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

**Veterans Benefits Administration July 14, 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. * Unless otherwise noted, the term “claims folder” refers to the official, numbered, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) repository – whether paper or electronic – for all documentation relating to claims that a Veteran and/or his/her survivors file with VA. * Minor editorial changes have also been made to * update incorrect or obsolete references * update obsolete terminology, where appropriate * 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 create new Section H for the relocation and updating of guidance previously located in Section G. | M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, Chapter 5, Section H  (III.ii.5.H) |
| To add guidance that discusses the special-handling period following the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA) decisions. | III.ii.5.H.1.a |
| * To add guidance that discusses the shipping policy during the special-handling period. * To update the special handling period to 120-days. | III.ii.5.H.1.b |
| To add guidance on how to permanently transfer paper claims folders during the special-handling period. | III.ii.5.H.1.c |
| To add guidance defining the locations to which a paper claims folder may be temporarily transferred during the special-handling period. | III.ii.5.H.1.d |
| To add guidance on how to coordinate a temporary transfer of paper claims folders for VA Central Office (VACO) review. | III.ii.5.H.1.e |
| To add guidance on how to store paper claims folders that are temporarily transferred between regional offices (ROs). | III.ii.5.H.1.f |
| To add guidance on how to transfer paper claims folders between ROs during the special-handling period. | III.ii.5.H.1.g |
| To add guidance that discusses the paper claims folders exclusion from quality reviews during the special-handling period. | III.ii.5.H.1.h |
| To add guidance that discusses the Office of General Counsel (OGC) Professional Staff Group VII (PSG VII) responsibility for litigating appeals that are before the CAVC and how PSG VII retrieves paper claims folders that are stored at the RO. | III.ii.5.H.2.a |
| To add guidance that provides the procedures for responding to PSG VII paper claims folders request. | III.ii.5.H.2.b |
| To add guidance on actions an RO must take when paper claims folders requested by PSG VII through the Appeals Management Center (AMC) cannot be located. | III.ii.5.H.2.c |
| To relocate guidance from old III.ii.5.G.30.d discussing handling claims folders after CAVC issues a decision to III.ii.4.I.4.a, which is more appropriate location to discuss handling folders. | III.ii.5.G.30.d (old) |
| To create new Topic 3 providing guidance on procedures after receipt of a final CAVC decision on a pending appeal. | III.ii.5.H.3 |
| To add guidance that discusses the possible scenarios after CAVC renders a final decision. | III.ii.5.H.3.a |
| To add guidance that discusses the procedures upon CAVC’s completion of the appellate process. | III.ii.5.H.3.b |
| To add guidance that discusses the process when CAVC issues a remand on the appellate issue(s). | III.ii.5.H.3.c |
| To add guidance that discusses PSG VII process when CAVC has taken final action before a first dispositive pleading has been filed. | III.ii.5.H.3.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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