**VBA Agent Cashier**

**Virtual-Instructor Led Training**

**Question & Answer**

**Resource Guide**

**April 2021**

**Sponsored by:**

* Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
* Office of Financial Management (OFM)
* VBA Administrative and Loan Accounting Center (ALAC)

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This resource guide provides answers to questions asked during the VBA Agent Cashier Virtual Instructor Led-Training (VILT) delivered by Office of Financial Management (OFM) on March 27-28, 2019 and March 5-20, 2020, (recorded training only) respectively.

## VBA Agent Cashier Questions and Answers (Q&A)

| **Agent Cashier Question** | **Agent Cashier Answer** |
| --- | --- |
| How do I request CAROLS access? | For CAROLS access, DMC will need the user to fill out boxes 1-9 of the attached form (make sure to include the users SSN# in box 2), sign the box “sign as the requestor”, then send it to[**SUPPORTSER.VAVBASPL@VA.GOV**](mailto:SUPPORTSER.VAVBASPL@VA.GOV) **.** Once DMC receive it, DMC staff will review/sign as the approver and submit it to the proper OIT staff. |
| Can SAO audit combine with an unannounced audit? Why can’t the SAO memo statement include unannounced audit findings? Or do these audit memos findings have to be separated? | Referring to MP4, Part IV, Chapter 17, Section C, Section 2, Unannounced Audit of the Agent Cashier <https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBAORM/fin/mp4partiv.asp> Stations should be evaluating the results/corrective action plans of the unannounced audit that were conducted before the internal control review had taken place. You could do the internal control review concurrently with the unannounced audit, technically, but you’ll still have two separate reports and in accordance with our current procedures, the findings of the unannounced audit are addressed in the internal control reviews (previously known as SAOs). |
| With all the discussion of the research in VA programs, I’m just wondering if there was something more in depth that should be taking place? | For the most part, as Agent Cashiers the primary purpose of your role besides doing the deposit daily is to determine the correct disposition of funds that you receive at the station. The various systems we discussed are for aiding you in determining the correct disposition so that we serve our Veterans/stakeholders with the utmost care and consideration. |
| Is the separation of duties waiver a required document? | Referring to MP4, Part IV, Chapter 9, Separations of Duties Waiver <https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBAORM/fin/mp4partiv.asp>  The separation of duties waiver is required if the Principal and/or Alternate Agent Cashier is also functioning as the Payroll clerk or as a certifier of voucher payments. Please also note that we have a letter template available for stations that determine they will need to request for a waiver. Note: Separation of Duties Waivers are valid for one year after they are approved by the Office of Financial Management. If a separation of duties for the identified employee is still needed beyond the date of expiration, a new request will have to be submitted at that time. |
| After receiving checks for the day, the agent cashier must do research for incoming checks and does not have time to make same day checks deposit. How is this handle? | All checks deposit via OTCnet system must be scanned and deposited on a daily basis regardless of the dollar amount. Per the RO Procedure Guide, Chapter 1, Agent Cashier, D-4, we do suggest for the Finance officer to set up a cut off time closest to the end of the day, e.g. an hour prior to the end of the agent cashier’s tour of duty, to ensure that all checks receive on that day get scanned and deposited into OTCnet. Checks that are receive later than the prescribed cut off time should be locked and secured into the safe for deposit on the next business day. |
| How many Agent Cashiers can you have at the station? | Generally, you must have at least one Principal Agent Cashiers. There is no requirement for the number of Alternate Agent Cashiers you can have at the station, however, we do recommend that you have at least one Alternate Agent Cashier in case the Principal Agent Cashier is not available for foreseen/unforeseen reasons. |
| Who do we contact if we run low on FSRs? | If the item is stocked in the VA Forms and Publications Depot, then employees at the RO can order through their station. Each station has a clerk/PCO who is responsible for ordering forms and publications from the Depot. So, you’ll have the person in charge of ordering forms/publications at your station contact the Depot to order additional FSRs. |
| What happened to convenience checks? | As of October 1, 2018, we no longer allow convenience checks for VBA. This is referenced on the [VBA Letter 20-18-08, Section D](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBAORM/fin/fin241c/purchase_card/VBA_Letter_20-18-08.docx). |
| Are there forms required for transferring accountability? Where are the forms kept for transferring accountability? | VA 0901 is used for transferring accountability from one Agent Cashier to another person. The forms should be kept and secured by your Finance Officer. |
