Pension and Fiduciary Service

PMC VSR Advanced Core Course Phase 6: Practical Application and Experience

Process Burial Claims

Trainee Guide

June 2024

Process Burial Claims

Lesson Overview

| Topic | Description |
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| Time Estimate: | 4 hours |
| Purpose of the Lesson: | This lesson is part of the entry-level course for PMC VSRs. The purpose of this lesson is to train PMC VSRs to process burial claims through demonstration, practice, and feedback. |
| Prerequisite Training Requirements: | Prior to taking the Process Burial Claims lesson, you must complete the entry-level course Phases 1–5.6. |
| Target Audience: | This lesson is for entry-level PMC VSRs. |
| Lesson References: | * **M21-1 II.i.2.B.4.d (Rejecting an Outdated Version of a VA Form)** * M21-1 XI.iii.1.B Burial Benefits * M21-1 XI.iii.1.C.1.a (Erroneous Awards) |
| Technical Competencies: | * Program Benefits and Eligibility (PMC VSR) * Processing Claims (PMC VSR) * VBA Applications (PMC VSR) |
| Knowledge Check: | Phase 6, Knowledge Check: Process Burial Claims |
| Lesson Objectives: | By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:   * Process burial claims. * Recognize indicators of a burial claim. * Confirm claim characteristics assigned by claims assistant. * Determine if claim may be denied without development. * Identify missing information/evidence. * Apply the correct development actions for the information/evidence missing from the claim. * Determine whether the claim is ready to rate, if rating activity is required. * Decide the award actions for a burial claim. * Prepare a decision notice for a burial claim. * Submit the claim to the Authorizer. |
| What You Need: | * Trainee guide * Access to VBA intranet * Access to CPKM * Pen and paper * Applicable VBA applications used in job aids * Access to the following job aids from VSR Assistant:   + **Burial Benefits Eligibility job aid**   + **Processing a Burial Claim Checklist** job aid |

