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## Chapter 1. eBenefits

#### 1. eBenefits

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| Introduction | This chapter provides information on the eBenefits web portal. |

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| Change Date | September 7, 2016 |

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| a. What is eBenefits? | The[eBenefits](https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal) web portal is an online resource for self-service tools and benefits-related information for, Veterans, service members, and their families |

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| b. Background on eBenefits | The President’s Commission on Care for America’s Returning Wounded Warriors (Dole/Shalala) established by [Executive Order 13426](http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/07-1137.pdf) in March 2007 recommended the creation of a web portal to provide wounded ill and injured service members, Veterans, their family members, and care providers a single and transparent access point to online benefits as well as related content and services.  In response, VA and DoD collaborated on developing the eBenefits Portal where VA has primary responsibility for the project and is designated as the lead agent. Additionally, since its initial conception, eBenefits has expanded beyond its original scope and is now intended to be an interactive web portal for all Veterans, all service members, and their families. |

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| c. Registration for eBenefits | Individuals can create an eBenefits account if they are active duty, retired, National Guard or Reserve, Veteran (non-retiree) or a family member. All persons must be registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) before an account can be created. Registration is actually for the DoD (DS) Self-Service Logon that allows for access to the eBenefits web portal.  It is anticipated as a result of VA and DoD data exchanges that most individuals seeking to register will be in DEERS. Those that are not should call the eBenefits Help Desk at 1-800-983-0937 for further instructions. |

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| d. Access Levels | The amount and type of information individuals may view through eBenefits depends on their access level. There are two types: Basic and Premium.  Access levels may also be referred to as credentials (e.g., Premium credential). Within eBenefits, DoD provides the capability for service members, Veterans, and family members to have a DS Logon for the purpose of accessing DoD and VA self-service functions available via eBenefits. |

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| e. Basic Access | To obtain Basic access, individuals will need to register through the [eBenefits website](https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal) . Basic credentialing will allow access to information that is entered into eBenefits by individuals, such as Favorite Links, or categories of benefits that are of interest. It's a lower form of access than Premium, but is easier to obtain.  Example: A VA home loan certificate of eligibility may be received with a Basic credential.  Upon completing the eBenefits registration form, a one-time activation code will be displayed and registrants will then be directed to the DEERS DoD Self-Service Access Center to activate their DoD Self-Service Logon and get a username and password. They can then return to eBenefits, click the Login button and use their username and password to log in. Basic access requires no In-Person-Proofing (IPP). IPP is the act of verifying a Veteran’s or beneficiary’s identity. It is also referred to as In-Person-Authentication (IPA). |

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| f. Premium Access | Premium credentialing will allow access to personally identifiable information in VA and DoD systems such as claim status, VA payment history, and Tri-Care. Military separation documents may also be retrieved with a Premium credential.  Service members must obtain Premium access by using their Common Access Card (CAC). They are considered already proofed. Military retirees are also considered proofed and may obtain Premium access using their Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) Logon.  Most Veterans will register for eBenefits without a CAC or a DFAS Logon; therefore, they will require IPP to obtain Premium access.  In this case, Premium access is granted by updating the individual’s profile within the DoD Self-Service Access Station. VBA has established a process for granting regional office users access to the DoD Self-Service Access Station. This process is discussed in detail below. |

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| g. VBA Roles and Responsibilities for eBenefits | In order to ensure that we maximize the ability of our Veterans and service members to access the capabilities of eBenefits, specific roles within VBA have been assigned. These roles and their responsibilities are described in detail in the following sections. For the purpose of administering access to the DS Access Station, regional offices are known as sites and have specific site identification numbers. Users are also known as operators. |

