Michigan State Tax Commission

Disabled Veterans Exemption

Frequently Asked Questions

November 14, 2023

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Eligibility Requirements

MCL 211.7b(1)(a) provides an exemption from property taxes under the General Property Tax Act for real property owned and used as a homestead by a disabled veteran who served in the United States Armed Forces, including the reserve components, and was discharged or released under honorable conditions. "Disabled veteran" is defined as a veteran who is a resident of this state and who meets 1 of the following criteria:

(i) Has been determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to be permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service and entitled to veterans' benefits at the 100% rate.
(ii) Has a certificate from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs certifying that the veteran is receiving or has received pecuniary assistance due to disability for specially adapted housing.
(iii) Has been rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as individually unemployable.

MCL 211.7b(1)(b) allows an unremarried surviving spouse of a qualifying disabled veteran to retain and claim the exemption:

> A surviving spouse of a disabled veteran who, immediately before death, was eligible for the exemption under this section. An exemption under this subdivision continues as long as the surviving spouse does not remarry, and the exemption applies to any property used and owned as a homestead by the surviving spouse, including homestead property acquired after the decedent's death.

The disabled veteran must have documentation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs which indicates the actual award of benefits under the program to qualify for the exemption. Award letters are generally released each November or December. The local unit should ask for the most recent award letter. The local unit should accept the most recent letter that the unremarried surviving spouse can provide. A letter from the County Department of Veterans Affairs indicating they have reviewed their records and the veteran meets the qualification is insufficient.

All three disability ratings from the Department of Veterans Affairs require that the veteran's disability have been service-connected. The determinations which qualify for exemption under MCL 211.7b are not the same as other veteran's programs which provide benefits based on a disability which is not service connected. A service-connected disability is a disability related to an injury or disease that developed during or was aggravated while on active duty or active duty for training.

What does “discharged or released under honorable conditions” mean?

“Honorable conditions” means either an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions. Other than honorable conditions (OTH) discharge or dishonorable discharge does not qualify.

How is a determination made that the disabled veteran is permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service and entitled to veterans’ benefits at the 100% rate?

The Department of Veterans Affairs Schedule for Rating Disabilities is used to assess the medical conditions and illnesses incurred or aggravated during the veteran's military service and a percentage rating from 0% to 100% is assigned based on the severity of the disability. Individuals filing the affidavit for the exemption under criteria a) must provide a copy of the letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs indicating they have a 100% service-connected disability and are entitled to receive benefits. MCL 211.7b does not require the disabled veteran to have already received the benefit, it only requires that he or she has been determined to be permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service and entitled to veterans’ benefits at the 100% rate.

What is pecuniary assistance for specially adapted housing?

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides veterans having certain specified permanent and total service-connected disabilities with financial assistance to purchase or construct an adapted home or modify an existing home to accommodate a disability. There are two grant programs: specially adapted housing grant (SAH) and the special housing adaptation grant (SHA). The State Tax Commission has determined that receipt of either grant would qualify an individual for the exemption under criteria b). Individuals filing the affidavit for the exemption under criteria b) must provide a copy of the certificate from the Department of Veterans Affairs indicating they are receiving or have received pecuniary assistance due to disability for specially adapted housing.

What does “individually unemployable” mean?

Individual unemployability is part of the Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation program. Under this program, veterans may receive compensation at the 100% rate even though their service-connected disability is not rated at 100%. The Department of Veterans Affairs determines eligibility and in order to be eligible, a veteran must prove they are unable to maintain substantially gainful employment as a result of their service-connected disability. In addition, the veteran must have one service-connected disability rated at 60% or more or two or more service-connected disabilities with at least one rated at 40% or more with a combined rating of 70% or more. Individuals filing the affidavit for the exemption under criteria c) must provide a copy of the letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs indicating they are individually unemployable. The assessor and Board of Review are not required to or permitted to assess the veteran’s qualifications independently. Instead, documentation issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs must form the basis for the evaluation and qualification for the exemption.

Is there an asset test and/or means test to determine eligibility?

No, there is no asset test and/or means test to determine eligibility. To be eligible, the disabled veteran must meet the requirements of MCL 211.7b regardless of the income or the value of the assets of the veteran or the unremarried surviving spouse.

A disabled veteran already owns a qualifying homestead but has not yet obtained the necessary Department of Veterans Affairs determination letter, can the exemption be granted?

No. However, when the determination letter is received, it can be submitted to the assessor, along with the other required documentation and the assessor may grant the exemption.

Unremarried Surviving Spouse

I am an unremarried surviving spouse. How do I prove I qualify for the exemption?

An unremarried surviving spouse qualifies for the exemption by their spouse having been qualified prior to their death. The unremarried surviving spouse must meet the same residency and ownership requirements as the veteran. In addition, the surviving spouse must have never remarried. Further, the disabled veteran must have been a Michigan resident at the time of his or her death, must have owned a Michigan homestead at the time of his or her death, and must be determined to have been qualified for disability benefits under one of the three specified criteria in MCL 211.7b prior to his or her death.

If an unremarried surviving spouse is receiving dependency and indemnity compensation does make them eligible for the exemption?

No. Qualification for benefits under other Department of Veterans Affairs programs does not qualify the unremarried surviving spouse to receive the exemption.

If the unremarried surviving spouse purchases a new home either in the same local unit or another local unit, are they still eligible for the exemption?

