

**(VSR VIP POST-D) INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL COMPUTER  
GENERATED LETTER (PCGL)  
TRAINEE HANDOUT**

**Table of Contents**

Objectives .....	2
References.....	3
Topic 1: Overview of Notification Requirements .....	4
Topic 2: Notification of Rating and Authorization Decisions .....	9
Topic 3: Accessing and Configuring PCGL .....	12
Attachment A: Rating Decision PCGL Example.....	17
Attachment B: Authorization Decision PCGL Example .....	23
Attachment C: Letter Format to Use (Ratings).....	27
Practical Exercise.....	28

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Identify the general requirements for decision notices and special requirements for visually impaired Veterans
- Complete the specific requirements for decision notices involving rating and authorization decisions
- Recognize steps for accessing and configuring PCGL
- Demonstrate the steps to generate notices in PCGL

## REFERENCES

- [38 CFR 3.103](#), Procedural due process and other rights
- [38 CFR 3.104\(c\)](#), Binding nature of decisions. *Favorable findings*.
- [M21-1, Part 1, 2, B.1](#), General Information on Notice of Proposed Adverse Action
- [M21-1, Part I, 2, D.1](#), General Information on Contemporaneous Notice
- [M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 2.B](#), Decision Notices
- [M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 4.B.5.c](#), Preparing a Decision Notice After Commencing the Recoupment of Separation Benefits
- [M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 5.B.1.i](#), Notifying a Veteran of His/Her Eligibility for a Tax Exemption
- [Approved Language for Favorable Findings – Dependency](#)
- [National Work Queue \(NWQ\) Phase 1 & 2 Playbook](#), Non-ADL Letters – p. 38-39
- [PCGL User’s Guides](#), PCGL Documents (includes links to the Beginner’s User Guide, as well as individual letters)

## TOPIC 1: OVERVIEW OF NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

VSRs must use the Personal Computer Generated Letter (PCGL) system to generate decision notices when the Redesigned Automated Decision Letter (RADL) is unavailable or incorrect within VBMS-A, or when letter creator cannot be used. Users must adhere to the notification requirements provided in *M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 2.B.* when preparing decision notices. PCGLs should always be customized to address the recipient's particular situation.

### Rules for Preparing a Decision Notice

When preparing a decision notice

- use
  - clear and concise wording, and
  - a customer-friendly and compassionate tone
- provide complete and accurate information concerning the issue(s) addressed, and
- avoid using VA jargon, to include
  - abbreviations with no accompanying definition, and
  - phrases such as
    - “service connection not found”
    - “disability not due to service,” or
    - “wanton and reckless disregard of the probable consequences.”

### Decision Notice Requirements

VA is required to provide claimants and their representatives (Power of Attorney and/or fiduciary) with timely notice of any decision made by VA that affects benefit eligibility or entitlement.

According to *M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 2.B.* award and denial decision notices must:

- Inform the claimant of the issues adjudicated
- Summarize the:
  - Evidence VA considered (See *M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 2.B.1.f-g*, regarding evidence)
  - Laws and regulations applicable to the claim, and
  - Applicable review options the claimant may use to seek further review of the decision
- Explain how to obtain or access evidence used in making the decision
- Identify, if applicable, the criteria required to grant service connection (SC) or the next-higher level of compensation, and/or
- Identify
  - For denied claims, the element(s) required to grant the claim that were not met, and
  - A listing of findings that are favorable to the claimant under *38 CFR 3.104(c)*, if applicable

If the enactment of a decision resulted in the creation of an overpayment in a beneficiary's account notify the beneficiary of the overpayment and his/her right to:

- Request a waiver of the overpayment, and/or
- A repayment plan

When VA grants entitlement to a benefit, or makes an adjustment to a running award, the decision notice must also notify the claimant of

- The monthly rate of payment
- The effective dates of entitlement and payment
- The amount of any benefits VA is withholding and the reason for the withholding, and
- Information about any additional benefits to which the claimant may be entitled

#### *Decisions Including Retired Pay*

Whenever the decision being processed involves withholding for military retirement pay, the decision notice must include the following additional paragraphs:

- Military Retired Pay Withholding
- Concurrent Receipt of VA Compensation and Military Retired Pay (a.k.a. the "Retired Pay Addendum")
- Tax Exemption Eligibility (*M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 5.B.1.i*)

Additionally, if service connection is granted for disability/disabilities related to Agent Orange (AO) the decision notice must also include notification of possible entitlement to Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) for service-connected AO-related disabilities. (*M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 5.A.7.d*)

#### *Decisions Including Recoupment of Separation Benefits*

If the decision processed includes recoupment of separation benefits (i.e. disability severance, separation pay, special separation benefit), the decision notice must also inform the Veteran of:

- The pre-tax amount of his/her separation benefits
- The gross amount of his/her monthly award of compensation
- The amount of compensation VA is withholding for recoupment of separation benefits
- The net amount of his/her month award of compensation, if any, and
- VA will continue withholding compensation until recoupment is complete

*Note:* Choosing the correct paragraph, when prompted, in PCGL will include the above information (see *M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 4.B.5.c*). Also see the preceding reference for additional language that must be added to the decision notice if VA is withholding all compensation to recoup separation benefits.

## Providing Review Rights

When notifying a beneficiary or claimant of a decision on a claim for disability compensation VSRs must ensure the following language appears under the heading “What You Should Do If You Disagree with Our Decision”:

If you do not agree with our decision, you have one year from the date of this letter to select a review option to protect your initial filing date for effective date purposes. You must file your request on the required application form for the review option desired. The table below represents the review options and their respective required application form.

