

THIS
ISSUE

How Much of a VA
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What You Should Know
About the PACT Act

What's Cooking:
*Grandma Hoppel's Chicken
Cordon Bleu Casserole*

THE
JAN DILS
FOUNDATION

VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND

JANUARY 2024

HOW MUCH OF A VA DISABILITY INCREASE CAN I EXPECT IN 2024?



VA disability rates for 2024 were confirmed on October 12, 2023, with the Social Security Administration's announcement of a 3.2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2024. Disabled Veterans will begin to see the 3.2% increase in their January 2024 payments.

For example, a Veteran rated 100% with no dependents receiving \$3,621.95 in 2023 will begin receiving \$3,737.85 in 2024 due to the 3.2% COLA increase. That's an increase of \$115.90 monthly.

The following charts demonstrate what single Veterans with no spouse or dependents can expect to receive monthly in 2024, depending on their disability ratings:

10%	20%	30%	40%	50%
\$171.23	\$338.49	\$524.31	\$755.28	\$1,075.16
60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
\$1,361.88	\$1,716.28	\$1,995.01	\$2,241.91	\$3,737.85

For more information on the rate increase for Veterans with spouses or dependents, visit [VAClaimsInsider.com/2024-va-disability-pay-charts/](https://vaclaimsinsider.com/2024-va-disability-pay-charts/)

Is VA disability pay tax-free?

Yes, VA disability compensation pay is tax-free at both the federal and state levels.

How does the VA determine my VA disability rating?

The VA uses the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) as a guide to evaluate and rate your disabilities. The VASRD is a comprehensive list of 834 VA disabilities and their corresponding ratings, ranging from 0% to 100% in increments of 10%. The ratings are used to quantify the severity of each disability based upon your current symptoms and how those symptoms negatively affect your work, life and social functioning.

How do I increase my VA rating?

You can apply for a VA disability increase by submitting a new VA claim online at [VA.gov](https://va.gov) along with medical records for each condition you're claiming. Your medical evidence should show how your symptoms have worsened and meet the higher rating criteria for each condition.

Need help with your VA disability increase or appeal? We are here to help. Call the experienced Veterans disability team at the Jan Dils Foundation today at **833.534.3577** or email us at contact@JanDilsFoundation.org. You served your country, now let us serve you.

Source: <https://vaclaimsinsider.com/2024-va-disability-pay-charts/>



Letter From Jan

Happy New Year! I hope Santa was good to you, and everyone in your family had a wonderful and safe holiday season. It looks like 2024 is off to a good start for our Veterans, who will see a welcome 3.2% cost of living increase in their monthly

VA disability payments. Every little bit helps, that's for sure.

Winter's chill is with us and, along with it, snowy and icy roads. Some tips to make driving safer:

- Fill your vehicle's windshield washer reservoir with high-quality "winter" wiper fluid with de-icer.
- Make sure defrosters and all windshield wipers work and replace any worn blades.
- Consider installing heavy-duty winter

wipers if you live in an area that gets a lot of snow and ice.

- Pack an emergency stash of extra clothes, blankets, drinking water and energy bars in case you get stranded.
- Store a bag of cat litter and a small shovel in the trunk in case your car gets stuck, and you need traction.

Cross your fingers: I have it on good authority that spring is just around the corner! *Let's be careful out there.*

Recreational Spotlight

HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE: IN CONCERT

On Saturday, January 20, 2024, at the Capitol Theatre in Wheeling, WV, you can relive the film that started it all. Watch the wand choose the wizard, a troll run amok, and magic mirrors in high definition while a live orchestra performs John Williams' iconic score. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime event as Harry, Ron, Hermione

and all your favorite characters return to the screen and enchant the world all over again.

Subscriptions for the 2023-2024 season, *Music at Play*, are on sale now. Contact the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra box office at boxoffice@wheelingsymphony.com or 304.232.6191 for more information.



Employee Spotlight

Emily Frost

Meet Emily Frost, one of our Social Security case development support specialists, who has been with our firm a little over two years. Her favorite part of her role here is helping our clients at any stage of the Social Security hearing process. She says, "It's very rewarding to be able to answer the questions the client has and help ease their minds during this stressful time."

In her free time, she enjoys driving to the Fun Barn in Athens, Ohio, with her son, as well as trying out different local coffee shops, food trucks, and breweries. Her favorite holiday is Christmas, which reminds her of when she and her three sisters would create and act out plays for the family on Christmas Eve.

We're lucky to have you, Emily!





WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE PACT ACT

When the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act became law in August 2022, millions of Veterans suffering from illnesses caused by toxic exposures became eligible for benefits. The PACT Act, which covers Veterans from Vietnam through Iraq and Afghanistan as well as those who served at Camp Lejeune, was the most significant expansion of benefits and services for Veterans suffering from toxic exposure in more than 30 years and addressed a broad spectrum of conditions.

