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

**Veterans Benefits Administration July 20, 2015**

**Washington, DC 20420**

#### Transmittal Sheet

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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 ii, “Initial Screening and Determining Veterans Status.”***Notes***: * The term “regional office” (RO) also includes pension management center (PMC), where appropriate.
* Minor editorial changes have also been made to
* clarify the procedures apply to paper claims folders, where appropriate
* update incorrect or obsolete references
* updated hyperlinks
* update obsolete terminology, where appropriate
* renumber each topic based on the standard that the first topic in each section is Topic 1
* reassign alphabetical designations to individual blocks, 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 document into conformance with M21-1 standards.
 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reason(s) for the Change | Citation |
| * To clarify that whenever possible, paper claims folders should be sent for scanning.
* To add references.
 | M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 4, Section I, Topic 1, Block a (III.ii.4.I.1.a) |
| * To explain why the control period for special handling of folders after a BVA decision is 150 days when the appeal period is only 120 days.
* To add references.
 | III.ii.4.I.1.c |
| To add guidance that discusses converting paper claims folders to an electronic claims folder (eFolder) after a BVA decision.  | III.ii.4.I.1.d |
| To clarify the process for identifying cases requiring special handling. | III.ii.4.I.1.e |
| * To clarify the policy that RO’s should maintain a temporary file for paper claims folders during the special-handling period.
* To add references.
 | III.ii.4.I.2.a |
| * To update the definition of a temporary file.
* Too add a reference.
 | III.ii.4.I.2.b |
| To add a reference relevant to limit access to the paper claims folder during the special-handling period. | III.ii.4.I.2.d |
| To relocate guidance from old III.ii.5.G.a that provides guidance on how to handle claims folders after the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) issues a decision  | III.ii.4.I.4.a |
| To remove duplicate guidance from old III.ii.4.I.31.a that discussed how to handle a GC request for a folder when CAVC dockets an appeal as this guidance is covered in III.ii.5.H.2.a. | --- |
| To remove duplicate guidance from old III.ii.4.I.33 that dicussed the final decision on pending appeals as this guidance is covered in III.ii.5.H.3.  | --- |
| * To update procedures for returning paper claims folders to the Office of General Counsel’s (OGC’s) Professional Staff Group VII (PSG VII).
* To update the PSG VII email address for claims folder that cannot be returned to PSG VII in a timely manner.
 | III.ii.4.I.4.d |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rescissions | None |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signature | Thomas J. Murphy, DirectorCompensation Service |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Distribution | LOCAL REPRODUCTION AUTHORIZED |