



## **Presumptive Disability Benefits**

### **What is “Presumptive” Service Connection?**

VA presumes that certain disabilities were caused by military service. This is because of the unique circumstances of a specific Veteran’s military service. If a presumed condition is diagnosed in a Veteran within a certain group, they can be awarded disability compensation.

### **What are “Presumptive” Conditions?**

If you are diagnosed with a chronic disease within one year of active duty release, you should apply for disability compensation. Examples of chronic disease include: arthritis, diabetes or hypertension.

Or, if you served continuously for at least 90 days and are diagnosed with **amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)** after discharge, you can establish service connection for the disease.

Veterans in the following groups may qualify for “presumptive” disability benefits:

- **Former prisoners of war** who:
  - Have a condition that is at least 10 percent disabling
  - Depending on length of imprisonment, specific conditions are presumed
    - Imprisoned for any length of time:
      - Psychosis
      - Any of the anxiety states
      - Dysthymic disorder (or depressive neurosis)
      - Organic residuals of frostbite
      - Post- traumatic osteoarthritis
      - Heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease
      - Stroke and the residual effects
      - Osteoporosis, when the Veteran has posttraumatic stress disorder

- Imprisoned for at least 30 days:
    - Beriberi (including beriberi heart disease)
    - Chronic dysentery
    - Helminthiasis
    - Malnutrition (including optic atrophy)
    - Pellagra
    - Other nutritional deficiencies
    - Irritable bowel syndrome
    - Peptic ulcer disease
    - Peripheral neuropathy
    - Cirrhosis of the liver
    - Avitaminosis
    - Osteoporosis
  
- **Vietnam Veterans** who were:
  - Exposed to Agent Orange
  - Served in the Republic of Vietnam or on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975
  - Specific presumed conditions are:
    - AL amyloidosis
    - B-cell leukemia
    - Chronic lymphocytic leukemia
    - Multiple myeloma
    - Type 2 diabetes
    - Hodgkin's disease
    - Ischemic heart disease (including but not limited to, coronary artery disease and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease)
    - Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
    - Parkinson's disease
    - Parkinsonism
    - Prostate cancer
    - Respiratory cancers
    - Soft-tissue sarcoma (not including osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma)
    - Bladder cancer
    - Hypothyroidism

- The following conditions, if they become greater than 10 percent debilitating within a year of exposure to an herbicide agent:
      - Acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy
      - Chloracne or other similar acneform disease
      - Porphyria cutanea tarda
- **Atomic Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation** and who experienced one of the following:
  - Participated in atmospheric nuclear testing
  - Occupied or were prisoners of war in Hiroshima or Nagasaki
  - Served before Feb. 1, 1992, at a diffusion plant in Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio or Oak Ridge, Tennessee
  - Served before Jan. 1, 1974, at Amchitka Island, Alaska Specific presumed conditions are:
    - All forms of leukemia, except chronic lymphocytic leukemia
    - Cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract, brain, bone, lung, colon or ovary
    - Bronchioloalveolar carcinoma
    - Multiple myeloma
    - Lymphomas, other than Hodgkin’s disease
    - Primary liver cancer, except if there are indications of cirrhosis or hepatitis B
- **Gulf War Veterans** who:
  - Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations
  - Have a condition that is at least 10 percent disabling by Dec. 31, 2026
  - Specific presumed conditions are:
    - Medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses that exist for six months or more, such as:
      - Chronic fatigue syndrome
      - Fibromyalgia
      - Irritable bowel syndrome
    - Any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that warrants a presumption of service connection, as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

- Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness include:
  - Fatigue
  - Skin symptoms
  - Headaches
  - Muscle pain
  - Joint pain
  - Neurological or neuropsychological symptoms
  - Symptoms involving the upper or lower respiratory system
  - Sleep disturbance
  - Gastrointestinal symptoms
  - Cardiovascular symptoms
  - Weight loss
  - Menstrual disorders
  
- **Gulf War Veterans** who:
  - Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations or in Afghanistan on or after September 19, 2001
    - Manifest one of the following infectious diseases to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year of separation:
      - Brucellosis
      - Campylobacter jejuni
      - Coxiella burnetii (Q fever)
      - Nontyphoid Salmonella
      - Shigella
      - West Nile virus
      - Malaria (or when accepted treatises indicate the incubation period began during a qualifying period of service)
    - Manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after separation:
      - Mycobacterium tuberculosis
      - Visceral leishmaniasis

- **Gulf War Deployed Veterans** who:
  - Served any length of time in the Southwest Theater of Operations during the Persian Gulf War, or
  - Served any length of time in Afghanistan, Syria, Djibouti or Uzbekistan on or after September 19, 2001 and
  - Manifests one of the following to any degree within 10 years from the date of separation from military service:
    - Asthma
    - Rhinitis
    - Sinusitis, to include rhinosinusitis