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| h. Agency Point of Contact (POC) for eBenefits | The Agency POC is located at VA Central Office (VACO) and serves as the liaison between regional office sites and DMDC. He/she collects the *New Site Request and Site Security Manager Permissions Request* forms and the primary and secondary Site Security Managers’ (SSM) DD Form 2875, *System Authorization Access Request (SAAR)*.  The Agency POC must have a current background investigation of at least a National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI) or higher. This will equate to the DoD required Public Trust IT Level II or higher. The Agency POC is the SSM’s primary point of contact at VACO. The SSM may contact the Agency POC through the eBenefits mailbox at [VAVBAWAS/CO/BAS/eBenefits](mailto:EBENEFITS.VBACO@va.gov).  Additional responsibilities include:   * regularly (monthly, at a minimum) reviewing a list of SSMs at the designated site(s) and submitting the *New Site Request and Site Security Manager Permissions Request* form to the DMDC’s Application Representative (AR) to revoke permissions when SSMs: * no longer have a need to administer access to an application, or * will no longer be an SSM for a site. * revoking permissions for SSMs is vital to mitigating the risks of inappropriate access to privacy-sensitive information. * submitting the form to the AR to request permission for existing SSMs to administer User access to new applications. * submitting changes in his/her contact information to the AR. When the Agency POC will no longer be a liaison for the Application, contact information for the replacement Agency POC must be submitted to the AR. * reviewing and posting monthly regional office In-Person Proofing data as provided by DMDC. |

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#### 1. eBenefits, Continued

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| i. Site Security Manager (SSM) | Each designated site will have a primary and secondary SSM. The Agency POC will coordinate with the Office of Information and Technology on designating SSMs. An SSM may serve as a primary or secondary for more than one site. SSMs must have a current background investigation of at least a NACI or higher. This will equate to the DoD required Public Trust IT Level II or higher.  Once designated, the SSMs may send their *New Site Request and Site Security Manager Permissions Request* form (one per site) and DD Form 2875, *SAAR* (one per SSM), directly to the Agency POC. The forms should be emailed to [VAVBAWAS/CO/BAS/eBenefits](mailto:EBENEFITS.VBACO@va.gov). If the functionality is available, SSMs may digitally sign the forms; otherwise, they must sign hard copies and scan the forms. **Note: SSMs need not complete the Site ID, Suggested Site Name, or Requestor (Point of Contact) Information on the *New Site Request and Site Security Manager Permissions Request* form*.***  The SSM is responsible for administering his/her assigned site(s) and for managing Super User/Users’ access to the DoD Self-Service (DS) Access Station. Access is managed by the SSM via the DMDC Security Online Web Application. The SSM maintains proper documentation for each User to include DD Form 2875, *SAAR*. The secondary SSM acts when the primary SSM is unavailable.  In addition to the responsibilities described above, the SSM must:   * notify the Agency POC when his/her information changes, e.g. name change or when there will be SSM changes for a site. As a follow up, if the primary will no longer be the SSM for a site, the secondary should notify the Agency POC. Conversely, the primary should notify the Agency POC when there is a change to the secondary SSM. The site should follow the procedures for appointing an SSM as described above. * review regularly (monthly, at a minimum) the list of users at their site(s) and remove a user’s access to a DMDC application when the User: * no longer has a need for the application, * is suspended from using the application, or * is no longer a user at that site. |

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| i. Site Security Manager (SSM) (continued) | Since it is not possible to delete users from the DMDC database, removing their application access is vital to mitigating the risks of inappropriate access to privacy-sensitive information.  The [*Security Online Web Application User Manual*](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/27/web_communications/web/ebenefits/training/Docs/enclosure%201_security%20online%20web%20app%20-%20user%20manual%201%205b.doc) describes how to remove a user’s application access and provides additional information about the SSM’s role and responsibilities.  SSMs will:   * use the DMDC Security Online Web Application to maintain their contact information and their site’s mailing address, telephone numbers, and web site URL. Accurate information ensures that new users receive their user IDs and passwords. * complete and archive [DD Form 2875, System Authorization Access Request (SAAR)](http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2875.pdf), for users requiring access to DoD’s systems and information. Do not send *SAAR* forms to DMDC. DoD requires the SSM retain these forms at the site of origin. |

