Introduction to VA Forms

Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 2 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 # | 4411832 |
| Prerequisites | There are no prerequisites for this course. |
| target audience | The target audience is Claims Assistants.  Although this lesson is targeted to teach the CA, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher type training. |
| Time Required | 2 hours |
| Materials/ TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:   * Introduction to VA Forms PowerPoint Presentation * Introduction to VA Forms Trainee Handout |
| 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 |
| 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 VA Forms | | |
| INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION | | Complete the following:   * Introduce yourself * Orient learners to the facilities * Ensure that all learners have the required handouts |
| time required | | 2 hours |
| Purpose of Lesson  Explain the following: | | This lesson is intended to provide the Claims Assistant (CA) with training on how to identify if the proper form was used for the benefit being sought. This lesson will contain discussions and exercises that will allow you to gain a better understanding to:   * Recognize and identify the correct VA form * Understand the significance of the March 24, 2015 date as it relates to prescribed claims forms |
| Lesson Objectives  Discuss the following:  Slide 2  Handout 2 | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the CA will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.  TheClaims Assistant will be able to:   * Explain the components of the Standard Claims and Appeals Form Rule for all claims received on and after March 24, 2015 * Identify the acceptable prescribed benefit form to file a claim | |
| 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 | Express to the CA the importance of having the proper forms for the benefit being sought. | |
| STAR Error code(s) | TBD | |
| References  Slide 3  Handout 3 | Explain where these references are located in the workplace.  All M21-1 references are found in the [CPKM](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/).   * [38 CFR 3.151, Claims for disability benefits](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ad275643432556b9dda942343fb89296&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div58#se38.1.3_1151) * [38 CFR 3.150, Forms to be furnished](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&SID=549cda86648188a6a068def5530850c9&rgn=div5&view=text&node=38:1.0.1.1.4&idno=38) * [38 CFR 3.155, How to file a claim](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ad275643432556b9dda942343fb89296&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div58#se38.1.3_1155) * [38 CFR 3.155(b), Intent to File a Claim](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ad275643432556b9dda942343fb89296&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div58#se38.1.3_1155) * [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 2, Section B, Benefit Programs and Types of Claims](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014119/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-2-Section-B-Claims-for-Disability-Compensation-and-or-Pension-and-Claims-for-Survivors-Benefits) * [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 2, Section C, Informal Claims Received Prior to March 24, 2015, Communication of an Intent to File (ITF), and Requests for Application](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014115/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-2-Section-C-Informal-Claims-Received-Prior-to-March-24-2015-Communication-of-an-Intent-to-File-ITF-and-Requests-for-Application) * [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 3, Section C, What Constitutes a Complete VA Form 21-22 or 21-22a](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014125/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-3-Section-C-System-Updates#4e) | |

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| Topic 1: Standard Claims and Appeals Form Rule | | | |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to identify a standard VA-prescribed form and the significance of the date March 24, 2015 as it relates to claims forms. | | |
| Time Required | 0.75 hours | | |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * Understand why all claimants must submit claims on a standard VA-prescribed form * Significance of the March 24, 2015 date   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * What are the major components of the “Standard Claims and Appeals Form” rule * Significance of the March 24, 2015 date | | |
| What are the major components of the “Standard Claims and Appeals Form” rule  Slide 4  Handout 4  **What is the importance of the March 24, 2015 date**  Slide 5  Slide 6 – Sample VA Form 21-0966. Inform trainees that there will be a separate class discussing the ITF process. | The “Standard Claims and Appeals Form” rule was a change in VA regulation which was published in the Federal Register on September 25, 2014, and became final effective March 24, 2015. It is comprised of four major components:   * Requiring all claimants to submit claims on a standard VA-prescribed form * Eliminating 38 CFR 3.157 * Creating an intent to file (ITF) process, and * Using a Standard Notice of Disagreement form.   If a claim is not received on the appropriate application form on or after March 24th, 2015, consider the correspondence a request for application.  *TRAINER: The next three slides will define these four points.*  Claims received before March 24, 2015 are not required to be submitted on prescribed forms.  VA stopped accepting informal claims on March 24, 2015. Claimants desiring the benefit of filing an informal claim must now communicate to VA “intent to file” a claim.  The ITF is significant because it is an “effective date placeholder.” This means that the date of receipt of the informal claim or ITF, not the date we receive the substantially complete application, would determine how far back in the past we can grant benefits. | | |
