

What About the Veteran Who Lost an Arm or a Leg?

"I don't want to take money from them."

1. Every veteran (including reserve/national guard with a "line of duty determination) with an injury or condition should apply.
2. Generally, the military branch of service handles these amputee claims when the service-member is in recovery.
3. These severely disabled veterans are compensated in numerous ways.
 - Usually, they are promoted to the next paygrade and retired with a military retirement.
 - They receive vocational rehabilitation and 100% free medical care, including prosthetics, adaptive devices, and wheelchairs.
 - They often receive service connected disability compensation at a high rate under a provision called "loss of use."
 - This typically amounts to over \$100K dollars in healthcare and compensation.
4. Filing your own claim helps these veterans by increasing participation and making the program stronger.

With your assistance, the VSO will complete the necessary paperwork needed to file with the VA. We can be contacted at 610-278-3285.



Contact Us

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Norristown, PA 19404-0311
610-278-3285
Fax: 610-278-5935
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1-855-634-HOPE (4673)



Montgomery County
Department of
Health and Human Services

Office of Veteran Affairs



**Service Connection Disability:
What it Means, What it
Doesn't and How it Applies to
You and Yours**



What is Service Connection?

Service Connection is the term used by the Federal Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Benefits Administration, per Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations Section 3.1(k):

“Service-connected means, with respect to disability or death, that such disability was incurred or aggravated, or that the death resulted from a disability incurred or aggravated, in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.”

What Does It Mean?

Multiple veterans benefits are tied to the notion of service connection.

- *For the living*, injuries (physical and mental) that originated in service and still bother a veteran today can be claimed for medical care, compensation, and other programs such as vocational rehab.
- *For departed veterans*, service connection is tied to funeral benefits and compensation for surviving spouses and some dependents. There is a separate pamphlet titled: “Service-Connection, what it means after a veteran passes” which outlines this in detail.



What can be Claimed?

The wounded combat veteran, the veteran who injured a shoulder playing rugby during active service, the reservist or national guardsman injured on drill with a “line of duty” determination, may qualify for service connection.



How is Service Connection Determined?

There are five ways to establish service connection:

- Direct service connection:* veteran suffers from a disability that occurred in service. This is the majority of claims.
- Service connection through aggravation:* veteran suffers from a disability that occurred before service but was aggravated by service.
- Presumptive service connection:* veteran suffers from a disability published by the VA.
- Secondary service connection:* veteran suffers from disability caused by an existing service connection.
- Service connection based on VA medical care:* veteran injured during VA hospitalization, medical or surgical treatment, examination, vocational rehabilitation, or compensated work therapy.



Claims Involve Several Steps

Establish Representation and Intent to File

You will need to enter into a limited power of attorney agreement with your Veteran Service Officer (VSO) using VA Form 21-22 as well as declare to the VA your intent to file on VA Form 21-0966.

Determine Items to Claim

An in-depth interview with your VSO and a review of available military service treatment records of other medical records is required.

Develop and File the Claim

The VSO will have you visit your doctor to fill out a Disability Benefit Questionnaire. The VSO will fill out the necessary paperwork to file the claim. Later, the VA will likely have you assessed by their doctors.

Wait

Claims can take several months to a year.

Like all accredited Veteran Service Organizations, there is **no charge** for these services.



Is there an Income Limit?

No, unlike other VA programs, the size of the compensation is based on the level of disability suffered by the veteran (generally described by the VA as the “average impairment in earning capacity”), not on need, income, or any other factor.