### Section B. Division of Responsibilities for Processing Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) and Quick Start Claims

#### Overview

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| In This Section | This section contains the following topics: |

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| Topic | Topic Name |
| 1 (old 3) | Regional Office (RO) and Intake Site Responsibilities |
| 2 (old 4) | Intake Site Responsibilities Unique to BDD Claims |
| 3 (old 5) | Intake Site Responsibilities Unique to Quick Start Claims |
| 4 (old 6) | BDD Rating Activity Site (RAS) and Quick Start Consolidated Processing Site (CPS) Responsibilities  |

#### 1. RO and Intake Site Responsibilities

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| Introduction | This topic contains information about the responsibilities of intake sites and ROs in handling Pre-Discharge claims, including * definition of an intake site
* responsibilities of Pre-Discharge coordinators
* document handling procedures specific to Pre-Discharge claims
* initial actions upon receipt of a Pre-Discharge claim
* initial development actions in Pre-Discharge claims
* actions to take in Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) when a claim is forwarded to the RAS/CPS
* circumstances requiring additional/alternative intake site action(s)
* actions to take for claims filed
* more than 180 days prior to discharge, and
* with no known date of discharge
* intake site responsibilities to update VBMS/Modern Awards Processing-Development (MAP-D)
* actions to take for Pre-Discharge claims without service treatment records (STRs)
* handling Pre-Discharge claims folders
* Pre-Discharge claims received through eBenefits, and
* handling documents received after shipping a claims folder for scanning.
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| a. Definition: Intake Site | An ***intake site*** is any location where the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) accepts claims. This includes* all regional offices (ROs)
* demobilization sites with a VA presence
* military installations with a VA presence, and
* VA health care facilities.

A Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) intake site is responsible for conducting outreach efforts, accepting claims, initiating development as appropriate, identifying points of contact for VA examinations, handling Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) issues, and serving as a general liaison.***Note***: Not all intake sites have the staffing or capability to perform the actions described in this topic. Under such circumstances, the parent RO of these sites bears the responsibility for taking these actions. |

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| b. Responsibilities of Pre-Discharge Coordinators | Each RO must assign a coordinator to monitor the Pre-Discharge claims it receives. The coordinator is responsible for ensuring the RO (and any of its remote intake sites) is* proactive in soliciting and accepting claims from service members prior to their release from active duty (RAD)
* timely in conducting development actions, including requesting the Separation Health Assessment (SHA) examination
* timely in following up on development actions, and
* timely in transferring claims to designated scanning and processing sites.
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| **c. Document Handling Procedures Specific to Pre-Discharge Claims** | Intake sites must remember the following important document handling procedures specific to Pre-Discharge claims:* Documents received in out-based environments must be secured in an approved, lockable container for transporting. Then hand delivered or mailed by secure carrier to the service center with a copy of the register within 72 hours.
* If an out-based employee accepts a Pre-Discharge claim and
* has access to a date stamp, the date stamp (manual or electronic) must
* be in red ink
* contain the RO name, number, and date received (mm/dd/yyyy), and
* identify the out-based office where the mail was received.
* does not have access to a date stamp, the VA employee must annotate the application with
* his/her initials
* his/her title
* the date of receipt, and
* the location where the employee received the claim.
* Place the date stamp on the ***front page*** of documents received in connection with a BDD or Quick Start claim within 24 hours of receipt.
* Employees receiving claims or evidence at a public contact or outreach activity must sign their names below the date stamp.
* Screen and place all incoming mail under the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) and Share control within seven calendar days of receipt.
* Each piece of mail that leaves the intake site should bear an annotation that shows
* the pending end product (EP), and
* a description of any action the employee took including
* the date of the action
* initials of the employee that took the action, and
* routing instructions.

***Reference***: For more information on mail handling and related procedures, see * VBA Letter 20-08-63 enclosure 3
* VBA letter 20-09-10
* M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.
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| d. Initial Actions Upon Receipt of a Pre-Discharge Claim | Upon receipt of a Pre-Discharge claim, intake sites are responsible for taking the initial actions described in the table below.  |

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| Step | Action |
| 1 | Review the application to ensure it is complete. |
| 2 | Date-stamp the application with the date of receipt. |
| 3 | Ensure the service member’s cell phone number and e-mail address are of record (to expedite development activities). |
| 4 | Ensure a *VA Form 21-686c, Declaration of Status of Dependents*,is of record if dependents are indicated on the application. |
| 5 | Obtain the service member’s service treatment records (STRs) (including *DD Form 2807-1,* *Report of Medical History*) for the current period of service.The following are acceptable formats for the STRs:* photocopies
* compact disk – read only memory (CD-ROM), and
* digital media files transferred by a secure method.

***Notes***: * If the service member provides original STRs, make a copy of the records and return the originals to the service member the same day.
* If the original records cannot be returned to the service member, then return them to the Department of Defense (DoD) at one of the addresses below.

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| **Branch of Service** | **Address to Return STRs** |
| Navy | Bureau of Medicine and Surgery7700 Arlington Blvd, Suite 5126Falls Church, VA 22042-5126 |
| Army | AMEDD Record Processing Center3370 Nacogdoches Road, Suite 116San Antonio, TX 78217 |
| Air Force | Air Force Record Processing Center3370 Nacogdoches Road, Suite 116San Antonio, TX 78217 |
| Coast Guard | Commanding OfficerHSWL Service CenterATTN: Central Cell300 E Main St, Suite 1000Norfolk, VA 23510-9109 |

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| **e. Initial Development Actions in Pre-Discharge Claims** | After ensuring a complete Pre-Discharge claim has been received, follow the steps in the table below to determine the initial development actions to complete.  |

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| Step | Action |
| 1 | Did the service member file his/her claim on *VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits*?* If *yes*, proceed to the next step.
* If *no*,
* provide the service member with [Section 5103 notice](http://www.benefits.va.gov/WARMS/docs/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/M21-1MRI_i_SecB.docx), and
* proceed to the next step.
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| 2 | Establish a Beneficiary Identification and Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) record (if one does not already exist). |
| 3 | Verify whether the claim can be processed in VBMS.