| If your station does not get a lot of checks that total $5,000, how often should we deposit? | The current policy for deposits is if we’re using OTCnet Check Capture we must do the deposits daily even if it totals less than $5,000. Please refer to [TFM Chapter 2000, Section 2055 – Frequency of Deposits](https://tfm.fiscal.treasury.gov/v1/p5/c200.html). |
| Do you need to use an FSR hard copy receipt if we make a copy in OTCnet? Do we need to keep a copy of the VA Form 1011, Record of Shipment of Valuables also? | Whereas, yes, electronic version of the FSR is acceptable. However, you are still required to have a physical FSR that must match up to the electronic version.  We will not eliminate paper FSR's entirely. When cash and negotiable instruments are mailed or shipped by air express or other carrier or transported by the Principal Agent Cashier or other VA personnel, including the transportation of cash to be exchanged for money orders, the Principal Agent Cashier will prepare and retain VA Form 1011, Record of Shipment of Valuables. The package will be securely sealed in the presence of the two responsible employees who signed the VA Form 1011. |
| How do we deposit foreign money? | Foreign currency needs to be processed through the Deposit Processing module. Please follow the instruction links below for making deposits of foreign currency:  [Create a Deposit for Foreign Currency Cash](https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/otcnet/training/wbt/content/60/sims/pja_create_dep_fcc.pdf)  Create a Deposit for Foreign Check Item |
| Briefly discuss relationship between CAROLS and BDN? | BDN is VBA’s legacy system that is being phased out from use with the exception of Education. CAROLS is the DMC’s system for tracking debts. The only relationship between BDN & CAROLS is that debts established in BDN will show up in CAROLS if they are referred to DMC for collection. |
| Are CARS and CAROLS the same? | CARS stand for Centralized Accounts Receivable and CAROLS stands for Centralized Accounts Receivable On-Line System. Stations should use CAROLS to inquire whether a debt is in CARS. |
| Is the Alternate AC allowed their own set of keys, or is it only the Primary AC? | There is no restriction on whether an Alternate Agent Cashier should have keys. This requirement is a station level directive as OFM’s financial policies & procedures do not restrict the ownership of keys to only the Primary Agent Cashier. |
| What is the policy on date stamping checks? | All checks deposit via OTCnet System must be scanned and deposited on a daily basis regardless of the dollar amount. Station Finance must maintain a log to record the receiving date of each check. The agent cashier stamps the check "Electronically processed" if the scanner is not programmed to do so. The agent cashier dates, and time stamps each item and the OTCnet System will assign a unique transaction identifier number. |
| Is there a list or set policies of Station Reports we are required to keep? Some reports may longer be needed to be held by the cashier. | We were made aware of the reports being sent out to the field with no data and are working with the Fiscal Systems to cease certain reports, especially the reports that are being generated for BDN transactions. However, there will continue to be reports that come from Treasury and/or HINES that stations should review which includes the Agency Monthly Report and the Treasury Disposition Report. |
| The options for checks I've been given are DMC, USBANK and FMS. Pretty straightforward if they have a debt, to DMC. Treasury that is not for Dept of Vets Affairs, back to FMS, all others to USBank. Is this the current process? | Yes, that is the current process. Checks paid to the VA for debts being managed by the DMC would be sent directly to the DMC, and Treasury checks would be forwarded back to the Treasury unless it was intentionally sent to the station for deposit such as for Attorney Fee withholdings. You may also receive checks from Vendors and/or Schools that would need to be applied toward your station’s debt. |
| Is it the Agent Cashiers responsibility to handle the mail of Homeless Vets, or only Checks? | Our Finance policy follows the C&P policy which states if a claimant or beneficiary is unable or unwilling to furnish a correct mailing address but wishes to continue pursuing a claim and/or receiving benefits, send his/her correspondence and/or benefit checks to the Agent Cashier of the office or center having jurisdiction over the claims folder, or Agent Cashier of any VA facility deemed appropriate. The Agent Cashier will hold the checks for up to 30 days, at which time the disposition of the correspondence and/or checks are as follows:  If a beneficiary fails to collect his/her benefit check from an Agent Cashier within 30 days, then the Agent Cashier returns the check to the Department of the Treasury. Result is This action suspends the beneficiary’s award.  If a claimant fails to collect correspondence from an Agent Cashier within 30 days then the Agent Cashier returns the correspondence to the RO, and RO follows the procedures in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.B.6.c](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000014111/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-B-Mail-Management?query=homeless%20veteran#6c)-[g](https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001018/content/554400000014111/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-ii-Chapter-1-Section-B-Mail-Management?query=homeless%20veteran#6g) for handling undeliverable mail. |
