

VA DISABILITY CLAIM CHECKLIST

VA Disability Claim Checklist
Everything You Need Before You File

A plain-English checklist to help Veterans file stronger VA disability claims the first time.

How to Use This Checklist

Filing a VA disability claim can feel overwhelming. This checklist walks you through the documents, evidence, and prep steps that help reduce delays, denials, and unnecessary appeals.

You do **not** need everything listed to file, but the more boxes you can check, the stronger your claim usually is.

Basic Claim Information

- Full legal name (as shown on DD-214)
- Social Security Number
- VA File Number (if you have one)
- Current mailing address
- Phone number and email
- Direct deposit banking information

Service Records

- DD-214 (or equivalent separation document)
- Service treatment records (STRs), if available
- Line of duty reports (if applicable)
- Deployment or duty location records
- MOS / job specialty documentation

If you do not have these records, VA may still be able to obtain them.

*Check out [nationalarchives.com](https://www.nationalarchives.com) to obtain a copy of DD214, deck logs, and many other records that may help your case.

Medical Evidence

- Current diagnosis for each claimed condition
- VA medical records
- Private medical records
- Hospital or specialist reports
- Mental health treatment notes (if applicable)
- Medication lists

Medical evidence should show:

- a current condition
- symptoms
- ongoing impact on daily life

Nexus & Connection Evidence

- Nexus letter (if available)
- Medical opinion linking condition to service
- Evidence showing “at least as likely as not” connection
- Medical literature (optional but helpful)

Not all claims require a nexus letter, but many denials come from missing this link.

Statements & Lay Evidence

- Personal statement describing symptoms and impact
- Statements from spouse, family, or coworkers
- Buddy statements from fellow service members
- Timeline of when symptoms started

Lay statements help explain what medical records don't show.

Before You Submit

- Conditions clearly listed
- Evidence labeled and organized
- Intent to File submitted (if needed)
- Copies saved for your records

You can file online, by mail, or with assistance.

This checklist is educational only and does not replace legal or accredited representation.