Pension and fiduciary service

PMC VSR Core Course  
Phase 3: PMC VSR Resources

Lesson 3: References

Lesson Plan

December 2019

References

Lesson Overview

| Topic | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Time Estimate: | 1 hour |
| Purpose of the Lesson: | This lesson is part of the entry-level curriculum, Core Course for PMC VSRs. The purpose of this lesson is to prepare PMC VSRs to locate and use common VA references. |
| Prerequisite Training Requirements: | Prior to taking the VA References lesson, trainees must complete PMC VSR Core Course Phases 1 and 2, as well as Phase 3 lessons 1 and 2. |
| Target Audience: | This lesson is for entry-level PMC VSRs. |
| Lesson References: | * **Master Course Map** learning aid * CPKM website * Pension homepage * M21-1 (Adjudication Procedures Manual) * M21-4 (Manpower Control and Utilization in Adjudication Divisions Manual) * M27-1 (Benefits Assistance Service Procedures) * e-CFR website * **Common VA References** job aid |
| Knowledge Check: | * Phase 3: PMC VSR Resources Knowledge Check |
| Technical Competencies: | * Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR) * VBA Applications (PMC VSR) |
| Lesson Objectives: | * Identify the most commonly used references by PMC VSRs.   + Describe the purpose and applicability of the different types of references.   + Describe the elements of each reference.   + Locate the appropriate reference.   + Navigate to the CPKM portal   + Know how to subscribe to the manual updates email |
| What You Need: | * Lesson plan * **Master Course Map** learning aid * Appendix A: References worksheet * Slides * Projector * Access to VBA intranet * Access to the **Common VA References** job aid from VSR Assistant * Access to the Compensation and Pension website * Access to the Pension and Fiduciary website * Access to CPKM * Access to the e-CFR website * Reference examples for each of the following:   + 38 CFR   + M21-1 (Adjudication Procedures Manual)   + M21-4 (Manpower Control and Utilization in Adjudication Divisions Manual)   + M27-1 (Benefits Assistance Service Procedures) |

Instructor Notes

This lesson provides trainees with the purpose, types, and locations of the most common references they will use on the job as well as knowledge of how to cite the different types of references.

