Shipping/Veterans Claim Intake Program (VCIP) Review and Centralized Mail (CM) Routing to Other Business Lines

Trainee Handout

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Objectives

* Understand the roles and responsibilities in the centralized mail process.
* **Understand the procedures for Record Management Number (RMN)/Document Control Sheet (DCS) Shipping.**

References

* [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 1, Section E, Centralized Mail (CM) Intake](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032384/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake)
* [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 1, Section F, Veterans Claims Intake Program (VCIP) Shipping](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000031703/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-F-Veterans-Claims-Intake-Program-VCIP-Shipping?query=vcip)
* [M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, Chapter 1, IPC](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014098/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-i%2C-Chapter-1---Structure-of-the-Veterans-Service-Center-%28VSC%29#2)
* [Centralized Mail Intranet](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/OBPI/Centralized_Mail.asp)
* [OBPI-VCIP Issue Tracker](http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/OBPI/VCIP/SD/OBPI%20Issue%20Tracker/default.aspx)
* [ICMHS Tracking Portal](https://vaportal-icmhs.csra.com/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fDefault.aspx)

Overview of the Centralized Mail (CM) Process

Intent of CM

Centralizing conversion of incoming paper to an electronic medium in the Centralized Mail (CM) process is intended to

* eliminate paper handling by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) personnel at regional offices (ROs)
* reduce the number of times mail is handled in any medium
* expedite uploading of claims, evidence, and other mail to electronic claims folders in the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS)
* improve customer service and claims processing timeliness through improved mail control processes, and
* implement first in, first out (FIFO) workflow for all mail received.

****Roles and Responsibilities in the CM Process****

The Intake Processing Center (IPC) is responsible for initial screening, control and uploading to VBMS of mail received in the CM portal.

| Position | CM User Role/Function | Responsibilities |
| --- | --- | --- |
| VSR, and/or an experienced Claims Assistant (CA) | Super User (Intake) | * Using the first-in-first-out (FIFO) workload strategy, route incoming mail on a daily basis to basic users for processing
* review and process mail that cannot be processed by a basic user due to complexity, and
* perform daily checks of all incoming queues and the PCT\IPC corporate e-mail box to ensure timely processing of all incoming mail.
 |
|  CA | Basic User (Control and Mail) | * Establish claims and generate automated Standard 5103 notice
* review and process exceptions (including failures to upload)
* control incoming notices of disagreement (NODs) or appeals-related evidence
* control incoming [VA Form 21-0966, Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0966-ARE.pdf), and update electronic records
* control evidence mail
* control and update electronic records (i.e. changes of address, [VA Form 21-22, Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant’s Representative](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-22-ARE.pdf), updates, birth certificates, etc.), and
* request service treatment records, verify service, except for Reservist and National Guard Veterans.
 |
| PSC, File Clerk, or CA | CM access optional | Prepares and ships paper claims folders to the scanning vendor according to current Veterans Claim Intake Program (VCIP) procedures |

**Receipt, Separation, and Routing of Physical Mail in the Mailroom**

* The USPS automatically sends mail to the scanning vendor when the claimant uses the centralized mail address provided in all development letters.
* When physical mail is received by the RO, the mail clerk opens, date stamps and separates the mail by VA business lines and/or addresses.
* Other VA business lines may include:
	+ Veterans Service Centers (VSCs)
	+ Pension Management Centers (PMCs)
	+ Appeals Resource Center (ARC)
	+ Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA)
	+ Fiduciary
	+ Education
	+ Insurance
	+ Loan Guaranty
	+ Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
	+ Vocational Rehabilitation & Education (VR&E)
	+ National Cemetery Administration (NCA)
	+ Human Resources Management
	+ Director’s Office
	+ co-located VSOs

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Once separated, use the table below to route the physical mail.

| **If mail ...** | **Then ...** |
| --- | --- |
| requires routing to* a VSC
* a PMC
* ARC, or
* BVA
 | follow the procedures in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032384/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake#2c) to ship to the appropriate scanning vendor. **Note**:  Ship Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act (PA) requests to the scanning vendor for processing in the CM portal. **References**:  For more information on* Processing mail in the CM portal, see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032384/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake#5), and
* RO processing of FOIA/PA requests in the CM portal, see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032384/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake#4).
 |
| is related to all other business lines | mail or forward (if interoffice) the documents to the appropriate business line. |
| is undeliverable mail containing Federal tax information (FTI) | * scan the document(s) to the restricted FTI electronic claims folder (eFolder) in the Legacy Content Manager following the safeguarding procedures for FTI, and
* follow the guidance pertaining to undeliverable essential mail.