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| j. Super User (Subject Matter Expert) | The Veterans Service Center Manager (VSCM) will designate an employee of the Public Contact Team, grade GS-10 or higher, to serve as Super User. The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Officer may also make a similar designation within the VR&E Division of the regional office. The employee:   * must have a current background investigation of at least a NACI or higher; * provides assistance in the use of the DoD Self-Service Access Station; * conducts training to new users following initial implementation and ensures training is properly documented and credited; * informs the SSM of any changes regarding User access (e.g., User transfers to a different team, or a new user requires access); and * notifies the SSM of any application issues that cannot be resolved.   If a Super User has questions that the SSM is unable to resolve, he/she may contact the Agency POC through the eBenefits mailbox at [VAVBAWAS/CO/BAS/eBenefits](mailto:EBENEFITS.VBACO@va.gov). |

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| k. DoD Self-Service Access Station Users | Public Contact Representatives (PCRs) at VBA’s National Call Centers and Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) on the Regional Office Public Contact Teams have primary responsibility to conduct IPP and use the [DoD Self-Service Access Station](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dsaccessstation/consent?continueToUrl=%2Fappj%2Fdsaccessstation%2F) to grant eBenefits access to Veterans and other beneficiaries. As noted above, this responsibility may also be given to designated VR&E employees.  Users requiring access to the DoD Self-Service Access Station will need to complete DD Form 2875, *SAAR*, and submit it to their designated SSM.  Users must have a current background investigation of at least a NACI or higher to access the application. The VSCM will ensure that all Public Contact employees that conduct in-person interviews, whether permanent or temporary, have access to the DoD Self-Service Access Station and are fully trained in its uses provided they meet all security requirements. The VR&E Officer will ensure that all VR&E designated users meet the same requirements. |

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| l. Modern Award Processing (MAP-D) Compliance | VBA is making claim and payment information available to claimants to provide better customer service and reduce the volume of phone calls to our National Call Centers (NCC). The following information will be available online through eBenefits:   * Claim status on open and historical claims, including: * Date of Claim, * Claim Type, * Claim Status, * Power of Attorney, * Regional Office of Jurisdiction, * Current Processing Location (if there is a temporary * Station of Jurisdiction), * Contentions, * Date Closed, and * MAP-D Tracked Item Paragraph Language. |

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| l. Modern Award Processing (MAP-D) Compliance (continued) | * Payment history, including: * Payment Date, * Payment Amount, * Payment Type, * Payment Method Mailing address or DD/EFT (Bank name and Account number), * Returned Payments, and * Payment Returned Date.   To ensure information displayed to Veterans is accurate, it is imperative that field stations follow the guidelines provided in [M21-4, Chapter 2, Appendix B, (VETSNET Business Rules)](http://www.benefits.va.gov/WARMS/docs/admin21/m21_4/ch02.doc), especially when working in MAP-D and Share. All personnel involved in claims processing must be familiar with the VETSNET business rules, understand the requirements, and be able to implement them.  MAP-D tracked-item paragraph language will be made available to Veterans via the eBenefits website in real time. If a MAP-D paragraph contains fill-ins and drop-ins, the data needs to be completed via the pop-up in MAP-D.  As an organization, if we do not use the VETSNET suite of applications in the manner they were intended, we will be providing less than optimal service to our Veterans, service members and their families.  In addition, by not using the VETSNET suite of applications, we will not experience the benefits of reduced call rates for status inquiries. |

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| m. Training for eBenefits | Super Users will be responsible for conducting future user training. All training materials, to include the *In-Person-Proofing User Guide*, will be available at the [eBenefits Training - Benefits Assistance Service](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/27/security_accounts.htm) web site.  For information on the eBenefits web portal, please refer to the [*eBenefits Release Guide*.](http://www.benefits.va.gov/WARMS/docs/20P/Web_Admin_Docs/eBenefits%202.3%20Release%20guide%20for%20the%20field.pdf) |

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| n. Technical Questions on eBenefits | Technical questions regarding the DoD Self-Service Access Station may be directed to DMDC at 1-800-477-8227 or 1-800-538-9522.  **Note:** DMDC *cannot* answer questions about eBenefits. |

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| o. eBenefits-Specific Questions | eBenefits specific questions may be referred to 1-800-983-0937. |