

In response to "Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits (VA Form 21-526EZ), OMB Control Number: 2900-0747

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

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**21-526EZ form questions/suggestions.**

**Instructions on the form:** Do I agree what the form should be used for and why.

- *Disability Service Connection:* Agree
- *Compensation Claims Submitted Prior to Discharge:* Agree
- *Compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1151:* Disagree because there is not anywhere on this form that you have a disability caused or aggravated by VA medical treatment, vocational rehabilitation, or compensated work therapy or that the claim is an 1151. Should this be a separate form? Especially if the veteran had a disability prior to the 1151 claim.
- *Automobile Allowance/Adaptive Equipment:* Disagree because if this is needed, it should be applied for on VA Form 21-4502 or 10-1394, not this form.
- *Secondary Service Compensation:* Agree with someplace to note it is secondary.
- *Temporary Total Disability Rating:* Disagree because there is no place on this form to note requesting temporary rating, how long the temporary rating will/should be, when being hospitalized, etc.
- *Special Monthly Compensation:* Disagree because there is no place on this form to note your service connected disability (ies) causes you to be in need of aid and attendance or to be confined to your residence. It is currently an assumption made by the adjudicator. A Severely Disabled Spouse? Nowhere on this form does it ask about dependents.
- *Benefits Based on a Veteran's Seriously Disabled Child:* Disagree because there is no place on this form that talks about dependents, disabled or not.

- *Increased Disability Compensation:* Disagree because there is no place on this form to note requesting increase or to show how the disability has worsened in this compensation form.
- *Individual Unemployability:* Disagree because there is no place on this form that it is requested that this be a consideration. Nowhere to note that the disability is preventing veteran from getting or keeping substantial employment. Use form 21-8940 for this.
- *Specially Adapted Housing/Special Home Adaptation:* Disagree because there is no place on this form to note that special consideration needs to be made. Use form 26-4555 for this. Especially Adapting and/or purchasing a residence.

*Want your claim processed faster?* Remove the instructions on pension benefits. Has no bearing on the disability compensation claim.

### *Special Circumstances*

*IU:* VA Form 21-8940. If this form is being filled out to get IU, why is the 526EZ needed? Only needed if submitting with original disability claim.

*PTSD:* There is no way that I would assist a person with PTSD to fill out VA Form 21-0781 or 21-0781a. I do not want to bring up any type of reaction in my office. I am not a trained mental health provider.

*Specially adapted housing:* As stated earlier, this is a separate application, why do we need both forms? Only needed if submitting with original disability claim.

*Auto Allowance:* As stated earlier, this is a separate application, why do we need both forms? Only needed if submitting with original disability claim.

*Aid and Attendance form:* This would be submitted when requesting the special monthly compensation. It is a separate form. Only needed if submitting with original disability claim.

*Where to send the form:* NYS VSO's are not allowed to send the forms directly to WI. They must be sent to the regional office for processing. This takes additional time to get the claim in the hands of an adjudicator. I would estimate at least 3 weeks longer. Why can they not be sent electronically, instead of paper form, to an address/system?

When *reopening a claim* previously denied, why fill out a whole new form? Just send in a Statement in support of claim with the new and material evidence. Reduce paperwork.

**IMPORTANT:** veterans non service connected pension benefits.... Remove. That is not what this form is for. If you are going to mention this benefit, then all benefits should be listed.

## **Actual Claim Form 21-526EZ:**

*Question 13.* Remove. What difference does it make if the claimant is a VA employee?

*Section II:* Remove. If it is a change of address, send in the change of address form VA Form 20-572.

*Veteran's Social Security Number.* Have it prefill at the top of each page.

*Section III: Homeless Information:* If the veteran is homeless or at risk, he will be filling out other paperwork with or alongside this paperwork. Not necessary for a disability claim.

If this section is kept on the form, remove the "Important" instructions. If this form is sent in without the NO boxes checked, it is returned to be completed. Does not follow the "Important" instructions.

*Under all dates:* allow entry of text. Ex: present

*Question #17.* Only asks for VAMC or DOD MTF's. Where are the private doctors supposed to go?

*Page 10:* Where it lists the required forms. For PTSD, why are both the 21-0781 AND the 21-0781a required?

*Section V: Service Information:* Redundancy.

19B Component also	21B
20A Dates also	21C
20B Last separated also	21D

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### *Submissions*

Veterans are prompted to see their local Veteran Service Representative/Officer (VSO) to help with filing claims. In e-benefits there is a place to choose what organization.

*Electronic Submission:* NYS County service officers are still being required to send in paper claims to the regional office. Electronic submission of documentation is needed to catch up with the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Can the VSO's submit a claim through the VBMS system? Or can the system be set up to notify VBA that a new claim has been uploaded by a VSO? Need to be able to submit claims electronically.

There has to be an easier way than sending 3-5 copies of all documents by snail mail.

If the VSO's organization is chosen in e-benefits, the VSO is not notified nor can they see documents on e-benefits. If the veteran chooses an organization, that organization should be able to see their information in VBMS. Can they?