “Inquiry” screens | | Exit | * Closes the COVERS application | | Last Two | * Displays current date and time of the day | |

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| DEMONSTRATION | Demonstrate how to log-on to COVERS. Trainees should also log-on to COVERS from their seats. Once logged-on, walk the trainees through the various functions by completing the following:   1. “Receive” a claims folder. 2. Enter a “Single Inquiry.” 3. Enter a “Name/SSN Inquiry.” 4. Demonstrate the “Change” function, but do not process. 5. Press “Previous Screen” to delete whatever you changed. 6. Demonstrate the “Delete” function by adding a volume to the claims folder at hand and then delete it using the “Delete” function. 7. Demonstrate the “BIRLS” function by entering a “Location Inquiry” on the claims folder at hand.   Since you will not be able to show a “Loc Correction”, explain the screen displayed. This function will change the BIRLS location of a claims folder that, for whatever reason, did not properly change when the claims folder was originally received in the office.   1. Demonstrate the “Search” function:  * “Mark for Mail” the claims folder at hand * Enter a “Request” for the claims folder at hand * “Change/Delete” the sear and request that was entered   Since the computer is not connected to a COVERS barcode label printer, the “Labels” function will not be demonstrated. Explain to the trainees that the capability exists for COVERS to “Generate Labels” on demand, where they will queue until the “Print Label” command is given. At that time, one of the following should be selected:   * Individual labels to print * All queued labels to print * Labels generated from individual location to print  1. Demonstrate the “Transfers” function:  * Identify an actual claims folder that is located in another station. * “Request Transfer” of this file, but do not complete the transaction. Select the “previous screen” to delete the action.  1. Demonstrate the “Transfer Out” function by following the directions for the “Transfers” function. 2. Show trainees the different drop-down menus for TTO and PTO, the “Route To” and “Remarks” sections. Do not actually TTO or PTO the example claims folder.   You will not be able to demonstrate the “Print XFR Slips” function because they have not been generated.   1. Explain to the trainees that upon completion of the TTO/PTO action, COVERS generates and queues the transfer slips that are used to attach to the file and route the file to the receiving station and that the operator must request that the slips be printed by the use of this command.   At this stage of the training, there is no need to go into any details of the “Miscellaneous” and “Messages” functions. It will suffice to mention them in passing, and to state that a full explanation of those, as well as the entire COVERS application is in the COVERS User Guide, which had previously been provided. |

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| **EXERCISE**  Regional Office Specific Topics | Using the trainee handout packet as a reference, have trainees fill in the table that can be found in Attachment A of the trainee handout packet. 15 minutes of time has been allotted for this exercise. The responses are provided in the answer key.  At this time add any information pertaining to:   * Station quality issues with this lesson * Additional State specific programs/guidance on this lesson |

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| Lesson Review, Assessment, and Wrap-up | |
| Introduction  Discuss the following: | The Introduction to COVERS lesson is complete.  Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments. |
| Time Required | 15 minutes |
| Lesson Objectives | You have completed the Introduction to COVERS lesson.  The trainee should be able to:   * Using the trainee handout packet and references, identify the purpose and general features of COVERS. * Using the trainee handout packet and references, differentiate between the functions of COVERS. |
| Assessment | Remind the trainees to complete the on-line assessment in TMS to receive credit for completion of the course.  The assessment will allow the participants to demonstrate their understanding of the information presented in this lesson. |