

Appendix B. Recommended Adaptations for Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) Grants

Overview

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1. General Information about SHA Recommended Adaptations

Change Date February 12, 2014, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

a. Description Recommended Adaptations (RAs) are suggested modifications and are not required for grant approval. There are no minimum property requirements (MPRs) for Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grants. RAs were developed over time by SAH experts who have gained an understanding of the residential needs of Veterans eligible for the SHA grant.

b. Statutory Requirement 38 United States Code, Chapter 21, or 38 Code of Federal Regulations 36.4401 through 36.4410, is the governing law that states SHA grants must be made available for adaptations determined to be reasonably necessary by the nature of the Veteran's disability.

c. RAs Based on Disability Type The RAs for SHA cases are based on the following types of disabilities:

- blindness in both eyes with a 20/200 visual acuity or less,
- loss, or loss of use, of both hands,
- certain severe burn injuries and severe respiratory injuries, and
- secondary disabilities.

d. Flexibility and Exercise of Judgment There is a need for flexibility and the exercise of judgment based on the physical capabilities and limitations of each Veteran. Equally important is the need to anticipate the Veteran's future needs. SAH Agents should assist the Veteran in using a modular approach to adapting the housing unit. That is, RAs should be chosen by the Veteran on an as needed, or as desired, basis. SAH Agents can contribute significantly to this process by merging awareness of the Veteran's capabilities and future needs with a thorough understanding of the RAs and the collective experience of SAH personnel.

e. Waiver and Approval There is no waiver process for SHA RAs. It is not a requirement that every RA be incorporated into the design of each room, or area, being adapted. Veterans have freedom of choice and may select individual features.

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1. General Information about SHA Recommended Adaptations, continued

- f. Limitations** The list of RAs is substantial, but not all-inclusive. Therefore, if a Veteran desires an RA not included in Appendix B, a request must be submitted by the Veteran, along with justification for the RA. The Regional Loan Center (RLC) must submit this request along with a recommendation to Central Office (CO) for approval or denial.

Important: Grant funds must not be used to cure deferred maintenance.

2. Recommended Adaptations for Blindness in Both Eyes with a 20/200 Visual Acuity or Less

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- This entire section has been updated.

a. RAs This topic contains information about RAs for blindness in both eyes with a 20/200 visual acuity or less, including:

- special lighting,
 - doors,
 - handrails/grab bars,
 - smoke, fire, and carbon monoxide detectors,
 - security items,
 - room additions,
 - covered porches,
 - hard surface walkways,
 - fencing,
 - electrical service,
 - swimming pools,
 - safety defect corrections, and
 - equipment related to accommodating a service dog assigned to the Veteran.
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b. Special Lighting RAs for lighting include:

- florescent,
 - high intensity,
 - light-emitting diode,
 - lighted outlets and switches,
 - open, or
 - indirect.
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2. Recommended Adaptations for Blindness in Both Eyes with a 20/200 Visual Acuity or Less, continued

c. Sliding Doors

RAs for doors include:

- sliding doors,
- pocket doors,
- keyless entry, or
- sliding kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors.

If it is not possible to adapt existing cabinets with sliding doors, new cabinets with sliding doors are acceptable.

d. Handrails and Grab Bars

RAs include the installation of handrails or grab bars for stability and safety in any area that presents an unsafe condition to the Veteran. Typical locations include the:

- interior walls,
 - walkways/sidewalks,
 - decks/patios,
 - steps,
 - toilets,
 - tubs, and
 - showers.
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e. Detection Systems

Smoke detectors, fire detection systems, and carbon monoxide detectors, preferably with battery back-up, are RAs for adapted housing units.

f. Security Items

The following security items are recommended:

- security systems,
- the replacement of exterior doors with solid core doors,
- deadbolt locks,
- storm shutters,
- an emergency exit (e.g. a level 5-foot x 5-foot platform with a stairway and railings), and
- interior, or exterior to interior, intercom system, excluding home audio systems.

If the Veteran chooses an intercom system with a home audio system, the Veteran must pay the difference in cost.