<b>Review Option</b>	<b>Required Application Form</b>
<b>Supplemental Claim</b>	VA Form 20-0995, <i>Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim</i>
<b>Higher-Level Review</b>	VA Form 20-0996, <i>Decision Review Request: Higher-Level Review</i>
<b>Appeal to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals</b>	VA Form 10182, <i>Decision Review Request: Board Appeal (Notice of Disagreement)</i>

**Please note:** You **may not** request a higher-level review of a higher-level review decision issued by VA.

The enclosed VA Form 20-0998, *Your Rights to Seek Further Review of Our Decision*, explains your options in greater detail and provides instructions on how to request further review. You may download a copy of any of the required application forms noted above by visiting [www.va.gov/vaforms/](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/) or you may contact us by telephone at 1-800-827-1000 and we will mail you any form you need.

You can visit [www.va.gov/decision-reviews](http://www.va.gov/decision-reviews) to learn more about how the disagreement process works.

If you would like to obtain or access evidence used in making this decision, please contact us by telephone, email, or letter as noted below letting us know what you would like to obtain. Some evidence may be obtained online by visiting [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

*Note:* The VSR is responsible for ensuring the current review rights paragraphs with language regarding VA Form 20-0998 are included in the PCGL and for ensuring the form is in the list of enclosures (though it should populate automatically). The above language was extracted from an RADL, however sufficient language for PCGL use can also be found in *M21-1 III.v.2.B.5*.

## Providing Centralized Mail Information

In the box below the heading “If You Have Questions or Need Assistance,” ensure that the following information is provided to the Veteran in the decision notice, should the Veteran want to contact VA:

- “Use the Internet” – replace the default IRIS web address with <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov>, and all remaining instances in the letter.
- “Write” – replace the default language with:

VA now uses a centralized mail system. For all written communications, put your full name and VA file number on the letter. Please mail or fax all written correspondence to the appropriate address listed on the attached *Where to Send Your Written Correspondence*.

*Note:* *Where to Send Your Written Correspondence* must be manually added to the list of enclosures and sent to the claimant.

## Maintaining Jurisdiction of Claims with a PCGL

When a PCGL is created, the draft copy of the notice will not be available to users in another regional office. Therefore, the *Non-ADL Notification Letter* special issue must be applied to one contention on the claim to maintain jurisdiction of the claim associated with the PCGL. VSRs must follow locally established procedures to notify the authorizing employee of the PCGL and pending award.

## Visually Impaired Veterans

When corresponding with or processing a decision made on the claim of a Veteran with visual impairment (SC or non-service-connected) that is at least 70% or more disabling, or a Veteran that has requested special accommodations due to visual impairment, ensure the following actions are taken (see *M21-1 Part III subpart v 2.B.2.a*):

- add the *Blind Veteran* flash to the Veteran’s corporate record in SHARE, and
- prepare the correspondence/decision notice using an 18-point font
- reverse file *VA Form 21-0178, Visually Impaired Veteran*, in the center section of the Veteran’s *paper* claims folder, if one exists.

At the time the notice is finalized and mailed, VA must make a minimum of three attempts to contact the Veteran by telephone to explain the substance of the decision. The VSR or authorizer responsible for disposing of the associated EP must:

- provide a general summary of the decision(s) made
- inform the Veteran that
  - the decision notice is forthcoming, and

- any additional questions concerning the notice's content may be directed to the National Call Center, and
- document
  - successful telephone contact on *VA Form 27-0820, Report of General Information*, or
  - unsuccessful attempts to contact the Veteran as a contact note in VBMS.



## TOPIC 2: NOTIFICATION OF RATING AND AUTHORIZATION DECISIONS

### Notification of Rating Decision

#### Requirements

When a decision is the result of a *rating*, the body of the PCGL does *not* need to:

- Summarize the:
  - Evidence VA considered
  - Laws and regulations applicable to the claim,
- Identify, if applicable, the criteria required to grant service connection (SC) or the next-higher level of compensation, or
- Identify
  - For denied claims, the element(s) required to grant the claim that were not met, and
  - A listing of findings that are favorable to the claimant under *38 CFR 3.104(c)*, if applicable.

Instead, attach a copy of the rating decision narrative document to the letter, as it already includes all of the above notification requirements. Do NOT attach a copy of the rating decision *codesheet*.

#### Additional Benefits and Entitlements

If we grant service-connection (SC) for a new medical condition or increase the percentage for a previously granted condition, we must notify the Veteran of any additional benefits to which they may be entitled.

Denials or confirmed and continued (C&C) do not prompt any potential entitlement to additional benefits. Therefore, notification should not be included if these are the only decisions.

*Note:* Additional benefits paragraphs & enclosures do *not* apply to authorization decisions, such as dependency adjustments.

*Additional Benefits Selections*

The table below lists additional benefits to which a claimant may be entitled, and the form required for applying for each benefit.