Yes. MCL 211.7b(1)(b) states that the exemption applies to <u>any</u> property used and owned as a homestead by the surviving spouse, including homestead property acquired after the veteran's death.

Can an unremarried surviving spouse claim the exemption if he or she demolishes the existing home on the parcel and constructs a new home the veteran never occupied?

Yes. MCL 211.7b(1)(b) states that the exemption applies to any property used and owned as a homestead by the surviving spouse, including homestead property acquired after the veteran's death.

Can an unremarried surviving spouse split the parcel, build a new house on one parcel and rent the original house?

Since the split creates a new parcel with just the new house and as long as the exemption is removed from the original/rented house the is now on its own parcel, yes. MCL 211.7b(1)(b) states that the exemption applies to any property used and owned as a homestead by the surviving spouse, including homestead property acquired after the veteran's death.

If a surviving spouse of a qualified disabled veteran remarries and then divorces, or is again widowed, is he or she qualified as an unremarried surviving spouse?

No. “Unremarried” means that the spouse has remained unmarried since the date of the veteran’s death.

Can a surviving spouse receive the exemption if the veteran was never declared permanently and totally disabled and receiving benefits at the 100% rate, was never declared individually employable, or was never receiving pecuniary assistance for specially adapted housing?

No. The eligibility of the surviving spouse is conferred upon them by the veteran having been eligible prior to his or her death.

If a surviving spouse was married to a person who died in the line of duty, does the surviving spouse qualify for the exemption?

No. Unfortunately, the exemption is only available to unremarried surviving spouses of disabled veterans who have received the requisite determination from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Does an unremarried surviving spouse have to obtain a current award letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to receive the exemption?

No. The unremarried surviving spouse may not be able to obtain an award letter after the veteran dies. The State Tax Commission advises that the assessor should accept the most recent letter that the unremarried surviving spouse can provide.

Applying for the Exemption

How do I apply for the exemption?

To apply for the exemption, the disabled veteran, their unremarried surviving spouse, or their legal designee must file Form 5107, *Affidavit for Disabled Veterans Exemption* with the city or township where the property is located. The disabled veteran (or unremarried surviving spouse) must file Form 5107 and supporting evidence with the local city or township assessor. Form 5107 **should not** be filed with the Department of Treasury or State Tax Commission.

Do I have to reapply for the exemption every year?

For tax year 2023, 2024, and 2025 you must apply for the exemption each year. Under MCL 211.7c, beginning January 1, 2025, the exemption once granted, remains in effect without subsequent annual reapplication by the disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse. The exemption continues until rescinded by the property owner or revoked by the assessor.

If I submit Form 5107 after December 30th of the year in which the exemption is requested, can the exemption be granted?

No, Form 5107 must be submitted to the local assessing unit before December 31 during the year in which the exemption is requested. Postmark of December 30 is acceptable.

Who has the authority to grant or deny the exemption?

The assessor of the city or township can grant or deny the exemption if Form 5107 is received after January 1 and before December 31. The March, July, and December Boards of Review have no authority to consider an application for the exemption.

What is the authority of the July and December Board of Review regarding the exemption?

The July and December Boards of Review, under MCL 211.53b, have the authority to grant a disabled veteran's exemption as a qualified error for any of the following:

1) An error made by the local tax collecting unit in the processing of a timely filed exemption affidavit.
2) A delay in the determination by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs that a veteran is permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service and entitled to veterans' benefits at the 100% rate.
3) **For tax year 2023 only,** a denial by the Board of Review of an exemption claimed by the unremarried surviving spouse.

If the exemption is granted by the July or December Board of Review, does it eliminate all the property taxes for that year?

Yes, as long as the disabled veteran owned and occupied the property as a homestead for the entire year. For example, if the exemption is granted by the December Board of Review, then refunds would be issued for any summer taxes paid and no winter taxes would be due on the property.

If a disabled veteran owned and lived in their home for the full year and receives a Veterans Affairs determination in August that they are 100% totally and permanently disabled, individually unemployable, or have been granted pecuniary assistance for specially adaptive housing, do they receive the exemption for the full year?

Yes. If the disabled veteran files Form 5107 and all supporting documentation with the city or township after January 1 and before December 31, the assessor should grant the exemption for the entire year.

Are special assessments eliminated when the Disabled Veterans Exemption is granted?

No, unless the statutory provision for that specific special assessment states otherwise. In general, special assessments are not considered property taxes. MCL 211.7b specifically indicates that the property is exempt from the collection of taxes under the General Property Tax Act. If an exemption is granted under MCL 211.7b, a special assessment would not generally be eliminated and would still be required to be paid. Millage based special assessments, such as MCL 41.801which provides funding for police and fire protection services, specifically provides that exempt properties are not subject to the special assessment. If the special assessment statute under states that it does not apply to exempt properties, then the property would not be subject to the special assessment once the exemption is granted.

How do I get my refund if I escrow my taxes?

Taxpayers are advised to contact their mortgage company or bank.

I am a disabled veteran and I live with my mother now and pay the property taxes. My mother's home is in a life estate, and I will receive the home upon her death. Am I eligible for the exemption?

No. Your mother is the owner of the home under the life estate, and you do not receive any ownership interest unless she still owns the home at the time of her death.

My home is in a trust. Am I eligible for the exemption?

That depends on the form of the trust. Any trust that shares ownership of the home (provides that there are additional current beneficiaries) other than the disabled veteran and/or his or her spouse or unremarried surviving spouse would not be eligible for the

exemption. MCL 211.7b does not provide for a partial exemption in the situation where the veteran or unremarried surviving spouse are only a partial owner of a property.

