

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Benefits Administration

Office of Administrative Review

System Transition Crosswalk: Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) Claim Establishment from Caseflow to VBMS

**Office of Administrative Review
Program Administration**

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1. Introduction

Purpose

This guide assists claim processors in transitioning the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) claim establishment process from Caseflow to the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS). This transition represents a significant advancement, as VBMS offers enhanced functionality, improved performance, and a more user-friendly interface that is already familiar to users. These improvements are designed to streamline workflows and increase efficiency in processing claims.

This document outlines the claim establishment process specifically for Compensation and Pension (C&P) AMA decision reviews. When VBA receives a VA Form 20-0995, *Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim*, and/or VA Form 20-0996, *Decision Review Request: Higher-Level Review*, for a C&P request for review, VBMS will serve as the system for establishing these decision reviews. It is important to note that all other business lines or non-C&P decision reviews will continue to be processed in Caseflow, maintaining a clear distinction in the claim establishment workflow.

Furthermore, VA Form 10182, *Decision Review Request: Board Appeal (Notice of Disagreement)*, which pertains to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board), will still be processed through Caseflow, maintaining consistency in that process. For AMA Board grants and remands, as well as legacy appeal remands, these claims will continue to be established through Caseflow as they follow a separate establishment process. This structured approach is essential for ensuring that Veterans and claimants receive timely and effective support throughout the claims process.

Overview of Systems

With the AMA implementation in February 2019, VBA implemented the claim establishment process for AMA decision reviews in Caseflow Intake.

Caseflow Intake

Caseflow Intake is a web-based application designed to support AMA. Caseflow intakes AMA decision reviews for Veterans/claimants who have chosen either the supplemental claim, higher-level review, or appeal to the Board. Caseflow Intake was developed as a single-entry point to be able to receive and establish decision reviews.

With Caseflow, users intake the decision review, which establishes an end-product (EP) in VBMS based on the type of selected decision review. Specifically, EP 040s are established for supplemental claims and EP 030s are established for higher-level reviews that fall under Compensation and Pension. Caseflow controls Board appeals based on the selected docket-type.

Caseflow was developed to track contentions as required under the AMA; however, its tracking capability required VBA users to navigate between VBMS and Caseflow to

update claim attributes. This led to the creation of workarounds, which in some instances affected the tracking functionality. To address these challenges with user experience and data tracking, VBA decided to transition from Caseflow to VBMS, improving the process for VBA users.

VBMS

VBMS is a web-based system designed to support the processing of claims, benefits, and entitlements offered by VBA. It is a comprehensive platform for managing electronic claims files. It streamlines the intake, processing, and adjudication of claims by consolidating various tasks within a single system. VBMS enables VBA users to update claim attributes, review evidence, and process decisions without the need to navigate multiple systems. By integrating these functions, VBMS enhances efficiency, improves data accuracy, and offers a more user-friendly experience for processing Veterans' claims.

Caseflow was developed to track individual contentions. However, the increasing AMA inventory caused challenges in Caseflow, such as the need for users to navigate between systems and its limited tracking capabilities. This shift required the development of data tracking capabilities within VBMS. Since claims processors are more familiar with VBMS, this transition also streamlined processes and enhanced efficiency.

2. New Features Highlight

In this initial deployment, basic claim establishment for AMA decision reviews will be available, marking an important step forward. As the transition to VBMS is deployed, VBA is set for the future ability to enhance system functionality, provide support, and seamlessly incorporate AMA EPs into standard claims processing within VBMS. Users will encounter familiar establishment elements, such as selecting issues from prior decisions, along with improvements like access to prior non-rating decision data. The "Side-by-Side Comparison" will highlight the similarities and differences between Caseflow and VBMS, allowing for a clear understanding of the changes.

A key benefit to VBMS claims establishment is the upfront selection of the EP and claim label, which reduces reliance on the system and minimizes the risk of incorrectly established decision reviews. This streamlined approach enhances efficiency and empowers users in the process. The main advantage is the ability to establish and process AMA decision reviews, including updates, all within VBMS.

In a future deployment, AMA claim establishment will be fully integrated once VBMS establishes the HLR return process and auto-establishes the associated EP 040s.

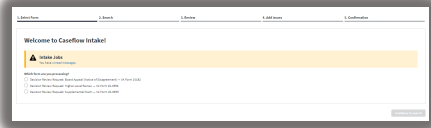
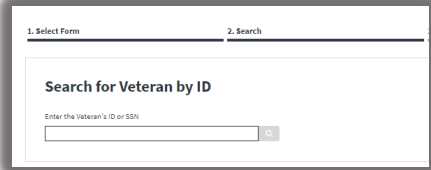
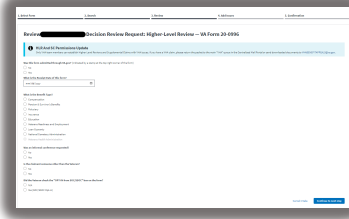
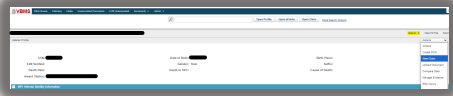
3. Side-by-Side Comparison

The side-by-side comparison offers a comprehensive view of the key details and differences between Caseflow and VBMS. This comparison will help users easily

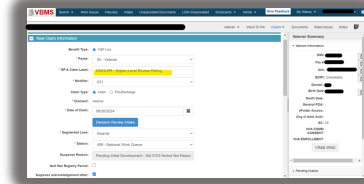
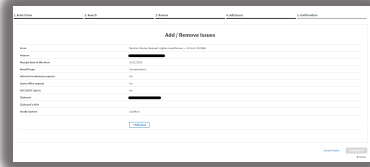
identify what has changed, including any updates or adjustments, and how it may impact overall functionality.

