

TDVS Benefits Bulletin
19-3

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TDVS Updates

Elimination of Dependent Interment Fees at State Veterans Cemeteries

There is no fee for the interment of an eligible veteran, spouse or dependent child at all Tennessee State Veterans Cemeteries. On June 3, 2019, Governor Lee signed House Bill 1187/Senate Bill 0844, which eliminated the dependent burial fee for the interment of the eligible veteran's most recent spouse. The Department of Veterans Services has eliminated all dependent burial fees.

Contact information for each of the State Veterans Cemeteries along with the convenient on-line pre-registration process can be found at TDVS's [web site](#).

VA and Veteran Benefit Updates

Annual Cost-of-Living-Adjustment

Veterans will see an annual cost-of-living adjustment of 1.6% in 2020. The cost-of-living adjustment is decided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index and was recently announced as 1.6% for 2020. This increase matches the one for military retirees and social security recipients.

Quality Review Insights

Supplemental Claims and the Requirement for New and Relevant Evidence

Supplemental claims (VA Form 20-0995) must include new and relevant evidence for VA to readjudicate a claim. New and relevant evidence is evidence that was not previously submitted to the VA that tends to prove or disprove a veteran's claim. When reviewing a supplemental claim, the VA first determines whether the evidence submitted or identified is new and relevant and if so, adjudicates the veteran's claim. New and relevant evidence can take many forms, including new laws or precedential court decisions.

PRACTICE TIP...For example, in the case of a Blue Water Veteran who previously filed a disability claim for a disease VA now recognizes as associated with Agent Orange and the VA finally denied that claim, the VRC or CSO should file a supplemental claim for disability compensation for that disease using VA Form 20-0995. On that form, you should check the box for “compensation” in block 12 and write the following language in box 13A: “I am entitled to disability benefits for [*put in name of your Agent Orange related disease*] under the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 and Procopio.” In block 13B of that form, you should write the date of the VA decision that denied you benefits for that disease.

Practice Like a Pro

VetraSpec Tip

Often a veteran’s date of birth will not be entered into the veteran’s profile in VeteraSpec. When assisting a veteran, verify that the date of birth is populated in the veteran’s profile. This will ensure that veterans’ power of attorney, intent to file, or disability compensation claim is eligible for Digits to Digits filing, which is the quickest method of filing forms or documents with VA.

Claim Number Tip

Years ago, VBA had provided veterans with an eight-digit file number. After 1960ish, VBA started using the veterans nine-digit social security number. Advocates submitting claims for veterans that already have an eight-digit file number and use the veteran’s social security number as a file number generates a second file in VBMS. This raises all kinds of problems including delay of needed veterans’ benefits. Using SHARE, VBMS or the VSO Hotline, advocates should verify whether these aging veterans have a file number when establishing a new profile in VeteraSpec.