



Veterans Affairs
Canada

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VETERANS
AFFAIRS

AT YOUR
SERVICE

Canada

www.vac-acc.gc.ca

Cat. No.: V32-64/1998
ISBN: 0-662-61500-x

Revised March 2005

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the Minister of Veterans Affairs, 1998.

Printed in Canada



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Introduction

This *At Your Service* brochure provides information on what you can expect when served by Veterans Affairs. It complements our *Services and Benefits* brochure.

Veterans Affairs includes Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB). VRAB operates independently from VAC. Information on what you can expect when served by VRAB is available on page 13 of this brochure.

Our Commitment to You

We are committed to providing you with the best possible service to meet your needs.

We will:

- deliver services to you in the official language of your choice, using easy-to-understand language;
- provide you with accurate information about our benefits and services;



- be consistent in the quality and level of services and benefits provided to you;
- treat you with courtesy, equity, fairness, respect and sensitivity;
- respect your privacy and make sure your personal information remains protected;
- make sure you are included in the decision-making process on matters affecting your health and well-being; and
- acknowledge the important role that your family and community have in your well-being.

Our Hours of Service

Our hours of service are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each business day. You can call us at the following toll-free numbers:

VAC (benefits and services)

1-866-522-2122

1-866-522-2022 (for service in French)



Bureau of Pensions Advocates

1-877-228-2250

Canada Remembers

1-877-604-8489

VRAB

1-800-450-8006

You may also call these numbers if you want to set up an appointment to visit one of our offices.

How You Can Help Us to Serve You Better

- Please have your VAC client number or service number ready when you call us.
- Tell us about any special needs you may have.
- Let us know, in writing, if another person will be helping you when you deal with us. Let us know if you want us to communicate directly with this person on your behalf.
- We will do our best to serve you as quickly as possible, but if we need more information it may take longer to answer your question or process your application.



- If we need more information from you, send it to us as quickly as possible. It is best if you can do this within 13 weeks of the date of your application.
- Let us know if your home address, phone number, or e-mail address changes.
- Let us know if your health, marital, or financial situation changes.
- Let us know what you think about our service.

Veterans Affairs Canada

When You Contact Us

You can reach us by telephone, regular mail, e-mail, or in person.

By telephone

When you call our toll-free number (1-866-522-2122), we will be able to:



- answer your general or routine questions, or refer you to the right person. If we need to do further research on your question, we will call you within one week to give you an answer or let you know how long it will take us to fully answer your question;
- update your personal information;
- check the status of your application or cheque;
- set up an appointment for you to visit one of our offices; or
- take your information on what you think about our service.

Monday and Tuesday are our busiest days, so it may take longer to reach us. We appreciate your patience. If you have access to the Internet, you may visit our Web site at www.vac-acc.gc.ca for information.

By regular mail

When you write to us with a question or a request, we will write back to you within three weeks of the date we received your letter. This letter will be in large print and in easy-to-read language, with as



few technical terms as possible. In this letter, we will either answer your question or request or, if we need more information, we will let you know how long it will take us to fully answer your question or request.

By e-mail

When you send us an e-mail (information@vac-acc.gc.ca) with a question or request, we will:

- send you an e-mail by the end of the following business day to let you know that we received your message; and
- fully answer your e-mail, or let you know that we need more information, within three weeks of the date we received your e-mail. This will be done by regular mail so that your privacy is respected.

In person

When you arrive at one of our offices for a scheduled appointment, you will be seen by a member of our staff within 15 minutes of the time of your appointment.

If you live outside of Canada

If you live outside of Canada, you may call us at the following numbers:



Toll-free from the United States or while visiting in Canada

1-888-996-2242

Toll-free from the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Belgium

00-800-996-22421

Collect from all other countries

(613) 996-2242

For more information, you may also visit our Web site at www.vac-acc.gc.ca.

When You Apply for a Benefit or Service

Disability Pension

- If this is the first time you are applying for a disability pension for a new condition, we will send you our decision within 24 weeks of the date we received your application.
- If you have a pensioned condition that you think has gotten worse and you ask for a re-assessment, we will send you our decision within 15 weeks of the date we received your request.



- If you have new or additional information and ask for a Departmental Review of a previous pension decision, we will send you our decision within eight weeks of the date we received your application.
- If you submit a claim for Attendance Allowance, Clothing Allowance or Exceptional Incapacity Allowance, we will send you our decision within six weeks of the date we received your claim.