While the screenshots may appear small and could be difficult to view in detail, they are included for comparison purposes to illustrate key differences between the two systems.

Note: The names that appear are test names and not real individuals.

| | Caseflow | VBMS |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>System Access</p> | <p>appeals.cf.ds.va.gov</p> | <p>https://www.vbms.vba.va.gov/vbmsp2/</p> |
| <p>Intake Process</p> | <p>Select Form</p> <p>Caseflow establishes the decision review based on the form.</p>  <p>Once the appropriate form is selected, the user inputs the Veteran's information to initiate the intake process.</p>  <p>Users must input the information from the claim form.</p>  | <p>Select New Claim</p> <p>Users will navigate to the specific Veteran to establish the claim for the Veteran.</p> <p>Once in the Veteran's profile, users will select from the "Action Requested" dropdown to establish a "New Claim."</p>  <p>VBMS will have users select the correct EP and claim label from the outset. This selection of the claim label, whether rating or non-rating, will trigger the population of the associated decision data, ensuring that the relevant information is available. Thus, if a rating claim label is selected, then the prior decision data for rating decisions will be available for issue selection.</p> <p>Once the EP and the claim label are selected, then user will click on the "Decision Review Intake" button.</p> |

Then users will “Add/Remove Issues” based on the prior decisions available.

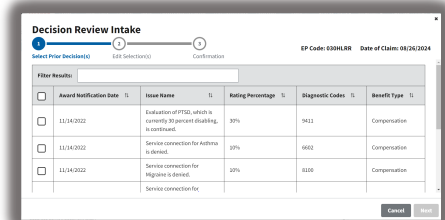


Note: If the form has mixed issues for rating and non-rating issues, users will need to complete **separate** intakes to establish the correct EP and claim label. As an example, if a VA Form 20-0996 is received, claiming a right knee issue and a dependency issue, then the user must establish 2 EP030s: 1) EP030 for the *Higher-Level Review – Rating* claim label to control the right knee issue and then a 2) EP030 (or sequential EP031) with the *Higher-Level Review – Non-Rating* claim label.

**Issue Selection:
Rating Issues**

For rating issues, users select from the available prior decisions.

For rating issues, users will select from the available prior decisions on the “Decision Review Intake” screen. This is similar to the Caseflow intake process.



Users will be required to select the “Informal Conference requested”.

The “Same station review requested” is also available on this screen. This field is optional

and is not required to proceed with establishment.

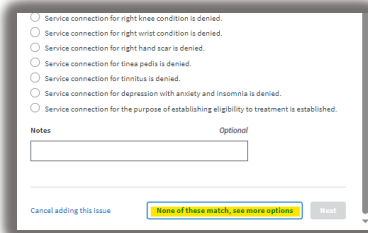
*Note: The “Informal Conference requested” and the “Same station review requested” will only be available for the higher-level review (HLR) establishment process. These selections will not be available for supplemental claims or for EP930 establishment.

Issue Selection: Non-Rating Issues

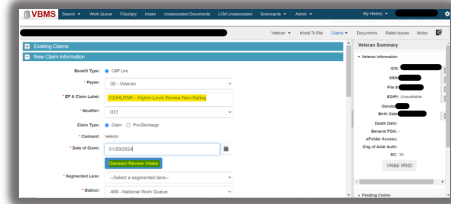
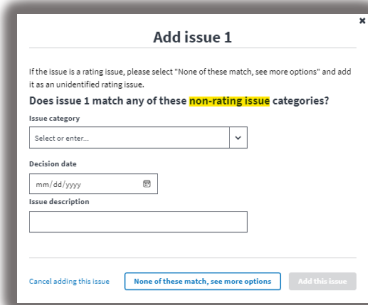
For non-rating issues, Caseflow did not populate non-rating issues under the prior decisions. Users are required to select a category and then manually input the decision issue. Thus, Caseflow required users to select the “None of these match, see more options” at the bottom of the “Add Issues” screen to enter non-rating issues.

For non-rating issues, VBMS will populate the non-rating issues for each prior decision. Users will be able to see the issues for the prior decisions to make the appropriate selection.

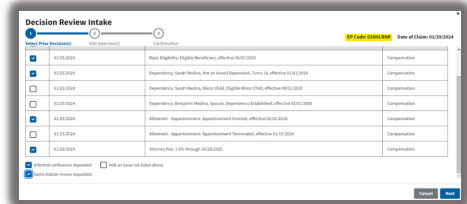
As a reminder, a separate EP must be established for the rating and non-rating issues.



