

Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange

Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service may be eligible for a variety of VA benefits, including disability compensation for diseases associated with exposure. Your dependents and survivors also may be eligible for benefits.

"Agent Orange" refers to a blend of tactical herbicides the U.S. military sprayed in the jungles of Vietnam and around the Korean demilitarized zone to remove trees and dense tropical foliage that provided enemy cover. Herbicides were also used by the U.S. military to defoliate military facilities in the U.S. and in other countries as far back as the 1950s.

In addition, VA has determined there is evidence of exposure to Agent Orange for Air Force and Air Force Reserve members who served during the period 1969 through 1986 and regularly and repeatedly operated, maintained, or served onboard C-123 aircraft (known to have been used to spray an herbicide agent during the Vietnam era). For more information about service qualifications and other eligibility criteria, visit the VA Agent Orange C-123 web page.

VA and federal law presumes that certain diseases are a result of exposure to these herbicides. This "presumptive policy" simplifies the process for receiving compensation for these diseases since VA foregoes the normal requirements of proving that an illness began during or was worsened by your military service. A Veteran who believes he or she has a disease caused by Agent Orange exposure that **is not** one of the conditions listed below must show an actual connection between the disease and herbicide exposure during military service.

Eligibility - Service in Vietnam or Korea

VA presumes that Veterans were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides if they served:

- In Vietnam anytime between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975, including brief **visits ashore** or service aboard a ship that operated on the **inland waterways** of Vietnam
- In or near the Korean demilitarized zone anytime between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971

If you fall into either category listed above, you do not have to show that you were exposed to Agent Orange to be eligible for disability compensation for diseases VA presumes are associated with it. Check the list of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships that operated in Vietnam to confirm whether your service aboard a ship allows VA to concede you were exposed to Agent Orange.

Eligibility - Service Outside of Vietnam or Korea

Even if you did not serve in Vietnam or the Korean demilitarized zone during the specified time periods, you can still apply for disability compensation if you were exposed to an herbicide while in the military and believe it led to the onset of a disease. This includes:

- Veterans who served on or near the perimeters of military bases in Thailand during the Vietnam Era.
- Veterans who served where herbicides were tested and stored outside of Vietnam.
- Veterans who were crew members on C-123 planes flown after the Vietnam War.
- Veterans associated with Department of Defense (DoD) projects to test, dispose of, or store herbicides in the U.S.

If eligible, you must prove that you were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during your military service to be eligible for service-connection for disease VA presumes are related to Agent Orange exposure.

Exception: Blue Water Veterans with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma may be granted service-connection without showing inland waterway service or that they set foot in Vietnam. This is because VA also recognizes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma as related to service in Vietnam or the waters offshore of Vietnam during the Vietnam Era.

Diseases Associated with Agent Orange

VA has recognized certain cancers and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service. Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for disability compensation or survivors' benefits for these diseases.

- AL Amyloidosis
A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs
- Chronic B-cell Leukemias
A type of cancer which affects white blood cells
- Chloracne (or similar acneform disease)
A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.
- Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin
- Hodgkin's Disease
A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver, and spleen, and by progressive anemia
- Ischemic Heart Disease
A disease characterized by a reduced supply of blood to the heart, that leads to chest pain
- Multiple Myeloma
A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue
- Parkinson's Disease
A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement
- Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset
A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and motor weakness. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of herbicide exposure.
- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least 10 percent disabling within one year of exposure to herbicides.

- Prostate Cancer
Cancer of the prostate; one of the most common cancers among men
- Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer)
Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)
A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues

Children with Birth Defects: VA presumes certain birth defects in children of Vietnam and Korea Veterans associated with Veterans' qualifying military service.

Veterans with Lou Gehrig's Disease: VA presumes Lou Gehrig's Disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS) diagnosed in **all** Veterans who had 90 days or more continuous active military service is related to their service, although ALS is not related to Agent Orange exposure.

Evidence Needed

If you are seeking service connection for one of the diseases VA presumes is associated with exposure to herbicides during service, VA requires the following:

- A medical diagnosis of a disease which VA recognizes as being associated with Agent Orange (listed above)
- Competent evidence of
 - service in Vietnam or at or near the Korean demilitarized zone during the dates shown above, or
 - exposure to herbicides in a location other than the Vietnam or the Korean demilitarized zone.
- Competent medical evidence that the disease began within the deadline (if any). (See 38 CFR 3.307(a)(6)(ii) for more information on deadlines.)

If you believe that you have a disease caused by herbicide exposure, but that disease is not on the list of diseases associated with Agent Orange, you may still apply for service-connection. In these cases, VA requires all of the following:

- Competent medical evidence of a current disability,
- Competent medical evidence of an actual connection between herbicide exposure and the current disability,
AND
- Competent evidence of:
 - service in Vietnam or at or near the Korean demilitarized zone during the dates shown above, or
 - exposure to herbicides in a location other than Vietnam or the Korean demilitarized zone.

Compensation Benefit

Monthly payment rates are based on the Veteran's combined rating for his or her service-connected disabilities. These ratings are based on the severity of the disabilities. Additional amounts are paid to certain Veterans with severe disabilities ("special monthly compensation") and certain Veterans with dependents. You can view the current Compensation Rate Tables to determine the amount you may receive.

How to Apply

- Apply online using eBenefits, **OR**
- Work with an accredited Veteran Service Organization such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Vets, Florida Department of Veteran Affairs, etc., or your County Veterans Service Officer, OR
- Call 1-800-827-1000 and file over the phone