Income Support

- If you apply for War Veterans Allowance, we will send you our decision within 30 days of the date we received your application.
- If you are not satisfied with this decision and you ask us to review it, we will send you our decision within five weeks of the date we received your request for a review.
- If you are a War Veterans Allowance client and need financial help from the Assistance Fund, we will send you our decision within one week of the date we received your application.



Understanding Your Rights

- If you are not satisfied with VAC's pension disability decision, you may contact the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (the Bureau) at 1-877-228-2250 for free legal advice and representation. The Bureau may suggest a Departmental Review or they may suggest a review or appeal before the VRAB.
- When you call the Bureau's toll-free line, a Legal Assistant will answer your call. If you leave a message, your call will be returned by the end of the following business day.
- When you want to make an appointment with a Bureau lawyer, you will be given, within two business days of your request, a time and date for an appointment that is convenient for both you and your lawyer.
- If you and your lawyer decide to go forward with a review or appeal of a decision made by VAC or VRAB, your case may be delayed while the Bureau waits for more medical information or other supporting evidence.



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- Once all documentation has been received by the Bureau, you may expect that:
 - a submission for a Departmental Review will be sent to VAC within two weeks.
 - if you and your lawyer decide to take your case to a Review Hearing before VRAB, the hearing will be held within eight weeks of the date of your application.
 - if you and your lawyer are not satisfied with the Review Hearing decision, and you decide to take your case to a VRAB Appeal Hearing, the hearing will be held within six weeks of the date of your application for an Appeal Hearing.



Health Care Benefits and Services

- If you qualify for a disability pension or War Veterans Allowance, we will mail you a VAC Health Care Identification Card within six weeks of the date you qualified. Along with the card, we will send you a booklet called *A Guide to Access Health Care Benefits and the Veterans Independence Program*. If you have any questions about your card or our benefits and services, you should call our toll-free number at 1-866-522-2122.
- If you need other VAC health benefits or services that are not covered by your VAC Health Care Identification Card, you must apply for these benefits and services. You should call our toll-free number to discuss your needs.
- If you apply for a health care service provided under the Veterans Independence Program, a member of our VAC District Office staff will call you to discuss your situation within three weeks of the date we received your application.
- To help us decide if you qualify for certain health care benefits, we may need to ask you some questions about your family income. This is called an income assessment. We will send you our decision within eight weeks of the date that your income assessment was completed.



- We will follow up with you at least once a year to learn if there are any other needs that Veterans Affairs may be able to help you with.
- If you are not satisfied with a health care claim decision and you ask us to review it, we will send you our decision within 12 weeks of the date you asked us to review your claim.

Honours and Awards

- VAC provides first issue or replacement medals, free of charge, to qualified veterans or their spouses within nine weeks of the date we received an application. The number of replacements is limited to four per veteran.
- If the veteran has passed away, the immediate next-of-kin may qualify to receive the first issue at no charge, or replacements at cost, within 15 weeks of the date we received an application.



Veterans Review and Appeal Board

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal. VRAB adjudicates on the review and appeal aspects of disability pensions and hears cases at the final level of appeal for War Veterans Allowance claims.

When your case is presented to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, you will be sent a written decision within 30 days of your hearing date. If, for any reason, your decision is not issued within this time frame, VRAB will write to you within 60 days of your hearing date to let you know the status of your case.

You may contact the Veterans Review and Appeal Board

By telephone

1-800-450-8006 (toll-free)

1-902-566-8835 (collect, if you live outside Canada)

By e-mail

vrab_tacra@vac-acc.gc.ca



By facsimile

1-902-566-6806

By mail

Veterans Review and Appeal Board

Daniel J. MacDonald Building

161 Grafton Street

P.O. Box 9900

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

C1A 8V7

For more information, you may also visit our Web site at www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca.



Accountability to our Clients

Everyone, both clients and Veterans Affairs' employees, has a role to play in making sure that services and benefits are delivered in the best and most timely way possible.

Our promise to you:

- VAC and VRAB will conduct regular Client Satisfaction Surveys to help measure how satisfied clients are with our service.
- We will also measure and track our service performance over time and we will post our findings every year on the VAC and VRAB Web sites.
- If you are not satisfied with the service you receive from VAC, you can call 1-866-522-2212 or send an e-mail to info@vac-acc.gc.ca.
- If you are not satisfied with the service you receive from VRAB, you can call 1-800-450-8006 or send an e-mail to vrab_tacra@vac-acc.gc.ca.



- From time to time, we will review this brochure to make sure that it is as up to date as possible. If you have any comments or suggestions about this brochure, you may contact us:

By e-mail:

plan@vac-acc.gc.ca

By facsimile:

1-902-368-0437

By mail:

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