**Note**:  **Do not ship undeliverable mail containing FTI to the scanning vendor.**  ***References***:  For more information on* handling undeliverable essential mail, see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.B](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014111/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-1%2C-Section-B---Mail-Management)
* FTI, see [M21-1, Part X, 9.A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000015137/M21-1%2C-Part-X%2C-Chapter-09---Section-A%2C-Federal-Tax-Information-%28FTI%29-Match%3A-General-Information)
* safeguarding FTI, see [M21-1, Part X, 9.B](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000019885/M21-1%2C-Part-X%2C-Chapter-09---Section-B%2C-Federal-Tax-Information-%28FTI%29-Match%3A-Safeguarding), and
* the proper identification of undeliverable FTI mail,  see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032384/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake#2d).
 |

 |

**Shipping Mail to Scanning Vendors**

* Once the mail is separated, follow the steps in the table below to ship the mail to the scanning vendor.

| **Step** | **Action** |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Return the mail in the original envelope or staple envelope to the front of the mail. |
| 2 | Securely bundle mail prior to placing it in the shipping box. ***Note***:  Only use rubber bands for packages too large for clips or staples. |
| 3 | To indicate separation for the vendors of packets for multiple claimants use a* sheet of paper between packets, or
* place each packet in a manila folder.
 |
| 4 | Place bundled mail into a USPS *Priority Mail Medium Flat Rate Box* (11’’ x 8 ½” x 5 ½” USPS box).  |
| 5 | Fill the container to approximately 90 percent capacity and add filler material. Ensure there is enough cushioning and items do not shift. |
| 6 | Use clear plastic shipping tape with United States Postal Service Mailing writing to seal the* box top
* bottom seam, and
* reinforce the edges.

Do not use * cord
* string
* twine
* masking tape, or
* cellophane tape.
 |
| 7 | Label the top of the box CM for centralized mail. Important:  All mail shipped to the vendors needs to contain a [VA Directive 6609 Notice](http://www.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=543&FType=2) sheet inserted into the shipping container. This notice provides the penalties for violation of Privacy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Acts. |
| 8 | Use the table in **III.ii.1.E to determine the physical shipping address to mail the material to.** Note:  Place the address label inside a sealable clear jacket provided by USPS. |
| 9 | Use priority mail tracking services from the USPS for shipping. Notes:* Mailroom must maintain a log of tracking numbers for future reference.
* A DCS is not required for mail sent under the CM program.
* If the volume of mail is larger or smaller than the recommended priority mail medium flat rate box, a different sized container may be used as long as it is an official USPS container (box, envelope, etc.).
 |

**FOIA and PA Request Process**

* Routing of FOIA and PA requests to the Records Management Center (RMC) is required when received through the CM portal. Follow the steps in the table below for RO FOIA/PA procedures.

| **Step** | **Action** |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | During initial screening, the IPC user routes FOIA/PA requests through the CM portal to the RMC’s mail queue without taking any system actions, **unless*** a FOIA/PA request is received in the same mail packet as other mail requiring RO action, or
* a Congressional FOIA/PA request is received.

Use the table below for instruction on FOIA/PA request forwarding exceptions.

| **If a ...** | **Then ...** |
| --- | --- |
| FOIA/PA request is received in the same mail packet as other mail requiring RO action | * Establish end product (EP) 510 Privacy Act Request or EP 511 FOIA,
* leave the suspense reason as Initial Review Pending, and
* immediately broker the work item to RMC in VBMS only.
* **Notes**:
* The user’s permanent note under the broker work items should indicate a FOIA/PA request was received with other RO action mail.
* After establishing the 510 series EP, the RO user
* should proceed with processing the action mail and uploading the mail packet to VBMS.

**Reference**:  For more information on establishing EPs in VBMS, see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 3.D](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000031819/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-3%2C-Section-D---Claims-Establishment). |
| Congressional FOIA/PA request is received through the CM portal | * download the request from the portal to a Portable Document Format (PDF)
* e-mail the document to VAVBASTL/RMC/CONGRESSIONAL, and
* upload to VBMS.