| We deposited a check that was received from Dept of Corrections regarding an incarcerated Veteran. The Veteran is now deceased and the two checks we deposited must go to appropriations. We are unsure where to move this money in CAATS to make sure the money gets returned to appropriations. (Mar 2020) | The station has a couple options.   1. They can create a debt in FAS on the Veteran and then send the funds to DMC. 2. Or they can create a debt in FAS, then create an 08A transaction to apply the “funds” toward the debt they created. Then they must do a station transfer on the funds in 3875 to HINES using CAATS.   The better option would probably be on having them create the debt and then send the funds to DMC. |
| We received two separate checks for this VET. Can we combine the total amount and create the debt in FAS? Now, my question is that we received two separate checks for this VET from the Dept of Corrections can we combine these two checks and pick one of the options above? Or do we have to do a separate entry to create a debt? (Mar 2020) | You can create one debt but if you are sending the money to DMC you will probably need to do two lines in CAATS unless they are combined into one line in 3875.  As for the other option, you can again do one debt and probably one 08A transaction but when you are moving the funds to HINES (ET transaction I believe?) that will also require one or two lines in CAATS depending on how it was deposited and shows in FMS. It’s more of a system limitation but as long as the aggregate amount equals the amount of the two checks. |
| Is there any guidance for agent cashiers teleworking 5 days a week? Our RO is cashless and required to telework 100%. (Mar 2020) | This question cannot be answered at this time, until all VBA business lines to include Treasury come up with new guidance regarding this unique situation. |
| IT is having issues setting up the computer for your station to process check deposits thru OTCnet.  If your stations’ OTCnet was down and you have done a manual deposit in several  years.  You process a manual deposit, but the bank is stating that there is no account for your station who would you contact to find this information.  How can you get IT assistance with setting up OTC net and finding out whom at your station is the check capture administrator? (Mar 2020) | The station will need to reach out to the OTCnet support who would be able to assist with setting up OTCnet. Another option is to contact your local IT support for assistance. OTCNet support can be accessed at the following link : <https://fiscal.treasury.gov/otcnet/contact.html> |
| If the Agent Cashier receives a refund check for VR&E, due to tuition refund, course dropped, etc. and there is no credit memo of record, is the check returned to the school in a negotiable or non-negotiable status?  (Mar 2020) | Generally, any check submitted without a proper credit memo established in IPPS will be returned to the facility/school/vendor, normally the same route it was received. |
| Is there a templated memo to send to the school to create the credit memo first prior to submitting the refund check? (Mar 2020) | You should always consult VR&E first to determine if a credit memo has been established prior to returning the check to the facility/school/vendor.  It is noted in the IPPS Procedural Advisory 20-03:  E. Credit Memos  “Any payment submitted without a proper credit memo established in the Tungsten Network will be returned to the facility/school/vendor by SSD.”  We recommend a general letter from SSD be created to address the issue; a refund check was received without a credit memo.  Debt letters are located in, [MP4, Part IV, Chapter 11, Station Debt: Appendix A](https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBAORM/fin/mp4partiv.asp) |
| Are OTCnet generated Batch List reports, that are labeled as Sensitive but Unclassified, authorized to be uploaded as part of a check deposit documentation package to the specific veteran’s VBMS on-line file? (April 2021) | It can be uploaded onto VBMS; however, it is recommended to redacting the document for any information that may not be relevant to the Veteran. We do not want to mix a bunch of non-relevant information into the Veteran’s VBMS profile. |
| Who or how do we contact someone from the Philadelphia PA US Treasury office if we have specific questions relating to Treasury generated checks and/or operations? (April 2021) | Philadelphia Financial Center  [855-868-0151](tel:1-855-868-0151) |