| Requirements for a Complete Claim Received on or After March 24, 2015  Slide 7  Handout 4  **Benefit Requests Not Requiring a Prescribed Form**  Slide 8  Handout 4 | Effective March 24, 2015, VA will only recognize compensation, pension, survivors, and related claims if they are submitted on the required standard forms. The new rule mandates that appellants must use a standard notice of disagreement form, VA 21-0958, Notice of Disagreement, to initiate the appeals process.  Emphasize the importance of the March 24, 2015 date by explaining informal claims were defined by regulations in effect prior to March 24, 2015. After that date, the concept of informal claim was removed from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations and replaced by the intent to file (ITF) and request for application regulations included in [38 CFR 3.155](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=b1d01c335ed4338df0246b6f0125f624&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div5#se38.1.3_1155).  The change also eliminates the provisions of 38 CFR 3.157 which allowed various documents other than claims forms to constitute claims, specifically, VA reports of hospitalization or examination and other medical records which could be regarded as informal claims for increase or to reopen a previously denied claim.  VA will recognize an Intent to File (ITF) a claim for benefits if it is submitted on the required VA Form 21-0966, *Intent to File,* indicating the benefit sought. An Intent to File may be accepted if it is signed by the veteran *or* authorization representative (POA) on behalf of the Veteran.  Effective March 24, 2015, VA will only accept issues listed on a timely VA Form 21-0958, Notice of Disagreement, if required, as part of the appeal submission for compensation. Any additional evidence or statements suggesting appealed issues will be considered a request for application for a NOD.  A prescribed claim form is not required for requests for   * review based on clear and unmistakable error (CUE) * reconsideration * substitution * a finding of incompetency received from a first or third party, and * removal of a dependent. | | |
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| Topic 2: Acceptable Forms | | | |
| Introduction | | This topic will introduce the trainee to the various forms used when filing for different types of claims: Compensation, Non-service connected pension, Individual Unemployability, DIC, Death Pension and Accrued, and Ancillary claims. | |
| Time Required | | 0.75 hours | |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | | Topic objectives:   * Recognize the various standardized claims forms which constitute a claim for benefits * Identify common forms that are routinely routed through the mail portal   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * Review of the VA Form 21-526 * Review of common VA forms | |
| **What is VA Form 21-526?**  Slide 9  Handout 5-11 | | VA Form 21-526, Veteran’s Application for Compensation and/or Pension, is the prescribed form a claimant must file when the benefit sought is original service connection, new or reopened claim, increased evaluation, temporary total disability rating, or pension.  M21-1 III.ii.2.B outlines the specific parameters for the required form based upon the benefit sought.  ***Instructor:*** Open the manual reference and review the chart on this page. Engage in a discussion of the various benefits available, and which forms are appropriate. Open the [VA Form 21-526](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-526-ARE.pdf) and review Parts I through XIII of the form with the trainees. | |
| **Review of Common VA Forms**  Slide 10    Handout12 | | Commonly you will see various forms come through the mail portal, and you will be required to recognize, upload, and route the forms as appropriate. A way to identify [VA Forms](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/) is to review the form number itself. The first two numbers identify the division within VA to which the form belongs.  Some common division numbers you will see are:  10 = Veterans Health Administration  21 = Veterans Benefits Administration  22 = Education  26 = Loan Guaranty  28 = Vocational Rehabilitation  29 = Insurance | |
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| Slide 11  Handout 12-14 | | Some Common VA Forms you will see are:  **Automobile Allowance or Vehicular Adaptive Equipment Claim**  [VA Form 21-4502 Automobile Allowance or Other Conveyance and Adaptive Equipment](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-4502-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 10-1394 Application for Adaptive Equipment Motor Vehicle](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-1394-fill.pdf)  **CHAMPVA**  [VA Form 10-7959c CHAMPVA Other Health Insurance (OHI) Certification](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-7959c-fill.pdf)  [VA Form 10-10d Application for CHAMPVA Benefits](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-10d-fill.pdf)  **DEPENDENCY**  [VA Form 21-686c Declaration of Status of Dependents](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-686c-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 21-674 Request for Approval of School Attendance](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-674-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 21-674b School Attendance