#### Department of Veterans Affairs M21-1, Part III, Subpart i

**Veterans Benefits Administration July 21, 2015**

**Washington, DC 20420**

#### Transmittal Sheet

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| Changes Included in This Revision | The table below describes the changes included in this revision of Veterans Benefits Manual M21-1, Part III, “General Claims Process,” Subpart i, “Overview of Claims Processing and Structure of the Veterans Service Center.”***Notes***: * The term regional office (RO) also includes pension management center (PMC), where appropriate.
* Minor editorial changes have also been made to
* update incorrect or obsolete references
* update obsolete terminology, where appropriate
* reassign alphabetical designations to individual blocks and repaginate, where necessary, to account for new and/or deleted blocks within a topic
* update section and topic titles to more accurately reflect their content
* clarify block labels and/or block text, and
* bring the documents into conformance with M21-1 standards.
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| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation |
| To add information on Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) intake site responsibilities. | M21-1, Part III, Subpart i, Chapter 2, Section B, Topic 1, Block a(III.i.2.B.1.a)  |
| To provide additional responsibility of the Pre-Discharge coordinator to ensure the regional office (RO) is timely in conducting development actions, including requesting the Separation Health Assessment (SHA) examination. | III.i.2.B.1.b |
| To remove old Block c as it contained outdated information on Pre-Discharge claim outreach. | -- |
| To add a new Block c with guidance on document handling procedures specific to Pre-Discharge claims. | III.i.2.B.1.c |
| * To revise table to include
* ensuring that a *VA Form 21-686c, Declaration of Status of Dependents*, is of record if dependents are indicated on the application, and
* what consistutes an acceptable format for service treatment records (STRs).
* To add notes on locations to return a Veteran’s original STRs if the original records cannot be returned to the service member.
 | III.i.2.B.1.d |
| * To relocate information from Steps 5 to 13 from old Block d.
* To include guidance on actions to take related to development of Pre-Discharge claims if the claim type is not excluded from Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) and if the claim type is excluded from VBMS.
* To add a note indicating that intake sites are responsible for creating tracked items to document completed development actions.
* To add hyperlinks to the reference guides for BDD Claims Establishment Procedures, Quick Start Claims Establishment Procedures, *VBMS User Guide,* and Policy on the Handling and Storage of Documents – Compensation and Pension (C&P).
 | III.i.2.B.1.e |
| * To add a new Block f with complete guidance on requesting examinations for Pre-Discharge claims.
* To provide guidance on the actions to take when a VA examination does or does not require claims folder review.
* To add notes to upload a copy of the VA examination request into the electronic folder (eFolder) and guidance for specific claims to include those due to environmental exposure in Southwest Asia/undiagnosed illness.
 | III.i.2.B.1.f |
| To add a new Block g with complete guidance on actions to take in VBMS when the claim is ready to be forwarded to the RAS and consolidated processing site CPS. | III.i.2.B.1.g |
| * To remove obsolete information related to actions an employee takes when he/she has no access to a date stamp.
* To remove guidance on actions the intake site must take for BDD Pre-Discharge and Quick Start VA Online Application (VONAPP) claims for relocation within Topic 1.
* To remove inaccurate information on actions to take if a service member has a paperless claims folder.
 | III.i.2.B.1.h |
| * To clarify the section by removing cross-reference to incorrect steps in III.i.2.B.1 tables.
* To remove outdated information on reason code 19, ON ACTIVE DUTY/RETIRED PAY.
* To remove outdated reference to III.i.2.A.2.b.
* To add cross-reference to M21-4, Appendix C.
 | III.i.2.B.1.i |
| To remove inaccurate information related to intake site responsibilities to submit a *DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty.* | III.i.2.B.1.j |
| To remove old Block k guidance related to Pre-Discharge claims with existing paperless claims folders as this is not current guidance. | -- |
| To remove outdated guidance on special issue indicators for BDD or Quick Start claims. | III.i.2.B.1.k |
| To remove old Block l with out-of-date guidance on use of a folder flash for BDD and quick start claims. | -- |
| * To provide guidance that eFolders will not have a separate Control of Veterans Records System (COVERS) location.
* To revise table to relocate within the block guidance that the intake site is responsible to request all records from the Records Management Center (RMC) and ensure all evidence is scanned and the claim is ready for decision before forwarding to the RAS.
