Lost Folders / 24 Hour Searches / Claims Folder Number Reconciliation and Cancellation

Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 1.25 Hour

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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 # | 4178989 |
| Prerequisites | Prior to this lesson, the Claims Assistant (CA) and Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) should have completed Cesting EPs and Date of Claim |
| target audience | The target audience for **Lost Folder / 24 Hour Searches / Claim Reconciliation and Cancellation** is CA andVSR Post Challenge.  Although this lesson is targeted to teach the CA andVSR Intermediate or Journey Level Post Challenge employee, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher type training. |
| Time Required | 1.25 hours |
| Materials/ TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:   * Lost Folder / 24 Hour Searches / Claim Reconciliation and Cancellation PowerPoint Presentation * Lost Folder / 24 Hour Searches / Claim Reconciliation and Cancellation Trainee Handouts * Lost Folder / 24 Hour Searches / Claim Reconciliation and Cancellation Job Aid |
| 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 * Handouts, which include a practical exercise * 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   Trainees require access to the following tools:   * VA TMS to complete the assessment * VBA Learning Catalog to access training materials |
| 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 Lost Folder / 24 Hour Searches / Claim Folder Number Reconciliation and Cancellation | | |
| INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION | | Complete the following:   * Introduce yourself * Orient learners to the facilities * Ensure that all learners have the required handouts |
| time required | | 1.25 hours |
| Purpose of Lesson  Explain the following: | | This lesson is intended to provide the Claims Assistant (CA), Veterans Service Representative (VSR) with an introduction to determining the protocols forLost Folder / 24 Hour Searches / Claim Reconciliation and Cancellation. This lesson will contain discussions and exercises that will allow you to gain a better understanding of:   * Searching for lost folders * Requests for 24 hour searches * Reviewing claims reconciliation and cancellations |
| Lesson Objectives  Discuss the following:  Slide 2  Handout 2 | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the CA and VSR will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.  The CA and VSR will be able to:   * Recognize the general policy for filing and storing Veteran’s records * Identify protocols for appropriate search procedures * Describe the appropriate steps to take with a missing claims folder or deceased Veteran’s claims folder * Discuss the steps to take when a lost file is located * Comprehend the general policies for a 24-hour search * Identify protocols for duplicate claims and how to reconcile those claims | |
| 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 | Inform trainees of the enormous impact the true importance of properly identifying claims files and how to properly locate those folders if not readily available. Misplaced claims folders can cause unnecessary claim processing delays and increase the likelihood that folders will be lost. Inform trainees how crucial it is to timely process Veterans’ claims and to prevent lost files. | |
| STAR Error code(s) | TBD | |
| References  Slide 3  Handout 3 | **Explain where these references are located in the workplace**.   * **M21-1, Part III.ii.4.D.1,** Lost Folders * **M21-1, Part III.ii.4.D.2,** 24 Hour Searches * **M21-1, Part III.ii.4.D.3,** Claims Folder NumberReconciliation and Cancellation * **M21-1, Part III.ii.3.B.2,** eFolder Creation * **M21-1, Part III.ii.4.E,** Consolidation of Duplicate Beneficiary Identification and Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) Records and Corporate Records * **Share User’s Guide** | |

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| Topic 1: Lost Folder Search | |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to upon discovery that the claims folder of a living or deceased Veteran, a Notice of Death (NOD) folder, or Dependents’ Educational Assistance (DEA) folder is missing, make an exhaustive search of the entire office. |
| Time Required | .50 hour |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * General policy for folder filing * General search procedures * Rebuilding lost claims folders * Rebuilding lost NOD or DEA folders, and * Combining folders when the original folder is located   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * Search the office * Missing folder for living or deceased Veteran * NOD or a DEA folder * Lost cannot be located * Lost folder is located |