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| **If the claim type…** | **Then ...** |
| is ***not*** excluded from VBMS | * create a Control of Veterans Records System (COVERS) location for the folder (if one does not already exist), but do not create a physical folder, and
* place the claim under EP control in VBMS.
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| is excluded from VBMS | * build a red rope claims folder if one does not already exist, and
* place the claim under EP control in Share.
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| 4 | Ensure all evidence is secured together, including * a dated copy of the Section 5103 notice or a completed and signed *VA Form 21-526EZ*
* photocopies of STRs, CD-ROM, and any digital media files, and
* any other evidence and information submitted in support of the claim.
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| 5 | Verify if the VA examination requires claims folder review.Follow the steps in the table below when requesting examinations for Pre-Discharge claims.

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| **Step** | **Action** |
| 1 | Select the appropriate claim type in the Compensation and Pension Record Interchange (CAPRI) according to the table below.

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| **If the service member files …** | **Then select the...** |
| a BDD claim and has 180 to 90 days remaining on active duty | *BDD – DOD SHA* claim type. |
| a BDD claim and has less than 90 days remaining on active duty | *BDD* claim type.  |
| a Quick Start claim | *QUICK START* claim type. |

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| 2 | Does the VA examination require claims folder review?* If *yes*, proceed to the next step.
* If *no*, proceed to Step 4.
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| 3 | Follow the steps in the table below if the VA examination requires claims folder review.

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| **Step** | **Action** |
| 1 | Send all evidence for scanning upload ***within five calendar days*** of receipt of the claim. |
| 2 | Add a VBMS custom tracked item, *Documents sent for scanning,* with a 10 day suspense |
| 3 | Are the documents available in VBMS within 10 days?* If *yes*, proceed to Step 5 of this table.
* If *no*,
* extend the suspense for an additional five days, and
* proceed to Step 4 of this table.
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| 4 | Are the documents present after the five-day extension?* If *yes*, proceed to Step 5 of this table.
* If *no*, e-mail the Veterans Claims Intake Program VCIP Mailbox for resolution.
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| 5 | ***Within five calendar days*** of notification that all evidence is uploaded into the eFolder, request the SHA Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) and any other necessary specialty examinations. |

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| 4 | ***Within five calendar days*** of receipt of the claim, * request the SHA DBQ and any other necessary specialty examinations, and
* send all evidence for scanning upload.
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***Notes***:* Upload a copy of the examination request into the eFolder or claims folder as noted in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.15.c.
* If service connection related to undiagnosed illnesses due to Gulf War environmental exposure is being claimed
* examination requests for these claims must be submitted to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) in CAPRI, as QTC examinations in the Centralized Administrative Accounting Transaction System (CAATS) cannot be requested for this claim type, and
* cut and paste the *Notice to Examiners* found in M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii, 1.E.1.i into the SHA DBQ request and identify the contention(s) being claimed related to environmental exposure.

Follow [VCIP Shipping standard operating procedure (SOP)](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/Transformation/docs/VCIP%20Shipping%20SOP.docx) and local vendor protocols to forward documents for scanning. |
| 6 | Proceed to M21-1, Part III, Subpart I, 2.B.f to continue the development process. |

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| ***Note***: Intake sites* are responsible for creating tracked items to document completed development actions
* must ensure VBMS images are available for review by the examining facility under the circumstances described in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.15, and
* are entitled to credit for an interview if they conduct one in connection with a Pre-Discharge claim.

***References***: For more information on* placing Pre-Discharge claims under EP control, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.A.2
* brokering claims, see [BDD Claims Establishment Procedures](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/docs/predischarge/workflow_BDD.pdf) and [Quick Start Claims Establishment Procedures](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/docs/predischarge/workflow_QS.pdf)
* VBMS, see the [VBMS User Guide](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBMS/resources.asp), and
* date stamp information, see [Policy on the Handling and Storage of Documents - Compensation and Pension (C&P).](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/usb/letters/2011/VBA_Letter_20-08-63encl3.doc)
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| **f. Actions to Take in VBMS When a Claim is Forwarded to the RAS/CPS** | For Pre-Discharge claims that have been determined to be ready to forward to the Rating Activity Site (RAS)/Consolidated Processing Site (CPS), access VBMS to* ensure all pending tracked items have the proper suspense timeframes and close any completed tracked items
* add the special issue *Pre-Discharge Consolidated Action* to one pending contention in VBMS ***prior*** to performing COVERS and VBMS transfer actions, and
* perform necessary COVERS and VBMS transfer actions to broker the claim to the RAS/CPS.

***Notes***: * For examinations scheduled in CAATS, ensure the request was not rejected/cancelled before forwarding the claim to the RAS/CPS. The status of the examination in CAATS should be *Accepted by Contractor*.
* Do ***not*** add the *Pre-Discharge Consolidated Action* special issue unless the claim is ready to be sent to the RAS/CPS.
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| g. Circumstances Requiring Additional/ Alternative Intake Site Action(s) | Under certain circumstances, intake sites must take additional and/or alternative action(s) upon receipt of a Pre-Discharge claim. Use the table below to determine these circumstances and the corresponding action(s) to take.  |

