



DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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Service Bulletin

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

<http://www.va.gov/>

VA Amends Clothing Allowance Regulation 38 CFR 3.810

VA has amended its regulations in order to implement the holding of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in *Sursely v. Peake*, 551 F.3d 1351, 1356 (Fed. Cir. 2009). In a final rule published in the *Federal Register* on November 16, 2011, VA implements *Sursely* by amending 38 CFR 3.810(a)(2) to provide that a veteran is entitled to a clothing allowance for each qualifying prosthetic or orthopedic appliance worn or used by a veteran because of a service-connected disability which tends to wear or tear clothing or medication prescribed by a physician and used by a veteran for a skin condition caused by a service-connected disability which irreparably damages an outer garment if each appliance or medication affects a single article of clothing or outer garment.

VA also provides in § 3.810(a)(3) that a veteran is entitled to two annual clothing allowances if:

- (1) A veteran uses more than one qualifying prosthetic or orthopedic appliance, medication for more than one skin condition, or an appliance and a medication; and
- (2) the appliance(s) or medication(s) each satisfy the requirements of § 3.810(a)(1) and together tend to tear or wear a single article of clothing or irreparably damage an outer garment, requiring replacement at an increased rate than if the article of clothing, or outer garment, was affected by a single qualifying appliance or medication.

This final rule is effective December 16, 2011, and includes claims pending before VA on December 16, 2011.

TSGLI Benefits Now Payable for Qualifying Genitourinary Injuries

<http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/TSGLI/TSGLI.htm>

Servicemembers who suffer severe injuries to the genitourinary organs will now be eligible for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection, or TSGLI. Military doctors report seeing an increase in these types of injuries, many of which are the result of the nature of current warfare and the use of improvised explosive devices by enemy combatants.

TSGLI provides a one-time payment to servicemembers sustaining certain severe traumatic injuries resulting in a range of losses, including amputations; limb salvage; paralysis; burns; loss of sight, and other traumatic losses. Genitourinary injuries for male and female servicemembers are being added to the TSGLI schedule of covered losses.

VA also provides health care for genitourinary problems, along with disability compensation for cases of service-related injuries or illnesses involving genitourinary organs. Eligibility for these new losses will be retroactive to injuries incurred on or after Oct. 7, 2001, the beginning of the Global War On Terror.

Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance Maximum Coverage Increases

<http://www.va.gov>

The maximum amount of Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) increased from \$90,000 to \$150,000, effective Oct. 1, 2011 under the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010. Maximum coverage will further increase from \$150,000 to \$200,000 after Jan. 1, 2012. VMLI is issued to those severely disabled veterans and servicemembers who have received grants for specially adapted housing (SAH) from VA. SAH grants are provided to those whose movement or vision is substantially impaired because of their disabilities.

Policyholders have three options for their VMLI coverage. They may decline the increase and retain their pre-October level of VMLI coverage and premium, accept the maximum amount of VMLI coverage for which they are eligible, or select a different amount of VMLI coverage. Coverage may not exceed the maximum allowed by law, or their mortgage balance, whichever is less.

All policyholders are automatically covered for \$150,000 or their mortgage amount, whichever is lower, between Oct. 1 and January 1, 2012, with no increase in their premium for this period. After Jan. 1, 2012, coverage will increase to the maximum amount for which the policyholder is eligible unless a different level of coverage is elected. Premiums for the new level of coverage will be deducted from VA compensation checks beginning in February 2012.

VA sent notification letters to eligible VMLI policyholders on September 1, 2011 to inform them of the increases. The letters included a form for policyholders to make their VMLI coverage selection, which will be effective Jan. 2, 2012.

VA Implements Spouse Telephone Support Program

<http://www.caregiver.va.gov>

VA is implementing a telephone support program to help the spouses of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, after a pilot telephone support program showed significant reduction in stress for spouses. The program, which is part of VA's Caregiver Support Program, builds spouses' ability to cope with the challenges that reintegration to civilian society can bring, helps them serve as a pillar of support for returning veterans, and eases the transition for families after deployments. Spouses in the pilot program reported decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety, with an increase in social support.

