***Survivors Benefits and Death Benefits Participant Guide***

**National Contact Center New Hire Challenge Training**

OTED Training

Lesson Content

**Duration:** 3.25 hours

**TMS:**  **4644627**

**Audience:** This lesson is intended for new hire Public Contact Representatives (PCRs) within VBA’s National Contact Centers (NCCs) however, it is also suitable for any new or experienced VA employee desiring information on this subject.

**Purpose:** This lesson provides VA employees assisting the public with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge on this topic. It fulfills the training requirements outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for new hires in the National Training Curriculum (NTC).

**Objectives:** Upon completing this lesson, trainees will be able to:

* Distinguish between common death benefits and survivors’ benefits
* Demonstrate an understanding and ability to answer questions to specific death benefits, their eligibility criteria, and how to apply for:
* Presidential Memorial Certificates
* Cemetery burials
* Military Funeral Honors
* Burial Flags
* Headstones
* Markers
* Medallions
* Demonstrate an understanding and ability to answer questions to specific survivors’ benefits, their eligibility criteria, benefit amounts, and how to apply for:
* Month of Death Payment
* Burial Allowance
* Plot/Interment Allowance
* Reimbursement of Transportation Costs
* Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
* Survivors Pension
* Accrued Benefits

**References:**

**KM Article**

* [Death Related Checklist](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000002732/Death-Related-Information-Checklist)
* [Death Benefits](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000002855/Death-Benefits)
* [National Cemetery Administration Referrals](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000168459/National-Cemetery-Administration-Referrals?query=pre%20need)
* [0820 Routing Procedures](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000031625/0820-Routing-Procedures)
* [Fast Letter (FL) 14-06: Automating and Simplifying Burial Benefit Payments - Background Information, Procedural Changes, and FAQs](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000011256/Fast-Letter-FL-14-06-Automating-and-Simplifying-Burial-Benefit-Payments-Background-Information-Procedural-Changes-and-FAQs)
* [PMC Map, Address, Phone #, Office Hours, and Offices of Jurisdiction](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000008829/PMC-Map-Address-Phone-Office-Hours-and-Offices-of-Jurisdiction)
* [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000002868/Dependency-and-Indemnity-Compensation-DIC)
* [Unreimbursed Medical Expenses (UME)](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000003279/Unreimbursed-Medical-Expenses-UME)

**Intranet**

**CPKM**

* [M21-1, Part VII, Chapter 1, Section B](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014974/M21-1-Part-VII-Chapter-1-Section-B-Burial-Benefits), Burial Benefits
* [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section B](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000032420/M21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-iii-Chapter-1-Section-B-Dependency-and-Indemnity-Compensation-DIC), Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
* [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart iii, Chapter 3, Section D](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014636/M21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-iii-Chapter-3-Section-D-Remarriage-of-a-Surviving-Spouse), Remarriage of a Surviving Spouse
* [M21-1, Part V, Subpart i, Chapter 1](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014359/M21-1-Part-V-Subpart-i-Chapter-1-Overview-of-Requirements-and-Development-for-Pension-and-Parents-Dependency-and-Indemnity-Compensation-DIC), Overview of Requirements and Development for Pension and Parents’ Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
* [M21-1, Part IV, Subpart iii, Chapter 3, Section A](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000014619/M21-1-Part-IV-Subpart-iii-Chapter-3-Section-A-Initial-Awards-to-Dependents?query=mod#5), Initial Awards to Dependents
* [M21-1, Part VIII, Chapter 1](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000015017/M21-1-Part-VIII-Chapter-1-Entitlement-to-Accrued-Benefits-Under-38-USC-5121), Entitlement to Accrued Benefits Under 38 U.S.C. 5121

**eCFR**

* §[3.1709](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ad275643432556b9dda942343fb89296&mc=true&node=pt38.1.3&rgn=div58#se38.1.3_11709), Transportation expenses for burial in a national cemetery

**Internet**

[National Cemetery Administration](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/index.asp)

[Department of Veterans Affairs](https://www.va.gov/)