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| If a(n) ... | Then the ... |
| service member claims entitlement to pension | intake site must provide the Section 5103 notice that is unique to claims for pension. |
| service member files a claim more than 180 days prior to discharge | intake site must follow the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.f. |
| service member files a claim with no known date of discharge | intake site must follow the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.j. |
| intake site* receives a Quick Start claim, that is excluded from VBMS, 10 or fewer days before a service member’s discharge date, or
* does not have the capability to place claims under EP control
 | intake site must follow the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.3.f. |
| service member with a Quick Start claim will be unable to attend local examinations because he/she is relocating  | intake site must follow the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.3.e. |
| intake site receives a Pre-Discharge claim without a complete copy of STRs for the current period of service | intake site must follow the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.l. |
| intake site receives a claim that BDD RASs and Quick Start CPSs do *not* process under M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.A | intake site must * enter a note in VBMS/Modern Awards Processing-Development (MAP-D) that explains why the claim cannot be processed as a BDD or Quick Start claim
* change the EP and claim label by removing the BDD or Quick Start third digit modifier and claim label, and
* route the claim to the regional office of jurisdiction (ROJ).
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| h. Actions to Take for Claims Filed More Than 180 Days Prior to Discharge | If a service member files a claim more than 180 days prior to discharge, the intake site is responsible for* establishing a ***non***-BDD/Quick Start EP and processing the claim outside of the BDD and Quick Start programs.
* denying the service member’s claim using the *return to active duty* selection from the drop down menu in VBMS - Awards (VBMS-A)
* notifying the service member of the reason for the denial, and
* clearing the EP.

***Reference***: For more information on non-BDD/Quick Start EPs, see * M21-4, Appendix C, and
* M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 1.B.2.c.
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| i. Actions to Take for Claims Filed With No Known Date of Discharge | If a service member files a claim with no known date of discharge, the intake site must * disregard the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.d
* explain to the service member that VA cannot pay compensation or pension to a person who is still on active duty, and
* encourage the service member to re-file the claim within 180 days of discharge.

***Exception***: If the service member is *not* present when the intake site discovers he/she has no known discharge date, the intake site must * take only those actions described in Step 2 of the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.d, and steps 2 and 3 of the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.e, and
* follow the instructions provided above through contact with the service member by
* telephone
* e-mail, or (if unsuccessful using these two means)
* letter.

***Notes***:* If the intake site contacts the service member by letter, it may clear an EP 400.
* By failing to provide his/her date of discharge, the service member did not submit a “substantially complete application” under [38 CFR 3.159(a)(3)](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=4763c6ae2488d644d0505035ea9c5015&mc=true&node=se38.1.3_1159&rgn=div8). For this reason, the intake site would *not*
* establish EP control, or (if it sends a letter to the service member)
* provide appeal rights.
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| j. Intake Site Responsibilities to Update VBMS /MAP-D | Upon receipt of a Pre-Discharge claim and throughout the time an intake site has custody of it, the intake site is responsible for updating VBMS/MAP-D to show* all claimed contentions, and
* any development actions taken, to include the
* location(s) where the service member will be examined, and
* date the intake site
* requested the examination(s), and
* received a corresponding examination report.

***Note***: Tracked items must be created for all development actions. VBMS/MAP-D notes are not sufficient to track development. |

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| k. Actions to Take for Pre-Discharge Claims Without STRs | Upon receipt of a Pre-Discharge claim ***without*** STRs for thecurrentperiod of service, intake sites must* establish a ***non***-BDD/Quick Start EP, and
* take the actions described in the table below.
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| If ... | Then the intake site must ... |
| * the service member is able to attend local examinations prior to discharge, and
* STRs for the current period of service are ***not*** required for the examination
 | * request the examination(s)
* follow up with the service member for his/her STRs, and
* forward the claim for immediate scanning.
 |
| * the service member is *unable* to attend local examinations prior to discharge, or
* STRs for the current period ***are*** required for the examination
 | forward the claim to the ROJ, which then assumes responsibility for* forwarding the claim for immediate scanning
* requesting the examination(s), and
* following up with the service member by phone and letter for his/her STRs.
 |
| * the intake site later obtains STRs through follow-up with the service member
* at least 60 days remain before his/her date of discharge, and
* the service member is still able to attend local examinations
 | * change the EP and claim label it initially established to the appropriate BDD EP/claim label, and
* process the claim as a BDD claim.
 |
| the intake site later obtains STRs through follow-up with the service member, but* less than 60 days remain before his/her discharge date, or
* the service member is no longer able to attend local examinations
 | * change the EP and claim label it initially established to the appropriate Quick Start EP/claim label, and
* process the claim as a Quick Start claim.
 |
| the intake site does not receive the service member’s STRs before his/her discharge date  | * ensure a non BDD/Quick Start EP/claim label is pending, and
* forward the claim to the ROJ for standard, non-Pre-Discharge processing.
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| ***Exception***: VA does *not* require members of the National Guard or Reserves who *file a Quick Start claim during demobilization briefings* to concurrently provide their STRs. Under these circumstances, Quick Start CPSs assume responsibility for obtaining the STRs through coordination with* the appropriate unit of the National Guard or Reserves, and
* RO Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) Coordinators.

***Note***: Defer examinations that require the service member’s STRs if the STRs are unavailable.***Reference***: For more information on EPs and claim labels for Pre-Discharge claims, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.A.2.c. |

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| l. Handling Pre-Discharge Claims Folders | Intake sites must establish a COVERS record and location for all paper claims folders associated with a Pre-Discharge claim.eFolders will not have a separate COVERS location. COVERS will provide notification that there is only an eFolder. Use the table below to determine the actions intake sites must take if a claims folder already exists for a service member who submits a Pre-Discharge claim. |

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| If the service-member submits a ... | And the claims folder is ... | Then the intake sitemust ... |
| BDD claim | located at another RO or records storage facility, such as the Records Management Center (RMC) or Federal Archives and Records Center (FARC) | * manually request the claims folder from its current custodian via e-mail to the corporate mailbox or designated point of contact, and
* the current custodian will send the folder for VCIP scanning.

***Note***: It is the intake site’s responsibility to request all records from RMC and ensure all evidence is scanned and claim is ready for decision before forwarding to the RAS.  |
| Quick Start claim | located at another RO or records storage facility, such as RMC or FARC | Send a request to the current custodian to send the records for scanning. |
| Quick Start claim | required for an examination and the claim is excluded from VBMS | * request the claims folder from its current custodian, and
* attach a paper flash to the folder that instructs the examining facility to forward the claims folder to the appropriate Quick Start CPS as soon as the examiner completes his/her review.

