Claims That Require Priority Processing

Trainee Handout

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Objectives

In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the student will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.

*The**student**will be able to:*

1. Identify categories of claims that require VA priority processing
2. Flag and direct claims for priority processing

References

[M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 1, Section D – Claims That Require Priority Processing](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/)

[M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 1, Section B - Mail Management](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/)

[M27-1, Part II, 2.2](http://www.benefits.va.gov/WARMS/docs/admin21/M27_1/Part_II/M27_1_II_2.doc)

Topic 1: Identify Categories of Claims That Require VA Priority Processing

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| **OBJECTIVES** | Topic objectives:*The**student**will be able to:* * Identify VA claims which require priority processing
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| **Emergent Claims Requiring VA Priority Processing***Slide 4* | The following list identifies VA claimants that require priority processing:* Diagnosed with Amytotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig’s Disease
* FDC program participant
* Extreme Financial Hardship cases
* Survivor of a former Prisoner of War (FPOW)
 |
| **Emergent Claims Requiring VA Priority Processing***Slide 5* | Any current or former member of the Armed Forces, or survivor who:* was very seriously injured/seriously injured (VSI/SI) in service and is not already receiving Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability benefits
* is an FPOW
* is homeless
* is terminally ill
* is more than 85 years old, or
* received the Medal of Honor.
 |
| **Emergent Claims Requiring VA Priority Processing***Slide 6* | Upon receipt of a claim from individuals identified in M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.D.1.a regional offices (ROs) must take any action on the claim that is necessary to move it to the next stage in the claims process ***before*** taking action on any other non-priority claim. |
| **Managing Claims Requiring Priority Processing***Slide 7* | ROs are required to case manage these cases by:* frequently following up on pending actions
* utilizing issue specific coordinators, where applicable
* using the telephone to contact homeless Veterans and to conduct development activities, whenever possible, and
* collaborating with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and other involved counterparts.
 |
| **Priority Processing Claims in a Paperless Environment***Slide 8***Cross Reference:**[**M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 1, Section B - Mail Management**](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/)  | Adjudicate a claim that requires priority processing before sending any associated paper documentation to a Veterans Claims Intake Program (VCIP) vendor for scanning if:* the claim is in paper form, or
* the claimant still has a traditional claims folder
 |

Topic 2: Flag and Direct Claims For Priority Processing

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| **OBJECTIVES** | Topic objectives:*The**student**will be able to:* * Prioritize Homeless Veterans Claims, Extreme Financial Hardship Claims, Very Seriously Injured and Seriously Injured Veterans Claims, and Terminal Illness Claims
 |
| **Homeless Veterans’ Claims***Slide 9* | The following steps should be taken to flag and direct Homeless Veterans’ claims:* Upon receipt of an application for benefits that contains a telephone number but no mailing address, attempt to contact the claimant by telephone to obtain a current mailing address.
* If neither a mailing address nor a telephone number are provided on the application, follow the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 1.B.9.i.
* Advise the Homeless Veterans Claims Coordinator (HVCC)
 |
| **Extreme Financial Hardship Claims***Slide 10* | The following steps should be taken to flag and direct extreme financial hardship claims:* Accept claimant’s statement of extreme financial needs as factual
* Review potential documentation to support include: eviction notice, past due notices, collection notices
* Append the Hardship corporate flash to a claimant’s record when extreme financial hardship has been adequately demonstrated
 |
| **Defining VSI and SI***Slide 11* | For the purposes of the VSI/SI program, a “serious disability” is defined as a disability that:* occurred as a result of participation in a military operation, and
* will likely result in discharge from military service.
 |
| **VSI and SI Claims***Slide 12* | The DoD classifies these injuries and illnesses into the following categories:* Very Seriously Ill or Injured (VSI)
* Seriously Ill or Injured (SI), and
* Not Seriously Ill or Injured (NSI).

All service members categorized as VSI or SI are considered seriously disabled for VA purposes. |
| **Terminal Illness***Slide 13* | If a claim is submitted with medical evidence of an illness that is likely to be terminal, the first line supervisor will determine prioritization.When determining if prioritization is warranted, consider* the likelihood the claimant will pass away before the completion of the claims process, and
* the probable need for access to ancillary benefits, such as Aid and Attendance, due to end of life care.
 |
| **Terminal Illness Flash***Slide 14* | If the determination is made to prioritize the case due to Terminal Illness, the following steps are taken:* Paper format - add a flash to the front of the paper claims folder indicating a claim for a terminal illness, and append the contention with the Terminally Ill special issue flash.
* Electronic format - append the contention with the Terminally Ill special issue flash, and change the claim priority to high in the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS).
 |

Practical Exercise

Directions: The student should review the examples to determine if the claim requires priority processing. A determination should be made with consideration that the VA Form 21-526 or 21-526EZ were completed and given the information provides in the examples.

**Example #1**

Making a decision based only on the information shown in the screen shots below, and assuming completion of the entire VA Form 21-526 or 21-526EZ, does the submission meet the criteria for VA priority processing? Why or why not?

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**Example #2**

Making a decision based only on the information shown in the screen shots below, and assuming completion of the entire VA Form 21-526 or 526EZ, does the submission meet the criteria for VA priority processing? Why or why not?









**Example #3**

Making a decision based only on the information shown in the screen shots below, and assuming completion of the entire VA Form 21-526 or 526EZ, does the submission meet the criteria for VA priority processing? Why or why not?





**(CAPRI notes submitted with claim)**

**Example #4**

Making a decision based only on the information shown in the screen shots below, and assuming completion of the entire VA Form 21-526 or 526EZ, does the submission meet the criteria for VA priority processing? Why or why not?