Property Eligible for the Exemption

What property is eligible for the exemption?

Real property owned and used as a homestead by the disabled veteran or his or her unremarried surviving spouse is eligible for the exemption. Personal property is not eligible for the exemption.

What does “homestead” mean?

A homestead is defined as any dwelling with its land and buildings where a family makes its home. A homestead within the meaning of the statute is the primary residence of a disabled veteran who is a Michigan resident or the primary residence of an unremarried surviving spouse who is a Michigan resident. To be a homestead, the residence must be owned by the disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse and must be the place where they always intend to return.

The disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse must have filed a Michigan income tax return claiming resident status or, if he or she is a new resident who has not yet been required to file a Michigan income tax return, he or she must intend to file a Michigan income tax return claiming resident status.

Does the veteran or unremarried surviving spouse have to be receiving a Principal Residence Exemption on the property in order to qualify for the exemption?

No. MCL 21.7b does not require the veteran or unremarried surviving spouse to be receiving a Principal Residence Exemption. MCL 211.7b only requires them to own and use the property as their homestead.

Are parcels contiguous to the parcel I live on eligible for the exemption?

No. MCL 211.7b is specific that the exemption is for real property owned and used as a homestead. A “Homestead” and a “Principal Residence” are not interchangeable terms. The criteria to qualify under the Principal Residence Exemption and to qualify for this exemption are not the same. Therefore, the qualification provided for contiguous vacant parcels under the Principal Residence Exemption does not apply.

Is the property eligible to receive a partial exemption if it is also used for a business purpose?

No. The property either qualifies for a 100% exemption or it does not qualify at all. There are no partial exemptions granted. If the property is used for any business or commercial purpose, other than for farming, it will not qualify for the exemption.

The State Tax Commission has determined that a hobby business activity, which results in the minimal use of the parcel for hobby business purposes is not disqualifying.

Is the property eligible to receive the exemption if there are other structures on the property which could be rented or used for a business purpose but are not currently being used?

Yes. The Disabled Veterans Exemption is determined by the actual use of the property. Provided that there is no other actual use of the property, other than farming, the property can qualify as the disabled veteran's or unremarried surviving spouse's homestead, if all other requirements are met.

If there is an unused commercial building, second residence or apartment on the parcel claimed as the homestead, is the parcel disqualified from receiving the exemption?

No. Unlike the Principal Residence Exemption, the Disabled Veterans Exemption depends on their being no actual other use of the parcel. A potential alternative use is not automatically disqualifying.

If I own the land and am in the process of building a home which will be my homestead, will the property qualify for an exemption?

No. Until the property is actually occupied by the disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse, it cannot qualify for exemption. When the property is occupied, the disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse will be eligible for a part-year exemption.

I am in the process of building a home and am living in a trailer on the property until the home is completed. Do I qualify for the exemption?

Yes, as long as you own the trailer and are using it as your homestead and meet all other requirements for the exemption.

If a veteran lives in a mobile home community and is assessed for a garage, porch, shed, or other improvements, as real property on leased land, is the veteran eligible to receive the exemption for the taxes resulting from these improvements?

Yes. MCL 211.7b(1) qualifies improvements as Real Property used and owned as a homestead. The exemption is applied for and granted in the same manner as a typical home.

I rent my home but pay property taxes as part of my rent, am I eligible?

No. MCL 211.7b is specific that the property must be owned by the disabled veteran or by their unremarried surviving spouse.

I am a disabled veteran who is a lifelong Michigan resident. In addition to my primary residence, I also own a summer home "up north". Are both of my homes eligible for the exemption?

No. MCL 211.7b is specific that the property must be owned and used as a homestead. The statute does not provide for receiving more than one Disabled Veterans Exemption.

If I own stock or a membership in a residential cooperative, does my unit qualify for the exemption?

No. A membership or stock ownership in a cooperative is the ownership of an interest in a corporation, not the ownership of real property.

If I have a life estate, life lease, or "lady bird" life interest in my residence and the remainder interest is held by others, can my property qualify as my homestead?

Yes. If the other requirements for receiving the exemption are satisfied, then property occupied under a life estate, life lease, or "lady bird" life interest can qualify as the disabled veteran's or unremarried surviving spouse's homestead.

If my home is in a joint tenancy or there are other co-owners, am I eligible for the exemption?

No. MCL 211.7b(4) defines "own" or "owned" to require legal title to the property be held solely by the disabled veteran or jointly by the veteran and their spouse, or solely by the unremarried surviving spouse.

If I am disqualified from receiving the exemption because there are other joint tenants or co-owners, can I remove the other owners from the deed and reapply for the exemption in a subsequent year?

Yes. If a disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse applied for and was denied the exemption due to other joint tenants or co-owners, the disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse can execute a new deed that removes the other owners. However, once the exemption is denied in the current year, it cannot be resubmitted and granted during that same year.

Changes in the Property's Status During the Assessment Year

During the assessment year, if ownership of the property is *acquired* by a qualified disabled veteran how do the claimant and the assessor proceed?

MCL 211.7b(3) states that once granted, the exemption applies to "all property taxes for the current year that have been paid by the individual who qualified for the exemption under subsection (1)(a) or (b) and all property taxes for the current tax year that would have been owed by that individual if the property was not exempt."