<b>Combined Evaluation</b>	<b>Additional Benefits</b>	<b>Corresponding Enclosures</b>
<b>0%</b>	None (all appropriate Additional Benefits information included automatically)	
<b>10%-20%</b>	Veteran Readiness & Employment Service*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA Form 28-1900</li> <li>• VA Form 28-8890</li> </ul>
<b>30%-90%; No IU</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veteran Readiness &amp; Employment Service*</li> <li>• Dependency Solicitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA Form 28-1900</li> <li>• VA Form 28-8890</li> <li>• VA Form 21-686c</li> </ul>
<b>100% or IU; <u>NOT</u> P&amp;T (Basic Eligibility to DEA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veteran Readiness &amp; Employment Service*</li> <li>• Dependency Solicitation</li> <li>• Insurance Waiver of Premium</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA Form 28-1900</li> <li>• VA Form 28-8890</li> <li>• VA Form 21-686c</li> </ul>
<b>100% or IU P&amp;T (Basic Eligibility to DEA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veteran Readiness &amp; Employment Service*</li> <li>• Dependency Solicitation</li> <li>• Insurance Waiver of Premium</li> <li>• CHAMPVA</li> <li>• Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) - only on initial grant of DEA**</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA Form 28-1900</li> <li>• VA Form 28-8890</li> <li>• VA Form 21-686c</li> </ul> <p>**Always delete VA Form 22-5490 &amp; VA pamphlet 22-73-3 from enclosures list when populated</p>

*Note:* \*For Veteran Readiness & Employment Service benefits, you will need to choose “Voc Rehab & Employment Services,” in PCGL and update the name in the paragraph (see Attachment A and the PCGL master letter). While the division name has been updated, it has yet to be reflected in PCGL, the form names, and the *M21-1, Adjudication Procedures Manual*.

In addition to the Corresponding Enclosures above, the following should be included in the enclosures list of every PCGL generated based on a rating decision:

- Rating Decision
- *Where to Send Your Written Correspondence*
- VA Form 20-0998

Note:

- For additional information about these benefits, see the list of references provided in *M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 2.B.1.k*
- Information about entitlement to healthcare is automatically generated in the PCGL when service connection is granted, or an increased evaluation is assigned
- Dependency Solicitation language is not required in decision notices when
  - one of the issues decided was entitlement to additional benefits for (a) dependent(s) or
  - the decision notice includes development for additional information/evidence to establish entitlement to additional benefits for (a) dependent(s).

\*\* When applicable, replace the default DEA paragraph with the following:

Your dependents may be eligible for Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35). For more information on this program, please visit the following website: <https://www.vets.gov/education/gi-bill/survivors-dependent-assistance/> or call 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551).

## **Notification of Authorization Decision**

### **Requirements**

Unlike the PCGL for a rating decision, the PCGL for an authorization decision (such as dependency) *must*:

- Summarize
  - The evidence VA considered
  - Laws and regulations applicable to the claim
- Identify
  - For denied claims, the element(s) required to grant the claim that were not met, and
  - A listing of findings that are favorable to the claimant under *38 CFR 3.104(c)*, if applicable

You will learn more about specific favorable findings language that applies to authorization decisions in subsequent lessons.

### **Enclosures**

The user will always need to modify the enclosures. "Rating Decision" will always populate in the list and will need to be **removed** any time the notification is *not* based on a rating decision.

The user will need to *manually* add the *Where to Send Your Written Correspondence*, enclosure every time.

## TOPIC 3: ACCESSING AND CONFIGURING PCGL

### Accessing and Exiting PCGL

Often, before the VETSNET Data button will be available in PCGL, the user will have had to open up VETSNET C&P Awards (smiley face), at least once on that computer, prior to attempting to use PCGL. You should only have to do this before the very first time you use PCGL on a computer, even if someone else has used it on that computer.

Complete the following steps prior to using PCGL for the first time on your current computer, or simply type “C&P Awards” in the Search bar and click the application to run:

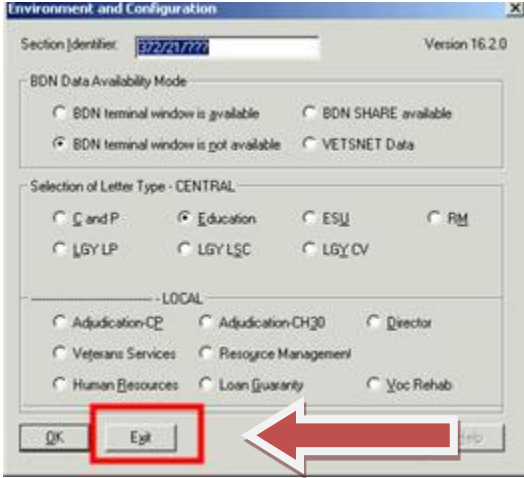
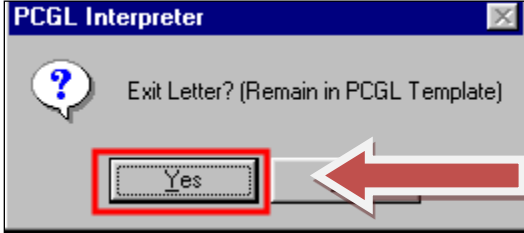

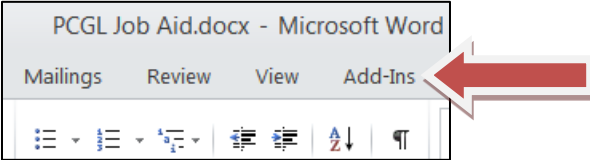
1. Click “Start” button
2. Navigate alphabetically and click on “VBAPPS” folder
3. Click “C&P Awards T11”
4. Log in using your PIV card
5. Allow the program to load
6. Click on the “OK” button once it’s available
7. Close the program and proceed to opening PCGL

