

Helpful Tips for Electronic Fully Developed Claims

DESCRIPTION *This article can be inserted into a newsletter (print or electronic) that directly targets Veterans. The article provides the top 10 tips for filing an electronic Fully Developed Claim and can be customized to include your organization by inputting your information into the highlighted fields.*

Getting the fastest decision possible on your VA compensation claim is a top priority for VA and **[Insert VSO Organization Name Here]**. As VA moves to a digital claims environment, the best way to file a disability compensation claim is online as an eClaim, not by paper. Veterans can now file an electronic Fully Developed Claim (FDC) through eBenefits to get a faster claim decision. In the same way that students submit a college application or you apply for a job online, you simply provide all relevant and required documentation at the same time you submit your compensation claim and certify that you have no added information to share. This allows VA to review all of your information at once and make a faster decision on your claim. Claims can be excluded or removed from the FDC Program for various reasons including insufficient evidence, failure to attend a VA medical appointment, and additional evidence received after submission. If a claim is removed from the FDC Program, it will be processed through the standard claims route.

To keep your claim on the VA fast path, here are TEN HELPFUL TIPS FOR ELECTRONIC FULLY DEVELOPED CLAIMS:

- 1. File Your Disability Compensation Claim Electronically through eBenefits.** The paperless, electronic claims submission process on eBenefits allows you to fill out your application, upload all required documentation, and submit your claim with ease.
- 2. Submit Your Application and Documentation Within One Year of Starting Your Claim.** You have the option of starting your claim to preserve your start date, from which benefits may be paid if your claim is awarded. You must submit all required documents within one year of the claim start date.
- 3. Gather and Submit ALL Documentation Simultaneously with Your Claim Application.** A claim can only be considered “Fully Developed” and eligible for faster processing if all required and relevant documentation is provided at the same time you submit your claim.
- 4. Read through all Application Forms Carefully.** Make sure you read through all of the instructions, and pay close attention to any special circumstances that apply to you.
- 5. Partner with a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) to File Your Claim.** Accredited VSOs, such as **[Insert VSO Organization Name Here]**, can serve as your Power of Attorney (POA), collecting important documentation on your behalf and ensuring your claim is complete.



6. Provide Specific Information on Your Application Forms. Make sure you provide detailed information about your claimed disabilities and federal records that VA can obtain on your behalf.

7. Do NOT Submit VA Form 21-4142, Authorization and Consent to Release Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs. In the traditional claims process, VA Form 21-4142 is used to give VA permission to gather records on your behalf. In the FDC Program, you must personally submit all required documentation in your possession, such as private medical records, and provide information on federal records you would like VA to gather for you.

8. If You're a Member of the National Guard or Reserve, YOU Must Submit Your Service Treatment Records. National Guard and Reserve members must provide any and all Service Treatment and Personnel Records in the custody of their Unit(s) simultaneously with their claim.

9. Submit a Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) to Support Your Claim. DBQ's provide additional medical information to help determine a disability rating and can be downloaded from the VA website and filled out by a VA clinician or a private physician with an active medical license.

10. Attend Scheduled VA Medical Examinations. If a VA Medical Exam is required for your claim, you must attend this appointment to keep your claim in the FDC Program.

File an eClaim today, and keep these helpful tips in mind to get the benefits you deserve, faster.