| PowerPoint Slides | Notes |
| --- | --- |
| **Process Burial Claims** |  |
| Lesson Objectives (1 of 2)  Demonstration: Instructors will provide claim scenarios and corresponding questions for trainee review. The instructors will then discuss the claims review process from start to finish under each claim demonstration with opportunities for trainee questions.  Guided Practice: Trainees are assigned live Burial claims to process. While reviewing live claims, the trainee will be able to:   * Recognize indicators of burial claims. * Confirm claim characteristics assigned by a Claims Assistant. |  |
| Lesson Objectives (2 of 2)   * Screen claim to determine if claim may be denied without development. * Determine if claim may be denied without development. * Identify and develop for any missing information or evidence. * Determine whether the claim is ready to rate, if rating activity is required. * Decide the award actions in VBMS-A for all applicable burial claim and element decisions. * Prepare ADL notice within VBMS-A. * Submit the claim to Authorization activity. |  |
| Why it Matters!   * Burial benefits assist the deceased Veteran’s family with unexpected expenses they will incur or have already incurred at a difficult time. * In addition, there are several different types of burial benefits, each with different eligibility requirements. * Thus, it is important to be able recognize the benefit being requested and apply the correct rules. |  |
| **Burial Benefits Recap: Types of Burial Benefits**   * Non-Service-Connected (NSC) Burial Allowance (to include death while under VA care), * Service-Connected (SC) Burial Allowance, * Plot or Interment Allowance, and * Transportation Benefit.   *NOTE:* These claims are processed using an EP 160. Please be sure to review for burial automation prior to processing claims for burial benefits. |  |
| **Burial Benefits Recap: Eligible Benefits** |  |
| **Review Activity: Burial Benefit Eligibility (1 of 2)**   1. Which burial allowance is **not** payable for unclaimed remains? 2. Which burial allowance is the claimant eligible for if the Veteran was receiving military retired pay in lieu of SC disability compensation at time of death? 3. If a Veteran’s death occurred while hospitalized by VA (or facility listed in 38 CFR 3.1706) or in VA care, would the claimant (a family member)   be eligible for the transportation benefit? |  |
| **Review Activity: Burial Benefit Eligibility (2 of 2)**   1. A claim for SC burial allowance is not eligible for which additional allowance? 2. Which burial allowance has a time limit? |  |
| **“Processing Burial Claims: Scenario 1 (1 of 2)”**  On 01/03/23, VA receives a VA Form 21P-530EZ, Application for Burial Benefits, from the surviving spouse of Michael Veteran, who died on 12/06/22. The surviving spouse, Holly, claimed NSC burial allowance on the application and claimed the place of death of the Veteran was at Scranton General Hospital. The application also shows Holly incurred burial expenses, the Veteran’s cremains are located at her private residence, and she is responsible for transportation expenses of the Veteran. Holly is not responsible for the Veteran’s plot or interment expenses as provided on the application. |  |
| **“Processing Burial Claims: Scenario 1 (2 of 2)”**  Additional evidence was submitted with the application for benefits including a copy of the Veteran’s death certificate showing he passed away from cardiac arrest. A copy of the Veteran’s DD Form 214 showing his honorable discharge from the Army on 02/12/54 was also received. Review of the Veteran’s record indicates he was in receipt of Veteran’s Pension benefits of $805.00 monthly as the greater benefit than his 30% service-connected compensation rating for PTSD at the time of his passing. The Corporate claims and denials tab indicates an EP 169 was cleared on 12/19/22, and Holly was issued a payment of $300.00. |  |
| **Scenario 1 Processing Questions (1 and 2)**   1. Does this claim require a rating decision? 2. Is Holly eligible to burial benefits based on the claim received 01/03/23? If so, what benefit(s) is she eligible to? 3. Under the Plot Allowance decision, what is the only element that should be checked as ‘Not Met’*?* |  |
| **Processing Burial Claims Demonstration: Claim 1**  **Indicates you should demonstrate an action**  **Demonstration of Processing Claim for NSC Burial Benefits.**   * Instructor demonstrates the claims review process from start to finish with opportunities to discuss trainee questions. |  |
| **Processing Burial Claims: Scenario 2**  On 03/15/22, VA receives a VA Form 21P-530EZ, Application for Burial Benefits, from the mother of Juan Veteran, who died in his residence on 01/30/22. The Award Information tab shows Mr. Veteran had a running Compensation award of 30% for PTSD. The claimant is requesting SC Burial benefits and checked that she incurred burial, plot and transportation expenses. VA received a copy of the Veteran’s death certificate with the application which showed his cause of death was from self-inflicted gunshot wound and indicated the Veteran was buried in a private cemetery.  No other evidence was submitted with the application, nor is any additional evidence located in the Veteran’s eFolder. |  |
| **Scenario 2 Processing Questions (1 of 2)**   1. What action must VA take? |  |
| **Scenario 2 Processing Questions (2 of 2)**   1. Based on the information provided, what benefits would this claimant be eligible to if SC burial was granted by rating decision? 2. Based on the information provided, what benefits would this claimant be eligible to if SC burial was denied by rating decision? |  |
| **Processing Burial Claims Demonstration: Claim 2**  **Indicates you should demonstrate an action**  **Demonstration of processing claim for SC Burial Benefits.**  Instructor demonstrates the claims review process from start to finish with opportunities to discuss trainee questions. |  |
| **Processing Burial Claims: Scenario 3 (1 of 2)**  On 02/25/23, VA received a VA Form 21P-530EZ, Application for Burial Benefits from a child of Joe Veteran who passed away 02/02/23 from CAD per the death certificate submitted with the application. The claimant indicated she is claiming NSC Burial benefits on the application. The death certificate showed the Veteran was widowed and his place of death was at the Long Beach VAMC.  The Veteran was receiving Veterans Pension with SMP of $2,050.00 monthly. Review of the application shows the daughter claimed she incurred burial, plot and transportation expenses. She also claimed the Veteran was buried in a National Cemetery on the application. |  |
| **Processing Burial Claims: Scenario 3 (2 of 2)**  The claimant submitted the Veteran’s DD214 showing he was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps on 07/12/46. A copy of the funeral home statement of goods and services was provided as supporting evidence showing the daughter paid the full balance of $9,264.78 on 02/07/23. The document included the following transportation charges: $295.00 for transfer of remains to funeral home, $295.00 for hearse, $150.00 for lead car to cemetery, $150.00 for flower van to cemetery, and $275.00 for transfer of remains to cemetery. |  |
| **Scenario 3 Processing Questions (1 of 2)**   1. What actions must VA take prior to being able to make an award decision? |  |
| **Scenario 3 Processing Questions (2 of 2)**   1. If VA confirms the Veteran was buried at the Long Beach National Cemetery, what benefits would the Veteran’s daughter be entitled to receive, and what would her benefit rate be if applicable? |  |
| **Processing Burial Claims Demonstration: Claim 3**  **Indicates you should demonstrate an action**  **Demonstration of processing Under VA Care Death Claim.**  Instructor demonstrates the claims review process from start to finish with opportunities to discuss trainee questions. ​ |  |
| **Guided Practice**  Instructions:   * Instructors assign live EP 160s to trainees. * Trainees review pending claims and take necessary action. * Use the job aids, references, and systems available. * Consult with instructor for assistance with processing questions. |  |
| Knowledge Check: Lesson Summary    Time Allowed: 15 minutes |  |
| What’s Next?   * Complete Process Burial Claims evaluation course: **TMS ID 4408387** |  |