



Hangar Flying Newsletter

A Publication of the JBLM McChord Field Retiree Activities Office for Air Force Retirees, their spouses and survivors. Department of the Air Force, 100 Joe Jackson Blvd, Customer Service Mall Rm 1001, JBLM McChord Field WA 98438-1114; Phone (253) 982-3214 (Voice Mail 24 hours a day). Email – retaffairs@us.af.mil Web Site www.mcchordrao.com Retiree Activities Office: Open 0900-1200 Monday – Thursday

Disability Benefits for Vietnam Veterans

Vietnam Veterans may be eligible for expanded VA disability compensation under the PACT Act, a law passed in 2022 that increases access to VA benefits and health care for Veterans exposed to toxic substances during their military service. If you are a Vietnam Veteran, find out if you're eligible for disability compensation due to certain medical conditions.

<https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/> (Source: VA)

Vietnam War Era Veterans

The PACT Act makes it easier for Vietnam Veterans to receive benefits for illnesses linked to Agent Orange exposure. Over 20 new health conditions are now presumed to have been caused by [exposure to hazardous substances](#) while serving in the military. A Veteran only needs to prove they have one of the "presumptive conditions" and served during a qualifying time period in a specific location to receive compensation. [Learn about Vietnam War era Veteran eligibility.](#) (Source: VA)

Gulf War and Post-9/11 Era Veterans

If you served in the Gulf War or Post-9/11 era in specified locations, you may qualify for disability compensation if you

experience certain medical conditions. VA considers certain service areas — "presumptive locations" — meaning that if you served in any of these places during specified time periods, you do not have to prove that you were exposed to toxins. [Learn about Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veteran eligibility.](#)

(Source: VA)

Short Notes

VA expands breast cancer screenings and mammograms for Veterans with potential toxic exposures [<https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-expands-breast-cancer-screenings-and-mammograms-for-veterans-with-potential-toxic-exposures/>] 07/27/2023 09:15 AM EDT Veterans under 40 who may have been exposed to burn pits and other toxins during their service are now eligible for breast cancer risk assessments and mammograms (as clinically appropriate) at VA. (Source: VA)

Cash-Out Refinance Loan

With a VA cash-out refinance loan you can replace your current loan with a new one under different terms. If you want to take cash out of your home equity or refinance a non-VA loan into a VA loan, a cash-out refinance loan may be right for you. Find out if you're eligible and how to apply.

<https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/loan-types/cash-out-loan/> (Source: VA)

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System

You must be registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) A database of information on uniformed services members (sponsors), U.S.-sponsored foreign military, DoD and uniformed services civilians, other personnel as directed by the DoD, and their family members. You need to register in DEERS to get TRICARE. (DEERS) to get your TRICARE benefit.

- Sponsors are automatically registered in DEERS
- Sponsors must register eligible family members.

Why You Should Update DEERS

Up-to-date DEERS records are vital to accessing your TRICARE benefit. It's critical to keep your DEERS information up to date so you and your family can use TRICARE.

Errors in DEERS can cause problems with claims, authorization letters for referrals, and delivery of home delivery prescriptions. It's also important to keep your information in DEERS up to date so you don't miss important information and enrollment deadlines.

When You Should Update DEERS

Update DEERS whenever you have a change (this list is not all-inclusive):

- Change in sponsor's status:
 - [Retiring](#) or [separating](#) from active duty
 - National Guard or Reserve member [activation](#) or [deactivation](#)
 - Change in service status (e.g., enlisted to officer, branch change)

- Getting [married](#) or [divorced](#)
- [Having a baby](#)
- [Moving](#) to a new location for any reason
- [Becoming eligible for Medicare](#)
- [Death of sponsor](#) or family member

If you're enrolled in any TRICARE plan (e.g., TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Select, TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve or TRICARE Young Adult) remember to also change your address and other personal information with your regional contractor.

Q: How do I update my contact information in DEERS?

A: Sponsors and family members can update contact information by using one of these options:

- **Online:** Log in to [IDCO](#) or [milConnect](#)
- **Phone:** 1-(800)-538-9552 (TTY/TDD: 1-(866)-363-2883)
- **Fax:** 1-(800)-336-4416
- **Mail:** Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office
Attention: COA
400 Gigling Rd.
Seaside, CA 93955-6771

(Source: Tricare)

How To Find Your TRICARE Referrals

If you have a [TRICARE Prime](#) plan, referrals play a big role in how you get health care. A [referral](#) is when your primary care manager (PCM) sends you to see another provider. If your PCM needs to refer you to a civilian provider, your [TRICARE regional contractor](#) also plays a role in the referral process.

