

YOU MIGHT QUALIFY FOR VA BENEFITS FOR YOUR CANCER

If you received a cancer diagnosis during or after active military service, you might qualify for VA disability benefits. To receive veterans (VA) disability for cancer, you must prove a connection between your diagnosed medical condition and an injury, illness, or event during your service. Doing so is a complicated process.

Fining a qualified attorney working on your behalf can help.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO GET VA DISABILITY BENEFITS?

VA disability compensation provides a fixed monthly benefit to veterans who become disabled from an injury or illness that arose due to military service. The key is convincing the VA that your injury or illness — in your case, cancer — is service-related. That is our job as your VA disability attorneys.

In certain situations, such as a severed limb from combat or a chronic back injury from a training exercise, connecting a veteran's medical condition to military service is straight forward. However, proving cancer is service related is not always so cut and dry. Even if your diagnosis occurs during or shortly after active duty, the challenge is convincing the VA that you incurred the illness at least in part due to something that happened during your service.

HOW CAN I CONNECT A CANCER DIAGNOSIS TO MILITARY SERVICE?

Our primary task as your VA disability attorneys is proving your cancer diagnosis stems from your military service. We have many avenues we can pursue to do this. For instance, if your military service exposed you to Agent Orange or radiation, the VA may presume your cancer to be service related.

AGENT ORANGE

Agent Orange exposure may cause serious health issues, including the following cancers, for thousands of soldiers exposed to it:

Soft-tissue sarcoma

Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Multiple myeloma

Prostate cancer

Leukemia

Lung cancer

If you served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975, VA presumes you were exposed to herbicides. Therefore, if you later received a cancer diagnosis, the VA does not require you to prove service connection.

RADIATION

The U.S. military has conducted many missions and training activities over the years with radiation risk. If you participated in one of these activities, the VA will grant service connection on a presumptive basis for certain medical conditions. Cancer experts have linked radiation exposure to many forms of the disease, including:

- Leukemia
- Thyroid cancer
- Breast cancer
- Esophagus and stomach cancers
- Pancreatic cancer
- Urinary tract cancer
- Brain cancer
- Bone cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Lung cancer
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Liver cancer

Exposure to both radiation and Agent Orange afford service connection on a presumptive basis for certain medical conditions. If you are not eligible for service connection on a presumptive basis, you are not out of luck. An attorney may be able to make the case and determine any potential connection between your diagnosis and your military service.

WHAT ARE THE PAYMENT AMOUNTS FOR VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION?

When the VA approves you for disability benefits, it assigns you a disability rating. This rating is between 0 and 100 percent. The severity of your condition, as judged by the VA, determines your disability rating. The VA takes into consideration such factors as current and ongoing treatment, how your medical condition affects or limits your activities of daily living, and severity of symptoms.

Here are the 2019 monthly payment amounts for VA disability benefits:

- 10 percent disability rating: \$140.05 per month
- 20 percent disability rating: \$276.84 per month
- 30 percent disability rating: \$428.83 per month
- 40 percent disability rating: \$617.73 per month
- 50 percent disability rating: \$879.36 per month
- 60 percent disability rating: \$1,113.86 per month
- 70 percent disability rating: \$1,403.71 per month

80 percent disability rating: \$1,631.69 per month

90 percent disability rating: \$1,833.62 per month

100 percent disability rating: \$3,057.13 per month

Moreover, a disability rating of 30 percent or above qualifies you to receive additional benefits for your spouse, children, or dependent parents. The VA provides an additional monthly payment schedule for veterans who are at least 30 percent disabled and have qualified dependents.

SPECIAL RULES FOR CANCER

If you are diagnosed with an active cancer that the VA determines is service-related, you will likely receive an automatic disability rating of 100 percent. This rating continues for as long as your cancer is active, and then for another six months following the successful completion of a treatment program, such as chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery.

Six months after your cancer treatment ends, the VA requires you to undergo another examination to evaluate the current status of your diagnosis. It then assigns you a new rating based on the results of the exam. Typically, if the exam shows your cancer is in remission, you receive a reduced rating based on the extent of your ongoing treatment or residual symptoms of the cancer.