If the property is not owned and used as a homestead for the entire tax year, MCL 211.7b(3) requires that the exemption be prorated. The individual must provide a copy of the closing statement or other purchase documents with Form 5107. The local treasurer must use this documentation, if provided, when calculating the amount of taxes to be exempted. There must be no refund of any property taxes not levied in the current tax year paid pursuant to the closing or other purchase documents to the seller by the individual who qualified for the exemption.

What if the veteran is unable or unwilling to provide a closing statement when they sell or purchase a home? How is the property tax liability calculated?

MCL 211.7b(3) states that if the closing statement or other purchase documents are not provided, the local treasurer must calculate the amount of taxes to be exempted by dividing the total property taxes levied in the year by 365 and then multiplying that number by the number of days the individual will use and own the property as a homestead.

If the veteran purchases the property but does not immediately occupy the property as his or her homestead, does the property qualify for exemption?

Yes. If the period between the closing and the date the property became the veteran's homestead is thirty days or less, then the proration of taxes shown on the closing statement may be used to determine the amount of taxes to be abated and/or refunded. If occupancy is delayed for more than thirty days after closing, the amount of taxes abated or refunded *shall be the lesser of* the amount that the veteran was required to pay according to the closing statement or the amount of current-year taxes which would normally be assigned to the purchaser, as calculated on a calendar-year basis.

If a disabled veteran, or unremarried surviving spouse, has been granted the exemption for the current year and then sells or transfers the property, what steps should be taken by the assessor?

The disabled veteran, or unremarried surviving spouse, shall rescind the claim of exemption within 45 days after the individual ceases to use and own as a homestead the property for which the exemption is granted. *Form 6054 Request to Rescind Disabled Veterans Exemption* must be filed with the assessor of the township or city in

which the property is located. If a rescission is not filed, the assessor shall file *Form 6055 Notice of Denial of Disabled Veterans Exemption* to remove the exemption. For the current year, under MCL 211.7b(3)(c) the local treasurer shall calculate the amount of taxes levied in the current tax year to be exempted by dividing the total property taxes levied in the year by 365 and then multiplying that number by the number of days the individual, while qualified from the exemption, used and owned the property as a homestead.

During the assessment year, if ownership of property is *surrendered,* how do the claimant and the assessor proceed?

MCL 211.7b(3) states that based on a proration that takes into account the effective date of any removal of the exemption, which the assessor shall designate as the date of the relevant conveyance or disposition. Using that date, the local treasurer shall calculate the amount of property taxes levied in the current tax year to be exempted by dividing the total property taxes levied in the year by 365 and then multiplying that number by the number of days the individual, while qualified for the exemption, used and owned the property as a homestead.

Examples of Proration

Assume a disabled veteran (DV) closes on a home purchase on June 1, 2023, and the property tax exemption is prorated based on how property taxes are prorated at closing.

- If at closing property taxes are prorated on a calendar year (CY) basis, the seller pays the DV 5/12 of the CY 2023 property taxes and the DV will receive a property tax exemption for 7/12 of the CY 2023 property taxes.
- If at closing property taxes are prorated as if paid in advance, the DV pays the seller 1/12 of the July 2022 taxes, the DV pays the seller 6/12 of the December 2022 taxes, and the DV is responsible for 100% of the taxes levied in 2023. The DV will receive a property tax exemption for 100% of the CY 2023 property taxes but will not receive a refund for the 2022 taxes paid at closing.

Assume a DV closes on a home purchased on October 1, 2023, the seller has paid the July 2023 bill, and the property tax exemption is prorated based on how property taxes are prorated at closing.

- If at closing property taxes are prorated on a calendar year basis, the seller is responsible for ¾ of the 2023 property tax levy. If the July 2023 bill is more than ¾ of the annual bill, the DV pays the seller the difference. If the July bill is less than ¾ of the annual bill, the seller pays the DV the difference. The DV receives a property tax exemption for 25% of the 2023 taxes, applied equally to the July 2023 and December 2023 tax bills.
- If at closing property taxes are prorated as if paid in advance, the DV pays the seller 2/12 of the December 2022 tax bill, the DV pays the seller 9/12 of the July 2023 bill, and the DV is responsible for 100% of the December 2023 tax bill. The DV will receive a property tax exemption for 9/12 of the July 2023 bill and 100%

of the December 2023 bill. The DV will not receive a refund for the 2022 taxes paid at closing.

Audit, Revocation, and Rescission

Is the local unit required to audit exemptions that have been granted?

Yes. The local unit is required to implement an audit program that includes all information required under MCL 211.7b(2). The audit may not occur more than once every three years unless there is a reasonable belief the property no longer qualifies for the exemption.

Is the property owner required to rescind the exemption if they no longer qualify?

Yes. The disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse must file Form 6054 with the assessor for the city or township within 45 days of any of the following:

1) They cease to use and own as a homestead the property for which the exemption was granted.
2) They no longer meet the qualifications under MCL 211.7b to receive the exemption.

Can the assessor revoke a granted exemption?

Yes. Under the audit program, the assessor may deny a new claim for the exemption or an existing exemption. The assessor is required to notify the property owner of the denial in writing, using Form 6055, which includes the reason for the denial and the appeal rights.

The exemption can be denied for the current year and the three immediately preceding years. Once denied, the property owner will be liable for the taxes, plus applicable penalty and interest as stated in MCL 211.7c(d).

Other Questions and Answers

How should an assessor proceed if it is determined that an exemption was granted when the claimant or property did not qualify, or that the claimant qualified but the exemption was mistakenly granted for a contiguous parcel?

