



Department of Veterans Affairs

EVIDENCE INTAKE CENTER
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In reply, refer to file number:
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The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins Act of 2022, known as the PACT Act, expands and extends eligibility for health care and benefits to Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. The law enables the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide generations of Veterans and their survivors with the care and benefits they have earned and deserve. Unfortunately, since the PACT Act was passed, claims predators have increasingly targeted Veterans – via emails, phone calls, or text messages – and tried to take some portion of their PACT Act-related and VA benefits. VA defines claims predators as "bad actors" who try to unlawfully charge Veterans to "help" process their claims with VA. These claims predators are not accredited by VA and are charging Veterans improper and exorbitant fees to help prepare, consult on, or file their initial benefits claims. VA claimants should **never** pay a fee to file or receive help in filing an initial claim for benefits. It is **unlawful** for these bad actors to charge fees for preparing, or helping to prepare, an initial claim. VA employees, as well as Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and VA accredited representatives, are available to help Veterans file their initial claims.

What Are Some Signs an Entity May Be a Claims Predator?

- **They Are Not Accredited by VA:** Beware of claims predators asserting they don't need to be accredited by VA or they are qualified to help in some other way. Don't believe them!
- **They Downplay VA Accreditation:** Beware of claims predators downplaying the quality of help Veterans and their family members can receive from VA accredited VSOs for free.
- **They Charge High Fees:** Beware of claims predators charging absurd fees or requesting a portion of your VA benefits payments. Never pay anyone a fee to file an initial claim for benefits.
- **They Make Dishonest Promises:** Do not trust anyone who claims they can help accelerate the claims process and obtain a 100% disability benefits evaluation. Only VA has the authority to determine disability evaluations.
- **They Require Contracts:** Never sign a contract agreeing to pay an unaccredited individual or company a fee in exchange for assistance in filing a VA initial claim, to include a percentage of or flat fee from future benefit payments.



What Is VA Doing?

Fraud poses a real threat to benefits and services, as fraudsters' schemes are constantly evolving. VA is committed to safeguarding your benefit payments by employing industry-leading fraud prevention techniques and partnering with federal agencies and other stakeholders to create a united front in protecting Veterans. There is a devoted team within VA that works diligently to proactively stop fraud before it occurs, create robust educational communication tools, and remediate financial losses if fraud does occur.

Where Can You Find More Fraud Prevention Information?

You can protect your benefits against claims predators by either applying for benefits in person at any VA regional office or securely online at: www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/Applying.asp. VA will help gather the evidence needed to support your claims. If you choose to seek assistance outside of VA, you can find a VA accredited representative by visiting www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative/find-rep/. If your claim is denied and you want a further review without submitting additional evidence, you can request a higher-level review. If your claim is denied and you want to submit new evidence, you can either file a supplemental claim or appeal the decision to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

For more information about claims predators fraud prevention resources, scan the below QR code or go to www.digital.va.gov/outreach-toolkits/claims-predators.



How To Report Fraud?

If you suspect a representative has acted unlawfully or unethically while helping file a VA benefits claim, you can report these claims predators at www.vsafe.gov or by calling 833-38V-SAFE.

Our goal is to empower you with tools to recognize claims predators and avoid their deceptive tactics. Every day at VA, we are working to fulfill our mission and our duty to honor the sacrifices you and your families have made.