* To add a note that Federal Records Centers (FRCs) are National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) facilities and only send requested claims folders to the requesting regional office of jurisdiction (ROJ).
* To add a note that the RMC is a Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) facility and ships claims folders to scanning vendors, as do all other VBA facilities.
* To remove old note with outdated information that the existence of an eFolder does not always denote a Veteran’s claims folder is paperless.
 | III.i.2.B.1.m |
| To add a new Block n to provide guidance on Pre-Discharge claims received via eBenefits based on the number of days remaining on active duty. | III.i.2.B.1.n |
| To add a new Block o and provide guidance on handling documents received after shipping a claims folder for scanning. | III.i.2.B.1.o |
| * To add a note that BDD claims related to contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune should be processed at one of the RAS locations.
* To add a note that BDD claims are excluded from Restricted Access Claims Centers (RACCs) and guidance on where sensitive claims folders are to be processed.
 | III.i.2.B.2.a |
| * To revise the table in the block related to special claims handling procedures for BDD claims to incorporate the current process.
* To provide guidance to ensure that all development actions have been performed, including requesting all evidence identified by the service member and guidance on what actions are to be taken based on whether records exist at the RMC or Federal Archives and Records Center (FARC).
* To add notes that the BDD RAS with jurisdiction over the Pre-Discharge claim is responsible for obtaining examination results, that intake sites must ensure VBMS images are available for review by the examining facility and give circumstances, that intake sites are entitled to credit for an interview if they conduct one in connection with a Pre-Discharge claim, and that intake sites are responsible for creating tracked items to document completed development actions as indicated in III.I.2.B.1.i.
* To include guidance on reviewing the evidence to determine whether a VA examination and/or medical opinion are/is required with reference to III.I.2.B.2.c for further guidance.
* To include guidance to refer to III.I.2.B.2.d for guidance on actions to be taken in VBMS when the claim is ready to be forwarded to the RAS/CPS.
* To add cross-references for placing BDD claims under EP control to III.i.2.A.2, brokering claims to the BDD Claims Establishment Procedures and Quick Start Claims Establishment Procedures documents, and to the *VBMS User Guide*.
 | III.i.2.B.2.b |
| To remove old Block c related to handling documents received after shipping a claims folder for scanning as the content was relocated to Topic 1. | -- |
| * To add a new Block c with complete guidance on requesting examinations for BDD claims.
* To provide guidance on actions to take if a service member files a BDD claim and has 90 to 180 days remaining on active duty as well as when the service member has less than 90 days remaining on active duty and if a claim is a Quick Start claim.
* To provide guidance on the actions to take when a VA examination does or does not require claims folder review.
* To add notes to upload a copy of the VA examination request into the eFolder and guidance for specific claims to include those due to environmental exposure in Southwest Asia/undiagnosed illness.
 | III.i.2.B.2.c |
| To add a new Block d with complete guidance on actions to take in VBMS when the claim is ready to be forwarded to the RAS/CPS. | III.i.2.B.2.d |
| To add a new Block a on determining which CPS has jurisdiction over a Quick Start claim based on location. | III.i.2.B.3.a |
| * To add a table addressing the Quick Start claims development process in detail.
* To include guidance on actions to take related to development of Quick Start claims if the claim type is not excluded from VBMS and if the claim type is excluded from VBMS.
* To include guidance on reviewing the evidence to determine whether a VA examination and/or medical opinion are/is required with reference to III.i.2.B.3.c for further guidance.
* To include guidance to refer to III.i.2.B.3.d for guidance on actions to be taken in VBMS when the claim is ready to be forwarded to the RAS/CPS.
* To add notes that intake sites must ensure VBMS images are available for review by examining facilities, 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 III.i.2.B.1.i
* To add cross-references for placing Quick Start Claims under EP control to III.i.2.A.2, brokering claims to the BDD Claims Establishment Procedures and Quick Start Claims Establishment Proceduresdocuments, and to the *VBMS User Guide*.
* To remove guidance on VBMS-excluded Quick Start claims and other process for Quick start claims for relocation at new 3.d.
 | III.i.2.B.3.b |
| To remove old Block c with outdated guidance on a checklist for Quick Start claims. | -- |
| * To add a new Block c with complete guidance on requesting examinations for Quick Start claims.
