



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington, D.C. 20420

January 31, 2022

OBI Letter 20C-22-01

Director (00)

All VBA Services, Staff Offices and Regional Offices and Centers

SUBJ: Annual Certification of Veteran Status and Veteran-Relatives

1. PURPOSE

The Office of Business Integration (OBI) letter establishes the policy and procedures to obtain annual certification from VA employees to ensure their records and the records of any immediate family members are properly secured in accordance with VBA's privacy and security standards.

This letter rescinds and replaces OFO Letter 20F-16-01.

2. POLICY

All individuals requesting access to VBA information systems are required to complete the VA Form 20-0344 "Annual Certification of Veteran Status and Veteran-Relatives," prior to obtaining system access. System users will be required to update their status for any changes annually.

VA Form 20-0344 will identify all immediate Veteran-Relatives (even if deceased) including spouses, children, parents, and siblings or individuals who otherwise have a close relationship. Such close relationships could create a potential conflict of interest or the appearance thereof within the claims process; identifying employed or contracted Veterans and Veteran-Relatives prevents potential inappropriate disclosure or access of sensitive information to or by unauthorized system users.

3. PROCEDURES:

- A. VBA hiring managers (or their designees/delegates such as HR liaisons) shall collect VA Form 20-0344 from VBA employees as part of the onboarding process.
- B. VBA staff initiating systems access requests for other types of system users (e.g. VA employees, contractors, work-studies, Veteran Service Officers, etc.) shall collect VA Form 20-0344 as part of the documentation related to the systems access request.

- C. Contracting Officer Representatives (COR) shall collect VA Form 20-0344 from VA contractors as part of the documentation related to the systems access request.
- D. All VBA information system users, (herein referenced as “user”) shall complete the annual certification in the Talent Management System (TMS) item (#4009424) “Annual Employee Certification of Veteran-Relatives (VA Form 20-0344)” annually. Only users with status changes (e.g., marriage, divorce, relative military status changed from active duty to Veteran) must submit a new VA Form 20-0344 during the annual certification process or at the time of the status change. *See Roles and Responsibilities.*
- E. A designated official, Change Management Analyst (CMA), Management Analyst (MA), etc. shall conduct a quarterly review of recertification for all users at their station(s) in coordination with the local TMS Administrator and local HR Liaison. Training Managers may access reports through the [VBA TMS Administrators Community of Practice SharePoint](#). The quarterly review shall be conducted to determine if any users have not completed the annual recertification and to identify any users whose self-certification status has changed.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – Annual Certification

- 1) For annual self-certification purposes, users shall be assigned TMS module VA #4009424 “Annual Employee Certification of Veteran-Relatives (VA Form 20-0344)”. This module allows the user to complete a Veteran Status Survey and report either “Yes” (my status has changed) or “No” (no changes since last submission).
- 2) If the user has had no changes to their Veteran or Veteran-Relative status since their last survey, the user shall select “No”, click “Submit”, and they have met the requirements for this course.
- 3) If the user has had changes in their Veteran or Veteran-Relative status since the last survey, the user selects “Yes”, and the user shall complete a revised VA Form 20-0344 and submit the updated form to their facility’s Human Resources (HR) Liaison, their COR or their access initiator. A fillable VA Form 20-0344 is available through the TMS module.
- 4) If the user is unsure what they have previously reported, the user should select “Yes” and submit a VA Form 20-0344 to their HR liaison to ensure proper reporting of the most up-to-date information. Once completed, the TMS course will be listed under the user’s course completion page with the time and date of completion.
- 5) It is the responsibility of each Regional Office or organizational entity to monitor VA Form 20-0344 compliance of their users, regardless of their physical presence onsite.

A. Onboarding and Sensitization Procedures

- 1) The Human Resources (HR) Liaison, COR, or other designated Common Security Services (CSS) Initiator (MA, CMA, etc.) shall ensure the VA Form 20-0344 is completed within 30 days of entering duty for all new VBA system users.

- 2) Local HR Liaisons or other designated CSS Initiators shall notify the facility Veterans Service Center (VSC) to place the appropriate Restricted Access / RACC flash on the Veteran-Employee, user's or relative's record.
- 3) The HR Liaison or other designated CSS Initiator shall submit a YourIT/ServiceNow ticket to have the records secured in accordance with local procedures.
- 4) OIT personnel will ensure the user's claim file number is appropriately linked to his / her / their VBA system account within the Common Security Employee Manager (CSEM) application. If a non-Veteran user is receiving benefits as a dependent of a Veteran, OIT personnel will link that Veteran's claim number to the user's VBA system account as well.
- 5) OIT personnel will refer to OBI Policy Letter [20C-21-02](#) Designation and Access of Sensitive Records, Appendix A Sensitivity Levels, for guidance on sensitizing Veteran or Veteran-Relative records.
- 6) The HR Liaison or other designated CSS Initiator shall coordinate with the local TMS Administrator to ensure each user in TMS has been assigned the "Annual Employee Certification of Veteran-Relatives (VA Form 20-0344)" module (#4009424) as a recurring curriculum for the annual recertification on the anniversary date of first certification or during the onboarding/granting of VBA Information Systems access.
- 7) The HR Liaisons or other designated CSS Initiators for VBA Central Office (VBAVACO) shall follow these procedures for processing the required information for out-based users.

B. Procedures Following Onboarding including Training Reviews and Desensitization

1. Local Training Managers (or other designated officials) shall conduct a quarterly review of recertification for all users at their station(s) in coordination with the local TMS Administrator and local HR Liaison. Training Managers may access reports through the [VBA TMS Administrators Community of Practice SharePoint](#).
2. The local HR Liaison or other designated official shall review the report listed above on a quarterly basis and provide it to executive leadership with clear breakdowns of Completed, Incomplete, Updated, and Unchanged entries for 20-0344 self-certification.
3. Facility or Office Senior Executives shall ensure any users who marked "Yes" on their TMS training have submitted a new VA Form 20-0344 to their HR liaison, COR or access initiator. Senior Executives shall certify quarterly reviews have occurred and employees are completing their self-certification annually.
4. The local Training Manager (or designated official) shall retain TMS reports in accordance with VA's records retention schedule.
5. Upon notification by HR or through VA's Clearance from Indebtedness process (refer to VA Directive 5004), of an employee's resignation or termination, a YourIT/ServiceNow ticket to have the employee's record properly updated will be submitted by local HR or

designated official. OIT will update the Master Sensitive File record by entering a suspense date of three years from the date of termination.

6. Upon notification to a contractor's COR of a contractor's resignation, termination, or change in assignment, the COR submits a YourIT/ServiceNow ticket to have the contractor's record properly updated. OIT will update the Master Sensitive File record by entering a suspense date of three years from the date of termination.
7. Upon notification by HR or through VA's Clearance from Indebtedness process (refer to VA Directive 5004), regarding the transfer of an employee to another VA facility, OIT will make the appropriate record changes to the Master Sensitive File to reflect the receiving VA Duty Station.
8. OIT personnel will refer to OBI Policy Letter [20C-21-02](#) Designation and Access of Sensitive Records, Appendix A Sensitivity Levels, for guidance on sensitizing Veteran or Veteran-Relative records.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions should be directed to the Office of Business Integration, Benefits Systems Management Division's Mailbox at BSM.VBACO@va.gov .

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