Users would input the information for the non-rating issue.



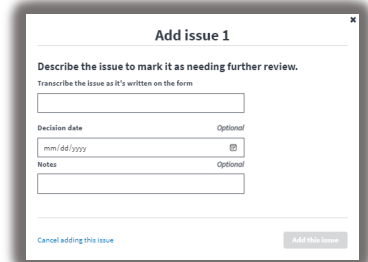
For non-rating issues, users will select from the available prior decisions on the “Decision Review Intake” screen. This information was not available during the intake process in Caseflow.



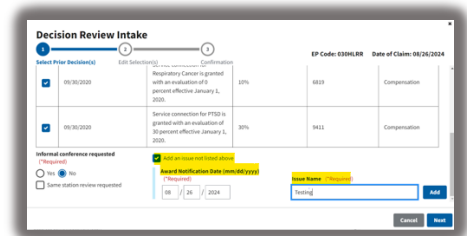
Issue Selection: Unknown/ Unidentified issues

If there was no rating issue available during the “Add Issue” selection process, then the issue would appear as a **“Unidentified Issue”** contention under the EP.

If there was no non-rating issue available during the “Add Issue” selection process, then the issue would appear as an **“Unknown Issue”** contention under the EP.

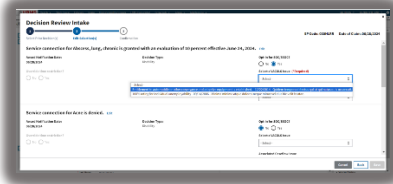
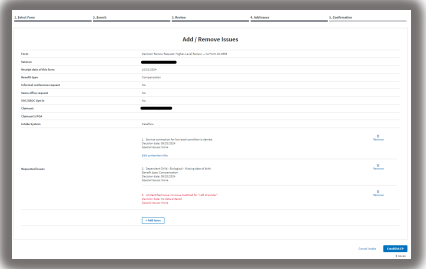
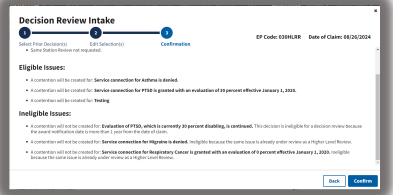
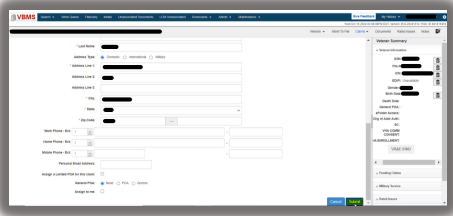


If the claimed issue from the form is not an available selection, then there is the option to add the issue.



The issue will be displayed as the text entered in the "Issue Name" field.

*Note: When using the **“Add an issue not listed above”** option for an issue that is not linked to a prior decision, VBMS will assign an **“Unidentified Issue: _____”** label. Users can edit the contention title, but the **“Unidentified Issue: _____”** label

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| | | <p>will remain visible. This is functioning as intended.</p> |
| <p>SOC/SSOC Opt-in and VACOLS</p> | <p>For the SOC/SSOC opt-in, this was at the beginning of the intake process when the information from the form was inputted into Caseflow. It did not provide the opportunity to associate it to the VACOLS record.</p> | <p>If the SOC/SSOC opt-in is selected under the issue, then it must be associated to a pending legacy appeal issue for VACOLS.</p>  |
| <p>Completing the Establishment Process</p> | <p>Once all issues are selected, then Caseflow will populate the selections.</p>  <p>To initiate EP establishment, click on “Establish EP.”</p> | <p>Once all issues are selected, then VBMS will also populate both eligible and ineligible issues.</p> <p>Identified ineligible issues will appear. There is the opportunity to go back to make any updates or proceed.</p>  <p>To initiate EP establishment, click on “Confirm.”</p> |
| <p>Establishing End-Product</p> | <p>Once the “Establish EP” is established, then Caseflow would send the intake information to VBMS to establish the appropriate EP(s) based on the issues selected. As an example, if there were rating and non-rating issues for the intake, then there would be 2 EPs showing in VBMS.</p> | <p>Once the “Confirm” button is clicked, it will bring the user back to the “New Claim” page. From there, then click on “Submit” at the bottom right of the page.</p>  |

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| | <p>There was a 24 – 48 hour wait process before the EP would appear in VBMS.</p> | <p>The EP will appear in VBMS based on the EP and claim label selected at the outset with the appropriate issues.</p> <p>The EP should appear nearly in real-time or shortly thereafter.</p> |
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4. Support and Troubleshooting

Support

The VBMS user guide will be updated in the near future to include detailed instructions for AMA claim establishment within VBMS. This update will provide additional guidance for users to navigate the new functionality and ensure a smooth transition from Caseflow.

Troubleshooting

If users encounter any issues while establishing AMA claims in VBMS, they are advised to open a [YourIT](#) ticket to receive assistance.

For any additional questions or concerns regarding the system transition, please reach out to [OAR Program Administration](#) for further support.