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2. Recommended Adaptations for Blindness in Both Eyes with a 20/200 Visual Acuity or Less, continued

g. Room Additions Room additions to an existing home are recommended for the purpose of storing sensory aids and/or exercise equipment. If necessary, the addition can be climate controlled and equipped with custom shelving.

h. Covered Porches The following adaptations regarding porches are recommended:

- Awnings over the front and/or rear doors
- Covering or enclosing an existing porch
- Constructing a new covered porch

i. Hard Surface Walkways New hard surface walkways are recommended and should be 48 inches wide. Replacing an existing hard surface walkway, unless the existing walkway presents a safety hazard, is considered to be maintenance and is unacceptable. The installation of new curbs for an existing walkway is acceptable.

j. Fencing The installation of fencing to overcome a hazard or safety concern is recommended (e.g. the installation of a fence at a steep drop or adjacent to a busy street).

k. Additional Electrical Service Additional electrical switches, outlets, and service capacity to accommodate sensory aids and equipment are recommended if there is a deficiency.

l. Swimming Pools Swimming pools that are medically necessary are acceptable. However, grant funds must not be used for spas, hot tubs, saunas, etc.

Important: The installation of spas or variations of swimming pools are acceptable if hydrotherapy is a prescribed treatment for the Veteran, and medically required.

m. Correction of a Safety Defect Corrections to safety defects are recommended (e.g. the replacement of a space heater with a gas forced air furnace system or the replacement of a gas range with an electric range).

n. Service Dog RAs related to accommodating a service dog assigned to the Veteran include, but are not limited to, invisible fencing, pet doors, etc.

3. Recommended Adaptations for Loss, or Loss of Use, of Both Hands

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- This entire section has been updated.

a. RAs The following items are recommended adaptations for loss, or loss of use, of both hands:

- lever-type water faucet fixtures in the kitchen or bathroom;
 - rubber doorknob covers or lever-type latches/locks for doors;
 - relocation of cabinets, countertops, and sinks to a convenient height;
 - toggle or press type light switches;
 - tap plates to open and close interior doors;
 - keyless entry systems for exterior doors;
 - automatic garage door openers;
 - circuit breaker electrical control panel modifications;
 - smoke detectors, fire detectors, and carbon monoxide detection systems;
 - special plumbing fixtures;
 - replacement of single or double hung windows with crank-type windows; and
 - correction of safety defects.
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4. Recommended Adaptations for Burn Injuries and Respiratory-Related Injuries

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- This entire section has been updated.

a. Introduction Veterans with respiratory related injuries, or severe burn injuries that reduce range of motion, may have needs that differ from other SAH eligible Veterans. It is important, especially in cases such as these, that each RLC has a flexible and expeditious approach to approving reasonable adaptations based on the specific needs of each Veteran.

b. RLC-Approved Equipment In addition to the other RAs presented earlier in Appendix B, the following adaptations are deemed reasonably necessary for Veterans with burn injuries or respiratory related injuries:

- a larger bathtub or walk-in tub to minimize the range of motion required to enter/exit;
- enlarged showers to accommodate seating;
- motion/touch sensing faucets and light switches;
- integrated, whole-house climate and lighting controls (smart controls),
- automatic door openers;
- accessible, custom closets and shelving;
- covered or enclosed patios, porches, entryways, retractable awnings, window tinting and/or window coverings to control sun exposure on the interior and exterior;
- conversion of basement areas to finished living areas to provide a comfortable environment free of sun exposure;
- room additions to store exercise equipment and/or other hobby related equipment;
- maintenance free building materials;
- invisible fencing, pet doors, and any other equipment related to accommodating a service dog assigned to the Veteran;
- air filtration and dehumidifying systems; and
- replacement of carpet with hard surface flooring for dust control.

As the types of injuries and treatments continue to change, new and creative adaptations may be deemed reasonably necessary. For adaptations that are not included in this appendix, a request must be submitted by the Veteran, along with justification and a recommendation from the RLC, to CO.

5. Recommended Adaptations for Secondary Disabilities

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• This entire section has been updated.

a. Definition A secondary disability is a disability that does not entitle a Veteran to the SHA grant, whether service-connected or non-service-connected.

b. Adaptations Adaptations to address secondary disabilities are allowed if the condition is documented by a Department of Veterans Affairs physician. For example, ramps for a blind/wheelchair-bound Veteran are allowed when blindness is service-connected, but the wheelchair condition is non-service connected.
