Service Records

Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 1 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 # | <Enter from Website or from Lead> |
| Prerequisites | None |
| target audience | The target audience for **Service Records** is **an RVSR in IWT**. |
| Time Required | 1 hour |
| Materials/ TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:   * Service Record PowerPoint Presentation * Service Record Excercise * Service Record Instructor 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 * 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:   * **A computer for reference research** * **Service Record Exercise** |
| 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 Service Records | | | |
| INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION | | Complete the following:   * Introduce yourself * Orient learners to the facilities * Ensure that all learners have the required handouts | |
| time required | | 1 hour | |
| Purpose of Lesson | | The intention of this lesson is to orient trainees to the general format, organization, composition, and structuring of service treatment records. | |
| Lesson Objectives  Discuss the following:  Slide 2 | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the RVSR trainee will be required to accomplish the following lesson objective.  TheRVSR trainee will be able to effectively review, understand, and translate service treatment records (STRs) with 98% accuracy. | | |
| Motivation | To be a Veteran, an individual must have served on active duty in military service. In order for us to decide claims for service connection of disabilities, we must have the treatment records and be able to understand them. Service Treatment Records, or STRs, provide that information for us, and we need to understand how to obtain them, and how to read them before we can make our decisions, and assist Veterans with their claims. | | |
| STAR Error code(s) | TBD | | |
| References  Slide 3 | Explain where these references are located in the workplace.  All M21-1 references are found in the [Live Manual Website](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/).   * [**M21-1 Part I, 1.C**](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?portalid=554400000001034) **- Requesting Records** * [**M21-1 Part III, Subpart iii, 2.A**](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?portalid=554400000001034) **– General Information on Service Records** * [**M21-1 Part III, Subpart iii, 2.B**](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?portalid=554400000001034) **- Migration of Service Records and the Procedures for Obtaining Them** * [**M21-1 Part III, Subpart iii, 2.I**](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?portalid=554400000001034) **- Control and Follow-Up of Requests for Service Records** * [**M21-1 Part IV, Subpart ii, 1.D**](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?portalid=554400000001034) **- Claims for Service Connection (SC) for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** * [**M21-1 Part IV, Subpart ii, 2.A**](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/portal.html?portalid=554400000001034) **- Deciding Claims for Disability Compensation** | | |
| Topic 1: Service Treatment Records | | | | |
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| Definition of Service Treatment Records (STRs)  Slide 4 | | | | **EXPLAIN:** Service treatment records (STRs) are the in-service health records that service departments collect for each service member. (For many years, they were referred to as service medical records (SMRs)). These records can be electronic, paper, or microfiche.  Original, paper versions of STRs in the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA’s) possession belong to the Department of Defense (DoD) and are only on loan to VA. They are subject to recall by entities within DoD, to include Reserve and National Guard units.  *NOTE: If a service member was treated during service at an off-base civilian facility, those civilian medical or mental health records are not automatically associated with their STRs.*  *In addition, these civilian treatment records are not forwarded to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) so we will not automatically get them if we request the service records from that facility.*  *Finally, STRs belong to the respective service departments and are on loan to VA for our use in determining entitlement to VA benefits. For this reason, we may not highlight or otherwise deface these records.* |
| History of Certification of STRs | | | | **EXPLAIN** that on January 1, 2013, individual service departments began issuing their own version of a letter that certified the completeness of a service member’s STRs. Prior to this date, no requirement for certification existed. On June 25, 2013, DoD replaced the letters with *DD Form 2963, Service Treatment Record (STR) Certification*. By August 1, 2013, all service departments were using the new form.  If a service department fails to certify the completeness of a service member’s STRs *after* January 1, 2013, follow the instructions in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.B.2.d](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/#2d). |
| Requesting STRs  Slide 5 | | | | **EXPLAIN:** Briefly how National Personnel RecordsCenter(NPRS) (PIES) and RMC request are now scanned and uploaded into VMBS eFolder and cover HAIMS for records received from military service departments after January 1, 2014.  **PIES**:  O50 request code acquire all available STRs and OMPF (Office Military Personnel File) records and upload to VBMS eFolder  When the PIES request is completed, the records and/or completed 3101 request are being directly sent for scanning  **RMC (Records Management Center)**:  Claims folder is located at RMC - RMC will ship to scanning and upload into VBMS eFolder  STRs are located at RMC  If STRs are In Transit  no further action is required  If STRS are not In Transit  request by sending email to RMC and RMC will ship to scanning and upload to |