Spouses participate in 12 telephone support groups over six months. The focus is on problem-solving and communication, relationships, mental health and resilience. A trained, nationwide team of VA medical center staff members, including many caregiver support coordinators, will lead the support groups.

Typical issues spouses and veterans face after deployment include communication difficulties, the need to renegotiate family roles and responsibilities and the added stress of combat related injury. Spouses of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have reported feeling overwhelmed, depressed, anxious and frustrated.

VA Announces \$100 Million in Homeless Prevention Funding

<http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>

VA will make \$100 million in grants available to community agencies to prevent homelessness by assisting low income veterans and families at risk of homelessness. The program is likely to help more than 35,000 veterans and families.

The funds for fiscal year 2012 are provided through VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, a homeless-prevention and rapid re-housing program established by VA in 2011. The program provides community organizations with funding for counseling, training, education assistance, direct time-limited financial assistance, transportation, childcare, rent, utilities, and other services aimed at preventing homelessness or providing homes for participating veterans and family members.

Private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives interested in the grants have until February 15 to submit completed applications. In December 2011 and January 2012, VA is sponsoring free workshops to review the grant application process. Community organizations interested in applying for funds under this program can use the website to find dates for workshops in Atlanta, Baltimore, Denver, San Francisco, and St. Louis.

New Videos Feature Military Service Stories of Women Veterans

www.va.gov/womenvet
www.womenshealth.va.gov

VA has released a series of videos in which women veterans describe their experiences serving in the military, ranging from their significant contributions to national safety and security to the challenges they faced during their service and after returning to civilian life.

The videos are part of VA's ongoing "Rethink Veterans" campaign to increase awareness of women Veterans and their vital roles in our nation's history. The videos can be viewed at www.womenshealth.va.gov or on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/VeteransHealthAdmin>.

The four stories just released were recorded during the July 2011 Women Veterans Summit in Washington, D.C. Women from all eras, conflicts, and service branches were invited to share their experiences. VA plans to release several video vignettes over the next few months.

Women veterans make up 1 percent of veterans, 15 percent of active duty service members and nearly 18 percent of guard and reserve forces. As the number of active duty women increases, so does the number of women veterans using their VA benefits.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DoL)

<http://www.dol.gov/>

New DoL Employment Initiatives for Veterans

<http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html>
www.MyNextMove.org/vets
https://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/home/veterans_job_bank

DoL's **Gold Card** provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with the intensive and follow-up services they need to succeed in today's job market. The Gold Card initiative is a joint effort of the DoL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS).

An eligible veteran can present the Gold Card at his/her local One-Stop Career Center to receive enhanced services including up to six months of follow-up. The enhanced in-person services available for Gold Card holders at local Career Centers may include:

- Job readiness assessment, including interviews and testing;
- Development of an Individual Development Plan (IDP);

- Career guidance through group or individual counseling that helps veterans in making training and career decisions;
- Provision of labor market, occupational, and skills transferability information that inform educational, training, and occupational decisions;
- Referral to job banks, job portals, and job openings;
- Referral to employers and registered apprenticeship sponsors;
- Referral to training by WIA-funded or third party service providers; and
- Monthly follow-up by an assigned case manager for up to six months.

On **My Next Move for Veterans**, veterans will find a search engine where they enter their prior military experience (branch of service and military occupation code or title) and link to the information they need to explore information on civilian careers and related training, including information they can use to write resumes that highlight related civilian skills. In addition, My Next Move for Veterans contains a link to an online assessment, the O*NET Interest Profiler, which provides results comparable to the Strong Interest Inventory being used in the new Transition Assistance Program (TAP). Veterans who have not received an interest assessment as part of TAP can access and take this interest assessment online from a link in the lower right-hand corner of My Next Move for Veterans.

The **Veterans Job Bank Search Widget** is the latest tool developed by the National Resource Directory (NRD) to help streamline the job search process for the military and veteran communities. A feature that can be added to any website, the Veterans Job Bank Search Widget gives users the ability to search for jobs from thousands of military-friendly employers worldwide based on keyword, military occupation code (MOC) and/or location. As with the NRD State Widget and Search Widget, the Veterans Job Bank Search Widget is maintenance free and automatically updates as jobs are posted by employers.



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