If a local unit determines that an exemption was granted under MCL 211.7b to an individual that was not eligible or was granted for non-eligible contiguous property, the assessor shall file *Form 6055 Notice of Denial of Disabled Veterans Exemption.* For the current year, if proration is needed, under MCL 211.7b(3)(c) the local treasurer shall calculate the amount of taxes levied in the current tax year to be exempted by dividing the total property taxes levied in the year by 365 and then multiplying that number by

the number of days the individual, while qualified from the exemption, used and owned the property as a homestead.

How should the assessor show the disabled veteran's exempt property on the roll and how should Headlee Additions and Losses, Capped value Addition and Loss, and Equalization New and Loss be handled?

The disabled veterans exemption is an exemption to the veteran, not the property. Due to this definition, beginning in January of 2024, there will be a classification choice in the 'Tax Info' (tab 3) within BS&A software that will flow over to the tax system to indicate the owner of the property is exempt from taxation. The value of the parcel will remain on the assessment roll as normal. As the process for handling veterans exemptions is different from prior years, assessors should verify that the Headlee Additions and Losses, Capped value Addition and Loss, and Equalization New and Loss were handled correctly from when the veteran first received the exemption up to the 2024 roll.

If the assessor is aware that a qualified disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse is in the process of selling the property claimed as his or her homestead, can they deny the exemption?

No, listing a property for sale does not automatically disqualify the disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse from receiving the exemption. However, if the disabled veteran or unremarried surviving spouse moves from the home and the property is no longer used as a homestead or the exemption is claimed another property, the exemption should be denied.

Should the assessor deny the exemption if the letter supplied with the affidavit is not the Summary of Benefits letter we normally receive; however, it is on the Department of Veterans Affairs letterhead and it does have the necessary information needed to receive the exemption?

No, the Department of Veterans Affairs does not have a standard letter they send to the veterans. The type of letter issued depends on which Veterans Affairs location the letter comes from. If the letter is from the Department of Veterans Affairs and has their logo, the exemption should be approved as long as the veteran meets one of three qualifications under MCL 211.7b.

If there was any penalty and interest that has been paid resulting from tax dollars that are now exempt under MCL 211.7b, is the penalty and interest also refunded to the veteran or unremarried surviving spouse?

Yes. If the penalty or interest was on tax dollars that are now exempt, any such paid penalty or interest should also be refunded to the veteran or unremarried surviving spouse. Any unpaid penalty or interest resulting from tax dollars that are now exempt under MCL 211.7b, should be removed by the local unit Treasurer.

Sample Summary of Benefits Letters

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

January 20, 2023

Name of Veteran
Address

In Reply Refer
to: xxx-xx-xxxx
27/eBenefits

Dear Veteran:

This letter is a summary of benefits you currently receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are providing this letter to disabled Veterans to use in applying for benefits such as state or local property or vehicle tax relief, civil service preference, to obtain housing entitlements, free or reduced state park annual memberships, or any other program or entitlement in which verification of VA benefits is required. Please safeguard this important document. This letter is considered an official record of your VA entitlement.

Our records contain the following information:

Sample

Personal Claim Information

Your VA claim number is: xxxxxxxx

You are the Veteran.

Military Information

Your most recent, verified periods of service (up to three) include:

Branch of Service	Character of Service	Entered Active Duty	Released/Discharged
Military Branch	Honorable (Type of Discharge received from Dept. of Defense)	Date	Date

(There may be additional periods of service not listed above.)

VA Benefit Information

You have one or more service-connected disabilities:	Answer Yes or No
Your combined service-connected evaluation is:	Percentage VA Rated Veteran
You are considered to be totally and permanently disabled due solely to your service-connected disabilities:	Answer: Yes or No

You should contact your state or local office of Veterans' affairs for information on any tax, license, or fee-related benefits for which you may be eligible. State offices of Veterans' affairs are available at http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm.

How You Can Contact Us

- If you need general information about benefits and eligibility, please visit us at https://www.ebenefits.va.gov or http://www.va.gov.
- Call us at 1-800-827-1000. If you use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the number is 1-800-829-4833.
- Ask a question on the Internet at https://www.va.gov/contact-us.

Sincerely Yours,

Regional Office Director

Sample

SAMPLE TYPICAL SUMMARY OF BENEFITS LETTER

Department of Veterans Affairs
477 MICHIGAN AVE
DETROIT MI 48226

Veteran's Name:

This letter is a summary of benefits you currently receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are providing this letter to disabled Veterans to use in applying for benefits such as housing entitlements, free or reduced state park annual memberships, state or local property or vehicle tax relief, civil service preference, or any other program or entitlement in which verification of VA benefits is required. Please safeguard this important document. This letter replaces VA Form 20-5455, and is considered an official record of your VA entitlement.

--America is Grateful to You for Your Service--

Our records contain the following information:

Personal Claim Information:

Your VA claim number is:
You are the Veteran

Military Information:

Your character(s) of discharge and service date(s) include:

Marine Corps, Honorable,

(You may have additional periods of service not listed above)

VA Benefits Information:

Service-connected disability: Yes
Your combined service-connected evaluation is: 100 PERCENT
The effective date of the last change to your current award was: 01-DEC-2012
Your current monthly award amount is:
Are you considered to be totally and permanently disabled due to your service-connected disabilities: Yes

You should contact your state or local office of Veterans' affairs for information on any tax, license, or fee-related benefits for which you may be eligible. State offices of Veterans' affairs are available at http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm.

