



## INTENT TO FILE

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A new *intent to file* process has been established for Veterans and Survivors who intend to file a claim for VA compensation, pension, or survivors' benefits, but need additional time to gather all of the information and evidence needed to support their claim.

### WHAT IS THE INTENT TO FILE PROCESS?

The *intent to file* process allows you additional time to collect all of the information needed to support your claim while protecting the earliest possible effective date for any award of benefits or increased benefits resulting from your claim. The date VA receives your *intent to file* will be protected as your effective date as long as the correct application form is completed and submitted within 1 year.

### WHAT DOES AN INTENT TO FILE A CLAIM CONTAIN?

Your intent to file must contain: (1) sufficient personal information to identify the Veteran and claimant (if not the Veteran); (2) an election of the general benefit(s) you are seeking (i.e., compensation, pension, or survivors benefits); and (3) you or your representative's signature.

### HOW DO VETERANS OR SURVIVORS NOTIFY VA OF THEIR INTENT TO FILE

There are three ways you can notify VA of your intent to file a claim.

1. **Electronically** via eBenefits or with the support of a VSO through the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal.
  - a. When submitting through eBenefits, you must initiate a claim, complete the personal information page, and hit "save", which then establishes your effective date while allowing you up to 1 year to complete your application.
2. **Completing and mailing paper [VA Form 21-0966](#), *Intent to File a Claim for Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC*.**
3. **Over the phone or in person.** Claimants can call VA's National Call Centers (800-827-1000), or tell a public contact representative in person at one of VA's regional office.



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You may also appoint a recognized representative, such as a Veterans Service Organization (VSO), who can notify VA on your behalf using one of the above three methods.

### **INTENT TO FILE PRESERVES THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF A POTENTIAL CLAIM**

Once VA is notified of your *intent to file*, you have up to 1 year from the date VA receives your *intent to file* to submit a formal claim for benefits and any supporting documentation.

The *intent to file* process also allows VA to award benefits retroactive to the date of your medical diagnosis or treatment as long as the *intent to file* is filed within 1 year of the diagnosis/treatment and the required claim form is filed within 1 year of the *intent to file*.

### **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT INTENT TO FILE**

- VA will only recognize one *intent to file* per general benefit at any given time.
- Your completed claim must be received within 1 year of the date VA receives your *intent to file* for the same general benefit in order for VA to consider your *intent to file* when assigning an effective date.
- Once you have submitted a completed claim, your *intent to file* for that general benefit will no longer be active. If you intend to file another claim, but require time to complete your claim, you must submit a new *intent to file* for the general benefit you are seeking.

For example: VA receives an *intent to file* for compensation benefits on April 1, 2015, an application for compensation benefits (i.e., [VA Form 526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits](#)) on August 1, 2015, and another application for compensation benefits on January 1, 2016. In this case, VA will consider an effective date of April 1, 2015, the date VA received the *intent to file*, for any benefits awarded as a result of the August 1, 2015 application. However, the April 1, 2015 *intent to file* date will not be used for any benefits awarded as a result of the January 1, 2016 application.

Consider the same circumstances as above, but a second *intent to file* for compensation benefits is received on October 1, 2015. In this case, VA will consider an effective date of April 1, 2015, the date we received the *intent to file*, for any benefits awarded as a result of the August 1, 2015 application. VA will also consider an effective of October 1, 2015 for any benefits awarded as a result of the January 1, 2016 application.

For More Information, Call Toll-Free 1-800-827-1000 or Visit <http://explore.va.gov/intent-to-file>