The flash must also include* a point of contact at the CPS, and
* the address of the CPS.
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| ***Notes***: * Federal Records Centers (FRCs) are National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) facilities and only send requested claims folders to the requesting ROJ.
* The RMC is a Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) facility and ships claims folders to scanning vendors, as do all other VBA facilities.
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| **m. Pre-Discharge Claims Received Through EBenefits** | For Pre-Discharge claims submitted electronically through eBenefits, use the table below to determine the proper routing actions.

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| **If the service member has ...** | **Then ...** |
| 90-180 days remaining on active duty when the claim is submitted | * eBenefits will create a diary claim with a third digit modifier “7” and *eBenefits* claim label
* the claim will be automatically routed to a BDD RAS location for development and rating, and
* the claim will remain assigned to the RAS until completion, at which time the jurisdiction of the eFolder will be transferred to the ROJ over the service member’s permanent address.
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| 1-89 days remaining on active duty when the claim is submitted | * eBenefits will create a diary claim with an EP 110, 010, or 020 (unless a different third digit modifier is required) and *eBenefits* claim label, and
* the claim will be routed to the ROJ over the service member’s current address.
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| ***Notes***: * In order to identify these diary claims, a *Diary – Future Claim – Detail* workload management report should be run.
* Upon receipt of a Pre-Discharge Veterans Online Application (VONAPP) claim, claims processors will develop for STRs as noted in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.d.
* Upon receipt of the STRs for the current period of service, claims meeting all BDD or Quick Start program criteria must undergo an EP change to the proper third digit modifier and claim label prior to being forwarded to the BDD RAS or Quick Start CPS of jurisdiction.

***References***: For more information on * BDD/Quick Start (to include VONAPP claims) EP and claim labels, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.A.2.c, and
* guidance on how to forward a claim to a BDD RAS or Quick Start CPS, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.e.
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| **n. Handling Documents Received After Shipping a Claims Folder for Scanning** | If an intake site receives documents that belong in a claims folder it has already shipped for scanning, the intake site must* update VBMS/MAP-D notes with
* a description of the documents
* the date of shipment for scanning, and
* any other information of importance to the RAS/CPS
* if additional contentions are received, enter the new contentions into VBMS/MAP-D
* attach a flash to the documents that identify them as *ACTIVE*, and
* follow [VCIP Shipping SOP](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/Transformation/docs/VCIP%20Shipping%20SOP.docx) and local vendor protocols.
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#### 2. Intake Site Responsibilities Unique to BDD Claims

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| Introduction | This topic contains information about intake site responsibilities unique to BDD claims, including* determining which RAS has jurisdiction over a BDD claim
* special claims-handling procedures for BDD claims, and
* actions to take in VBMS when a BDD claim is forwarded to the RAS/CPS.
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| a. Determining Which RAS Has Jurisdiction Over a BDD Claim | BDD RASs are located at the following two ROs:* Salt Lake City, and
* Winston-Salem.

The jurisdiction of each RAS is determined geographically, as shown in the table below: |

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| If the intake site that received the claim is located in ... | Then jurisdiction lies with the ... |
| * the Continental District,
* the Midwest District,
* the Pacific District or
* Korea
 | Salt Lake City RAS. |
| * the North Atlantic District,
* the Southeast District, or
* Germany
 | Winston-Salem RAS. |

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| ***Note***: * BDD claims with contentions related to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune should be processed at one of the above RAS locations as noted in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.E.7.c.
* BDD claims are excluded from Restricted Access Claims Centers (RACCs).
* BDD claims that are restricted claim records (also known as sensitive files) for employees of the Salt Lake City RAS should be processed by the Winston-Salem RAS and employees of the Winston-Salem RAS should be processed by the Salt Lake City RAS.
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| **b. Special Claims-Handling Procedures for BDD Claims** | In addition to the responsibilities described in the previous topic (M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1), intake sites are responsible for following the steps in the table below when handling a BDD claim. |

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| **Step** | **Action** |
| 1 | Did the service member file his/her claim on [*VA Form 21-526EZ*](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-526EZ-ARE.pdf)?* If *yes*, proceed to the next step.
* If *no*,
* provide the service member with [Section 5103 notice](http://www.benefits.va.gov/WARMS/docs/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/M21-1MRI_i_SecB.docx), and
* proceed to the next step.
 |
| 2 | Establish a BIRLS record (if one does not already exist). |
| 3 | Verify whether the claim can be processed in VBMS.

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| **If the claim type…** | **Then ...** |
| is ***not*** excluded from VBMS | * create a COVERS location for the folder (if one does not already exist), but do not create a physical folder, and
* place the claim under EP control in VBMS.
 |
| is excluded from VBMS | * build a red rope claims folder if one does not already exist, and
* place the claim under EP control in Share.
 |

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| 4 | Verify if the VA examination requires claims folder review.Follow the steps in the table below when requesting examinations for BDD claims.

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| **Step**  | **Action** |
| 1 | Select the appropriate claim type in CAPRI according to the table below.

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| **If the service member files …** | **Then select the...** |
| a BDD claim and has 180 to 90 days remaining on active duty | *BDD – DOD SHA* claim type. |
| a BDD claim and has less than 90 days remaining on active duty | *BDD* claim type.  |

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| 2 | Does the VA examination require claims folder review?* If *yes*, proceed to the next step.
* If *no*, proceed to Step 4.
 |
| 3 | Follow the steps in the table below if the VA examination requires claims folder review.