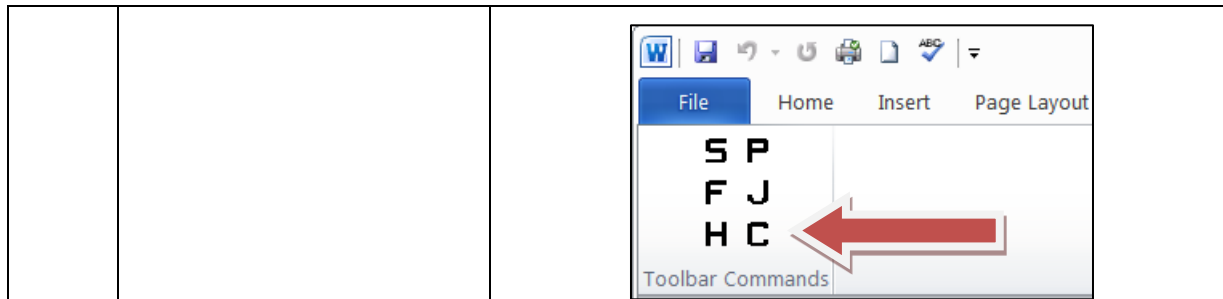
<b>Starting/Exiting PCGL: Regular Desktop or Citrix Desktop</b>	
<b><i>Start PCGL from the initial Windows screen</i></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click “Start” button (window pane in task bar)</li> <li>2. Navigate alphabetically and click “VBAPPS”</li> <li>3. Navigate alphabetically to PCGL and select</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click “Search” button (magnifying glass next to the “Start” button in the task bar)</li> <li>2. Click inside the Search Box</li> <li>3. Type in “PCGL”</li> <li>4. Click on the PCGL program to run</li> </ol>
<b><i>Exiting PCGL</i></b>	<p>There is a “Cancel” button only on the initial few screens. This will be the only time you will be able to go back to the previous screen.</p> <p>Each screen has an “Exit” button. To exit PCGL, or the current PCGL:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click “Exit”</li> <li>2. When asked to confirm your choice, click on “Yes” to exit PCGL</li> </ol>

## Configuring/Customizing PCGL

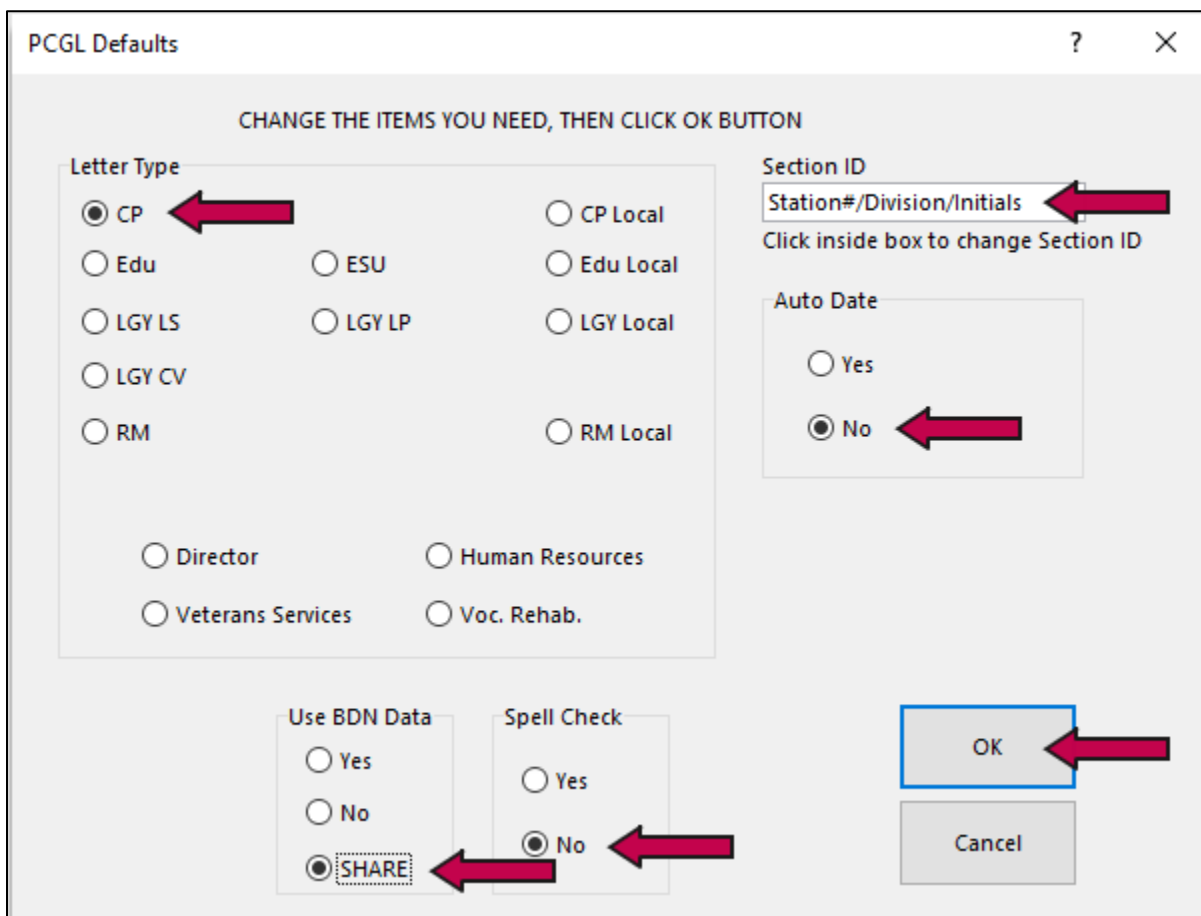
Configuring PCGL is easy. Just follow the steps below and PCGL will run the way you want it, every time, until you change it. Configurations don't always hold in the Citrix Desktop environment, from use to use. The term "BUTTON" is used to designate "radio buttons" which have a space for showing choices.