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| General Policy for Filing and Storing Veteran’s Records  Slide 4  *Handout 4*  General Search Procedure  Slide 5  Handout 4-5 | Adhere to the policies for filing and storing Veterans' records listed below:   * File folders only in designated cabinets. * Do not store Veterans' records in desks or other unauthorized places. * Do not remove Veterans' records from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) premises for any purpose unless authorized by Regional Office (RO) management.   Consider Veterans' records that are stored at a site away from the RO, as authorized by RO management, as being on VA premises and treat the records accordingly. RO management must ensure that the off-site location, whether a government or private facility, meets all on-site security requirements and standards, and that all files stored off-site are tracked in the Control of Veterans Records System (COVERS).  Action:   * Conduct name search * Add claims folder number to the search * Check the:  1. Pending files of the transfer and correspondence activities; and 2. Principal guardianship  * Look for an active compensation, pension or educational record   **Note:** if these records show payment of benefits by another Regional Office (RO), contact that RO to determine whether or not the folder is located there.  If completion of the preceding steps fails to result in location of the missing folder, consider the folder lost.  **Note:** the RO that has mail for the folder and is requesting the folder should report the folder missing.   * Maintain the End Product (EP) with 60 day suspense from the date of the receipt of the claim. At the expiration of 60 days  1. Create a rebuilt claims folder for processing the claim, and  Continue any incomplete search efforts to find the original folder |
| Rebuilding Lost Claims Folder  Slide 7-8  Handout 5-6 | Action:   * Ask the Records Management Center (RMC) to conduct a “missing folder search.” Submit the request via e-mail to VAVBASTL/RMC/CIR   Result: the RMC searches for the claims folder in its holdings. If the claims folder is not at the RMC, the RMC:   1. Place a “missing folder” charge card in its place, and 2. Notifies the RO that the claims folder is missing   **Note:** the RMC does not maintain NOD or DEA folders   * Request a physical check for the claims folder in the file bank by:  1. Sending an email message to the Veterans Service Center Manager (VSCM) of any RO where there is reason to believe the folder may be located, and 2. Requesting a response within a specific period of time   **Note:** for priority processing claims, request a response time of 24 hours. For routine requests, request a response time of five work days   * Upon receipt of negative replies from all locations, **rebuild the claims eFolder** by doing the following:  1. Create a Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) electronic efolder 2. Submit requests for copies of any relevant evidence or documentation of the claimant and/or power of attorney 3. Update of the Beneficiary Identification and Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) to show the eFolder at the RO is a rebuilt eFolder, and 4. Append the “Rebuilt Folder” corporate flash  * Upon receipt of negative replies from all locations, **rebuild the paper format claims** by doing the following:  1. Prepare a rebuilt folder 2. Submit requests for copies of any relevant evidence or documentation in the possession of the claimant and/or power of attorney 3. Update BIRLS to show that the folder at the RO is a rebuilt folder, and 4. Prominently mark the cover of the rebuilt folder with the words Rebuilt Folder   Important: Create a rebuilt folder no more than 60 days from the date a corresponding claim is received, if the original claims folder is not located. | |
| Rebuilding Lost NOD or DEA Folders  Slide 8  Handout 6 | If a NOD or a DEA folder cannot be located after completing internal searches and receiving responses to requests for searches at any other ROs where the folder might be located:  eFolder – create and eFolder AND append the “Rebuilt Folder” corporate flash - **eFolder creation – M21-1, Part III, ii, 3.B.2**  paper format – rebuild folder   * if necessary, include copies of documents from available claims folders, fiscal records, and education records in the DEA folder, and * prominently mark the cover of the rebuilt folder with the words Rebuilt Folder - **standard notations for folders – M21-1, Part III, ii, 3.B.4.b** | |
| Combining Folders When the Original Folder is Located  Slide 9-10  *Handout 7* | If a lost folder is located for an **eFolder**:   * Consolidate document that were obtained from the original folder into the rebuilt eFolder * Remove the rebuilt indicator in BIRLS * Remove the Rebuilt Folder corporate flash, and * If the lost folder was a claims folder belonging to a living or deceased Veteran, notify the RMC that the original folder has been found.   Result: the RMC removes the missing folder charge card from its files  **Note:** Do not notify the RMC if the folder was a NOD or DEA folder  If a lost paper format folder is located:   * Combine the rebuilt folder and the original folder * Remove the rebuilt folder indicator in BIRLS * Forward the folder to the controlling operational element for review, and * If the lost folder was a claims folder belonging to a living or deceased Veteran, notify the RMC that the original folder has been found.   Result: the RMC removes the missing folder charge card from its files  Note: Do not notify the RMC if the folder was a NOD or DEA folder | |

