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

**Veterans Benefits Administration July 20, 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 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. |

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| 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 |

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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, Director  Compensation Service |

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