| PowerPoint Slides | Instructor Activities |
| --- | --- |
| **Lesson 3: References** | **DISPLAY** slide  “Lesson 3: References”  **INTRODUCE** yourself as the instructor.  **INTRODUCE** the lesson. |
| **Why Are References Important?**   * References, when used properly, can:   + Improve quality of work   + Increase timeliness   + Provide job satisfaction   + Reduce stress   + Provide promotion potential   + Help Veterans   + Substantiate administrative decisions and determinations that affect a Veteran’s case | **DISPLAY** slide  “Why Are References Important?”  **DISCUSS** the importance of references to the job of a PMC VSR.  **PROVIDE** an example from your own experience where the reference played an integral part in:   * Improving the quality of your work * Increasing timeliness * Providing job satisfaction * Reducing stress * Providing promotion potential * Helping Veterans * **Substantiating administrative decisions and determinations that affect a Veteran’s case** |
| **Technical Competencies**   * Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR) * VBA Applications (PMC VSR) | **DISPLAY** slide  “Technical Competencies”  **REVIEW** technical competencies with trainees. |
| **Lesson Objectives**   * Describe the most commonly used references by PMC VSRs. * Describe the purpose and applicability of the different types of references. * Describe the elements of each reference. * Locate the appropriate reference | **DISPLAY** slide  “Lesson Objectives”  **PRESENT the objectives for the lesson.** |
| **Precedence of VBA Laws, Regulations, and Procedures**  The is a flowchart with 4 rectangular boxes, from top to bottom: Constitution, U.S. Code, 38 CFR, and Manual. | **DISPLAY** slide  “Precedence of VBA Laws, Regulations, and Procedures”  **EXPLAIN** that the references are built off of precedence set by the Constitution. The Constitution is interpreted into the U.S. Code, which is represented by the 38 CFR. The 38 CFR is further broken down into smaller, easy to read and interpret parts in the M21-1. The M21-1 will be explained in more detail later in the lesson.  This icon prompts you to ask students a discussion question or to ask students if they have any questions before proceeding with instruction.  **ASK** trainees if there are any questions regarding on what VA references represent or how they are established. |
| **Most Commonly Used References for PMC VSRs**   * 38 CFR * M21-1 Compensation and Pension Materials, Adjudication Procedures Manual * M21-4 Manpower Control and Utilization in Adjudication Divisions * M27-1 Benefits Assistance Materials * VBA Letters * Job aids, located in the VSR Assistant from the PMC VSR button | **DISPLAY** slide  “Most Commonly Used References for PMC VSRs”  **EXPLAIN** briefly the references shown on the slide and that they will use these references to make decisions on claims and provide information to claimants. Let trainees know that each reference will be discussed separately later in the lesson.  This icon indicates you should refer trainees to a document or reference (e.g., a page in the Student Guide or a specific appendix)  **REFER** the trainees to the **Common VA References** job aid, located in the VSR Assistant from the PMC VSR button. |
| **How to Access References**   * Compensation and Pension Knowledge Management (CPKM) * Pension and Fiduciary homepage | **DISPLAY** slide  “How to Access References”  **REMIND** trainees that they learned about these sites and how to access them in the previous lesson, Pension Homepage.  **REVIEW** with trainees how to access each site by having them navigate to the VBA intranet. Have the trainees access the following:   * CPKM * Pension homepage |
| **VA and Title 38 USC**   * Chapter 1 of Title 38 of the United States Code (USC) of Federal regulations (CFR) governs the administration of Veterans benefits. * This reference is used by federal agencies of the United States regarding pensions, bonuses, and Veterans’ relief. * VSR work primarily in Part 3 of 38 CFR. * Available online through the [Code of Federal Regulations (e-CFR) website](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse) and through the publications website. * Organized in numerical order from the first regulation (3.1) to the two thousand six hundredth regulation (3.2600). | **DISPLAY** slide  “VA and Title 38 USC”  **REVIEW** the precedence of VBA laws, regulations, and procedures.  **EXPLAIN** that Chapter 1 of Title 38 is the principal set of rules issued and used by federal agencies of the U.S. regarding pensions, bonuses, and Veterans’ relief.  **ACCESS** the [Code of Federal Regulations (e-CFR) website](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse) and have the trainees confirm that they can access it as well.  **DEMONSTRATE** how to use the e-CFR website by selecting “Title 38” from the drop-down menu. Navigate with the trainees to a part that the trainees will become familiar with on the job, such as Part 3, Adjudication. |
| **M21-1 Adjudication Procedures Manual**   * The M21-1 is an interpretation of CFRs * Also known as “The Manual” * Consists of the following parts:   + Part 1. Claimants’ Rights and Responsibilities   + Part 3. General Claims Process   + Part 4. Compensation, DIC, and Death Compensation Benefits   + Part 5. Pension and Parents’ Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)   + Part 6. Chapter 18 Benefits   + Part 7. Burial Benefits   + Part 8. Accrued Benefits   + Part 9. Ancillary and Special Benefits   + Part 10. Matching Programs | **DISPLAY** slides   “M21-1 Compensation and Pension Materials, Adjudication Procedures Manual”  **EXPLAIN** to the trainees that the M21-1 manual is an interpretation of the CFRs and it provides detailed instructions for implementing regulations using VA systems. This is the reference they will use most on the job.  **REVIEW** how to access the manual via the VBA intranet and the Pension and Fiduciary homepage.  **NAVIGATE** the trainees to the M21-1 manual and advise them to select a few sections to get familiar with it.  **NOTE** that they will learn how the use the CPKM tool in Lesson 5: Overview of Pension Systems and Applications. |

