



# Service Officer Newsletter

February 2023 Edition

As we enter the New Year, the VA has started reviewing PACT Act Claims. To Help Veterans understand the provisions of PACT Act and to see if they are qualified the VFW has launched a Nationwide Campaign to assist Veterans.



The website ([www.pactact.org](http://www.pactact.org)) will have the Veteran answer questions and will then be referred to an accredited service officer. The current edition of the VFW Magazine dated Feb 2023 gives an excellent overview of the PACT Act.

**Address all questions and concerns to  
the Chairperson:**

**Charles.vfwerie@gmail.com  
Work Cell (717).614.3319**



All Post Service Officers need to be familiar with the PACT Act and advise the Veteran in their filing of claims. Do not inform the Veteran they will receive a monetary amount; the VA makes that decision. Attached to this newsletter is an excellent information sheet that advises the Veteran about scams, Service Officers need to make copies for the respective Post and place in an area that is visible to all.

I have received calls from Veterans to assist them in providing information to Law Firms in reference to the Camp Lejeune Justice Act (Water). My answer is "Once you sign with a Law firm, we cannot help you".



If there are questions about filing a claim, contact an accredited Service Officer.

**"WE ARE HERE TO ASSIST THE VETERAN AND THEIR FAMILY"**



**CHARLES J BEATTIE  
DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER**



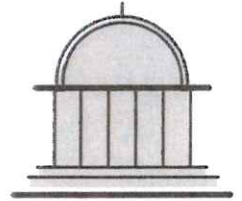




# BE VIGILANT OF PACT ACT SCAMS

On August 10, President Biden signed the [Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act \(PACT Act\)](#) into law. This law helps millions of Veterans and their survivors by:

- Extending VA health care eligibility for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 (Post-September 11, 2001) eras
- Expanding benefits eligibility for Veterans exposed to toxic substances and their survivors



## Tips to Avoid PACT Act Scams

Scammers are taking advantage of new opportunities to commit fraud. There's been an increase in PACT Act-related [phishing \(email\)](#), vishing (phone), and [social media scams](#) targeting Veterans to access their PACT Act benefits or submit claims on their behalf.

Veterans should be cautious of anyone who guarantees a lucrative financial benefit or service.

### Do's

- ✓ You may submit your application securely [online](#) via VA.GOV or in person at any Regional Office. You may file your claim directly with VA and then, VA will assist in gathering evidence necessary to support it. There are no costs or hidden fees to apply.
- ✓ Be cautious of companies who advertise VA benefits can only be obtained with their help. These companies may not be recognized by VA and may be attempting to charge illegal fees.
- ✓ Be cautious of aggressive companies who may try to pressure you to sign their contract through frequent communications or by insisting "you must act now or lose your chance for benefits."
- ✓ Be cautious of companies who claim to be contacting you on behalf of VA or to have a special relationship with VA. Contact VA at 1-800-827-1000 if you are unsure about the authenticity of any message received.
- ✓ Validate: If you are interested in working with a Veteran Service Organization (VSO), agent, or attorney, use the Office of General Counsel [Accreditation tool](#) to confirm and validate their credentials.

### Don'ts

- ⊘ Do not sign a contract agreeing to pay an unauthorized company a percentage of your benefit payment in exchange for their assistance with your VA claim. If you need help filing a claim, there are representatives of VSOs, agents, and attorneys who have been [accredited by VA](#) to assist you.
- ⊘ Do not sign a blank form for someone else to complete later. Always review the completed form before signing and keep a copy for yourself.
- ⊘ Do not be fooled by companies who advertise they have special relationships with medical professionals and can guarantee your benefits award. If they are defrauding the Federal government, you could be held responsible for paying those benefits back.
- ⊘ Do not provide your social security number, medical records, or other personally identifiable information to anyone offering claims assistance before confirming their credentials using the Office of General Counsel [Accreditation tool](#).
- ⊘ Do not sign forms that are not [VA generated](#) or third-party authorization for someone to provide "behind-the-scenes" claims assistance.

[www.VA.gov/PACT](http://www.VA.gov/PACT) is the official source of PACT Act information.

We want Veterans and survivors to apply now for their PACT Act-related benefits.

To report suspected scams, please contact the VA Office of Inspector General ([OIG Hotline \(va.gov\)](#)). File a complaint with the [Federal Trade Commission](#). Visit the [Cybercrime Support Network](#) for additional [resources](#) to help Veterans, service members, and their families combat cybercrime.

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at [VA.gov/PACT](http://VA.gov/PACT)  
Download the [VA Health and Benefits App](#)  
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)  
Find a VA at [VA.gov/find-locations/](http://VA.gov/find-locations/)