**Note**:  The CM portal would not normally contain Congressional FOIA/PA requests. RO Congressional Liaisons may refer Congressional staff to RMC for qualifying requests. |

 |

**Basic User Mail Role in the CM Portal**

* screens mail assigned to his/her work queue
* immediately notifies the super user and/or supervisor if FTI is discovered in the CM portal
* establishes new claims or appeals, including
	+ entering contentions
	+ sending Section 5103 notices (when applicable)
	+ assigning claims to the appropriate segmented lane, and
	+ routing paper claims folders to scanning vendors for conversion (when necessary)
* updates currently pending claims, including
	+ claim level suspense, and
	+ managing evidence/tracked items
* updates claimant information in all applicable VA systems
* uploads the mail to VBMS or sends to the appropriate business line
* update direct deposit information **anytime** new valid direct deposit information is received.

***Note***:  Routing of paper claims folders to scanning vendors is not necessary when the claim may be worked without claims folder review. For example, claims for additional compensation for dependents are generally decided without claims folder review.

**Processing CM Packages**

| **Step** | **Action** |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Check VBMS and the Veterans Appeals Control and Location System (VACOLS) for a current pending or recently adjudicated EP or appeal. Is the mail package related to development of a current pending EP associated with a claim or appeal or is the mail late-flowing mail that was submitted in response to development of a recently adjudicated claim or appeal?* If yes, follow the guidance found in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032384/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake#5d).
* If no, go to the next step.
 |
| 2 | Does the mail involve a claim that falls under the jurisdiction of a restricted access claims center (RACC) because the claimant is a Veteran employee, a relative of an employee, an employee or relative of a VSO, or other claimant as defined in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 4.A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014126/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-4%2C-Section-A---Paper-Claims-Folders-Storage-and-Control) ?* If yes, go to the next step.
* If no, go to Step 5.
 |
| 3 | Does the mail represent a claim or appeal that is subject to National Work Queue (NWQ) routing? * If yes,
	+ activate the Restricted Access corporate flash
	+ ensure the local Information Security Officer restricts access to the corresponding VA record by assigning one of the sensitivity levels described in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 4.A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014126/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-4%2C-Section-A---Paper-Claims-Folders-Storage-and-Control), and
	+ go to the next step.
* If no, go to the next step.

**Important**:  ROs must request assistance from their NWQ point of contact when transferring a claim if they are unable to activate the Restricted Access corporate flash because VA has already assigned one of the sensitivity levels described in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 4.A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014126/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-4%2C-Section-A---Paper-Claims-Folders-Storage-and-Control).**References**: * See the [Share User’s Guide](http://css.vba.va.gov/SHARE/) for instructions for activating a corporate flash.
* See the [National Work Queue Playbook](https://vaww.vba.esp.va.gov/sites/OFOPlaybooks/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx), under the heading Restricted Access Claims Center (RACC) Claims Routing, for more information about handling claims or appeals that
	+ fall under the jurisdiction of a RACC, and
	+ are subject to NWQ routing.
 |
| 4 | Transfer the packet to the appropriate RACC queue (St. Paul RACC, Milwaukee RACC, or Philadelphia RACC) and take no further action. **Notes**: * System access settings prevent most RO employees from updating VA’s systems to reflect the receipt of evidence or information included in mail that a RACC must ultimately process.  Accordingly, ROs must immediately forward such mail to the appropriate RACC.
* RACC development letters contain the RACC Coversheet for placement on top of subsequent mail submitted. The RACC Coversheet automatically routes the packet to the appropriate RACC queue.
* To avoid improper routing in the CM portal, PCT personnel accepting mail from Veteran employees must use the RACC Coversheets listed below.
	+ [Philadelphia RACC Coversheet](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/OBPI/CentralMail/Philadelphia_RACC.pdf)
	+ [Milwaukee RACC Coversheet](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/OBPI/CentralMail/Milwaukee_RACC.pdf)
	+ [St. Paul RACC Coversheet](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/OBPI/CentralMail/St%20Paul_RACC.pdf)