**VA Forms**

* [VA Form 0820f](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-27-0820f-ARE.pdf), *Report of Month of Death*
* [VA Form 40-0247](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0247.pdf), *Presidential Memorial Certificate Request Form*
* [VA Form 40-10007](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf), *Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery*
* [VA Form 27-2008](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-27-2008-ARE.pdf), *Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes*
* [VA Form 40-1330](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf), *Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker*
* [VA Form 40-1330M](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330M.pdf), *Claim for Government Medallion for Placement in a Private Cemetery*
* [VA Form 21P-530EZ](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-530EZ-ARE.pdf), *Application for Burial Benefits*
* [VA Form 21P-534EZ](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/survivors/dic.pdf), *Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits*
* [VA Form 21P-535](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-535-ARE.pdf), *Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s)*

# Introduction

As a Public Contact Representative (PCR) in the National Contact Center (NCC), you receive inquiries from Veterans, their family members, and other interested parties related to services and benefits offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

This lesson is an introduction to common death benefits and survivors’ benefits you encounter during call interactions. Recall from the Introduction to Reference Material training lesson, reference material refers to resources that provide background information, regulations, policies, procedural guidance, and answers to frequently asked questions. Most of this lesson will refer to KM article [Death Related Benefited Information Checklist](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000002732/Death-Related-Information-Checklist) and accessing the [National Cemetery Administration](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/index.asp) website.

## Defining Death Benefits and Survivors Benefits

Throughout VA reference material, the meaning of death benefits encompasses many benefits and services and can be used interchangeably when describing VA benefits for survivors.

### Death Benefits Defined

For this lesson, death benefits will refer to VA burial and memorial benefits offered to an eligible Veteran at the time of death.

***Survivors Benefits Defined***

For this lesson, survivors’ benefits will refer to VA benefits offered to survivors as a result of an eligible Veteran’s death.

# Death Benefits

As PCRs, you are responsible for providing death benefits information to callers who

report a death or inquire about specific death benefits.

In your role, common Veteran death benefits relate to:

* Presidential Memorial Certificates
* Cemetery burials
* Military Funeral Honors
* Burial Flags
* Headstones
* Markers
* Medallions

Death benefits are time-sensitive, except for the Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC). If the Veteran’s death occurred within the past three (3) days or if the caller mentions the Veteran’s burial has yet to take place, PCRs must discuss those death benefits.

# Presidential Memorial Certificate

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is a gold engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President of the United States, to honor the memory of deceased Veterans who are eligible for burial in a national cemetery.

## Eligible Recipients

The recipients who are eligible to receive a PMC include:

* Next of Kin
* Relatives
* Friends
* Authorized service representatives

There is no limit to the number of PMCs issued on behalf of a Veteran.

## Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility for the PMC is the same as [Eligibility for Burial in a National Cemetery](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/presidential-memorial-certificates/). The Veteran must have an honorable discharge or died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty for training.

## How to Apply

If not processed electronically, to apply for the PMC claimants must complete and return [VA Form 40-0247](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-0247.pdf), *Presidential Memorial Certificate Request Form* with supporting documents to the Memorial Products Service. The supporting documents include a copy of the Veteran's discharge documents that shows service dates and the character of service.

The completed form and supporting documents can be returned two ways:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **By MAIL to the** | **By FAX to** |
| Presidential Memorial Certificates (41B3)  National Cemetery Administration  5109 Russell Road  Quantico, VA 22134-3903 | ATTENTION OF:  Presidential Memorial Certificates  at  1-800-455-7143 |

Beginning in 2020, VA automatically presents a PMC to a Veteran’s next of kin at the burial, when the Veteran is buried in a national cemetery. If the family or close friends would like to request more than one PMC, they would need to complete VA Form 40-0247. If the Veteran is eligible for burial in a national cemetery but is buried in a private cemetery, the family member or close friend can still apply to get a PMC.

For non-receipt of PMCs more than six (6) weeks, individuals can contact the President’s Memorial Certificate Program at 202-632-7300.

## Resources

To help address PMC inquiries, refer to KM article [Death Related Checklist](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000002732/Death-Related-Information-Checklist) and access [Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC)](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/presidential-memorial-certificates/).