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| **Step** | **Action** |
| 1 | Send all evidence for scanning upload ***within five calendar days*** of receipt of the claim. |
| 2 | Add a VBMS custom tracked item, *Documents sent for scanning,* with a 10 day suspense |
| 3 | Are the documents available in VBMS within 10 days?* If *yes*, proceed to Step 5 of this table.
* If *no*,
* extend the suspense for an additional five days, and
* proceed to Step 4 of this table.
 |
| 4 | Are the documents present after the five-day extension?* If *yes*, proceed to Step 5 of this table.
* If *no*, e-mail the VCIP Mailbox for resolution.
 |

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***Notes***:* Upload a copy of the examination request into the eFolder or claims folder as noted in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.15.c.
* If service connection related to undiagnosed illnesses due to Gulf War environmental exposure is being claimed
* examination requests for these claims must be submitted to VHA in CAPRI, as QTC examinations in the CAATS cannot be requested for this claim type, and
* cut and paste the *Notice to Examiners* found in M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii, 1.E.1.i into the SHA DBQ request and identify the contention(s) being claimed related to environmental exposure.

Follow [VCIP Shipping standard operating procedure (SOP)](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/Transformation/docs/VCIP%20Shipping%20SOP.docx) and local vendor protocols to forward documents for scanning. |
| 5 | ***Within five calendar days*** of receipt of the claim, * request the SHA DBQ and any other necessary specialty examinations, and
* send all evidence for scanning upload.
 |
| 6 | Ensure that all development actions have been performed prior to forwarding the claim to the RAS, including* requesting all evidence identified by the service member, and
* if there is more than one period of service, requesting the other period’s STRs from the service member, RMC, or other necessary location.

If records exist at the* RMC, do not manually request, as the RMC is automatically notified upon the establishment of an EP and will forward records in their possession for scanning, or
* FARC, manually request the records and they will forward for scanning.
 |
| 7 | Proceed to M21-1 Part III, Subpart I, 2.B.2.c to continue the development process. |

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| ***Notes***: * The BDD RAS with jurisdiction over the Pre-Discharge claim is responsible for obtaining examination results.
* Intake sites
* must ensure VBMS images are available for review by the examining facility under the circumstances described in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.15
* are entitled to credit for an interview if they conduct one in connection with a Pre-Discharge claim, and
* are responsible for creating tracked items to document completed development actions as indicated in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.e.

***References***: For more information on* placing BDD claims under EP control, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.A.2
* brokering claims, see [BDD Claims Establishment Procedures](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/docs/predischarge/workflow_BDD.pdf) and [Quick Start Claims Establishment Procedures](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/docs/predischarge/workflow_QS.pdf), and
* VBMS, see the [*VBMS User Guide*](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBMS/resources.asp).
 |

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| **c. Actions to Take in VBMS When a BDD Claim is Forwarded to the RAS/CPS** | For BDD claims that have been determined to be ready to forward to the RAS/CPS, access VBMS to* ensure all pending tracked items have the proper suspense timeframes and close any completed tracked items
* add the special issue *Pre-Discharge Consolidated Action* to one pending contention in VBMS ***prior*** to performing COVERS and VBMS transfer actions, and
* perform necessary COVERS and VBMS transfer actions to broker the claim to the RAS/CPS.

***Notes***: * For examinations scheduled in CAATS, ensure the request was not rejected/cancelled before forwarding the claim to the RAS/CPS. The status of the examination in CAATS should be *Accepted by Contractor*.
* Do ***not*** add the *Pre-Discharge Consolidated Action* special issue unless the claim is ready to be sent to the RAS/CPS.
 |

#### 3. Intake Site Responsibilities Unique to Quick Start Claims

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| Introduction | This topic contains information about intake site responsibilities that are unique to Quick Start claims, including* determining which CPS has jurisdiction over a Quick Start claim
* Quick Start claims development process
* actions to take in VBMS when a Quick Start claim is forwarded to the CPS
* examination requests intake sites must not schedule
* VBMS-excluded Quick Start claims received 10 or fewer days before discharge date, and
* CPS addresses.
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| Change Date | July 21, 2015 |

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| **a. Determining Which CPS Has Jurisdiction Over a Quick Start Claim** | Quick Start CPSs are located at the following two ROs:* Winston-Salem, and
* San Diego.

The jurisdiction of each CPS, including claims involving demobilization, is determined geographically, as shown in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If the intake site that received the claim is located in ... | Then jurisdiction lies with the ... |
| * the Continental District,
* the Midwest District,
* Pacific District, or
* Korea
 | San Diego CPS. |
| * the North Atlantic District,
* the Southeast District, Area, or
* Germany
 | Winston-Salem CPS. |

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| ***Notes***: * Quick Start claims received from demobilizing National Guard or Reserve units will be forwarded to the CPS with jurisdiction over the ROJ where the service member resides.
* Quick Start claims with contentions related to the contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune should be processed at one of the above RAS locations as noted in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2.E.7.c.
* Quick Start claims are excluded from RACC. Quick Start claims that are restricted claim records (also known as sensitive files) for employees of the San Diego CPS should be processed by the Winston-Salem CPS and employees of the Winston-Salem CPS should be processed by the San Diego CPS.
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| b Quick Start Claims  Development Process | In addition to the responsibilities described in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1, intake sites are responsible for following the steps in the table below when developing a Quick Start claim.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Step | Action |
| 1 | Did the service member file his/her claim on [*VA Form 21-526EZ*](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-526EZ-ARE.pdf)?* If *yes*, proceed to the next step.
* If *no*,
* provide the service member with [Section 5103 notice](http://www.benefits.va.gov/WARMS/docs/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/M21-1MRI_i_SecB.docx), and
* proceed to the next step.
 |
| 2 | Establish a BIRLS record (if one does not already exist). |
| 3 | Verify whether the claim can be processed in VBMS.

|  |  |
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| **If the claim type…** | **Then ...** |
| is ***not*** excluded from VBMS | * create a COVERS location for the folder (if one does not already exist) but do not create a physical folder, and
* place the claim under EP control in VBMS.
 |
| is excluded from VBMS | * build a red rope claims folder if one does not already exist, and
* place the claim under EP control in Share.
 |

 |
| 4 | Ensure all evidence is secured together, including * a dated copy of the Section 5103 notice or a completed and signed [*VA Form 21-526EZ*](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/20/cio/20s5/forms/VBA-21-526EZ-ARE.pdf)
* photocopies of STRs, CD-ROM, and any digital media files, and
* any other evidence and information submitted in support of the claim.
 |
| 5 | Verify if the VA examination requires claim file review and whether the service member will be available in the area of the intake site for examinations prior to release from active duty..