Need Additional Information or Verification?

If you have any questions about this letter or need additional verification of VA benefits, please call us at 1-800-827-1000. If you use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the number is 1-800-829-4833. Send electronic inquiries through the Internet at https://iris.va.gov.

Sincerely yours,

VETERANS SERVICE CENTER MANAGER

Department of Veterans Affairs
PO BOX 4444
JANESVILLE WI 53547-4444

Example of typical yearly IU tax abatement statement

November 10, 2022

Veteran's Name:

2135593_110982**********AUTO**5-DIGIT 48169 T290 P6

This letter is a summary of benefits you currently receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are providing this letter to disabled Veterans to use in applying for benefits such as housing entitlements, free or reduced state park annual memberships, state or local property or vehicle tax relief, civil service preference, or any other program or entitlement in which verification of VA benefits is required. Please safeguard this important document. This letter replaces VA Form 20-5455, and is considered an official record of your VA entitlement.

--America is Grateful to You for Your Service--

Our records contain the following information:

Personal Claim Information:

Your VA claim number is: [redacted]
You are the Veteran

Military Information:

Your character(s) of discharge and service date(s) include:
Navy, Honorable, 28-Jan-1969 - 03-Mar-1972
(You may have additional periods of service not listed above)

VA Benefits Information:

Service-connected disability: Yes
Your combined service-connected evaluation is: 60 PERCENT
The effective date of the last change to your current award was: 01-DEC-2021
Your current monthly award amount is: $3,517.84
Are you being paid at the 100 percent rate because you are unemployable due to your service-connected disabilities: Yes
Are you considered to be totally and permanently disabled due to your service-connected disabilities: Yes

You should contact your state or local office of Veterans' affairs for information on any tax, license, or fee-related benefits for which you may be eligible. State offices of Veterans' affairs are available at http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm.

Need Additional Information or Verification?

If you have any questions about this letter or need additional verification of VA benefits, please call us at 1-800-827-1000. If you use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the federal relay number is 711. Send electronic inquiries through the Internet at https://iris.custhelp.va.gov/.

Sincerely yours,

Regional Office Director

NE201221

Example of newly awarded 100 P&T veteran, they may not receive a tax abatement statement before applying for a property tax exmption that first year, they will start receiving them the following November.

April 5, 2022

We made a decision on your VA benefits.

Dear :

This letter will guide you through the information you should know and steps you may take now that VA has made a decision about your benefits.

Your Benefit Information:

- Evaluation of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depressive disorder, with anxious distress, which is currently 30 percent disabling, is increased to 100 percent effective February 2, 2021.
- Entitlement to special monthly compensation based on housebound criteria being met is granted from February 2, 2021.
- Basic eligibility to Dependents' Educational Assistance based on permanent and total disability status is established from February 2, 2021.
- The claimant is considered competent.
- Service connection for copd is denied.

Your combined rating evaluation is:

Combined Rating Evaluation	Effective Date
30%	Jan 31, 2018
70%	Oct 15, 2018
100%	Feb 2, 2021

How VA Combines Percentages

If you have more than one condition, VA will combine percentages to determine your overall disability rating. The percentages assigned for each of your conditions may not always add up to your combined

We have included with this letter:

1. Explanation of Payment
2. Additional Benefits
3. Where to Send Your Correspondence
4. VA Form 20-0998
5. Rating Decision
6. Fraud Prevention Attachment

Contact information:

Web: www.vets.gov
Phone: 1-800-827-1000
TDD: 711
To send questions online: visit https://iris.custhelp.com/

Social Media:

Twitter: @VAVetBenefits
Facebook: www.facebook.com/VeteransBenefits

Your representative:

You appointed AMERICAN LEGION as your accredited representative. They have also received a copy of this letter.

They can help you with any questions you have about your claim.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the *Veterans Crisis Line* at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.

March 31, 2022

We have included with this letter:

1. Explanation of Payment
2. Additional Benefits
3. Where to Send Your Correspondence
4. VA Form 20-0998
5. Rating Decision
6. Fraud Prevention Attachment

Contact information:

Web: www.vets.gov
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If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the *Veterans Crisis Line* at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.

We made a decision on your VA benefits.

Dear:

This letter will guide you through the information you should know and steps you may take now that VA has made a decision about your benefits.

Your Benefit Information:

- Evaluation of post traumatic stress disorder, which is currently 50 percent disabling, is increased to 70 percent effective December 29, 2021.
- Entitlement to individual unemployability is granted effective July 14, 2021.
- Basic eligibility to Dependents' Educational Assistance based on permanent and total disability status is established from July 14, 2021.
- Evaluation of coronary artery disease with old myocardial infarction, which is currently 60 percent disabling, is continued.

Your combined rating evaluation is:

Combined Rating Evaluation	Effective Date
10%	Aug 31, 2010
20%	Sep 30, 2011
80%	Jul 14, 2021
90%	Dec 29, 2021

How VA Combines Percentages

If you have more than one condition, VA will combine percentages to determine your overall disability rating. The percentages assigned for

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Regional Office

VA File Number

Represented By:
AMERICAN LEGION
Rating Decision
03/30/2022

INTRODUCTION

The records reflect that you are a Veteran of the Vietnam Era. You served in the Army from October 11, 1967 to October 10, 1969. You filed a new claim for benefits that was received on December 29, 2021. Based on a review of the evidence listed below, we have made the following decision(s) on your claim.