**KNOWLEDGE CHECK**

***True or False.***

1. *There is no limit to the number of PMCs issued on behalf of a Veteran.*
2. *The PMC must be discussed within three days of the Veteran’s death or if the caller mentions the burial of a Veteran has yet to take place.*
3. *When applying for the PMC, the individual must submit the original military discharge document.*

# Cemetery Burials for Veterans

The option exists for a Veteran to buried in national, State, or private cemetery.

# Burial in a National Cemetery

The VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA) maintains 143 national cemeteries in 40 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 soldier's lots and monument sites. VA national cemeteries do not exist in every state.

There is no charge for burial in a VA national cemetery. Formal funeral services are not held at VA national cemeteries, but a final committal service may be performed at the cemetery. A burial can be scheduled to take place following the committal service. VA national cemeteries rarely conduct burials on weekends.

Gravesites in VA national cemeteries cannot be reserved. Along with a gravesite, the government also provides the following at no charge:

* Opening and closing of the grave
* A burial liner
* A headstone or marker
* Perpetual (ongoing) care of the gravesite

The funeral provider can make cremation arrangements however any item or service obtained from a funeral home or cremation office will be at the family's expense. Cremated remains are buried or inurned in VA national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains.

## National Cemetery Eligibility

### Veterans

A Veteran with any discharge, other than dishonorable (with certain exceptions), is eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery.

### Servicemembers

A Servicemember who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty for training is eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery.

### Eligibility for Specific Groups

In addition, under certain conditions, [Eligibility for specific groups](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/eligibility/) exists for burial in a VA national cemetery. The specific groups include:

* U.S. citizens who served in the armed forces of any government allied with the United States during War
* Members of Reserve components or the Reserve Officers' Training Corps
* Commissioned officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration

* Commissioned officers of the Public Health Service
* World War II Merchant Mariners
* Philippine Armed Forces Veterans
* Hmong Veterans

### Dependents

When a Veteran meets eligibility requirements for burial in a VA national cemetery,

eligible dependents are also eligible; even if the Dependent died first. Eligible dependents include:

* Spouses
* Dependent Children
* Dependent Parents

## Resources

To help address eligibility inquiries for a VA national cemetery, as an option, refer to the [NCA](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/index.asp) website and access [Eligibility](https://www.cem.va.gov/burial_benefits/eligible.asp).

## Scheduling Burial in a VA National Cemetery

Before scheduling a burial in a VA national cemetery, the funeral director or the next of kin should review the [Checklist](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/schedule-a-burial/) located on the NCA website. The checklist provides the flowing steps to take before arranging internment:

1. Gather the information and documents to identify the deceased
2. Decide on the burial details and gather all related information
3. Fax the burial details and all related information to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office
4. Call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office

## Military Discharge Documents

There are several types of [military discharge document](https://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/hmm/discharge_documents.asp) military discharge documents that are sufficient to determine eligibility for burial in a VA national cemetery. The DD 214 is the most commonly used document for verification. The military discharge document or other supporting documentation should bear an official seal and show the Veteran was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.

### Service Verification Letter

If a Veteran’s service **is verified** in our system of records, as PCRs, you can offer a Service Verification Letter to the caller.

### The National Archives

The NCA works directly with the [National Archives](https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records) to obtain records to verify service

for burial benefits.

If the Veteran’s service **is not** verified in our system of records, individuals can still call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office. The National Archives will work to expedite requests of records for a Veteran’s funeral preparation.

## Arranging Interment in a National Cemetery

The Scheduling Office will have the most current schedule of available interment times for each cemetery. The National Cemetery Scheduling Office is open every day from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step 1: FAX Eligibility Documentation** | |
| * Fax to 1-866-900-6417   **or**   * Scan and email to:   [NCA.Scheduling@va.gov](mailto:NCA.Scheduling@va.gov)   * The person’s name for the request of burial benefits should be in the subject line. | * A copy of an official military discharge document bearing an official seal or supporting documentation. |
| **Step 2: CALL the Scheduling Office** | |
| * Call 1-800-535-1117 | * The National Cemetery Scheduling Office should be called after documentation has been submitted. Scheduling Office agents assist individuals with the verification process. |

## Resources

To help address arranging a burial in VA national cemeteries, as an option, refer to

the [Before You Call Checklist](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/pdf/NCA_NCSO_BeforeYouCallChecklist_Sep2019.pdf) or [Arranging for Burial in a VA National Cemetery](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Arranging_for_Burial_in_a_VA_National_Cemetery.pdf) fact sheet.