| Requesting STRs: HAIMS  Slide 6 | | | | VBMS automatically submits a request for a Veteran’s STRs to Health Artifacts and Imaging Management Solution (HAIMS) when   * a Veteran whose service ended on or after January 1, 2014 files a claim for VA benefits, and * the RO that received the claim begins processing it in VBMS.  |  |  | | --- | --- | | **If ...** | **Then HAIMS provides VA with ...** | | HAIMS has never before responded to a request for the Veteran’s STRs | a certified, electronic copy of all STRs the Veteran’s service department has uploaded into HAIMS. | | HAIMS has already responded to an initial request for STRs | an electronic copy of any *additional* STRs the Veteran’s service department has uploaded into HAIMS since the previous request. |   ***Notes***:   * No tracked item is generated when VBMS submits a request to HAIMS. * To determine the status of a request, users must rely on the status and error messages listed in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.B.3.g](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/#3g). * When HAIMS transmits an electronic copy of a Veteran’s STRs to VBMS, VBMS   + inserts the copy into the Veteran’s eFolder, and   + displays a “new mail” indicator to alert users that the Veteran’s STRs are available for viewing. * When the Veteran’s separation date is on or after January 1, 2014, but the separation date either does not exist or is updated in the corporate record during claim establishment or processing, VBMS displays a button labeled “Request STR Again” under the OBTAIN STRS tab. Users must return to this tab and click on the button after updating the corporate record with the correct separation date. |
| STR Contents  *Slides 7* | | | | **EXPLAIN** that these are things that may be present in the Veteran’s service records, but not in every case.  The contents of the STRs will vary from Veteran to Veteran. Some will have only an entrance/separation exam, and some may contain multiple envelopes filled with hundreds of documents. |
| STR Formats  *Slide 8* | | | | **EXPLAIN** that the enlistment exam is not always clearly labeled. If you don’t see ENLISTMENT on the examination, you can identify it using the date or y noting that it is an examination of a “civilian.”  (use pointer to draw attention to the different places you can find the information as you explain it.) |
| STR Formats  *Slide 9* | | | | **EXPLAIN** Again, the separation exam is not always clearly labeled and checking the date may be helpful in determining which examination in the file is the separation examination. As RVSRs we need to know the date of the entrance and separation examinations because when we include the STRs in the EVIDENCE section of our rating decision we musts provide a date range. |
| STR Review  *Slide 10* | | | | **EXPLAIN** We can tab and label the Veteran’s STR using the annotation and book marking methods in VBMS.  RVSRs must review all of the available service records (YES every page) for claimed conditions and unclaimed chronic conditions 38 CFR 3.309a in service. Remember that we would need to solicited a claim for unclaimed chronic conditions before we can address the condition. If the condition(s) meet the criteria for a grant we would do so at that time.  It is a good practice as an RVSR to identify any of the conditions that you find in the service records if the VSR has not already done this. The VSR will complete the development checklist and solicit the claims for disabilities that they or the RVSR note in the service record. |
| STR Review  *Slide 11* | | | | **EXPLAIN** We must make all reasonable efforts to protect the integrity, appearance and readability of the service records since they are only on loan to us. (READ SLIDE) |
| STR Data Format  *Slide 12* | | | | **EXPLAIN:** SOAP is an acronym for Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plan. This is a common method of documentation used by health care providers when they write out notes in a patient's charts.  S: Subjective summary, or history of the patient’s reason for seeking medical advice/help, or symptoms experienced. We will often see the patient states they have pain here.  O: Objective finding by the treatment provider during the examination. This is also were we get the “bulk” of our finding for rating purposes.  A: Assessment - the diagnosis, or in some cases the provisional diagnosis pending further tests  P: Plan for treatment or medication prescribed |
| SOAP Format  *Slide 13* | | | | **EXPLAIN** that sometimes “S: will be labeled with an “H” for history; and “A” will sometimes be labeled “I” for impression or “DX” for diagnosis.  **EMPHASIZE** the “S” (or “H”) portion is NOT the diagnosis. These are the symptoms that the Veteran is reporting, not the findings of the Dr.--which are usually found under the “A” portion of the record  As a final note, this SOAP format may also be used by private doctors/clinics/hospitals in their treatment records and reports. The format is not unique to military records. |
| STR Format Example  *Slide 14* | | | | **ANSWERS**:  S: Here is an excerpt from a typical treatment record. In this case, the **S** section (subjective symptoms) would be “Past history right knee injury in 1995. Arthroscopic surgery showed torn medial meniscus. Patient underwent medial meniscectomy, physical therapy, then limited duty. Symptoms continued. Medical Evaluation Board completed 9/95. That exam showed marked lateral laxity, some tenderness at medial aspect, no edema, no locking. Patient discharged from service w/disability severance pay. Today, complains of right knee buckling, pain with standing, sitting, stair climbing.” Notice that this contains the medical history AND the Veteran’s reported symptoms.  **O** (objective symptoms): Flexion to 110, extension to 5. + tenderness to patellar compression. + varus/valgus stress test. Marked lateral laxity. Negative drawer sign. No edema. X-ray: slight joint space narrowing, early arthritic changes.  **A** (assessment): Status post right medial meniscectomy with residual laxity, degenerative joint disease.  **P** (plan/treatment): Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and orthopedics consult. |
| Questions?  *Slide 15* | | | | Ask trainees if they have any questions concerning the material presented during the course. Once questions are answered, please continue. |
| Translating SOAP Exercise  *Slide 16* | | | |  |
| Exercise | | | | Translate each of the three service treatment record samples given. Put the SOAP information in the blanks provided at the bottom by the corresponding letter. In addition, write out the abbreviations and acronyms you find in the text. We will go over the answers together. |

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| Lesson Review, Assessment, and Wrap-up | |
| Introduction  Discuss the following: | The Service Records lesson is complete.  Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments. |
| Lesson Objectives | You have completed the Service Records lesson.  You will now be able to effectively review, understand, and translate service treatment records (STRs) with 98% accuracy. |