



Timber Pines Military Veterans, Inc.

The PACT Act and your VA benefits

The PACT Act is a law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their [survivors](#)—with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve. And starting **March 5, 2024**, we’re expanding VA health care to millions of Veterans—years earlier than called for by the PACT Act.

This page will help answer your questions about what the PACT Act means for you or your loved ones. You can also call us at [800-698-2411](tel:800-698-2411) (TTY: 711). And you can file a claim for PACT Act-related disability compensation or apply for VA health care now.

What’s the PACT Act and how will it affect my VA benefits and care?

The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history. The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

The PACT Act will bring these changes:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- Adds 20+ more presumptive conditions for burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- Helps us improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

If you’re a Veteran or survivor, you can file claims now to apply for PACT Act-related benefits.

What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure?

To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition.

But for some conditions, we automatically assume (or “presume”) that your service caused your condition. We call these “presumptive conditions.”

We consider a condition presumptive when it's established by law or regulation.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

Am I eligible for VA health care under the PACT Act?

You're eligible to enroll now—without needing to apply for disability benefits first—if you meet the basic service and discharge requirements and any of these descriptions are true for you:

- You served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, or any other combat zone after 9/11, **or**
- You deployed in support of the Global War on Terror, **or**
- You were exposed to toxins or other hazards during military service at home or abroad

Specific toxins and hazards include burn pits, sand and dust, particulates, oil well or sulfur fires, chemicals, radiation, warfare agents, depleted uranium, herbicides, and other occupational hazards.

Note: Even if none of these descriptions are true for you, you may still be eligible for VA health care based on your service.

Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veteran eligibility

We've added more than 20 burn pit and other toxic exposure presumptive conditions based on the PACT Act. This change expands benefits for Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veterans.

These cancers are now presumptive:

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Head cancer of any type
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer of any type
- Pancreatic cancer

- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type

These illnesses are now presumptive:

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis

If you served in any of these locations and time periods, we've determined that you had exposure to burn pits or other toxins. We call this having a presumption of exposure.

On or after September 11, 2001, in any of these locations:

- Afghanistan
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria
- Uzbekistan
- Yemen
- The airspace above any of these locations

On or after August 2, 1990, in any of these locations:

- Bahrain
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- The United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- The airspace above any of these locations

Yes. The PACT Act adds new presumptive conditions. But there are also many other health conditions that we presume are caused by exposure to toxic (or hazardous) materials. If you have any of these other conditions, you may be eligible for health care or benefits.

You're eligible to enroll now—without needing to apply for disability benefits first—if you meet the basic service and discharge requirements and any of these descriptions are true for you.

You served on or after September 11, 2001, in any of these locations:

- Afghanistan
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria
- Uzbekistan
- Yemen
- Any other country determined relevant by VA (none at this time)
- The airspace above any of these locations

You served on or after August 2, 1990, in any of these locations:

- Bahrain
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- The United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- The airspace above any of these locations

You deployed in support of any of these operations:

- Operation Enduring Freedom
- Operation Freedom's Sentinel
- Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Operation New Dawn
- Operation Inherent Resolve
- Resolute Support Mission

Note: You may also be eligible if you were exposed to any toxins or other hazards during training or active-duty service, or based on other factors.

Vietnam era Veteran eligibility

Based on the PACT Act, we've added 2 new Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

- High blood pressure (also called hypertension)
- Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)

You may also be eligible for disability compensation based on other Agent Orange presumptive conditions. These conditions include certain cancers, type 2 diabetes, and other illnesses.

If you think you're eligible for VA health care and benefits, we encourage you to apply now.

Yes. The PACT Act adds new presumptive conditions. But there are also many other health conditions that we presume are caused by exposure to toxic (or hazardous) materials. If you have any of these other conditions, you may be eligible for health care or benefits.

We've added these 5 new locations to the list of presumptive locations:

- Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from January 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976
- Laos from December 1, 1965, through September 30, 1969
- Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969
- Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, through July 31, 1980
- Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977

If you served on active duty in any of these locations, we'll automatically assume (or "presume") that you had exposure to Agent Orange.

Note: This isn't the full list of presumptive locations for Agent Orange exposure. Review eligibility requirements for more presumptive locations.