| PowerPoint Slides | Instructor Activities |
| --- | --- |
| **M21-4 Manual**   * Provides a logistical overview of how the stations function * Consists of the following parts:   + Chapter 1. Overview   + Chapter 2. Workflow Management Plans   + Chapter 3. National Quality Reviews   + Chapter 4. Claims and Appeals Processing Timeliness   + Chapter 5. Systematic Analyses of Operations (SAO)   + Chapter 6. Quality Review Team (QRT)   + Chapter 7. PMC National Quality and QRT   + Chapter 8. Fiduciary Hub (Hub) National Quality Reviews and Quality Review Teams (QRT)   + Appendix A. Glossary of Terms and Definitions   + Appendix B. End Product Codes and Work-Rate Standards for Quantitative Measurements   + Appendix C. Index of Claim Attributes   + Appendix D. Index of Claim Stage Indicators | **DISPLAY** slides  “M21-4 Manpower Control and Utilization in Adjudication Divisions”  **EXPLAIN** to the trainees that the M21-4 manual is a logistical overview of how the Regional Offices (ROs) function. It provides information regarding workflow management, timelines for claims processing, and directives for the Quality Review Team.  **REVIEW** how to access the manual via the Compensation Service Intranet Home Page, Pension and Fiduciary intranet, and the KnowVA website.  **NAVIGATE** the trainees to the M21-4 manual and advise them to select a few sections to get familiar with it.  This icon indicates you should refer trainees to a document or reference (e.g., a page in the Student Guide or a specific appendix)  **REFER** the trainees to the **Common VA References** job aid, located in the VSR Assistant from the PMC VSR button, for a summary of this information. |
| **Manual Changes**   * **Directions to subscribe to the weekly manual update email** * **Go to the provided link** * **Click on “subscribe here”** * **Follow the steps for subscribing to updates on this next page. Updates from the week are sent every Friday.** | **DISPLAY** slide  “Manual Changes”  **NAVIGATE** the trainees to the link provided to sign up for the weekly emails  **EXPLAIN** it is important to review all published manual changes  This icon indicates you should refer trainees to a document or reference (e.g., a page in the Student Guide or a specific appendix)  **REFER** the trainees to the **Common VA References** job aid, located in the VSR Assistant from the PMC VSR button, for a summary of this information. |
| **M27-1 Benefits Assistance Service Procedures**   * **Manual used primarily by public contact and outreach employees to help them provide timely and accurate benefit information and services to Service members, Veterans, dependents, and survivors** * **Consists of the following parts:**   + **Part I. VBA Public Contact and Direct Services**   + **Part II. VBA Outreach**   + **Part III. VBA Web Communications**   + **Part IV. Quality and Training**   + **Part V. Access and Business Applications** | **DISPLAY** slide  “M27-1 Benefits Assistance Service Procedures”  **EXPLAIN** to the trainees that the M27-1 manual is what they will refer to when providing benefit information to Service members, Veterans, dependents, and survivors.  **REVIEW** how to access the manual via the Compensation Service Intranet Home Page, Pension homepage, and the KnowVA website.  **NAVIGATE** the trainees to the M27-1 manual and advise them to select a few sections to get familiar with it.  This icon indicates you should refer trainees to a document or reference (e.g., a page in the Student Guide or a specific appendix)  **REFER** the trainees to the **Common VA References** job aid, located in the VSR Assistant from the PMC VSR button, for a summary of this information. |
| **VBA Letters**   * **Can be found under the “VBA Letters” section of the Publications Index** * **Written from the office of the Undersecretary for Benefits** * **Cover a range of topics from benefit processing instructions to information about leadership programs** * **Communicated via upper management** | **DISPLAY** slide  “VBA Letters”  **NAVIGATE** the trainees to the “VBA Letters” VBA intranet site. Show an example of a VBA Letter.  **EXPLAIN** that these letters are received rarely and are received as an Under Secretary for Benefits letter. This directive is often communicated by upper management.  This icon indicates you should refer trainees to a document or reference (e.g., a page in the Student Guide or a specific appendix)  **REFER** the trainees to the **Common VA References** job aid, located in the VSR Assistant from the PMC VSR button, for a summary of this information. |
