

The PACT Act and your VA benefits

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve.

This page will help answer your questions about what the PACT Act means for you or your loved ones. You can also call us at [800-698-2411](tel:800-698-2411) (TTY: 711). And you can file a claim for PACT Act-related disability compensation or apply for VA health care now.

- [File a disability claim online](#)
- [Apply for VA health care](#)

[Back to top](#)

[On this page](#)

[What’s the PACT Act and how will it affect my VA benefits and care?](#)[What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure?](#)[Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veteran eligibility](#)[Vietnam era Veteran eligibility](#)[Getting benefits](#)[Information for survivors](#)

[Back to top](#)

What’s the PACT Act and how will it affect my VA benefits and care?

The PACT Act is perhaps the largest health care and benefit expansion in VA history. The full name of the law is The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

The PACT Act will bring these changes:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- Adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- Helps us improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

If you’re a Veteran or survivor, you can file claims now to apply for PACT Act-related benefits.

[Back to top](#)

What does it mean to have a presumptive condition for toxic exposure?

To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition.

But for some conditions, we automatically assume (or “presume”) that your service caused your condition. We call these “presumptive conditions.”

We consider a condition presumptive when it's established by law or regulation.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

[Back to top](#)

Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veteran eligibility

[Collapse all](#) -

What burn pit and other toxic exposure conditions are now presumptive?

We've added more than 20 burn pit and other toxic exposure presumptive conditions based on the PACT Act. This change expands benefits for Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veterans.

These cancers are now presumptive:

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Head cancer of any type
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphatic cancer of any type
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type

These illnesses are now presumptive:

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis
- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis

- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease (ILD)
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis

How do I know if I have a presumptive exposure to burn pits?

If you served in any of these locations and time periods, we've determined that you had exposure to burn pits or other toxins. We call this having a presumption of exposure.

On or after September 11, 2001, in any of these locations:

- Afghanistan
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria
- Uzbekistan
- Yemen
- The airspace above any of these locations

On or after August 2, 1990, in any of these locations:

- Bahrain
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- The United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- The airspace above any of these locations

Am I eligible for free VA health care as a post-9/11 combat Veteran?

We're extending and expanding VA health care eligibility based on the PACT Act. **We encourage you to apply, no matter your separation date.** Your eligibility depends on your service history and other factors.

If you meet the requirements listed here, you can get free VA health care for any condition related to your service for up to 10 years from the date of your most recent discharge or separation. You can also enroll at any time during this period and get any care you need, but you may owe a copay for some care.

At least one of these must be true of your active-duty service:

- You served in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, **or**
- You served in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998

And this must be true for you:

- You were discharged or released on or after October 1, 2013

We encourage you to enroll now so we can provide any care you may need now or in the future. Enrollment is free.

What if I was discharged or released before October 1, 2013?

If you meet the requirements listed here, you can receive care and enroll during a special enrollment period between **October 1, 2022**, and **October 1, 2023**.

At least one of these must be true of your active-duty service:

- You served in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War, **or**
- You served in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998

And both of these must be true for you:

- You were discharged or released between September 11, 2001, and October 1, 2013, **and**
- You haven't enrolled in VA health care before

We encourage you to apply during this 1-year period so we can provide you with any care you may need now or in the future. Enrollment is free. And your care may be free as well.

[Back to top](#)