**REGIONAL OFFICE RESEARCH COORDINATOR TRAINING INSTRUCTOR LESSON PLAN**

**TIME REQUIRED: 1.75 HOURS**

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**LESSON DESCRIPTION**

The information below provides the instructor with an overview of the lesson and the materials that are required to effectively present this instruction.

### TMS #4616228

**PREREQUISITES** Prior to this lesson, the Regional Office (RO) Research

Coordinator should have expert knowledge of records research.

### TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for the RO Research Coordinator Training is RO Research Coordinator.

### TIME REQUIRED

**MATERIALS/ TRAINING AIDS**

1.75 Hours

Lesson materials:

* RO Research Coordinator Training PowerPoint Presentation
* RO Research Coordinator Training Handout

### TRAINING AREA/TOOLS

The following are required to ensure the trainees are able to meet the lesson objectives:

* + Classroom or private area suitable for participatory discussions
  + Seating, writing materials, and writing surfaces for trainee note taking and participation
  + Handouts, which include a practical exercise
  + Large writing surface (easel pad, chalkboard, dry erase board, overhead projector, etc.) with appropriate writing materials
  + Computer with PowerPoint software to present the lesson material

RO Research Coordinators require access to the following tools:

* + RO Research Coordinator Training Handout
  + RO Research Coordinator PowerPoint

**PRE-PLANNING** □ Become familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Lesson Plan while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding PowerPoint slides. This will provide you the opportunity to see the connection between the Lesson Plan and the slides, which will allow for a more structured presentation during the training session.

* + - Become familiar with the content of the handouts and their association to the Lesson Plan.
    - Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to

practice coordination between this Lesson Plan, the handouts, and the PowerPoint slides and ensure your timing is on track with the length of the lesson.

* + - Ensure that there are copies of all handouts before the training session.
    - When required, reserve the training room.
    - Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (as needed).
    - Talk to people in your office who are most familiar with this topic to collect experiences that you can include as examples in the lesson.
    - This lesson plan belongs to you. Feel free to highlight headings, key phrases, or other information to help the instruction flow smoothly.

Feel free to add any notes or information that you need in the margins.

**TRAINING DAY** □ Arrive as early as possible to ensure access to the facility and

computers.

* + - Become familiar with the location of restrooms and other facilities that the trainees will require.
    - Test the computer and projector to ensure they are working properly.
    - Before class begins, open the PowerPoint presentation to the first slide. This will help to ensure the presentation is functioning

properly.

* + - Make sure that a whiteboard or flip chart and the associated markers are available.
    - The instructor completes a roll call attendance sheet or provides a sign-in sheet to the students. The attendance records are forwarded to the Regional Office Training Managers.

## INTRODUCTION TO RO RESEARCH COORDINATOR TRAINING

### INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION

Complete the following:

* Introduce yourself
* Orient learners to the facilities
* Ensure that all learners have the required handouts

**TIME REQUIRED** 5 minutes

### PURPOSE OF LESSON

*Explain the following:*

This lesson is intended to identify the RO Research Coordinator Training processing. This lesson will allow you to gain a better understanding of:

* Topic 1: Scope of MRRC research
* Topic 2: Duties of RO Research Coordinator
* Topic 3: When an MRRC request is required
* Topic 4: Helpful Hints for Research Requests
* Topic 5: Steps for submission of MRRC request
* Topic 6: When to contact MRRC

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

*Discuss the following: Slide 2*

*Handout 2*

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

The RO Research Coordinator will be able to:

* Establish scope of MRRC research
* Identify duties of RO Research Coordinator
* Determine when a MRRC request is required
* Indicate required fields for MRRC request
* Review steps for submission of MRRC request
* Clarify when to contact the MRRC mailbox

### REFERENCES

*Slide 3*

*Handout 3*

Explain where these references are located in the workplace. All M21-1 references are found in the Live [Manual](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034) Website.

* + M21-1.I.1.C.1.a VA’s Duty to Obtain Federal Records
  + M21-1.VIII.iv.1.A General Information and Development for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Claims
  + 38CFR 3.159 Department of Veterans Affairs assistance in developing claims

### Assignment of and Qualifications for an RO Research Coordinator

*Handout 4*

Each RO must designate employee(s) to serve as RO Research Coordinator(s)

The designated employee must

* possess expertise in military records, and
* be thoroughly familiar with the information within the M21-1.

Important:

* Each RO must designate at least one alternate RO Research Coordinator.
* If an RO does not have sufficient staffing to designate a RO Research Coordinator, the Veterans Service Center Manager (VSCM) should request an exception to this requirement from the Office of Field Operations (OFO).

# TOPIC 1: SCOPE OF MRRC RESEARCH

**INTRODUCTION** This topic describes the scope of requests researched by the MRRC

**TIME REQUIRED** 5 minutes

**OBJECTIVES** Topic objectives:

* + Identify the scope of requests researched by the MRRC through specific examples of events that MRRC will and will not research

*Slide 4*

*Handout 4*

MRRC conducts research on the following

* Stressor incidents
* Herbicide/Agent Orange exposure events
* All branches of service (including Marine Corps)

MRRC Does Not Research

* Military sexual trauma (MST)
* C123
* Asbestos
* Radiation
* Camp Lejeune
* Mustard Gas/Lewisite contaminated water
* Mistreatment of enemy prisoners
* Events that almost happened
* Other environmental toxins/substances
* Stressors for valid Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claims

# TOPIC 2: DUTIES OF RO RESEARCH COORDINATOR

**INTRODUCTION** This topic identifies duties of RO Research Coordinators

**TIME REQUIRED** 10 minutes

**OBJECTIVES** Explain the duties of RO Research Coordinators

*Slide 5*

*Handouts 4 and 5*

* Determines whether or not there is sufficient information available to conduct research
* Confirms Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) sanctioned intranet and internet sources have been reviewed, to include

the Official Military Activities Report (OMAR) app.