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If the VA examination...** | **Then ...** |
| * *does* require claim file review, and
* the service member will be available for examination at the intake site area by the time claim documents are scanned and uploaded
 | * send all evidence for scanning upload ***within five calendar days*** of receipt of the claim,
* add a VBMS custom tracked item, *Documents sent for scanning,* with a 10 day suspense
* If the documents are not available in VBMS within 10 days, suspense for an additional five days. If the documents are not present after 15 days, email the VCIP Mailbox for resolution
* ***within five calendar days*** of notification that all evidence is uploaded into the eFolder, requested the Separation Health Assessment (SHA) DBQ and any other necessary specialty examinations
 |
| * *does* require claim file review, and
* the Servicemember will ***not*** be available for examination at the intake site area by the time claim documents are scanned and uploaded
 | * send all evidence for scanning upload ***within five calendar days*** of receipt of the claim,
* add a VBMS custom tracked item, *Documents sent for scanning,* with a 10 day suspense
* If the documents are not available in VBMS within 10 days, suspense for an additional five days. If the documents are not present after 15 days, email the VCIP Mailbox for resolution
* ***within five calendar days*** of notification that all evidence is uploaded into the eFolder proceed to step 6

**Note**: The CPS will be responsible for requesting all necessary examinations in these instances. |
| does ***not*** require claim file review | * ***within five calendar days*** of receipt of the claim, request the SHA DBQ and any other necessary specialty examinations, and
* send all evidence for scanning upload ***within five calendar days*** of receipt of the claim
 |

***Important***: The *Quick Start* Claim Type should be selected for all Quick Start claims in CAPRI.***Notes***:* Upload a copy of the examination request into the eFolder or claims folder as noted in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.15.c.
* If service connection related to undiagnosed illnesses due to Gulf War environmental exposure is being claimed
* examination requests for these claims must be submitted to VHA in CAPRI, as QTC examinations in the CAATS cannot be requested for this claim type, and
* cut and paste the *Notice to Examiners* found in M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii, 1.E.1.i into the SHA DBQ request and identify the contention(s) being claimed related to environmental exposure.
* Follow [VCIP Shipping standard operating procedure (SOP)](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/Transformation/docs/VCIP%20Shipping%20SOP.docx) and local vendor protocols to forward documents for scanning.
 |
| 6 | Proceed to M21-1 Part III, Subpart I, 2.B.3.c. |

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| ***Note***: Intake sites* must ensure VBMS images are available for review by the examining facility under the circumstances described in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.l5
* are entitled to credit for an interview if they conduct one in connection with a Pre-Discharge claim, and
* are responsible for creating tracked items to document completed development actions as indicated at M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1.e.

***References***: For more information on* placing Quick Start claims under EP control, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.A.2
* brokering claims, see [BDD Claims Establishment Procedures](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/docs/predischarge/workflow_BDD.pdf) and [Quick Start Claims Establishment Procedures](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/vbadod/docs/predischarge/workflow_QS.pdf), and
* VBMS, see the [VBMS User Guide](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBMS/resources.asp).
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| ***Notes***:* Upload a copy of the examination request into the eFolder or claims folder as noted in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 3.A.15.c.
* If service connection related to undiagnosed illnesses due to Gulf War environmental exposure is being claimed
* examination requests for these claims must be submitted to VHA in CAPRI, as QTC examinations in the CAATS cannot be requested for this claim type, and
* cut and paste the *Notice to Examiners* found in M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii, 1.E.1.i into the SHA DBQ request and identify the contention(s) being claimed related to environmental exposure.
* Follow [VCIP Shipping standard operating procedure (SOP)](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/Transformation/docs/VCIP%20Shipping%20SOP.docx) and local vendor protocols to forward documents for scanning.
 |

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| **c. Actions to Take in VBMS When a Quick Start Claim Is Forwarded to the RAS/CPS** | For Quick Start claims that have been determined to be ready to forward to the CPS, access VBMS to* ensure all pending tracked items have the proper suspense timeframes and close any completed tracked items
* add the special issue *Pre-Discharge Consolidated Action* to one pending contention in VBMS ***prior*** to performing COVERS and VBMS transfer actions, and
* perform necessary COVERS and VBMS transfer actions to broker the claim to the CPS.

***Notes***: * For examinations scheduled in CAATS, ensure the request was not rejected/cancelled before forwarding the claim to the CPS. The status of the examination in CAATS should be *Accepted by Contractor*.
* Do ***not*** add the *Pre-Discharge* special issue unless the claim is ready to be sent to the CPS.
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| d. Examination Requests Intake Sites Must Not Schedule | An intake site must ***not*** schedule a service member for examination(s) if the service member will be unable to attend them. Under these circumstances, the intake site must take the following actions:* for VBMS claims, enter a note indicating why an examination was not scheduled, or
* for hard copy (paper) claims only, attach a paper flash to the application materials that reads *No Examination Scheduled*, and provide an explanation (on the paper flash) for not scheduling the examination(s).
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| **e. VBMS-Excluded Quick Start Claims Received 10 or Fewer Days Before Discharge Date** | If an intake site receives a VBMS-excluded Quick Start claim 10 or fewer days before the discharge date, it should not place the claim under EP control. Under these circumstances, *or if the intake site does not have the capability to place a claim under EP control*, it must take the following actions before forwarding the claim to the appropriate CPS:* ensure an open period of service exists in BIRLS (If the open period does not exist, perform a BIRLS update in Share.)
* attach a paper flash to the application materials that reads *No EP or Diary Exists-Establish Control Immediately*
* provide an explanation (on the paper flash) for not placing the claim under EP control, and
* mail to the CPS of jurisdiction.
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| f. CPS Addresses | The table below shows the addresses of the Winston-Salem and San Diego CPSs: |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Winston-Salem CPS | San Diego CPS |
| VA Regional Office (318)Attn: Winston-Salem Quick Start CPS100 North Main Street, Suite 1900Winston-Salem, NC 27101 | VA Regional Office (377)8880 Rio San Diego DriveAttn: Quick Start TeamSan Diego, CA 92108 |