To customize PCGL, do the following from the Environment and Configuration screen:

Step	Action	Sample
1.	Click "Exit"	
2.	Click "Yes"	
3.	<p>Click on Add-Ins at the top of the Word document then</p> <p>Click on the "Configuration" button  at the top left of the Word document to access the PCGL Defaults screen.</p>	



PCGL Defaults Screen








Block Title	Guidelines
Letter Type	Click on CP as the default. This is the most common type most VSRs will use. If you need a different type, you can always choose it during the letter-building process.
Section ID	Whatever you type here will print on your PCGLs in the reference lines along with the file number and stub name. We suggest that you follow local station guidelines. While in training, ask your Course Coordinator and/or Instructor what to use.

Block Title	Guidelines
Auto Date	If you select “YES”, PCGL automatically inserts the current date on your PCGLs.  Select “No” as the date will be entered by the authorizer, or the authorizer will indicate it is ok to add the date when the letter is finalized.
Use BDN Data	Choose any of these.
Spell Check	Choose either. This is a personal preference. <i>Always ensure you run a spell check after all modifications are completed.</i>

After making your changes, click on “OK” to set the selected defaults.

*Note: If you do not want to change the defaults, click "Cancel" to return to the PCGL WORD DOC screen.*

Additional PCGL Add-Ins Tab Options	
	Start PCGL: Click on this button to go the "Environment and Configuration" screen to start a new, standard PCGL.
	Free Form: In some letters, PCGL is suspended to allow you to enter text or edit the Word document. You must then use the ‘F’ button to “wake-up” PCGL prompts to finish the letter.
	Header: Click on this button to add header information in a non-standard (Free Form) PCGL.  NOTE: Headers are not viewable while the document is in Normal view; they are viewable while in the Print Layout view.  NOTE: You do not usually have to use this button as the PCGL program automatically inserts headers in your PCGLs.
	Print: Click on this button to print your PCGL. First, ensure you have changed your printer to print to a PDF document. You will be asked the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Copies with Seal” – choose 1</li> <li>• “Copies Without Seal” – choose 0</li> <li>• “Print Forms?” – choose “No,” as these are outdated versions</li> </ul>
	JetForm Merge: Click on this button to print a form or attachment with the claimant's file number and name on it. <b>**This button should no longer be used as it will print outdated versions of forms</b> and will always print forms for the last Veteran for which you printed a PCGL, regardless of whether you’re in a different Veteran’s PCGL.

<b>Helpful Hints</b>	
How do I enter dates when going through the prompts?	Dates can be entered in the following formats: 1-1-20, 1/1/20, 01-01-20, or 01/01/20  <i>*Do not use a 4-digit year. An error will occur.</i>
How do I stop words showing up as misspelled when they are not?	Update your dictionary during Spell Check by adding local names and terms it does not have. <b>Be sure these are spelled correctly!</b>
How do I enter numbers when going through the prompts?	Do not use commas unless you are in free text; e.g. enter "1000" instead of "1,000."
What does the "EXIT" button do?	Exit the PCGL program upon confirmation. (PCGL asks whether you really want to exit PCGL. Click on "YES" to exit or stop further processing the specific PCGL.)



# ATTACHMENT A: RATING DECISION PCGL EXAMPLE

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

JOHN A VETERAN  
155 VAN GORDON ST  
LAKEWOOD CO 80228

In Reply Refer To: STATION ID/UNIT/INITIALS  
CSS XXX XX XXXX  
VETERAN, John A

Dear Mr. Veteran:

We made a decision on your claim for service connected compensation received on January 20, 2020.

This letter tells you about your entitlement amount and payment start date and what we decided. It includes a copy of our rating decision that gives the evidence used and reasons for our decision. We have also included information about additional benefits, what to do if you disagree with our decision, and who to contact if you have questions or need assistance.

### Your Award Amount and Payment Start Date

Your monthly entitlement amount is shown below:

Monthly Entitlement Amount	Payment Start Date	Reason for Change
\$1,043.43	Feb 1, 2020	Compensation Rating Adjustment
\$979.43	Nov 15, 2030	Martha Turns 18, Removed from Award

We are paying you as a Veteran with 2 dependents. Your payment includes an additional amount for your spouse, Mary; and your child, Martha. *Let us know right away if there is any change in the status of your dependents.*

### You Can Expect Payment

Your payment begins the first day of the month following your effective date. You will receive a payment covering the initial amount due under this award, minus any withholdings. Thereafter, payment will be made at the beginning of each month for the prior month. For example, benefits due for May are paid on or about June 1.