| Is there a standardized VBA Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and/or Operating Instructions (OI) available for Agent Cashier operations? (April 2021) | [CHAPTER 1 . AGENT CASHIER VBA GUIDE](https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvbaw.vba.va.gov%2FVBAORM%2Ffin%2Ffin241c%2Fro_guides%2FChapter_1_AgentCashier.docx&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cad0fd209eb5f47ac54b008d8f443b2e9%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637527918883361085%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=%2B7U4WWLnNSpOyF2SRjEe4kuSdxXgU48FSVS6rXqfeVg%3D&reserved=0) [https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBAORM/fin/fin241c/ro\_guides/Chapter\_1\_AgentCashier.docx](https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvbaw.vba.va.gov%2FVBAORM%2Ffin%2Ffin241c%2Fro_guides%2FChapter_1_AgentCashier.docx&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cad0fd209eb5f47ac54b008d8f443b2e9%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637527918883371040%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=YnFVkV2U%2BiKp3s2VRNR6kSk8D4FDfXJH46kjnMvPKrE%3D&reserved=0) |
| Is there a guide or standardized Agent Cashier file plan available? (April 2021) | [https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBAORM/alac/docs/OFM\_SSC\_Individual\_Training\_Plan\_ITP\_503\_Agent\_Cashier\_Jun20.pdf](https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fvbaw.vba.va.gov%2FVBAORM%2Falac%2Fdocs%2FOFM_SSC_Individual_Training_Plan_ITP_503_Agent_Cashier_Jun20.pdf&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cad0fd209eb5f47ac54b008d8f443b2e9%7Ce95f1b23abaf45ee821db7ab251ab3bf%7C0%7C0%7C637527918883371040%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=LcT7DSx0mhvQesBtEi9Bkj2PIUn8mCizyWQJFNaN5CY%3D&reserved=0) |
| Who or how do we contact the centralized mail portal (aka Janesville WI and Lackland FL) Quality Assurance Personnel to report issues regarding checks that are being physically held by the contractor for some time (some are received as stale dated) prior to being mailed out to its SOJ VARO?  Does the contract list the frequency (i.e. once a week, once a month, etc.) of when these checks must be/are required to be physically mailed out? (April 2021) | The checks are supposed to be mailed at least weekly, if not every 3 days. Now, this will all be moot in less than a week, as the mail forwarding orders are going to be turned off and things will return to pre-COVID normal for mail routing. |
| Is there an all Agent Cashier specific distribution email box?  If yes, how do we add personnel to it? (April 2021) | There is no distribution list for Agent Cashiers now. We usually communicate through the Office of Field Operations for any news regarding SSDs. |
| Are Agent Cashiers authorized to perform additional duties or have specific non-related programs assigned to them? (April 2021) | Please review the policy below:  <https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBAORM/fin/fin241c/mp4_partiv/Chapter_9_SeparationOfDutiesWaiver.docx> |
| Why does the VBA instruct on the First Notification of Death letters correspondence to direct the recipient(s) to mail checks to either the Philadelphia PA US Treasury location or VA Debt Management Center?  Personnel are sending non-treasury checks (i.e. personal checks, money orders, cashier’s checks, etc.) to the US Treasury whom in turn forwards it to the VA Debt Management Center because the US Treasury only deals with government issued checks regarding VA issues.  Furthermore, the VA Debt Management Center is also receiving additional checks directly in order to clear a debt that has either been recouped per CAROLS and/or no debt is showing in the veteran’s VBMS file. (April 2021) | First notification of death should not be included with agent cashier functions, but rather forwarded to VACO for them to review and answer as a policy related item.  The operations mailbox is: [OPERATIONS.VBACO@va.gov](mailto:OPERATIONS.VBACO@va.gov) |
| Now that the new US Access Card will be replacing the old PIV cards, has this US Access Card been tested and/or will it work on the OTCnet program/log-in screen? (April 2021) | You should still be able to log into OTCnet using a username/password. Please make sure update your profile information on ITIM. |
| Due to the current and changing VA COVID-19 operations tempo, what is the minimum amount of days allowed prior to depositing checks (i.e. once a week, every 3 business days, VARO director’s discretion, etc.)? (April 2021) | See attached word document. We are following the allowance given by Treasury which is currently effective till the end of April 2021. We will only extend this exception if Treasury allows it. |
| Is there a possibility in the future of a monthly Microsoft Teams Agent Cashier briefing, Q&A session, and a specific training topic session/meeting?  (April 2021) | We are currently forming a training team (work in progress), and this will be brought to their attention as something of interest from the field. |

## Additional Resources

| **Resource** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| Add the Form 2958 to Additional Resources |  |
| CAROLS User Guide |  |