**KNOWLEDGE CHECK**

***Multiple Choice.***

1. *The following is* ***not*** *considered a time-sensitive benefit that must be discussed within three days if the Veteran’s burial did not take place:*
   1. *Markers*
   2. *Cremation*
   3. *Headstones*
   4. *Medallions*
   5. *Military Funeral Honors*
   6. *Burial Flags*

**KNOWLEDGE CHECK**

***True or False.***

1. *There is no charge for an eligible Veteran’s burial in a VA national cemetery.*
2. *Burial in a VA national cemetery is verified by the funeral director.*
3. *If the Veteran is eligible for burial in a National Cemetery, dependents are also eligible if their death occurred before the Veteran’s death.*

***Memory Recall.***

1. *Name three ways claimants can verify a Veteran’s discharge status.*

## Pre-Need Burial Eligibility Determination

VA promotes pre-need eligibility determinations to encourage Veterans and their eligible family members to plan in advance to use VA burial benefits. Pre-need determination of eligibility does not guarantee burial in a specific VA national cemetery. At the time of need, burial in a specific VA national cemetery will be scheduled.

### How to Apply

To apply for, claimants must complete and return [VA Form 40-10007](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf), *Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery* with copies of supporting documentation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **By MAIL to the** | **By FAX to** |
| NCA FP Evidence Intake Center  PO Box 5237  Janesville, WI 53547 | ATTENTION OF:  The National Cemetery Scheduling Office  1-855-840-8299 |

Supporting documentation includes a copy of the Veteran's discharge documents that shows service dates and the character of service. VA Form 40-10007 explains the evidence requirements and can be used as a reference to address inquiries.

The option also exists to apply online on the VA website:

* [Apply for Pre-Need Eligibility Determination](https://www.va.gov/burials-and-memorials/pre-need/form-10007-apply-for-eligibility/introduction)

Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant’s Representative and Appointment of Individual as Claimant’s Representative can apply on behalf of eligible claimants.

VA will review pre-need burial applications and provide written notice of a determination of eligibility to the claimant. VA will store the pre-need application, supporting documentation, and the decision letter to expedite burial arrangements at the time of need.

## Resources

To help address pre-need eligibility determinations, refer to *Facts and Brochures* on the NCA website and access [*Planning Your Legacy VA Survivors and Burial Benefits Kit*](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/docs/VASurvivorsKit.pdf).

# Burial in a State Cemetery

State Veterans Cemeteries have eligibility similar to VA national cemeteries; however, they may include residency requirements.

## State Cemeteries

Many State Veterans Cemeteries have been established or improved with federal funding but are operated by the State. Eligibility and scheduling for a State Veterans Cemetery should be referred to the respective State Cemetery.

# Burial in a Private Cemetery

The death benefits discussed previously in this lesson are also available for Veterans buried in a private cemetery. Those benefits are:

* Presidential Memorial Certificates
* Military Funeral Honors
* Burial Flags
* Headstones
* Markers
* Medallions

Families are encouraged to determine in advance if the private cemetery has any restrictions on the type of headstone or marker that can be used to mark the grave or if a special marker base is required and fees for setting, placement, and maintenance.

## Dependents

There are no VA benefits available to spouses and dependents buried in a private cemetery.

To assist with private cemetery inquiries, as an option, refer to [Burial in a private cemetery](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/eligibility/burial-in-private-cemetery/) on the NCA website.