**Your payment will be directed to the financial institution and account number that you specified. To confirm when your payment was deposited, please contact that financial institution.**

*If this account is no longer open,  
please notify us immediately.*

### **What We Decided**

We determined that the following condition was related to your military service, so service connection has been granted:

<b>Medical Description</b>	<b>Percent (%) Assigned</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Left shoulder strain	10%	Jan 20, 2020

We determined that the following service connected condition(s) has/have worsened, so we granted an increase in your assigned percentage:

<b>Medical Description</b>	<b>Old Percent (%) Assigned</b>	<b>New Percent (%) Assigned</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Lumbosacral strain, claimed as chronic low back pain	10%	20%	Jan 20, 2020

We determined that the following condition was not related to your military service, so service connection remains denied:

<b>Medical Description</b>
Left Ankle Sprain

Your overall or combined rating is 50% effective January 20, 2020. We do not add the individual percentages of each condition to determine your combined rating. We use a combined rating table that considers the effect from the most serious to the least serious conditions.

We have enclosed a copy of your Rating Decision for your review. It provides a detailed explanation of our decision, the evidence considered, and the reasons for our decision. Your Rating Decision and this letter constitute our decision based on your claim received on January 20, 2020. It represents all claims we understood to be specifically made, implied, or inferred in that claim.

We enclosed a VA Form 21-8764, "Disability Compensation Award Attachment-Important Information," which explains certain factors concerning your benefits.

## Are You Entitled to Additional Benefits?

You may be eligible for government life insurance if you

- were released from active duty after April 25, 1951,
- are in good health (except for any service connected conditions), and
- apply within two years of this notification of your disability rating.

If you are totally disabled, you may be eligible to have your government life insurance premiums waived. The Insurance is called Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI), and you should receive a package within two weeks. This package will contain information about the insurance and an application. If you do not receive an S-DVI package, please contact the Insurance Center to request additional information. Call the Insurance toll free number, 1-800-669-8477, or visit the Insurance web site, <http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/>, for further information about Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance.

If you served overseas in support of a combat operation, you may be eligible for mental health counseling at no cost to you at the Veteran's Resource Center. For more information on this benefit please visit <http://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/>.

You may be eligible for medical care by the VA health care system for any service connected disability. You may apply for medical care or treatment at the nearest medical facility. If you apply in person, present a copy of this letter to the Patient Registration/Eligibility Section. If you apply by writing a letter, include your VA file number and a copy of this letter.

### REDUCE OR ELIMINATE YOUR MEDICAL CO-PAYMENTS

If you receive care at a VA medical facility, **please call our Health Benefits Call Center at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or notify your local VA medical center** of this change in your compensation benefits. This rating decision may reduce or eliminate your co-payments for your VA-provided medical care. You may also be eligible for a refund based on this rating decision. Information regarding VA health care eligibility and co-payments is available at our web site <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/cost/>.

You should contact your State office of Veteran's affairs for information on any tax, license, or fee-related benefits for which you may be eligible as a Veteran (or surviving dependent of a Veteran). State offices of Veteran's affairs are available at <http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>.

You may be able to receive Veteran Readiness & Employment Service benefits. The enclosed VA Form 28-8890, "Important Information About Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits," explains this benefit completely. To apply for this benefit, complete and return the enclosed VA Form 28-1900, "Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation."

The VA provides Blind Rehabilitation services to eligible blind, low vision, or visually impaired Veterans to help them regain their independence and quality of life. The Veteran's blindness, low vision, or vision impairment does NOT have to be related or caused by military service. If you need help with your vision loss, please contact your nearest Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator (VIST) at the eye clinic at your nearest VA Medical Center. For more information, go to <http://www.rehab.va.gov/blindrehab/>.

Your combined evaluation is 30 percent or more disabling; therefore, you may be eligible for additional benefits based on dependency. If you wish to submit a claim for dependents, please complete and return the attached VA Form 21-686c, *Application Request to Add and/or Remove Dependents*. Please fill out every blank on the form. We may be able to pay you retroactive benefits for your dependents if you submit the VA Form 21-686c, *Application Request to Add and/or Remove Dependents* or report dependents within a year from the date of this letter.

### What You Should Do If You Disagree with Our Decision

If you do not agree with our decision, you have one year from the date of this letter to select a review option to protect your initial filing date for effective date purposes. You must file your request on the required application form for the review option desired. The table below represents the review options and their respective required application form.

Review Option	Required Application Form
<b>Supplemental Claim</b>	VA Form 20-0995, <i>Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim</i>
<b>Higher-Level Review</b>	VA Form 20-0996, <i>Decision Review Request: Higher-Level Review</i>
<b>Appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals</b>	VA Form 10182, <i>Decision Review Request: Board Appeal (Notice of Disagreement)</i>

**Please note:** You **may not** request a higher-level review of a higher-level review decision issued by VA.

The enclosed VA Form 20-0998, *Your Rights to Seek Further Review of Our Decision*, explains your options in greater detail and provides instructions on how to request further review. You may download a copy of any of the required application forms noted above by visiting [www.va.gov/vaforms/](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/) or you may contact us by telephone at 1-800-827-1000 and we will mail you any form you need.

You can visit [www.va.gov/decision-reviews](http://www.va.gov/decision-reviews) to learn more about how the disagreement process works.

If you would like to obtain or access evidence used in making this decision, please contact us by telephone, email, or letter as noted below letting us know what you would like to obtain. Some evidence may be obtained online by visiting [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

## What Is eBenefits?

eBenefits provides electronic resources in a self-service environment to Servicemembers, Veterans, and their families. Use of these resources often helps us serve you faster! Through the eBenefits web site, you can:

- Submit claims for benefits and/or upload documents directly to the VA
- Request to add or change your dependents
- Update your contact and direct deposit information and view payment history
- Request a Veterans Service Officer to represent you
- Track the status of your claim or appeal
- Obtain verification of your military service, civil service preference, or VA benefits
- And much more!