Report](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-674b-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 21P-509 Statement of Dependency Parent](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21P-509-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 21-0788 Information Regarding Apportionment of Beneficiary’s Award](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-0788-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 21-0538 Status of Dependents Questionnaire](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-0538-ARE.pdf)  **EP 290-Retired Pay/Severance Pay**  [VA Form 21-651-Election of Compensation in Lieu of Retired Pay or Waiver of Retired Pay to Secure Compensation from Department of Veterans Affairs](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-651-ARE.pdf)  **Drill Pay**  [VA Form 21-8951-2 Notice Of Waiver Of VA Compensation Or Pension To Receive Military Pay And Allowances](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-8951-2-ARE.pdf)  **Education**  [VA Form 22-1990 Application for VA Education Benefits](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-22-1990-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 22-5490 Dependents' Application for VA Education Benefits (Under Provisions of Chapters 33 and 35)](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-22-5490-ARE.pdf) | |
|  | | **Finance**  [VA Form 27-0820d Report of Non-Receipt of Payment (Missing Check/Check Tracer Request)](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-27-0820d-ARE.pdf)  **FOIA-Privacy Act**  [SF 180 Form Request Pertaining To Military Records](https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html)  [VA Form 3288 Request For and Consent to Release of Information from Individual’s Records](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA3288.pdf)  [VA Form 10-5345a Individuals' Request for a Copy of Their Own Health Information](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-5345a-fill.pdf)  **VA Form 10-7131/7132**  [VA Form 10-7131 Exchange of Beneficiary Information and Request for Administrative and Adjudicative Action](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-7131-fill.pdf)  Commonly used for :  Outpatient Treatment Records Request  Net Worth Determination  Service Verification  Dental Trauma Rating  [VA Form 21-7132 Status Change](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-7132-fill.pdf)  Commonly used for: VA Hospital Admissions/VA Contact Nursing Homes  **Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaption (SAH/SHA) Grant Claim**  [VA Form 26-4555 Application in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing or Special Home Adaptation Grant](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/Search_action.asp?FormNo=26-4555&tkey=&Action=Search)  **Other Common VA Forms**  [VA Form 21-22 Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant’s Representative](file:///C:\Users\VBADENBauerM\Documents\CA%20guide%20RB%20draft%205-19-16.docx#POAAuth)  [VA Form 20-0986, Eligibility Determination for Character of Discharge (COD) Request Form](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-20-0986-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 21-4140-1 Employment Questionnaire](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-4140-1-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 10-10EZ Instructions for Completing Enrollment Application for Health Benefits](http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/1010EZ-fillable.pdf)  [VA Form 28-1900 Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-28-1900-ARE.pdf)  [VA Form 20-0968 Claim for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-20-0968-ARE.pdf) | |
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| **PRACTICAL EXERCISE** | | | |
| |  | | --- | | TIME REQUIRED | | EXERCISE | | | 0.25 hours  Allow trainees to work individually or in groups to discuss and complete the practical exercise included in the Trainee Handout.  Ask if there are any questions about the information presented in the exercise, and then proceed to the Review. | |
|  | | 1. The veteran is filing an original claim for service connection on VA Form 21-526EZ. Is this the correct form for an original claim?   1. Yes 2. No   2. Which of the following forms can be used to submit new or re-open claims?   1. 21-526 2. 21-526b 3. 21-526c 4. 21-526EZ 5. All of the above   3. A veteran submitted a re-opened claim for non-service connected pension on VA-Form 21-526. Is this the correct form for a reopened claim for non-service connected pension?   1. Yes 2. No   4. What form can be used to file a claim for Individual Unemployability (IU)?   1. 21-8940; 21-526; and 21-526b 2. 21-526c; 21-526EZ 3. A only 4. A and B   5. A widow filed a claim for DIC/Accrued benefits. What are the correct forms to use?   1. 21-526 and 21-601 2. 21P-530 and 21-534 3. 21-534 and 21-601 4. 21-534EZ and 21-534 | |
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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Lesson Review, Assessment, and Wrap-up** | | | **Introduction** | The Introduction to VA Forms lesson is complete.  Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments. | | **Time Required** | 0.25 hours | | **Lesson Objectives** | You have completed the Introduction to VA Forms lesson.  The trainee should be able to:   * Understand why all claimants must submit claims on a standard VA-prescribed form * Significance of the March 24, 2015 date * Recognize the various standardized claims forms which constitute a claim for benefits * Identify common forms that are routinely routed through the mail portal | | **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. | | | | |
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