**Reference**:  For more information on determining the proper RACC jurisdiction, see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 4.A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014126/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-4%2C-Section-A---Paper-Claims-Folders-Storage-and-Control). |
| 5 | Does the mail represent material that a PMC must review/process?* If yes,
	+ use the map below to determine the PMC with jurisdiction
	+ transfer the claim to the appropriate PMC queue, and
	+ take no further action.

map of the US with PMC jurisdiction* If no, go to the next step.
 |
| 6 | Does the mail represent a **new compensation** related claim, [*VA Form 21-0958, Notice of Disagreement*](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0958-ARE.pdf), or [VA Form 9, Appeal to Board of Veterans' Appeals](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA9.pdf)?* If yes, go to the next step.
* If no, go to Step 11.
 |
| 7 | Will the RO that received the CM package retain jurisdiction?* If yes, go to the next step.
* If no, go to Step 10.

**Important**:* ROs may **not** transfer claims (rating, non-rating, appeals, or work items, to include mail received in the CM portal) to another RO solely because the claimant resides within another RO’s geographical jurisdiction. ROs may transfer a claim to another RO **only** if the
	+ claimant has requested a personal hearing
	+ claimant is a homeless Veteran, or
	+ claim is a “special mission claim” that a specific ROs must process.
* If an RO receives a claim or appeal over which it will retain jurisdiction, but another RO has custody of the corresponding paper claims folder, the RO that is retaining jurisdiction must request permanent transfer of the folder through COVERS.  If the claim or appeal is subject to NWQ routing, the RO must also add the Requested Claim Folder tracked item.

**Exception**:  As noted in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 5.A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000015798/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-iii%2C-Chapter-5%2C-Section-A---General-Information-on-Relationship-and-Dependency), certain requests for dependency do not require review of the claims folder. In those situations, request of the claims folder is unnecessary.  |
| 8 | Follow the instructions in the table below.

| **If the mail represents a(n) …** | **Then place it under control according to the instructions in …** |
| --- | --- |
| claim | [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 3.D](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000031819/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-3%2C-Section-D---Claims-Establishment). |
| notice of disagreement (NOD) | [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 3.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000033133/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-3%2C-Section-E---Establishing-an-Appellate-Record). |
| perfected appeal ([VA Form 9](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA9.pdf)) | [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 3.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000033133/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-3%2C-Section-E---Establishing-an-Appellate-Record). |

 |
| 9 | Upload the mail package into the appropriate eFolder and disregard the remaining steps in this table. |
| 10 | Follow the instructions in the table below.

| **If the claim, NOD, VA Form 9, or work item…** | **Then…** |
| --- | --- |
| * requires a personal hearing
* pertains to a homeless Veteran
 | * transfer the mail package to the queue of the RO that has geographical jurisdiction based on the claimant’s/beneficiary’s place of residence, and
* take no further action.
 |
| * involves special mission issues with exclusive jurisdiction, or
* involves exceptions to general policy for claims folder jurisdiction
 | * determine jurisdiction by following the guidance found in
	+ [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 5.A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014136/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-5%2C-Section-A---Jurisdiction-Over-Claims), or
	+ [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 5.A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014136/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-5%2C-Section-A---Jurisdiction-Over-Claims)
* transfer the mail package to the proper RO’s queue, and
* take no further action.
 |

 |
| 11 | Is the mail for a business line other than Compensation Service or Pension and Fiduciary Service?* If yes,
	+ reroute the mail to the appropriate business line following the guidance in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032384/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake#6), and
	+ take no further action.
* If no, go to the next step.
 |
| 12 | Check COVERS to determine whether a claims folder exists.Does a claims folder exist?* If yes, go to the next step.
* If no,
	+ check for a previously established claims folder using the guidance found in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 3.A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014122/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-3%2C-Section-A---Assignment-of-Claims-Folder-Numbers)
	+ establish a claims folder (if necessary), and
	+ go to the next step.

**Note**:  If there is not enough information to establish a claims folder, see the military mail procedures in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 4.H](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014133/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-4%2C-Section-H---File-Types). **References**:  For more information on* using COVERS, see the [COVERS User Guide](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/systems/docs/COVERSUG.doc), and
* establishing a claims folder, see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 3.B](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014123/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-3%2C-Section-B---Paper-and-Electronic-Claims-Folders).
 |
| 13 | Does a review of the mail determine that no action is needed?* If yes,
	+ the package is considered file or drop mail
	+ upload to VBMS, and
	+ take no further action.
* If no,
	+ take all necessary actions (e.g. intent to file (ITF), change of address, power of attorney update, etc.), and
	+ upload to VBMS.