DECISION

1. Evaluation of post traumatic stress disorder, which is currently 50 percent disabling, is increased to 70 percent effective December 29, 2021.

2. Entitlement to individual unemployability is granted effective July 14, 2021.

3. Basic eligibility to Dependents' Educational Assistance based on permanent and total disability status is established from July 14, 2021.

4. Evaluation of coronary artery disease with old myocardial infarction, which is currently 60 percent disabling, is continued.

EVIDENCE

- VA Form 21-8940, Veteran's Application For Increased Compensation Based On Unemployability, received December 29, 2021
- VA Form 21-4192, Request For Employment Information in Connection With Claim For Disability Benefits, received December 29, 2021
- Section (§) 5103 Notice, dated January 3, 2022
- VA letter, dated January 4, 2022
- VA Form 21-4142 Authorization and Consent to Release Information to Department of Veteran's Affairs, received January 6, 2022
- Private Treatment Records, received January 12, 2022
- VA contract examinations, Quality Timeliness Customer Service (QTC), conducted February 22, 2022
  VAMC (Veterans Affairs Medical Center) treatment records
- VAMC (Veterans Affairs Medical Center) treatment records
- DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, received July 14, 2021
- Service Treatment Records, received June 15, 2015
- Intent To File A Claim For Compensation and/or Pension, or Survivors Pension and/or DIC, received July 14, 2021
- VA Form 21-526EZ Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits, received November 4, 2021

REASONS FOR DECISION

1. Evaluation of post traumatic stress disorder currently evaluated as 50 percent disabling.

The evaluation of post traumatic stress disorder is increased to 70 percent disabling effective December 29, 2021, the date we received your claim. (38 CFR 4.1, 38 CFR 3.400)

We have assigned a 70 percent evaluation for your post traumatic stress disorder based on:
- Anxiety
- Chronic sleep impairment
- Depressed mood
- Difficulty in adapting to a worklike setting
- Difficulty in adapting to stressful circumstances
- Difficulty in adapting to work
- Difficulty in establishing and maintaining effective work and social relationships
- Disturbances of motivation and mood
- Forgetting directions
- Forgetting names
- Forgetting recent events

• Forgetting to complete tasks
• Impaired impulse control
• Impairment of short- and long-term memory
• Mild memory loss
• Occupational and social impairment with reduced reliability and productivity
• Retention of only highly learned material
• Suspiciousness
• Unprovoked irritability with periods of violence

The overall evidentiary record shows that the severity of your disability most closely approximates the criteria for a 70 percent disability evaluation. (38 CFR 4.7, 38 CFR 4.126)

A higher evaluation of 100 percent is not warranted for a mental disorder unless the evidence shows total occupational and social impairment, due to such symptoms as:
• Gross impairment in thought processes or communication
• Persistent delusions or hallucinations
• Grossly inappropriate behavior
• Persistent danger of hurting self or others
• Intermittent inability to perform activities of daily living (including maintenance of minimal personal hygiene)
• Disorientation to time or place
• Memory loss for names of close relatives, own occupation, or own name. (38 CFR 4.125, 38 CFR 4.126, 38 CFR 4.130)

There is no evidence of record that shows that you are unable to manage your financial affairs. (38 CFR 3.353)

2. Entitlement to individual unemployability.

Entitlement to individual unemployability is granted effective July 14, 2021 the date you meet schedular for individual unemployability and the date we received your intent to file. (38 CFR 3.155, 38 CFR 3.400)

Entitlement to individual unemployability is granted because you are unable to secure or follow a substantially gainful occupation as a result of service-connected disabilities. (38 CFR 4.16)

The following criteria explain entitlement to individual unemployability. The claimant must be unable to secure or follow a substantially gainful occupation as a result of service-connected disabilities. 38 CFR 4.16 provides that individual unemployability may be granted if there is only one such disability, and this disability is ratable at 60 percent or more; or that, if there are two or more disabilities, there shall be at least one disability ratable at 40 percent or more, and sufficient additional disability to bring the combined rating to 70 percent or more. These percentage standards are set aside only when the evidence clearly and factually shows the Veteran has been rendered unemployable solely due to service-connected disabilities regardless of their individual and combined percentages. Such cases are submitted to the Director of Compensation Service for extra-schedular consideration. (38 CFR 3.321)

The medical evidence of record shows your heart condition and PTSD prevent you from working.

There is no evidence of record that shows that you are unable to manage your financial affairs. (38 CFR 3.353)

It is the defined and consistently applied policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the law under a broad interpretation, consistent, however, with the facts shown in every case. When, after careful consideration of all procurable and assembled data, a reasonable doubt arises regarding service origin, the degree of disability, or any other point, such doubt is to be resolved in favor of the claimant.

Based on the evidence and resolving any doubt in your favor, service connection is granted for IU. (38 CFR 3.102, 38 CFR 3.303, 38 CFR 4.3, 38 CFR 4.6)

3. Eligibility to Dependents' Educational Assistance under 38 U.S.C. Chapter 35 based on permanent and total disability status.