When you need a referral to get civilian care, your PCM sends a request to your regional contractor for review. Once your regional contractor approves the request,

you'll get an electronic authorization letter with instructions for using your referral.

Where to find your referral, it typically takes three business days for your contractor to process your referral. To check its status or download your authorization letter, go to your regional contractor's patient portal. If you don't already have an account for your region's portal, you'll need to create one.

Log in to the [TRICARE East Region patient portal](#) or [TRICARE West Region patient portal](#).

You can also get information about your referral by phone.

East Region: Call 1-(800)-444-5445.

West Region: Call 1-(844)-866-9378.

What to do with your referral, your authorization letter will outline the care and number of visits you're approved for. It will also have information about the provider you're referred to. Contact that provider to schedule your first appointment. If you want to see a different provider, call your regional contractor. Don't forget to check the letter for your referral's expiration date. Most referrals expire in 180 or 365 days. If your referral expires and you need a new one, contact your PCM.

When you need a referral, do you need a referral? It depends on your [beneficiary category](#), [health plan](#), and the type of care you need, you need a referral for specialty care and some diagnostic services. If you get this care without a referral, you'll be using the [point-of-service option](#). You'll pay more out of pocket if you use this option, as outlined in the [TRICARE Costs and Fees Fact Sheet](#).

TRICARE Select, TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve, and TRICARE For Life: You don't need a

referral for most health care services. (*TRICARE Communications*)

Check Out the New TRICARE Webinars Page

looking for TRICARE webinar recordings, slides, and transcripts? You can now find them in the TRICARE Newsroom. Webinar topics include:

- Using TRICARE after retiring
- Getting started with Medicare and TRICARE
- Maximizing your TRICARE pharmacy benefits

[Go to TRICARE Webinars](#)

<https://newsroom.tricare.mil/Multimedia/Webinars>

American Forces Travel (AFT)

AFT is the Department of Defense's online leisure travel website managed by Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) and supported by Priceline. Veteran eligibility includes all Veterans of the United States Armed Forces with a discharge status of honorable or general under honorable conditions.

With American Forces Travel, the opportunities for family summer travel are boundless. For a limited time only, enjoy additional value-added products and services for select vacation packages. [American Forces Travel - Great savings on Hotels, Flights, Cars, Packages, and Cruises!](#) (*Source: American Forces Travel*)

HELPFULL LINKS

To find your state representative:

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/>

To find your state senators:

<http://www.senate.gov>

To find DFAS: <http://www.dfas.mil>

To find Tricare: <http://www.tricare.mil>

To schedule an appointment to renew your ID Card <https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil>

Link to Retiree Publications

Army Echoes:

<http://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement>

Navy Shift Colors:

www.shiftcolors.navy.mil

Air Force Afterburner:

www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner

Marine Corps Semper Fidelis:

www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/SemperFidelis

Coast Guard Evening Colors:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras>

Businesses who give military discounts

<https://militarybenefits.info/military-discounts/>

VA benefits book can be found at:

https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/2020_Federal_Benefits_for_Veterans_Dependents_and_survivors.pdf

VA Questions? Call the VA at 1-(800)-698-2411 their new one-stop call line.

Veterans Crisis Hotline new number—**988 then Press 1 or Text 838255**

US Department of Veterans Affairs Links

https://www.va.gov/?utm_source=header&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources

facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/>

twitter <https://twitter.com/deptvetaffairs>

instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/deptvetaffairs>

youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBvOzPLmbzjtpX-Htstp2vw>

Rally Point

<https://www.rallypoint.com/join/orgs/veterans-affairs-va-department-of-veterans-affairs-va-washington->

[dc?utm_source=dept_of_va&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=email_header_icon](https://www.rallypoint.com/join/orgs/veterans-affairs-va-department-of-veterans-affairs-va-washington-dc?utm_source=dept_of_va&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=email_header_icon)

Podcast https://news.va.gov/va-podcast-network/?utm_source=header&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources

blog

https://news.va.gov/?utm_source=header&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources

The McChord Retiree Activities

Office needs Volunteers, if you are

interested, training is provided. We are military retirees and spouses, who share our knowledge of retired benefits to help military retirees in the community. For more information stop by our office, we are located in Building 100, the Customer Service Mall 9am-12 noon, M-T, or call us at (253)-982-3214.