**Note**:  On or after March 24, 2015, new claims/appeals must be filed on a fully completed, prescribed VA application form.  **Reference**:  For more information about ITF and [VA Form 21-0966, Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-0966-ARE.pdf), see [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 2.C](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014115/M21-1%2C-Part-III%2C-Subpart-ii%2C-Chapter-2%2C-Section-C---Informal-Claims-Received-Prior-to-March-24%2C-2015%2C-Communication-of-an-Intent-to-File-%28ITF%29%2C-and-Requests-for-Application). |

**Processing Solicited and Unsolicited Mail**

* Solicited and unsolicited mail refers to mail submitted in association with development of a claim or appeal.
* **Note**:  New appeals and perfected appeals ([VA Form 9](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA9.pdf)) are not types of solicited or unsolicited mail.  Follow [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032384/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake#5c) for proper handling procedures for new and perfected appeals and for other types of mail.
* When processing solicited or unsolicited mail, update VBMS according to instructions in the following table.

| **Step** | **Action** |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Does the solicited or unsolicited mail pertain to a pending EP?* If yes, go to the next step.
* If no, go to Step 6.
 |
| 2 | Does the mail represent evidence requested and documented by a tracked item?* If yes,
	+ the package is considered solicited
	+ go to the next step.
* If no,
	+ the package is considered unsolicited
	+ go to Step 4.
 |
| 3 | * Update the tracked item RECEIVED field with the date of receipt of the evidence
* select the SAVE button
* upload the packet to VBMS, and
* take no further action.

**Example**:Screenshot of Updating the tracked item RECEIVED field with the date of receipt of the evidence |
| 4 | * Update the MANAGE EVIDENCE screen with the evidence received under the ADD UNSOLICITED tab, and
* go to the next step.

 **Examples**:Screenshot of Updating the MANAGING EVIDENCE screen with the evidence received Screenshot of Updating the MANAGING EVIDENCE screen with the evidence received under the ADD UNSOLICITED tab |
| 5 | * Add any new contentions by selecting ADD CONTENTIONS on the contentions screen
* upload the packet to VBMS, and
* take no further action.

**Example**:Screenshot of Adding any new contentions by selecting ADD CONTENTIONS on the contentions screen**Notes**:* Remember to include the date of claim (date of receipt of new contention) for each contention.
* Do not change the lane already assigned unless there is a new special issue or Special Operations contention.
 |
| 6 | If the evidence does not pertain to any pending claim, check VACOLS.Does the mail pertain to a pending appeal?* If yes,
	+ manage evidence in VBMS to show that the evidence was received as outlined in Step 4
	+ upload packet to VBMS, and
	+ go to Step 8.
* If no, go to the next step.

**Reference**:  For more information on using VACOLS, see the [VACOLS User Guide](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/publicat/Users/Index.htm#bmv). |
| 7 | Review the mail for a possible EP 930.Is an EP 930 warranted (the mail relates to a previous claim and was received prior to a previous claim being closed)?* If yes, establish an EP 930 and go back to Step 4.
* If no, contact the Super User for guidance, and no further action is necessary.

**Note**:  Use the appropriate claim label to differentiate between rating and non-rating EP 930s. **Reference**:  For more information on EP 930s, see [M21-4, Appendix B](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000011474/Appendix-B.-End-Product-Codes-and-Work-Rate-Standards-for-Quantitative-Measurements). |
| 8 | Is the appeal under the jurisdiction of BVA?* If yes,
	+ the Basic User sends the mail package to the re-route queue, and
	+ a Super User reassigns the package to BVA in the CM portal.
* If no, take no further action.
 |

**Rerouting Mail by Email to Other Business Lines**

* If the Basic User identifies mail for business lines not in CM, he/she
	+ uses the functionality within the portal to download the mail image(s) to PDF format, and
	+ sends the document(s), via encrypted email, to the appropriate business line.
* Business lines not in the CM:
	+ Education
	+ Insurance
	+ Loan Guaranty
	+ VR&E
	+ Fiduciary Hub (**Do not** re-route Fiduciary Hub mail to the co-located RO)
	+ Support Services Division (SSD)/finance activity
	+ VHA
	+ NCA

Note: Information on where to email CM for other business lines can be found at [M21-1 III.ii.1.E](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032384/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-E-Centralized-Mail-CM-Intake#6).