Enrolling in eBenefits is easy. Just visit [www.eBenefits.va.gov](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov) for more information. If you submit a claim in the future, consider filing through eBenefits. Filing electronically, especially if you participate in our fully developed claim program, may result in faster decision than if you submit your claim through the mail.

## If You Have Questions or Need Assistance

If you have any questions, you may contact us by telephone, e-mail, or letter.

<b>If you</b>	<b>Here is what to do.</b>
Telephone	Call us at 1-800-827-1000. If you use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the Federal number is 711.
Use the Internet	Send electronic inquiries through the Internet at <a href="https://iris.custhelp.va.gov">https://iris.custhelp.va.gov</a> .
Write	VA now uses a centralized mail system. For all written communications, put your full name and VA file number on the letter. Please mail or fax all written correspondence to the appropriate address listed on the attached <i>Where to Send Your Written Correspondence</i> .

In all cases, be sure to refer to your VA file number XXX XX XXXX.

If you are looking for general information about benefits and eligibility, you should visit our web site at <https://www.va.gov>, or search the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov>.

We sent a copy of this letter to your representative, Veterans of Foreign Wars, whom you can also contact if you have questions or need assistance.

Sincerely yours,

RO Director  
VA Regional Office

E-mail us at: <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov>

Enclosure(s): Rating Decision  
VA Form 21-8764  
VA Form 28-8890  
VA Form 28-1900  
VA Form 21-686c  
VA Form 20-0998  
*Where to Send Your Written Correspondence*

cc: Veterans of Foreign Wars

# ATTACHMENT B: AUTHORIZATION DECISION PCGL EXAMPLE

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

JOHN A VETERAN  
155 VAN GORDON ST  
LAKEWOOD CO 89117

In Reply Refer To: STATION ID/UNIT/INITIALS  
CSS XXX XX XXXX  
VETERAN, John A

Dear Mr. Veteran:

We have made a decision on your dependency claim received on June 25, 2019.

This letter tells you about your entitlement amount and payment start date and what we decided. We have also included information about what to do if you disagree with our decision, and who to contact if you have questions or need assistance.

### Your Monthly Compensation

Your revised monthly compensation is shown below:

Total VA Benefit	Amount Withheld	Amount Paid	Effective Date	Reason for Change
\$417.15	\$0.00	\$417.15	Mar 1, 2018	Former spouse, Betty, removed due to divorce
\$428.83	\$0.00	\$428.83	Dec 1, 2018	Cost of Living Adjustment
\$479.83	\$51.00	\$428.83	Jul 1, 2019	Spouse, Kathy, added to award, Retired pay withholding
\$479.83	\$0.00	\$479.83	Aug 1, 2019	Retired pay withholding ends

We are paying you as a veteran with 1 dependent. Your payment includes an additional amount for your spouse Kathy. *Let us know right away if there is any change in the status of your dependents.*

### We Have Withheld Benefits

You are not allowed to receive full military retired pay and full VA compensation at the same time. The following will provide an explanation of how this works:

- ***If your VA compensation is less than your retired pay***, you will receive compensation payments. The military service department will pay you the difference between your compensation and your retired pay.

- ***If your VA compensation is greater than your retired pay***, we will pay you compensation, and you will not receive retired pay.

For now, we must withhold part of your compensation until August 1, 2019. We must do this to prevent a double payment. By working together with the military service department, we will make sure you get your full combined payment.

*Important Information: VA compensation isn't taxable. Please contact the Internal Revenue Service for tax information.*

## **Concurrent Receipt of VA Compensation and Military Retired Pay**

You may be eligible for full or partial concurrent receipt of VA compensation and military retired pay under the Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) and/or Concurrent Retired and Disability Pay (CRDP) programs. Your retired pay center (RPC) has been notified of this award of VA compensation. If your RPC determines the withholdings from your VA compensation should be retroactively adjusted due to CRSC/CRDP eligibility; VA will be notified and will adjust your VA compensation accordingly.

More information on CRSC and CRDP can be found at the following web site: <http://www.dfas.mil/dfas/retiredmilitary/disability/payment.html>, or by calling your RPC as shown below:

- Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS): 1-800-321-1080
- United States Coast Guard: 1-800-772-8724
- Public Health Service: 1-800-638-8744

## **Tax Exemption Eligibility**

Because VA compensation is not taxable, you may be entitled to a tax exemption during the period VA withheld your compensation; the amount of the exemption would be the amount of compensation VA withheld based on your receipt of military retired pay.

Subsequent changes in the amount of compensation VA withholds based on your receipt of military retired pay may affect the tax exemption. Please contact the Internal Revenue Service with questions about your tax liability

## **What We Decided**

Kathy Veteran has been added to your award effective June 10, 2019, because you submitted all the required information and meet the eligibility requirements for the dependency allowance. (38 CFR 3.4, 38 CFR 3.50, 38 CFR 3.57, 38 CFR 3.204, 38 CFR 3.205, 38 CFR 3.216)

We removed Betty Veteran from your award effective March 1, 2018, for the following reason:



- You and Betty divorced on February 6, 2018. (38 CFR 3.50, 38 CFR 3.209, 38 CFR 3.213)

## How We Made Our Decision

This letter constitutes our decision based on your claim received on June 25, 2019. It represents all claims we understood to be specifically made, implied, or inferred in that claim.

