

Office of Administrative Review

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Date of Receipt Procedures



Purpose

This Tip Sheet provides examples of the proper dates of receipt for claims affected by mail disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic, from March 1, 2020, through June 9, 2023.



Background

On March 13, 2020, the President declared the COVID-19 outbreak constituted a national emergency, with an effective date of March 1, 2020, pursuant to the National Emergencies Act (NEA). On April 10, 2023, the President signed [Public Law 118-3](#), which terminated the national emergency declared under NEA. This means the end date of VBA's temporary claims and appeal processing guidance, including guidance contained in this training and Tip Sheet, is June 9, 2023, which is 60 calendar days following the date the President ended the national emergency.



Audience

All claims processors.



References

- [Policy Letter 20-02: Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Claims and Appeals Processing Guidance](#)
- [Memorandum, Rescinding Policy Letter 20-02 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Claims and Appeals Processing Guidance](#)
- Training – VA 4557749, *Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Date of Receipt Procedures*

Tips

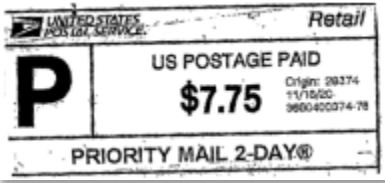
Use the following table to determine date of receipt for claims affected by the date of receipt guidance contained in PL 20-02, which applies to any claim pending, received, or postmarked between March 1, 2020, and June 9, 2023.



- Example 1: An original claim is received on June 12, 2023. The postmark date is June 9, 2023. The claims processor should follow the guidance in PL 20-02.
- Example 2: An original claim is received on June 12, 2023. The postmark date is June 10, 2023. The claims processor should follow the guidance in [M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 2.B.1.a-b](#).



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If . . .	Then . . .
<p>the correspondence was submitted by mail and has a postmark from a mail distribution service such as the United States Postal Service or FedEx</p> <p>Example:</p>  <p>Note: The scanning vendor's receipt date for paper mail will appear in a separate bar across the top of the document in VBMS.</p> <p>Example:</p> <div data-bbox="329 968 979 1020" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">11182020 - VA Evidence Intake Center, Janesville WI</div>	<p>the date of receipt is the date of the postmark.</p>
<p>the correspondence was submitted by mail and does not have a postmark and bears a VA date stamp, Claims Intake Center watermark or COVID-19 watermark dated on or after March 1, 2020, but on or before August 26, 2020</p> <p>Examples:</p> <div data-bbox="329 1314 979 1346" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">04302020 - VA Evidence Intake Center, Janesville WI</div> <div data-bbox="375 1381 914 1444" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; margin-top: 10px;">VA – Claims Intake Center – COVID – 04/07/2020</div>	<p>the date of receipt is February 29, 2020, unless that date is clearly erroneous.</p> <p>In cases where the application of a February 29, 2020, date of receipt would be clearly false, claims processors should apply the procedural guidance in M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 2.B.1.b, to make a best estimate for the date of document receipt.</p>


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If . . .	Then . . .
<p>the correspondence was submitted by mail and does not have a postmark and bears a VA date stamp, Claims Intake Center watermark or COVID-19 watermark dated on or after August 27, 2020</p> <p>Examples:</p> <div data-bbox="326 615 971 653" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">11182020 - VA Evidence Intake Center, Janesville WI</div> <div data-bbox="358 690 927 814" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>VA - Claims Intake Center - COVID - 10/01/2020 - Lakeland FL</p>  </div>	<p>consider it to have been received 10 calendar days prior to the date stamp or watermark - unless doing so results in a clearly erroneous date of receipt.</p>
<p>the correspondence was submitted by mail and the postmark is illegible</p> <p>Example:</p> <div data-bbox="402 1024 938 1157" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">  </div>	<p>treat the correspondence as received without a postmark.</p> <p>Note: Apply procedures in M21-1, Part II, Subpart i, 2.B.1.b for cases in which the postmark is partially legible.</p>
<p>the correspondence was received via facsimile</p> <p>Examples:</p> <div data-bbox="347 1367 943 1457" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>VA Claims Intake Center – 10302020</p> <p>10/30/2020 20:04 770 [REDACTED]</p> </div> <div data-bbox="347 1482 943 1562" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>VA Decision Review Operations Center Intake Center - 12/16/2020</p> <p>BEST COPY Source: EMMS</p> <p>12/16/2020 14:12 770 [REDACTED]</p> </div> <p>Notes: Faxed documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will include a fax transmission header beneath the watermark indicating confirmation of fax date and time, and • may contain another date stamp header stating, “BEST COPY Source: EMMS.” See Important Reminders for more information on EMMS. 	<p>the date of receipt is the VA Claims Intake Center date stamp on the top of the document.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 date of receipt procedures do not apply, and • ensure that the document does not also include an earlier receipt date stamp from a regional office or other authorized VA entity.

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If . . .	Then . . .
<p>the correspondence was submitted electronically and has an electronic date stamp</p> <p>Examples: Claims/documents can be submitted electronically by either the claimant, VSO or National Call Center (NCC). Electronically submitted mail will have an electronic date stamp that appears as part of the document at the top left.</p> <div data-bbox="370 695 935 806" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>VA Claims Intake Center – 10142020</p>  <p>Department of Veterans Affairs</p> </div> <div data-bbox="370 835 935 905" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>VA Pension Claims Intake Center - 04/28/2021 BEST COPY Source: Direct Upload</p> </div> <div data-bbox="318 936 992 999" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>09/24/2014 – VA Evidence Intake Center, Janesville WI ScanDate: 09/25/2014 BEST COPY – PMR PROGRAM REFERRED</p> </div> <p>Notes: Electronically submitted documents will often contain another date stamp header stating,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “BEST COPY Source: EMMS” • “BEST COPY Source: Direct Upload” • Documents submitted through VA.gov will have a submission number and the text “submitted electronically” across the top left of each page as follows: <div data-bbox="412 1339 935 1371" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p># [REDACTED] Submitted Electronically through VA.GOV</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some electronically submitted documents will contain the “Application Submitted” date stamp as follows: <div data-bbox="500 1507 834 1619" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">VA DATE STAMP (DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Application Submitted: 09/25/2020 02:16 AM CT</p> </div>	<p>the date of receipt is the date of the electronic date stamp.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 date of receipt procedures do not apply, and • ensure the system reflects the electronic date stamp and not the document scan date.

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Important Reminders

- Electronic Mail Management System (EMMS) is a VA contract as of December 14, 2020, that uses the Application Programming Interface (API) as a digital pathway to upload documents into the Centralized Mail Portal (CMP). This 'EMMS' designation **always** indicates a faxed or electronically submitted document.
 - Prior to the EMMS contract on December 14, 2020, electronically submitted documents may indicate the Computer Systems Research and Applications (CSRA) Corporation contract.
 - If questions arise as to the source or submission of a document, users may view the vendor and source of a document in the Results Grid of the CMP. For example, electronic submissions will often indicate "API" or "DirUpload" as intake types. Furthermore, users that find critical information in CMP that is **not available** in VBMS, must place a note in VBMS describing such information and its applicability to determining date of receipt.
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Other Resources

- [Centralized Mail Portal](#)
 - [Office of Business Integration \(OBI\) Centralized Mail Intranet](#)
 - Training - VA 4558348, *Overview of the Centralized Mail Portal*
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