# Veterans Claims Intake Program (VCIP) Shipping

**Overview of VCIP Shipping Procedures for Claims Folders, Service Treatment Records (STRs), and Personnel Records**

* The Veterans Claims Intake Program’s (VCIP's) mission is to
	+ provide direct support to the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) claims process by providing procedures for intake of
	+ source material
	+ documentation
	+ electronic records, and
	+ data
	+ work collaboratively with all stakeholders to manage VBA’s digital operating environment, and
	+ provide procedures relating to intake capabilities and the execution/management of document conversion services contracts.
* **Source materials not eligible for CM processing will be shipped to the scanning vendors** using the Record Management Number (RMN)/Document Control Sheet (DCS) shipping process, a regional office’s (RO’s) Intake Processing Center (IPC) or mailroom personnel ship source materials for document conversion, including
	+ claims folders
	+ service treatment records (STRs), and
	+ personnel records.

**Record Management Number (RMN)/Document Control Sheet (DCS) Shipping Process**

* **CSRA portal access is required to ship documents to the scanning vendor via the RMN/DCS process. There are limited CSRA portal access accounts available. Instructions on how to obtain access and shipping requirements are outlined in M21-1** **III.ii.1.F.**

**Requesting a Folder Rescan and Other Scanning Inquiries**

* **If documents are missing from VBMS th**e source folder or shipment must be located before a rescan request can be submitted.
	+ If looking for the Claims file first check COVERS. When the claims folder is shipped from an RO or RMC to the scanning vendor it should have been COVERED to one of the locations in M21-1 **III.ii.3.B. The most common are:**
		- **DCSC1** - CSRA Newnan, GA
		- **DCSC2** - Mt Vernon, KY
		- **DCSS1** - Janesville, WI
		- **DCSS2** - Janesville, WI
		- **ICMHS** - Converted as part of the File Bank Extraction program.
	+ Check the VBMS Intake tab. Select “All Stations, enter the file number, and remove the date.



* Once you have a list of all RMN/DCS shipments for that file number you can determine which DCS was shipped on the same day that matches the date shown as shipped in COVERS. Click on the box number for additional information on that shipment that is needed to submit a ticket to the scanning vendor.
* Rescan requests for shipments to DCSS1, DCSS2, and ICMHS (SMS) can be submitted through the [OBPI-VCIP Issue Tracker](http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/OBPI/VCIP/SD/OBPI%20Issue%20Tracker/default.aspx).
* Rescan requests for shipments to DCSC1 and DCSC2 (CACI) can be submitted through the [ICMHS portal](https://vaportal.csra.com/https%3A/vaportal.csra.com/).
* Additional information on how to check the status of an RMN or DCS in the vendor portals can be found at the[**VBA Centralized Mail Intranet**](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/OBPI/Centralized_Mail.asp)and the document[**How to Check the Status of an RMN or DCS in the Vendor Portals**](https://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/OBPI/VCIP/SD/OBPI%20Issue%20Tracker/Training%20Material/How%20to%20Check%20Status%20of%20an%20RMN%20or%20DCS%20ID.pdf)found at the bottom of the on the OBPI-VCIP Issue Tracker page.

# Practical Exercise

Answer the following questions.

1. What workload strategy is used to route incoming mail on a daily basis?
2. You receive a FOIA/PA request in the mailroom. How is it processed?
3. **True or False.** You are working in the CM portal and receive a mail packet for a fiduciary hub. You do not route the mail packet in the mail portal to the Regional Office.
4. **True or False.** You are working in the CM and receive a mail packet that contains both a Privacy Act request and mail for a pending claim. You would just route the mail packet to the RMC for processing.
5. You are establishing an initial claim and receive direct deposit information with the claim. Are you required to update the direct deposit information when the claim is established?
6. What screen is VBMS can be used to search for the RMN of a shipment to the scanning vendor that was shipped using the RMN/DCS shipping process?
7. Where would you go to request a rescan for a shipment to DCSC1 (CACI)?
8. Where would you go to request a rescan for a shipment to DCSS1 (SMS)?