

VA proposes rule to extend presumed areas of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides, making it easier for exposed Veterans to receive their earned benefits

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A presumption of exposure means that VA automatically assumes that Veterans who served in certain locations were exposed to certain toxins. Presumptives lower the burden of proof required to receive disability benefits, helping Veterans get the benefits they deserve as quickly as possible. This expansion of presumptives will help Veterans

who served in the specified locations receive health care and benefits for [certain cancers and chronic conditions](#). To be eligible, a Veteran must have served in the identified location(s) during a specific time period and currently have a condition(s) presumptively associated with herbicide exposure.

Delivering world-class health care and benefits to toxic-exposed Veterans is a top priority for VA and the Biden-Harris Administration. As a part of President Biden's pledge to serve Veterans with military toxic exposures, over the past few years, VA has expanded presumptive service connection for more than [hundreds of health conditions](#) related to toxic exposures under the [PACT Act](#) – the [largest expansion of Veteran care and benefits in generations](#). Thanks to this historic action, VA is delivering [more care and more benefits to more Veterans](#) than ever before in U.S. history.

“This proposed change would make it easier for Veterans exposed to herbicides who served outside Vietnam to access the benefits they so rightly deserve,” said **VA Secretary Denis McDonough**. “Our goal is to provide every Veteran – of every era – with the VA health care and benefits they deserve, and this is another step in the right direction.”

Veterans who want to file an initial claim for a herbicide-related disability can visit [VA's website](#), use [VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits](#), or work with a VA-recognized [Veterans Service Organization](#) to assist with the application process. Veterans may also contact their [state Veterans](#)

[Affairs Office](#). [Survivors](#) can file claims for benefits based on the Veteran's service if the Veteran died from at least one of the recognized presumptive herbicide diseases.

This proposed rule also codifies provisions in the [PACT Act](#), the [Blue Water Navy Act of 2019](#), and the [National Defense Authorization Act for 2021](#).

For more information about the changes, visit [The Federal Register](#).

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Reporters and media outlets with questions or comments should contact the Office of Media Relations at vapublicaffairs@va.gov



Veterans with questions about their health care and benefits (including GI Bill). Questions, updates and documents can be submitted online.

[Contact us online through Ask VA](#)