| **Other PMC VSR References**   * AMA FAQs * P&F Service Inquiries * Job aids   + Can be provided by management or peers, or created by you * VSR Assistant EPSS | **DISPLAY** slide  “Other VSR References”  **NAVIGATE** the trainees to the AMA FAQs, P&F Service Inquiries, VSR Assistant EPSS, and Pension EPSS.  **EXPLAIN** the AMA FAQs are frequently asked questions that apply to the Appeals Modernization ACT (AMA). P&F Service Inquiries are assistance to inquiries from the PMCs when there is confusion about a certain policy or procedure. EPSS is a tool that provides step-by-step guides and supports claims processing and decision making.  This icon indicates you should refer trainees to a document or reference (e.g., a page in the Student Guide or a specific appendix)  **REFER** the trainees to the **Common VA References** job aid, located in the VSR Assistant from the PMC VSR button. |
| **Practice Exercise—VBA References Review**   * Instructions:   + Complete the Appendix A: References worksheet   + Access the **Common VA References** job aid, located in the VSR Assistant from the PMC VSR button   + Navigate to CPKM to access the references in the job aid   + Answer the questions in the worksheet using the references   + Submit answers to another trainee * Time allowed: 15 minutes | **DISPLAY** slide  “Practice Exercise—VBA References Review”  This icon indicates you should refer trainees to a document or reference (e.g., a page in the Student Guide or a specific appendix)  **REFER** trainees to Appendix A: References worksheet and the **Common VA References** job aid, located in the VSR Assistant from the PMC VSR button.  **INSTRUCT** trainees that they have 15 minutes to complete the worksheet. Let the trainees know when to start and stop. Once they have completed the worksheet, have the trainees swap their worksheets with one another for grading as you go through the correct answers. |
| **VBA References Review Exercise Answers**   1. What is the topic of 38 CFR 3.110?    * *Computation of time limit* 2. According to M21-1 III.v.1.B.5.k, what are the types of uncharacterized separations?    * *Entry level separation*    * *Void enlistment or induction*    * *Dropped from the rolls* 3. Where is the reference for development of accrued benefits in the Manual?    * *M21-1 VIII.3* 4. According to the M21-1 V.i.2.1.a, what elements must be shown to establish entitlement to Veterans Pension?    * *Qualifying Service*    * *Permanent and total disability or 65 years old*    * *Countable income below the MAPR, and*    * *Net worth limitations met* 5. What is the topic of 38 CFR 3.701?    * *Elections of pension or compensation* | **DISPLAY** slide  “VBA References Review Exercise Answers”  **REVIEW** the correct answers with the group of trainees and address any questions or issues that may arise. |
| 1. **What reference provides information regarding the effect of income and net worth on pension and parents DIC? Provide the citation**    * ***M21-1, Part V, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section A*** 2. What is the topic of 38 CFR 3.53?    * *Continuous cohabitation* 3. What is the reference for End Product Classification codes?    * *M21-4, Appendix B* |  |
| **Lesson Summary**   * Knowing what references are available and how to use them are essential in performing tasks and duties on the job. * Remember, references are important because they:   + Improve quality of work   + Increase timeliness   + Provide job satisfaction   + Reduce stress   + Provide promotion potential   + Help Veterans   + Substantiate administrative decisions and determinations that affect a Veteran’s case | **DISPLAY** slide  “Lesson Summary”  **EMPHASIZE** the importance of:   * The references available to PMC VSRs * The purpose of each reference * Knowing the elements of each reference * Where the references are located   This icon indicates you should refer trainees to a document or reference (e.g., a page in the Student Guide or a specific appendix)  **REFER** the trainees to the **Common VA References** job aid for summaries of each reference and where each reference can be found. |
| **Questions?**  This icon prompts you to ask students a discussion question or to ask students if they have any questions before proceeding with instruction. | **DISPLAY** slide  “Questions?”  This icon prompts you to ask students a discussion question or to ask students if they have any questions before proceeding with instruction.  **ASK** trainees if they have any questions or concerns regarding the VA references available and how to use them. |
| **What’s Next**  TMS Evaluation  TMS #4189331 References | **DISPLAY** slide  “What’s Next”  **DISCUSS** the upcoming TMS Evaluation |