* Submits all RO research requests for stressor verification to the MRRC via the Record

Research Requests chevron in VBMS Core.

* Emails the MRRC mailbox

at VAVBAWAS/CO/209/MRRC when a pending research request is no longer needed or needs to be cancelled

# TOPIC 3: WHEN A MILITARY RECORDS RESEARCH CENTER (MRRC) REQUEST IS REQUIRED

### INTRODUCTION

**TIME REQUIRED**

### OBJECTIVES/ TEACHING POINTS

*Slide 6*

*Handout 5*

This topic outlines when a research request to MRRC is required

20 minutes

Research requests are required in situations where Veteran claims exposure to herbicides or stressful event(s) but field personnel are unable to corroborate the event.

The following general criteria must be met before the RO RC may submit a research request for verification of a claimed stressor or herbicide exposure event:

The claims folder contains minimum information needed to allow additional research as described in M21-1.III.iii.2.I.4.b

* The required development is completed, but the claimed stressor cannot be conceded base on the stressor verification review procedures in **VIII.iv.1.A.3.d****.  Stressor Verification Review Procedure**
  + The claimed herbicide exposure cannot be conceded based on development procedures in M21-1.IV.1.H.1.c
  + All military records, to include service treatment records and entire OMPF are of record and have been reviewed
  + There is no previous MRRC response of record that addresses the claimed event. cannot be conceded base on the stressor

verification review procedures in M21-1.IV.ii.1.D.3.d

# TOPIC 4: HELPFUL HINTS FOR RESEARCH REQUESTS

### INTRODUCTION

**TIME REQUIRED**

### OBJECTIVES/ TEACHING POINTS

*Slides 7-8*

*Handout 5-6*

This topic will allow the RO Research Coordinator to enter a records research request

20 minutes

Topic objective: To provide RO Research Coordinators with assistance in determining what elements are needed for a sufficient research request

When submitting a request for stressor or herbicide exposure corroboration to MRRC, include the following:

* date of event within 120 days
* Veteran’s complete tour dates
* designation of the Veteran’s unit of assignment
* specific geographic location of the claimed event
* medals or citations received by the Veteran
* names of other service members

# TOPIC 5: SUBMISSION OF RESEARCH REQUESTS IN VBMS

### INTRODUCTION

**TIME REQUIRED**

### OBJECTIVES/ TEACHING POINTS

This topic outlines the step by step process for entering MRRC research requests in VBMS and status of requests.

20 minutes

Topic Objective: To provide guidance on inputting an MRRC request

*Slides 9-17*

*Handout 6-9*

1. Click on the chevron labeled "Record Research Requests" and the select the Create Research Request button
2. Choose either stressor or exposure
3. Complete request form using information provided by Veteran
4. If the Veteran provides name(s) of individuals injured or deceased, enter information in fields provided
5. Air Force requests require input of Veteran’s Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) at the **time of the claimed event** (review personnel file – Performance Reports to obtain)
6. When all fields have been completed, press the save button
7. User then has the option to submit research request or delete
8. Once submit research is entered, a reminder prompt will remind user they have 2 business days to cancel request and 5 business days to edit the request

Status of MRRC request

Authorized users can view the status of the request by selecting the Record Research Requests chevron. All requests that have been submitted for the claim will be listed separately

VBMS automatically updates the status of requests upon submission:

* + *Research Requested* – automatically generated when the requestor submits a records research request that cannot be immediately assigned to a researcher.
  + *Research Assigned* – automatically updated when the

records research task is assigned to a researcher.

* + *Research in Progress* – manually updated when a researcher launches a records research task.
  + *Research Extended* – manually updated when a records

research task is extended.

* + *Research Response Provided* – automatically updated when a records research task is completed.

# TOPIC 6: WHEN TO CONTACT MRRC

### INTRODUCTION

*Discuss the following:*

This topic defines when an RO Research Coordinator would contact MRRC.

**TIME REQUIRED** 5 minutes

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

*Slide 18*

*Handout 9*

Topic objective: To provide guidance for when it is appropriate to contact MRRC.

With real time status of research requests available in VBMS, there is no need to send a follow up inquiry to MRRC mailbox.

* If cancellation of a research request is needed, please send email to VAVBAWAS/CO/209/MRRC [RRC.VBACO@VA.GOV,](mailto:RRC.VBACO@VA.GOV)

including Veterans’ name, SSN or file number, date of research

request submission and reason for cancellation.

* For policy and manual related questions and/or feedback related to stressor research, provide detailed but concise information.
* To request a research request be expedited, provide the basis for the request.
* Excludes routine follow ups. The status of pending research requests may be ascertained by checking VBMS.

### INTRODUCTION

*Discuss the following:*

### TIME REQUIRED

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

*Slide 19*

*Handout 9*

# TOPIC 7: REMINDERS

Insufficient requests and the MRRC

Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments.

15 minutes

Topic Objective: To provide important reminders to the RO Researcher Coordinators.

* MRRC will return any research request identified as invalid or incomplete, with an explanation of the deficiency(ies) identified. MRRC then closes out the request, and it must be resubmitted as a new request to receive further consideration
* Research requests involving casualties or injuries are NOT

insufficient just because the name of the deceased or injured was not provided