Office of Administrative Review Scheduling and Conducting Informal Conferences



Purpose

This Tip Sheet provides helpful information, references and high-level instructions for scheduling and conducting informal conferences for higher-level reviews.



Audience

All claims processors responsible for scheduling and conducting informal conferences.



References

- 38 C.F.R. § 3.2601(h), Informal Conferences
- M21-5, 5.3, Requests for Informal Conferences

Tips

Review block 16 of VA Form 20-0996, *Decision Review Request: Higher-Level Review,* to determine if

- the claimant, or his/her representative, requests an informal conference, and
- the claimant would like VA to contact his/her representative to schedule the informal conference using the below table:



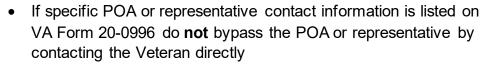
| If | Then |
|---|--|
| Block 17 of the VA Form 20-0996 lists a representative or POA's specific contact information | Contact the listed representative or POA, <i>not the claimant</i> , to schedule the informal conference. |
| Block 17 of the VA Form 20-0996 does not list specific contact information for the representative or POA (i.e., it is blank, or the telephone number is missing) | Contact the claimant to schedule the informal conference. |
| Block 17 of the VA Form 20-0996 lists a generic Veterans Service Organization (VSO) or representative's office and no specific contact information (i.e., 'DAV' or 'VFW') | Contact the claimant to schedule the informal conference. |

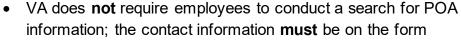




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Important Reminders





- Employees must verify POA is an authorized representative by ensuring VA Form 21-22/21-22a is of record
- Conduct OGC accreditation database search, if necessary
- Do not contact an unaccredited POA; instead, call the claimant directly to schedule



Other Resources

- Training, VA 4564283, AMA Informal Conferences
- Training, VA 4564453, Scheduling Informal Conferences