There are many questions about this law and what it means. Here are some of them:

1. What changes did the PACT Act include?

While some ailments caused by toxic exposure can present quickly, other illnesses can take years to become evident. That left many Veterans outside the eligi-

bility window to enroll in VA healthcare and others struggling to prove a service connection because of the time elapsed. To address this, the PACT Act increased the time frame during which Veterans can enroll in VA healthcare from five to 10 years following discharge for post-9/11 combat Veterans.

Also, the VA increased the number of conditions “presumed” to be caused by military service during these time periods, thus relieving the Veteran of the burden of proving service connection.

2. How do I know if I've been exposed to burn pits?

If you served in any of these locations on or after Sept. 11, 2001, the VA presumes you were exposed to burn pits or other toxins:

- Afghanistan
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria

- Uzbekistan
- Yemen, or
- the airspace above any of these locations

The VA also presumes you were exposed to burn pits or other toxins if you served on or after Aug. 2, 1990, in any of these locations:

- Bahrain
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Oman
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates, or
- the airspace above any of these locations

3. What presumptive conditions were added for burn pit exposure?

- Brain cancer
- Gastrointestinal cancer of any type
- Glioblastoma
- Head cancer of any type
- Kidney cancer
- Lymphatic cancer of any type
- Lymphoma of any type
- Melanoma
- Neck cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Reproductive cancer of any type
- Respiratory cancer of any type

The following illnesses are also now considered presumptive:

- Asthma that was diagnosed after service
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Chronic rhinitis
- Chronic sinusitis

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GRANDMA HOPPEL'S CHICKEN CORDON BLEU CASSEROLE

Grandma Hoppel is our Recruiting Specialist **Kaydi Hoppel's** late grandmother. The family put together a little book to preserve her favorite recipes.



INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (cooked and cubed) | ½ cup sour cream |
| 2 cups cooked rice | ½ cup milk |
| 6 slices Swiss cheese | 2 cans cream of chicken soup |
| 10 slices cooked ham | 10 saltine crackers (crushed) |

DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 350 degrees and spray a 13x9-inch casserole dish with cooking spray. Spread rice on the bottom and top with chicken, Swiss cheese and ham. In another bowl, mix soup, milk and sour cream together and pour on top of the casserole. Top with crushed crackers. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes or until warm and bubbly.

It's Game Time

COMMONYMS

What's a commonym, you ask? A commonym is a group of words that have a common trait in the three words/items listed. For example, the words: A car - A tree - An elephant... they all have trunks. These will make you think!

1. The Brain - The Lung - The Ear
2. Spider - Fiddler - Hermit
3. Back - Butterfly - Side
4. A Car - A Tree - An Elephant
5. A Bear - A Hammer - A Lobster
6. Fish - Fishing - Dotted
7. Metal - Radar - Lie
8. Stop - Spot - Strobe
9. Trap - French - Glass
10. State - Sales - Income

Answers: 1. They have lobes 2. Crabs 3. Swimming strokes 4. They have trunks 5. They have claws 6. Lines 7. Detectors 8. Lights 9. Doors 10. Taxes

PERSONAL INJURY | VETERANS DISABILITY | SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY

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- Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis
- Emphysema
- Granulomatous disease
- Interstitial lung disease
- Pleuritis
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Sarcoidosis

4. What changes were made for Vietnam-era Veterans?

The PACT Act added two additional presumptive conditions related to Agent Orange exposure:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Monoclonal gammopathy of undermined significance (MGUS)

Also, five new presumptive locations were added for Vietnam-era Veterans. For more information on these locations, visit: www.legion.org/veteransbenefits/256577/what-you-need-know-about-pact-act-benefits

5. What new radiation presumptive locations were added?

VA added three new response efforts to the list of presumptive locations for radiation exposure. For more information on these locations, visit: www.legion.org/veteransbenefits/256577/what-you-need-know-about-pact-act-benefits

6. I served at Camp Lejeune. Am I eligible for healthcare benefits?

If you served at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune or the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) at New River, North Carolina, at any time from Aug. 1, 1953, through Dec. 31, 1987, and did not receive a dishonorable discharge, you may be eligible for disability and healthcare benefits. Following is a list of covered health conditions related to Camp Lejeune:

- Bladder cancer
- Breast cancer

- Esophageal cancer
- Female infertility
- Hepatic steatosis
- Kidney cancer
- Leukemia
- Lung cancer
- Miscarriage
- Multiple myeloma
- Myelodysplastic syndromes
- Neurobehavioral effects
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Renal toxicity
- Scleroderma

7. How do I obtain these benefits?

VA encourages anyone who thinks they may be eligible for benefits and care under the PACT Act to file a claim. If you need help with your application or appeal, the experienced VA benefits team at the Jan Dils Foundation is ready to help. Call us today at **833.534.3577** or email us at contact@JanDilsFoundation.org.