**KNOWLEDGE CHECK**

***True or False.***

1. *State cemeteries are funded by the federal government and must meet the same eligibility requirements as VA national cemeteries for Veteran burials.*
2. *The VA form to apply for Pre-Need Burial Eligibility is VA Form 40-10007, Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery.*
3. *Appointed Veterans Service Organization as Claimant’s Representative*

*and Appointed of Individual as Claimant’s Representative can apply on*

*behalf of eligible claimants for Pre-Need Burial Eligibility.*

# Military Funeral Honors

Military Funeral Honors are one way to show the nation's deep gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our country.

## Services Provided

The Department of Defense (DOD) is responsible for providing Military Funeral Honors. Military Funeral Honors consists of two or more uniformed military persons, with at least one being a member of the Veteran's parent service of the armed forces to present the core elements of the funeral honors ceremony:

1. Playing of Taps
2. A rifle detail
3. A color guard
4. Presentation of the burial flag

Military Funeral Honors can be performed at the committal service. When military Funeral Honors at a national cemetery are desired, they are arranged before to the committal service by the funeral home.

## Requesting Funeral Honors

The DOD program, "Honoring Those Who Served," calls for funeral directors to request Military Funeral Honors on behalf of Veterans' families. However, Veterans' organizations may assist in the provision of Military Funeral Honors. In support of this program, VA national cemetery staff may also assist to coordinate military funeral honors.

## Resources

To help address Military Funeral Honors inquiries, as an option, refer to [Military Funeral Honors](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/military_funeral_honors.asp)in the Death Related Checklist.

# Burial Flag

A United States flag is provided to drape the casket of a deceased Veteran. The flag is provided at no cost and is intended to honor the memory of a Veteran or Reservist who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces.

## Eligibility for a Burial Flag

VA will furnish a burial flag for memorialization for Veterans with other than dishonorable discharge and meet requirements outlined on [VA Form 27-2008](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-27-2008-ARE.pdf), *Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes.* The VA form does include the following statement for claimants:

“I CERTIFY that the statements made in this document are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I further certify that the deceased veteran is eligible, in accordance with the attached instructions, for issue of a United States flag for burial purposes, and such flag has not been previously applied for or furnished.”

## How to Apply

To apply for a burial flag, claimants must complete [VA Form 27-2008](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-27-2008-ARE.pdf), *Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes* with supporting documents. Supporting

documentation includes a copy of the Veteran's discharge documents that shows service dates and the character of service. The VA form can be used as a reference to address questions.

The VA form can be returned to:

* A funeral director
* A representative of the Veteran
* An organization having charge of the funeral arrangements or acting in the interest of the Veteran

A flag may also be obtained at any VA regional office or U.S. Post Office. Not all local post offices have burial flags on hand, but they should be able to direct the individual to the closest issuing post office.

***Flag Recipients***

Only one flag may be issued for each deceased Veteran. The flag cannot be replaced if it is lost, destroyed, or stolen. The flag is given to the following person(s) in the order of precedence listed:

* Surviving spouse
* Children, according to age
* Parents, including adoptive, stepparents, and foster parents
* Brothers or sisters, including half-blood brothers or sisters
* Uncles or aunts
* Nephews or nieces
* Others, such as cousins or grandparents

When burial is in a national, State, or military post cemetery, a burial flag will be

provided. A flag may not be issued after burial unless it was impossible to obtain a

flag in time to drape the casket or accompany the urn before burial.

If the next-of-kin or friend is requesting the flag after the Veteran's burial, he or she must personally sign the VA Form 27-2008 and explain in Item 15 "Remarks"

the reason that prevented the untimely application for a burial flag.

## Resources

To assist with questions, as an option, refer to the [Burial Flag Fact Sheet](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/burials/flag.pdf) in the Death Related Checklist.

# Headstones, Markers, and Medallions

Upon request, and at no charge to the claimant, VA will furnish a Government

issued headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of an eligible Veteran in any

cemetery around the world, regardless of their date of death. However, arrangements for placing it in a private cemetery are the claimant's responsibility and all setting fees are a private expense. Claimants can see what headstones and markers look like by reviewing [VA Form 40-1330](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf), *Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker*. Claimants can see what medallions look like by reviewing [VA Form 40-1330M](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330M.pdf), *Claim for Government Medallion for Placement in a Private Cemetery*.

Eligible deceased Veterans may receive a Government-furnished headstone or marker, or a medallion, but not both.