## What You Owe

We reviewed evidence in your case and found that we have overpaid your benefits. A separate initial proposal letter will tell you more about the overpayment. VA's Debt Management Center will also send you a letter explaining how much you've been overpaid, as well as how to repay this debt. We know managing a new debt can be difficult, but we would like to work with you on some options that can help. We encourage you to visit [www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov) and [www.consumer.gov](http://www.consumer.gov) for helpful financial information.

## Evidence Used to Decide Your Claim

In making our decision, we used the following evidence:

- VA Form 21-686c, *Application Request to Add and/or Remove Dependents*, received on June 25, 2019
- Copy of Divorce Decree, received on June 25, 2019
- Copy of Marriage Certificate, received on June 25, 2019

## What You Should Do If You Disagree with Our Decision

If you do not agree with our decision, you have one year from the date of this letter to select a review option to protect your initial filing date for effective date purposes. You must file your request on the required application form for the review option desired. The table below represents the review options and their respective required application form.

Review Option	Required Application Form
Supplemental Claim	VA Form 20-0995, <i>Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim</i>
Higher-Level Review	VA Form 20-0996, <i>Decision Review Request: Higher-Level Review</i>
Appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals	VA Form 10182, <i>Decision Review Request: Board Appeal (Notice of Disagreement)</i>

**Please note:** You **may not** request a higher-level review of a higher-level review decision issued by VA.

The enclosed VA Form 20-0998, *Your Rights to Seek Further Review of Our Decision*, explains your options in greater detail and provides instructions on how to request further review. You may download a copy of any of the required application forms noted above by

visiting [www.va.gov/vaforms/](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/) or you may contact us by telephone at 1-800-827-1000 and we will mail you any form you need.

You can visit [www.va.gov/decision-reviews](http://www.va.gov/decision-reviews) to learn more about how the disagreement process works.

If you would like to obtain or access evidence used in making this decision, please contact us by telephone, email, or letter as noted below letting us know what you would like to obtain. Some evidence may be obtained online by visiting [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

## If You Have Questions or Need Assistance

If you have any questions, you may contact us by telephone, e-mail, or letter.

<b>If you</b>	<b>Here is what to do.</b>
Telephone	Call us at 1-800-827-1000. If you use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the number is 1-800-829-4833.
Use the Internet	Send electronic inquiries through the Internet at <a href="https://iris.custhelp.va.gov">https://iris.custhelp.va.gov</a> .
Write	VA now uses a centralized mail system. For all written communications, put your full name and VA file number on the letter. Please mail or fax all written correspondence to the appropriate address listed on the attached <i>Where to Send Your Written Correspondence</i> .

In all cases, be sure to refer to your VA file number XXX XX XXX.

If you are looking for general information about benefits and eligibility, you should visit our web site at <https://www.va.gov>, or search the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at <https://iris.custhelp.va.gov>.

We have no record of you appointing a service organization or representative to assist you with your claim. You can contact us for a listing of the recognized veterans' service organizations and/or representatives. Veterans' service organizations, which are recognized or approved to provide services to the veteran community, can also help you with any questions.

Sincerely yours,

RO Director  
VA Regional Office

Enclosure(s): VA Form 20-0998  
*Where to Send Your Written Correspondence*

## ATTACHMENT C: LETTER FORMAT TO USE (RATINGS)

After opening PCGL, choosing the CG4 letter, and entering the Veteran's name and address information, choose from the following options.

If rating decision has the following decisions...	Then use the following letter format...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant/increase, or</li> <li>• Grant/increase, w/ denial, or c&amp;c (continue and c&amp;c denial), grant/deny IU, etc.</li> </ul>	Grant comp, or combo grant/denial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase, or</li> <li>• Increase w/ denial, or c&amp;c (continue and c&amp;c denial), grant/deny IU, etc.</li> </ul>	Increased comp, or combo inc/denial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denials, or</li> <li>• S/C 0% grant only, or</li> <li>• Deny IU, or</li> <li>• Any combination of the above</li> </ul>	Denial comp/pen + comb eval @ 0%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C&amp;C (cont. an already s/c condition), or</li> <li>• C&amp;C denial (previously denied by rating), or</li> <li>• C&amp;C denial w/ denial of new condition</li> </ul>	C&C by rating – eval + SC denial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denial &amp; C&amp;C (continuing an already s/c condition)</li> </ul>	Generate the <i>C&amp;C by rating – eval + SC denial</i> letter, THEN copy the <i>decision only</i> , for the denials, from the rating narrative & paste into the C&C letter. (Or, you may generate the letter, and manually type in the decisions not covered by that letter format.)

\*\*When rating decision addresses ONLY C&C's or denials, or both together, no additional benefits notification should be included.

## PRACTICAL EXERCISE

1. You are informed that a claimant/beneficiary has been assigned a 70% disability rating for a visual impairment.
  - a. What changes do you need to make to the standard PCGL in order to meet special notification requirements?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. What action should be taken at the time the decision notice is finalized and mailed to the claimant or beneficiary?
  
2. What additional information and attachments must always be manually added to a PCGL decision notice for compensation claims?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. When notifying a claimant of the result of a rating decision, the body of the PCGL decision notice does *not* need to:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. You're processing a rating decision for an original award that grants a 30% combined evaluation. The only form received was the *VA Form 21-526EZ*. You generate the award and RADL fails. You must complete a PCGL. What additional benefits information and enclosures must you include in the PCGL?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. While preparing to generate notification of a rating decision, you determined the Veteran is in receipt of military retired pay. What paragraphs must be included in the PCGL?