We've added these 3 new response efforts to the list of presumptive locations:

- Cleanup of **Enewetak Atoll**, from January 1, 1977, through December 31, 1980
- Cleanup of the Air Force B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons off the coast of **Palomares, Spain**, from January 17, 1966, through March 31, 1967
- Response to the fire onboard an Air Force B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons near **Thule Air Force Base in Greenland** from January 21, 1968, to September 25, 1968

If you took part in any of these efforts, we'll automatically assume (or "presume") that you had exposure to radiation.

There are also other locations where we presume that you had exposure to radiation. If you served in any of these locations, you may be eligible for health care or benefits.

If you served on active duty in any of these locations during these time periods, you're now eligible to apply for VA health care:

- **The Republic of Vietnam** between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975
- **Thailand at any U.S. or Royal Thai base** between January 9, 1962, and June 30, 1976
- **Laos** between December 1, 1965, and September 30, 1969
- **Certain provinces in Cambodia** between April 16, 1969, and April 30, 1969
- **Guam or American Samoa (or their territorial waters)** between January 9, 1962, and July 31, 1980
- **Johnston Atoll (or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll)** between January 1, 1972, and September 30, 1977

Getting benefits

If you haven't filed a claim yet for the presumptive condition, you can file a new claim online now. You can also file by mail, in person, or with the help of a trained professional.

If we denied your disability claim in the past and we now consider your condition presumptive, you can submit a Supplemental Claim. We'll review your case again.

We encourage you to file a Supplemental Claim. When we receive a Supplemental Claim, we'll review the claim again.

Note: If we denied your claim in the past and we think you may be eligible now, we'll try to contact you. But you don't need to wait for us to contact you before you file a Supplemental Claim.

You don't need to do anything. If we added your condition after you filed your claim, we'll still consider it presumptive. We'll send you a decision notice when we complete our review.

Yes. The PACT Act is here to stay, and Veterans and survivors can file for benefits anytime. The sooner you file, the sooner you can start getting your earned benefits.

So don't wait. File your claim—or quickly submit your intent to file—today.

We will process your claim with the utmost urgency to get you the benefits you deserve as quickly as possible. In the first year of the PACT Act, we completed 458,659 PACT Act-related claims—delivering more than \$1.85 billion in earned benefits to Veterans and their survivors.

The time it takes to review your claim depends on these factors:

- The type of claim you filed
- How many injuries or disabilities you claimed and how complex they are
- How long it takes us to collect the evidence needed to decide your claim

We regularly update the average number of days it's taking us to make a decision on disability-related claims on our website.

You can also check your claim status on VA.gov or through our VA: Health and Benefits mobile app.

Toxic exposure screenings

Toxic exposure screenings are available at VA health facilities across the country.

Every Veteran enrolled in VA health care will receive an initial screening and a follow-up screening at least once every 5 years. Veterans who aren't enrolled and who meet eligibility requirements can enroll and receive the screening.

The screening will ask you if you think you were exposed to any of these hazards while serving:

- Open burn pits and other airborne hazards
- Gulf War-related exposures
- Agent Orange
- Radiation
- Camp Lejeune contaminated water exposure
- Other exposures

We'll then give you information about any benefits, registry exams, and clinical resources you may need.

Ask about the screening at your next VA health care appointment. If you want to get one sooner, contact your local VA health facility. Ask to get screened by the toxic exposure screening navigator.

You can also schedule a telehealth screening on our VET-HOME website.

Information for survivors

Yes. If you're a surviving family member of a Veteran, you may be eligible for these benefits:

- **A monthly VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA DIC) payment.** You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse, dependent child, or parent of a Veteran who died from a service-connected disability.
- **A one-time accrued benefits payment.** You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse, dependent child, or dependent parent of a Veteran who we owed unpaid benefits at the time of their death.
- **A Survivors Pension.** You may qualify if you're the surviving spouse or child of a Veteran with wartime service.

You can submit a new application for VA dependency and indemnity compensation (VA DIC).

Note: If we denied your claim in the past and we think you may be eligible now, we'll try to contact you. We may be able to reevaluate your claim. But you don't need to wait for us to contact you before you reapply.