**Eligibility for Headstones, Markers, and Medallions**

Both deceased Veterans and deceased Servicemembers are entitled to a VA-supplied headstone or marker.

***Headstones and Markers***

[VA Form 40-1330](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf) explains the eligibility requirements.

***Medallions***

[VA Form 40-1330M](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330M.pdf) explains the eligibility requirements.

## Resources

To assist with questions, as an option, refer to the [Headstone, Markers and Medallions Brochure](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/HeadstoneMarkerMedallion_Brochure.pdf) on the NCA website.

**How to Apply**

For a headstone or marker, claimants can complete [VA Form 40-1330](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf) with supporting documents*.* For a medallion, claimants can complete [VA Form 40-1330M](https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330M.pdf) with supporting documents. Supporting documentation includes a copy of the Veteran's discharge documents that shows service dates and the character of

service.

The forms can be returned:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **By MAIL to the** | **By FAX to** |
| Memorial Products Service (41B)  Department of Veteran Affairs  5109 Russell Road  Quantico, VA 22134-3903 | ATTENTION OF:  Memorial Products Service(41B)  at  1- 800-455-7143 |

**KNOWLEDGE CHECK**

***Fill in the blank.***

1. *Military units provide, at a minimum, a two-person uniformed detail to present these core elements of the funeral honors ceremony:*
2. *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
3. *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*
4. *A color guard*
5. *Uniformed service members who present the burial flag*

***True or False.***

1. *VA Form 27-2008 is used to apply for Military Funeral Honors.*
2. *Eligible deceased Veterans may receive a Government-furnished headstone, marker, and a medallion.*
3. *VA Form 40-1330 is used for Claim for Government Medallion for Placement in a Private Cemetery.*

*4. Spouses and dependents are eligible for a medallion.*

# Survivors Benefits

Survivors inquirer about entitlement to VA benefits and services because of a

Veteran’s death.

In your role, common Veteran survivors’ benefits relate to:

* Month of Death Payment
* Burial Allowance
* Plot/Interment Allowance
* Reimbursement of Transportation Costs
* Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
* Survivors Pension
* Accrued Benefits

# Month of Death Payment

If a Veteran received a VA compensation or pension benefit payment, once the death is reported and processed, the benefit payment is stopped.

As a result, the Month of Death (MOD) benefit, a one-time benefit payment equal to the amount the deceased Veteran would have received before death, is available to claim.

## Status of Payments

Any payment issued after the Veteran’s death must be returned as follows:

1. Direct Deposit – leave the account open for U.S. Treasury to retrieve funds.
2. Paper Check Not Cashed, return to:

* Department of the Treasury

Financial Management Service

PO Box 51320

Philadelphia, PA 19115-6320

If unopened check, annotate “Death- Return to Sender” with a line through the Veteran’s address.

1. Paper Check Cashed or Direct Deposit Closed, Debt Management Center

(DMC) will issue a notice of the debt. To pay back a debt, callers can contact the DMC at 800-827-0648 or pay online at www.pay.va.gov.

## Eligibility for the Month of Death Payment

Only the surviving spouse is eligible to claim the MOD Payment. The surviving spouse will receive a paper check in his/her name.

## How to Apply

The claim for the MOD payment can be completed by PCRs using [VA Form 0820f](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-27-0820f-ARE.pdf), *Report of Month of Death*. VA Form 0820f must be routed according to KM article [0820 Routing Procedures](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000031625/0820-Routing-Procedures).

## Resources

To help address MOD payment inquiries, refer to the Death Related Checklist.

# Burial Reimbursement

VA burial reimbursements are flat-rate monetary benefits that are paid at the maximum amount authorized by law for an eligible Veteran’s burial and funeral costs.

The three (3) burial reimbursements offered by VA include:

* Burial allowance
* Plot/Interment allowance
* Reimbursement of transportation costs

A burial allowance is a partial reimbursement for expenses incurred for the burial of an eligible Veteran.