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| ***Note***: Only VBMS-excluded claims are routed to the above addresses. |

#### 4. BDD RAS and Quick Start CPS Responsibilities

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| Introduction | This topic contains information about BDD RAS and Quick Start CPS responsibilities, including* Pre-Discharge claims for both compensation and pension
* verifying service information before awarding benefits
* automated VBMS STR requests
* generating an automated VBMS STR request
* handling claims for which no evidence of discharge is of record
* handling claims from service members who remain on active duty beyond their anticipated discharge date
* RAS and CPS responsibilities related to insufficient examination results in connection with Pre-Discharge claims
* claims processing at RAS/CPS
* discovery of claims that the RAS/CPS is excluded from processing, and
* transfer of jurisdiction after a RAS/CPS decides a Pre-Discharge claim.
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| a. Pre-Discharge Claims for Both Compensation and Pension | If a service member files a BDD or Quick Start claim for both compensation *and* pension, the RAS/CPS with jurisdiction over the claim is responsible for determining entitlement to both benefits. ***Important***: Dual claims for both compensation and pension are currently excluded from VBMS and must be processed in legacy systems. Please check the [VBMS exclusion list](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/Transformation/docs/VBMS%20Claim%20Exclusion%20List.doc) for the most current excluded claims. |

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| b. Verifying Service Information Before Awarding Benefits | Before a BDD RAS or Quick Start CPS may award benefits, it must* verify the discharge date
* verify the character of discharge, including performing character of discharge (COD) determinations, when necessary, and
* obtain the certified STRs.

***Note***: Service departments normally issue a *DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, to service members at the time of their release from active duty. Under certain circumstances, however, service departments may issue the form *prior* to separation. VA considers such forms valid for the purpose of verifying service information. Other valid means of verifying service include Veterans Information Solution (VIS) and Defense Personnel Records Information System (DPRIS).***References***: For more information on* VIS, see the [*VIS User Guide*](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/publicat/docs/visug2001.doc)
* DPRIS, access the HELP tab on the [DPRIS web site](https://www.dpris.dod.mil/) (Registration is required.)
* COD determinations, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 1.B, and
* service verification, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 6.6.
 |

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| **c. Automated VBMS STR Requests** | Upon establishment of a rating EP, VBMS submits an automated request to the DoD Healthcare Artifacts and Image Management Solution (HAIMS) system for Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps service members separating or retiring on or after January 1, 2014.Automatic STR requests generate on the day following RAD (RAD+1) for claims established as diaries. If the service information is not complete in BIRLS as of close of business on RAD+1, the automated STR request will not generate. Pre-Discharge claims processors need to ensure this automated request is generated for BDD and Quick Start claims.***Important***: Follow established procedures as outlined in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 2 for Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps Veterans separated or retired from military service *before* January 1, 2014. |

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| **d. Generating an Automated VBMS STR Request** | Follow the steps in the table below to ensure an automated VBMS STR request is generated for BDD and Quick Start claims. |

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| --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Action** |
| 1 | Verify the status of the automated STR request in VBMS by checking the *Obtain STRs* section of the *Development Plan*.If the service member’s service information * has been updated prior to the end of RAD+1 and the STR status message is not in an *error* or *warning* status, then no additional action is required, or
* has ***not*** been updated prior to the end of RAD+1 and the STR status message is in an *error* or *warning* status proceed to Step 2.
 |
| 2 | Use the table below to determine the actions to perform based on the type of STR status error or warning message received.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If the system returns...** | **Then ...** |
| *WARNING: This Veteran is not eligible for an Electronic STR Request. Eligibility checked on MM/DD/YYYY at HH:mm. The RAD Date does not meet the eligibility criteria.* | the Veteran’s military profile must be updated to reflect correct RAD date. If the correct RAD is on or after January 1, 2014, * update the Veteran’s military service
* return to the OBTAIN STR tab in the *Development Plan* section
* resubmit the STR request by clicking on *Request STR Again*, and
* the status message will be updated immediately to reflect a new status.
 |

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| ***Notes***: * The only way to avoid an *error* or *warning* message is to ensure that the service member’s period of service in BIRLS is complete **before** the end of the RAD+1 date.
* Clicking on the *Request STR Again* button without entering a complete period of service in BIRLS will continue to generate the same error message.
* Do not delay other development actions awaiting the certified copies of the STRs.
 |

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| e. Handling Claims for Which No Evidence of Discharge Is of Record | If no evidence of discharge is of record on or after a claimant’s anticipated discharge date, the BDD RAS or Quick Start CPS with jurisdiction over the affected claim must take one or more of the following actions until the evidence is obtained* check VIS
* ask the claimant to upload his/her *DD Form 214* into eBenefits
* contact the appropriate separation site or transition facility to determine the claimant’s
* duty status, and
* anticipated release date, and/or
* submit a request for service verification through DPRIS.

***Note***: A RAS or CPS should assume a claimant will remain on active duty for at least 60 more days ***and deny his/her claim accordingly*** if* at least 60 days have passed since the anticipated discharge date, and
* attempts to obtain evidence of discharge through the actions described above have been unsuccessful.