* To provide guidance on actions to take if a service member files a BDD claim and has 90 to 180 days remaining on active duty as well as when the service member has less than 90 days remaining on active duty.
* To provide guidance on the actions to take when a VA examination does or does not require claims folder review.
* To add notes to upload a copy of the VA examination request into the eFolder and guidance for specific claims to include those due to environmental exposure in Southwest Asia/undiagnosed illness.
 | III.i.2.B.3.c |
| To remove old Block d with outdated guidance on transferring Quick Start claims to a CPS. | -- |
| To add a new Block d with complete guidance on actions to take in VBMS when the claim is ready to be forwarded to the RAS and CPS. | III.i.2.B.3.d |
| * To remove guidance on C&P Worksheet completion that is located in other areas of this section to include 3.c.
* To add guidance related to entering a note indicating why an examination was not scheduled for VBMS claims.
 | III.i.2.B.3.e |
| To add a new Block f for relocation of guidance on VBMS-excluded quick start claims from Topic 3, Block b. | III.i.2.B.3.f |
| To provide clarification that only VBMS-excluded claims are routed to the addresses in this block. | III.i.2.B.3.g |
| To add information that C&P dual claims are currently excluded from VBMS and must be processed in legacy systems. | III.i.2.B.4.a |
| To remove old Block b with information about work items as this is outdated guidance pertaining to the Virtual VA (VVA) system. | -- |
| To revise for clarity by discussing verifying service information before awarding benefits. | III.i.2.B.4.b |
| To remove old Block c with unnecessary information on the initial RAS actions upon receipt of a work item, which is obsolete guidance. | -- |
| To add a new Block c with a description of automated VBMS STR requests. | III.i.2.B.4.c |
| To add a new Block d with a procedural table for submitting an automated VBMS STR request. | III.i.2.B.4.d |
| * To remove note that only users with VVA role of supervisor or system administrator may delete rating decisions.
* To provide guidance on removing an unpromulgated rating decision from VBMS-Rating (VBMS-R).
* To update guidance on setting a claim level suspense reason when a service member provides a discharge date that is 60 days or fewer from the current date.
 | III.i.2.B.4.f |
| To remove old Block h guidance that is obsolete related to VVA and preparing ratings in Rating Board Automation (RBA 2000).  | -- |
| * To provide additional information in the table related to claims processing at the RAS/CPS, including accepting jurisdiction of the brokered claim in VBMS, following guidance in III.i.2.B.1, and keeping BDD claims in brokered status in open status with all development complete as well as information on diary maturity dates.
* To add a cross-reference for completing rating decisions to IV.ii.2.A and B and for promulgating and authorizing an award to III.v.2.A.
 | III.i.2.B.4.h |
| To remove old Block i guidance that is obsolete related to promulgating a rating decision using VVA and Veterans Services Network (VETSNET). | -- |
| To add guidance on creating a VBMS/ Modern Awards Processing – Development (MAP-D) note indicating a reason when a claim is excluded. | III.i.2.B.4.i |
| To remove old Block j guidance that is obsolete related to authorizing an award action and use of work items.  | -- |
| To add a new Block j with guidance on transfer of jurisdiction after a RAS/CPS decides a Pre-Discharge claim. | III.i.2.B.4.j |
| To remove old Block k guidance that is obsolete related to handling claims folders from scanning sites as this related to VVA. | -- |
| To remove old Block l guidance related to document scanning at the RAS as this no longer applies with removal of related guidance in rows directly above this row. | - |
| To remove old Block m guidance on transfer of jurisdiction after a RAS/CPS decides a BDD claim as this no longer applies with removal of related guidance in rows directly above this row. | - |
| To move Blocks a and e from old Topic 7 to Blocks g and h of Topic 4. | -- |
| To remove old Block b on inadequate examination results as this no longer applies due to removal of other related blocks in this section described in rows above this row.- | -- |
| To remove old Block c on claims from service members on active duty as this no longer applies due to removal of other related blocks in this section as discussed in the rows above. | -- |
| To remove old Block d on Quick Start claims for both C&P as this no longer applies due to removal of other related blocks in this section as discussed in the rows above. | -- |
| To remove old Block f on jurisdiction over appeals and subsequent claims as this no longer applies due to removal of other related blocks in this section as discussed in the rows above. | -- |

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| Rescissions | None |

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| Authority | By Direction of the Under Secretary for Benefits |

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| Signature | Thomas J. Murphy, DirectorCompensation Service |

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