A Plot/Interment allowance is an additional monetary reimbursement benefit that may be awarded in the event the Veteran’s death is NSC and the Veteran is not buried in a VA national cemetery. Plot refers to the final disposition site of the

remains. Interment refers to the burial of casketed remains in the ground or the placement or scattering of cremated remains.

Reimbursement of transportation costs refers to the repayment of some or all the cost to transport an eligible deceased Veteran’s body by VA. The amount of reimbursement is not set by VA but is based on a reasonable charge.

There are resources for Unclaimed Veterans such as [Burial Reimbursement](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/veterans-burial-allowance/), discussed in further detail on the NCA website.

## Eligibility for Burial Reimbursement

For burial allowance eligibility, the Veteran must have had other than dishonorable" service and meet additional requirements.

## Time Limit for Filing Burial Reimbursement

There are time limits for filing burial reimbursements.

### Service-Connected Death

There **is no time limit** for the service-connected burial allowance, plot or interment allowance, VA hospitalization death burial allowance, or reimbursement of transportation expenses.

### Non-Service-Connected Death

A claim for non-service-connected burial allowance must be filed with VA within two (2) years after the date of the Veteran's permanent burial or cremation. If a Veteran's discharge was corrected after death to under conditions other than dishonorable, the claim must be filed within two years after the date of correction.

## Automated Burial Reimbursement

Some burial allowances can be processed automatically during the First Notice of Death (FNOD) process. Only the surviving spouse is eligible. If automation is possible, automatic payments will be made to an eligible surviving spouse of record for Burial Allowance and Plot/Internment Allowance. Details are provided in KM article [Fast Letter (FL) 14-06: Automating and Simplifying Burial Benefit Payments - Background Information, Procedural Changes, and FAQs](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000011256/Fast-Letter-FL-14-06-Automating-and-Simplifying-Burial-Benefit-Payments-Background-Information-Procedural-Changes-and-FAQs).

**KNOWLEDGE CHECK**

***True or False.***

1. *The MOD payment is for all survivors.*
2. *The three burial reimbursements offered by VA are burial allowance,*

*plot/interment allowance, and reimbursement of transportation costs.*

1. *Reimbursement of transportation costs is set at a maximum rate by VA*

# Burial Allowance Amounts

## Service-Connected Burial Allowance Amounts

For service-connected burial allowance amounts, access Burial Allowances from the [NCA](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/index.asp) website.

## Non-Service-Connected Burial Allowance Amounts

For non-service-connected burial allowance amounts, access Burial Allowances from the[NCA](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/index.asp) website.

## Hospitalized Non-Service-Connected Burial Allowance Amounts

For non-service-connected burial allowance amounts if the Veteran was hospitalized by VA at the time of their death, access Burial Allowances from the [NCA](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/index.asp) website.

## Reimbursement of Transportation Costs

If the Veteran was buried in a National Cemetery nearest his/her last place of

residence, the total expenses of all transportation charges will be reimbursed. If not, the reimbursement will be equal to the amount that would have been incurred to transport the deceased Veteran to the nearest National Cemetery with available space, unless that cost is higher.

### Reimbursable Transportation Expenses

All receipts for transportation charges should show the name of the Veteran, the name of the person who paid, and the amount of the charges. The itemized statement of account should show the charges made for transportation.

The eligibility requirements are included on [VA Form 21P-530EZ](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-530EZ-ARE.pdf), *Application for Burial Benefits.* The VA form will explain the evidence requirements and can be used as a reference to address questions*.*

## How to Apply for Burial Allowance Reimbursement

If the burial allowance is not electronically processed, the claimant must submit

[VA Form 21P-530EZ](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-530EZ-ARE.pdf), *Application for Burial Benefits* with supporting documents and return to the Pension Management Center (PMC) of jurisdiction.

For PMC jurisdictions, refer to KM article [PMC Map, Address, Phone #, Office Hours, and Offices of Jurisdiction](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000008829/PMC-Map-Address-Phone-Office-Hours-and-Offices-of-Jurisdiction).

The option also exists to apply [Online](https://www.va.gov/burials-and-memorials/application/530/introduction) at VA’s website.

# Other Survivor Benefits

Survivors are eligible for additional survivor benefits.

## Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a tax-free monetary benefit paid to eligible survivors of military Servicemembers who died in the line of duty or eligible survivors of Veterans whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease or, in some cases, nonservice-connected deaths.

### Eligibility Requirements

Surviving spouses, children, and/or parents may be considered eligible to receive DIC.

### Resources

To assist with DIC inquiries, refer to KM article [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000002868/Dependency-and-Indemnity-Compensation-DIC) or the [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Fact Sheet](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/survivors/dic.pdf) in KM article Death Related Checklist which also includes the link to access the current [DIC rates](https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation/).

The [Parent Fact Sheet](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/survivors/parentsdic.pdf) in KM article Death Related Checklist can be used as a reference for inquiries related to Parent DIC and includes the link to access the current DIC rates.

**Survivor Pension**

The Survivor Pension benefit is a tax-free monetary benefit payable to a low-income, un-remarried surviving spouse and/or unmarried child(ren) of a deceased Veteran with wartime service. This benefit may be made available in the event the Veteran’s death was not service-connected.

***Eligibility Requirements***

Survivor Pension is a needs-based benefit paid to surviving spouses and children of

wartime Veterans, who meet certain age, disability, and marriage requirements. Once the Veteran’s and dependent requirements are met, VA determines if the

survivor meets income eligibility requirements.

The income eligibility requirements of Survivor’s Pension include:

* A yearly countable income below the Maximum Annual Pension Rate (MAPR) set by Congress, and
* Meet net worth limits

VA deducts certain expenses, such as unreimbursed medical expenses, from the annual household income. This will decrease the countable income and

increase the monthly pension payment.

### Resources

For survivor pension inquiries, refer to the [Survivor Pension Fact Sheet](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/survivors/Survivorspension.pdf) in KM article Death Related Checklist which includes the link to access the current [pension rates](https://www.va.gov/pension/survivors-pension-rates/). Also, for unreimbursed medical expenses inquiries, refer to KM article [Unreimbursed Medical Expenses (UME)](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000003279/Unreimbursed-Medical-Expenses-UME).

## Accrued Benefits

Accrued benefits are benefits due to the beneficiary but not paid before death. Payment for accrued benefits may be made if:

* A payee was entitled at death under existing ratings or

decisions, or

* Evidence was in the file at the date of death and due but not paid

***Eligibility Requirements***

The evidence in the file at the time of death must support the existence of accrued benefits. This means evidence in VA’s possession on or before the date of death and includes all information located at any VA facility.

Upon the death of a Veteran, accrued benefits are payable, in order, to the:

* Surviving spouse
* Veteran’s children
* Parents
* Sole Surviving Parent

There is a one-year limitation from the date of the beneficiary’s death for claims to be filed for any accrued benefits (with exceptions).

### Resources

To assist with inquiries, refer to KM article [Accrued Benefits Ready Reference](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001001/content/554400000002423/Accrued-Benefits-Ready-Reference).

**How to Apply**

For Surviving Spouses and Children DIC, claimants complete [VA Form 21P-534EZ](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/survivors/dic.pdf),

*Application for DIC, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits* with supporting documents.

For Parents DIC, claimants complete [VA Form 21P-535](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-535-ARE.pdf), *Application for*

*Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s)* with supporting documents.

For accrued benefits, claimants complete [VA Form 21P-534EZ](https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/survivors/dic.pdf), *Application for DIC, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits* or [VA Form 21P-601](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-601-ARE.pdf), *Application for Accrued Amounts Due A Deceased Beneficiary* with supporting documents.

The forms can be returned:

* By completing and mailing or faxing the appropriate application to the Pension Management Center that serves the claimant’s state
* By working with an accredited representative or agent
* In-person with a PCR in the Public Contact Team

**KNOWLEDGE CHECK**

***Fill in the blank.***

1. *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the application to apply for burial allowance.*
2. *A claim for non-service-connected burial allowance must be filed within \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years after the date of the Veteran's permanent burial or cremation.*
3. *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the VA Form number when filing for DIC benefits.*
4. For Parents DIC, claimants complete [\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_](https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-535-ARE.pdf)\_, *Application for*

*Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s).*