***Reference***: For more information on denying claims from service members who remain on active duty, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.4.f. |

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| f. Handling Claims From Service Members Who Remain on Active Duty Beyond Their Anticipated Discharge Date | If service members remain on active duty beyond their anticipated discharge date, the RAS or CPS must * attempt to contact the service member to obtain a new discharge date, and
* use the table below for further instructions to follow.

***Exception***: If a service member remains on active duty because his/her service department referred the service member into the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES), follow the instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.D.15.c. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If the service member ... | Then the RAS or CPS must ... |
| * plans to remain on active duty *more* than 60 days from the current date, or
* the RAS or CPS is unsuccessful in its attempts to contact the service member
 | * dispose of any hard-copy, unpromulgated rating decisions under [*RCS VB-1, Part I, Item number 13-052.200*](http://www.benefits.va.gov/WARMS/docs/admin20/rcs/part1/sec13.doc)
* delete unpromulgated rating decisions from
* VBMS-Rating (VBMS-R), and/or
* Rating Board Automation (RBA) 2000
* retain all other accumulated documentation in the claims folder
* deny the claim using the *RETURN TO ACTIVE DUTY* selection from the drop down menu in VBMS-A, and
* notify the service member of the reason for denial.

***Notes***: * To remove an unpromulgated rating decision from RBA 2000, the Rating Veterans Service Representative (RVSR) who prepared the decision must first pull it back into RBA 2000 and then delete it.
* To remove an unpromulgated rating decision from VBMS-R, select the claims folder number from the work pending queue and select *Return to Files Without Update*.
 |
| provides a discharge date that is 60 days *or fewer* from the current date | * Enter a note into VBMS indicating the new discharge date

Update any tracked items if necessary |

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| g. RAS and CPS Responsibilities Related to Insufficient Examination Results in Connection With Pre-Discharge Claims | BDD RASs and Quick Start CPSs are responsible for determining the sufficiency of examinations conducted in connection with Pre-Discharge claims in their jurisdictions. If a RAS or CPS determines examination results are insufficient for rating purposes, it is responsible for* returning the examination report to the VA medical facility or contractor that conducted the examination for appropriate action, and/or
* scheduling any additional examination(s) it deems necessary to decide the Pre-Discharge claim.

***Note***: Under the circumstances described above, RASs and CPSs should * decide every issue for which sufficient evidence exists to award a benefit, including service connection at a noncompensable level, and
* defer a decision on the remaining issue(s) for which insufficient evidence exists.

***Reference***: For more information about intermediate rating decisions and deferred issues, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 4.A. |

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| h. Claims Processing at RAS/CPS | Follow the steps in the table below to determine the process for handling claims after their arrival at a RAS/CPS. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Step | Action |
| 1 | Accept jurisdiction of the brokered claim and ensure it is assigned to the appropriate VBMS personal work queue. |
| 2 | Follow the guidance in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.1, to ensure the claim is a substantially complete Pre-Discharge application. |
| 3 | BDD claims brokered to RASs must be in open status but with all development complete.If not completed by the intake site, CPSs are required to * perform all required development actions noted in M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.3, and
* request all necessary examinations ***within five days*** of receipt at the CPS.
 |
| 4 | Obtain completed examination reports. |
| 5 | Ensure all required development is complete. |
| 6 | Verify the Veteran’s* discharge date, and
* COD (must be other than dishonorable).

***Note***: The diary maturity date/EP date of claim is one day following separation (RAD+1). |
| 7 | Update VBMS/MAP-D to show the claim is ready for decision. |
| 8 | Prepare a rating decision. ***Note***: The RAS/CPS is responsible for rating all issues it defers, unless the basis for the deferral is incorrect jurisdiction. |
| 9 | If the Veteran selected a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) as his/her power of attorney, make the completed rating decision available for review by the appropriate VSO for a minimum of two days. Send an e-mail to the VSO notifying it that the rating is in the eFolder for its review. |
| 10 | * Promulgate the rating decision, and
* authorize the corresponding award action.
 |
| 11 | Send decision notice to the Veteran. |
| 12 | Permanently transfer the eFolder jurisdiction to the ROJ over the Veteran’s current address. |

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| ***References***: For more information on* placing BDD and Quick Start claims under EP control, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.A.2
* verifying a Veteran’s discharge date and COD, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.B.4.d and e
* completing rating decisions, see M21-1, Part IV, Subpart ii, 2.A and B
* VSO review of completed rating decisions, see M21-1, Part I, 3.B.3, and
* promulgating and authorizing an award, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart v, 2.A.
 |

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| i. Discovery of Claims That the RAS/CPS Is Excluded From Processing  | If a RAS/ CPS discovers a claim in its inventory that VA policy specifically excludes from the BDD or Quick Start program under M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, 2.A.1.e, the RAS/CPS must* change the pending EP to a non-BDD or Quick Start EP
* create a VBMS/MAP-D note indicating the reason for exclusion, and
* transfer the corresponding claims folder/eFolder to the ROJ.

***Reference***: For more information on non-BDD or Quick Start EPs, see * M21-4, Appendix C, and
* M21-1, Part III, ii.1.B.2.
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| j. Transfer of Jurisdiction After a RAS/CPS Decides a Pre-Discharge Claim | After a RAS/CPS decides a Pre-Discharge claim, it transfers jurisdiction over the corresponding eFolder to the ROJ (based on the geographical area in which the claimant resides). The ROJ is responsible for processing* subsequent claims, and/or
* an appeal of the RAS/CPS decision.

***Note***: To transfer an eFolder’s jurisdiction in COVERS or VBMS, follow the instructions in the Tip Sheet titled [*Transferring Out VBMS Claims*](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/Transformation/docs/Transferring%20VBMS%20Claims%20TIP%20Sheet%20FINAL.doc). |