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| Topic 2: Request 24-Hour Searches | |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to become familiar with the general policy for 24-hour searches and how to request those searches. |
| Time Required | .50 hour |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * General policy on 24-hour searches * Procedure to request a 24-hour search   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * How to request 24-hours searches |
| General Policy on 24-Hour Searches  Slide 11  Handout 8  **Priority processing:**  ALS – Lou Gehrig’s  FDC  Financial Hardship  FPOW  VSI/SI  Homeless  Terminally Ill  85 years old or older  Medal of Honor | Request 24-hour searches by email AND only on priority processing claims.  Request 24-hour searches:   * By email, and * Only on priority processing claims |
| Procedures to Request a 24-Hour Search  Slide 11  Handout 8-9 | Action:   1. Compose an email that 2. Provides the: 3. Veteran’s name 4. Claims folder number 5. Type of mail that necessitates the search, and 6. Name, address and RO of the employees to whom the folder should be sent, and 7. Clearly requests: 8. A physical check for the folder in the file banks, and 9. A response within 24-hours 10. Send the email to the VSCM of the: 11. RO that BIRLS shows has custody of the folder, and 12. RO where it is reasonable to believe the folder is located (if different that the RO shown in BIRLS). 13. Upon receipt of negative responses from all the ROs that received requests in Step 2, prepare a rebuilt folder. |

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| Topic 3: Claims Folder Number Reconciliation and Cancellation | |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to become familiarized with information on claims folder number reconciliation and cancellation |
| Time Required | .25 hour |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * Understand RO action when two BIRLS records exist for the same Veteran * Understand the requirements for consolidation |
| RO Action When Two BIRLS Records Exist for the Same Veteran  Slide 12  Handout 11 | Upon discovery that two BIRLS records exist for the same Veteran, forward all corresponding documentation, including claims folders and applications, if applicable, to the local Intake Processing Center (IPC).  ***Exception: Do not forward finance activity records to the IPC***.  The IPC is responsible for consolidating the records. This is accomplished by using the Duplicate Claim (DUPC) command, which users access through the Benefits Delivery Network (BDN)  **Information for using DUPC command, M21-1, Part III, ii, 4.E**. |
| Requirements for Consolidation  Slide 13  Handout 11 | In order to consolidate duplicate BIRLS records, the RO that is performing the consolidation must have custody of both of the corresponding claims folders. If one or both claims folders are available in an electronic format only (eFolder), the RO must hold jurisdiction over the eFolder(s).  If the RO that discovered the duplicate records does not have custody of, or hold jurisdiction over, the claims folder(s)/eFolder(s) involved, that RO must request a permanent transfer of the absent claim folder/eFolder.  Note: If the RMC has custody of both claims folders, the RMC is responsible for consolidating the duplicate records. |
| Regional Office Specific Topics | 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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| Practical Exercise | |
| Time Required | .25 hours |
| EXERCISE | Read the following scenarios and determine the next course of action.  Ask if there are any questions about the information presented in the exercise, and then proceed to the Review. |
| Scenario 1 | A Veteran submits a reopen claim into the Regional Office for an increase for his Diabetes Mellitus Type II and a new claim for his Peripheral Neuropathy upper and lower. It is discovered that the paper claim file cannot be located in the designated filing location.  What is your next course of action? |
| Scenario 2 | A Veteran submits a reopen claim into the Regional Office for and increase for his hearing loss. The Veteran has a rebuilt paper folder on file. The original file is discovered prior to being rated by the RVSR.  What is your next course of action? |
| Scenario 3 | A Veteran submits a claim for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). You do a folder search, and discover the paper folder is located at another Regional Office.  What is your next course of action? |