Basic eligibility to Dependents' Educational Assistance based on permanent and total disability status is established from July 14, 2021, the date you became eligible for this benefit and the date we received your intent to file. (38 CFR 3.155, 38 CFR 3.400)

Eligibility for Dependents' Educational Assistance is derived from a Veteran who was discharged under other than dishonorable conditions; and has permanent and total service-connected disability(ies); or permanent and total disability(ies) existed at the time of death; or the Veteran died as a result of service-connected disability(ies). Also, eligibility exists for a service member who died in service. Finally, eligibility can be derived from a service member who, as a member of the armed forces on active duty, has been listed for more than 90 days as missing in action; captured in line of duty by a hostile force; or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power. (38 USC Chapter 35, 38 CFR 3.807, 38 CFR 21.3021)

Basic eligibility for Dependents' Educational Assistance is granted as the evidence shows you currently have a totally disabling service-connected disability or disabilities, permanent in nature. (38 USC Chapter 35, 38 CFR 3.807, 38 CFR 21.3021)

4. Evaluation of coronary artery disease with old myocardial infarction currently evaluated as 60 percent disabling.

The evaluation of coronary artery disease with old myocardial infarction is continued as 60 percent disabling.

We have assigned a 60 percent evaluation for your coronary artery disease with old myocardial infarction based on:
• Workload of 3.1-5.0 METs results in heart failure symptoms

November 15, 2022

We made a decision on your VA benefits.

This letter will guide you through the information you should know and steps you may take now that VA has made a decision about your benefits.

Your Benefit Information:

- Entitlement to individual unemployability is granted effective April 5, 2022.
- Basic eligibility to Dependents' Educational Assistance based on permanent and total disability status is established from April 5 2022.

See **Rating Decision** to find out why we made this decision.

Your monthly entitlement amount is shown below:

Monthly Entitlement Amount	Payment Start Date	Reason
$3,636.17	May 1, 2022	Individual Unemployability Adjustment, Compensation Rating Adjustment

We are currently paying you as a Veteran with one dependent. *Let us know right away if there is any change in the status of your dependents.*

If payments are due, you should receive your first payment, if not already in receipt of payments, within 7-10 days of this notice.

We have included with this letter:

1. Explanation of Payment
2. Additional Benefits
3. Where to Send Your Correspondence
4. VA Form 20-0998
5. Rating Decision
6. Fraud Prevention Attachment

Contact information:

Web: www.vets.gov
Phone: 1-800-827-1000
TDD: 711
To send questions online: visit https://iris.custhelp.com/

Social Media:

Twitter: @VAVetBenefits
Facebook: www.facebook.com/VeteransBenefits

Your representative:

You appointed AMERICAN LEGION as your accredited representative. They have also received a copy of this letter.

They can help you with any questions you have about your claim.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the *Veterans Crisis Line* at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.

Department of Veterans Affairs
A.J. Celebrezze Federal Building
1240 East 9th Street
Cleveland, OH 44199

January 24, 2022

In Reply Refer To

This letter is a summary of benefits you currently receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are providing this letter to survivors of disabled Veterans to use in applying for benefits such as state or local property or vehicle tax relief, civil service preference, to obtain housing entitlements, free or reduced state park annual memberships, or any other program or entitlement in which verification of VA benefits is required. Please safeguard this important document. This letter is considered an official record of your VA entitlement.

Our records contain the following information:

Personal Claim Information
The claim number shown on our records is
You are a survivor of the Veteran.

Military Information
The character(s) of discharge and service date(s) of the veteran include:
Honorable, Army, 07/18/1968-07/16/1971
(There may be additional periods of service not listed above)

VA Benefits Information
You are in receipt of: Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
Your current monthly award amount is: $1,742.94
The Veteran died on active duty: No
The Veteran died as a result of a service-connected disability: Yes
Was the Veteran considered permanently and totally disabled at the time of death: Yes

You should contact your state or local office of veterans' affairs for information on any tax, license, or fee-related benefits for which you may be eligible. State offices of veterans' affairs are available at http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm.

Department of Veterans Affairs
PO BOX 5365
JANESVILLE WI 53547-5365

Example of DIC letter that does NOT verify eligibity for property tax exemption. If the veteran was 100% P&T before passing, there will be an additional line stating that the veteran was considered P&T before death. This veteran was, VA errored in omitting it. The spouse called and received a corrected letter on the next page.

November 8, 2021

This letter is a summary of benefits you currently receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). We are providing this letter to survivors of Veterans to use in applying for benefits such as housing entitlements, free or reduced state park annual memberships, state or local property or vehicle tax relief, civil service preference, or any other program or entitlement in which verification of VA benefits is required. Please safeguard this important document. This letter replaces VA Form 20-5455, and is considered an official record of your VA entitlement.

--America is Grateful to You for Your Sacrifice--

Our records contain the following information:

Personal Claim Information:

The claim number shown on our records is:
You are a survivor of the Veteran

Military Information:

The character(s) of discharge and service date(s) of the Veteran include:

Army, Honorable, 18-Jul-1968 - 16-Jul-1971

(There may be additional periods of service not listed above)

VA Benefits Information:

You are in receipt of: DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION
The effective date of the last change to your current award was: 01-JAN-2021
Your current monthly award amount is: $1,645.83
The Veteran died as a result of a service-connected disability: Yes

You should contact your state or local office of Veterans' affairs for information on any tax, license, or fee-related benefits for which you may be eligible. State offices of Veterans' affairs are available at http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm.

Need Additional Information or Verification?

If you have any questions about this letter or need additional verification of VA benefits, please call us at 1-800-827-1000. If you use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), the federal relay number is 711. Send electronic inquiries through the Internet at https://iris.custhelp.va.gov/.

Sincerely yours,

Regional Office Director

Enclosure(s): What Things Affect Your Rights To Payment