Burial Benefits

Effective July 7, 2014: VA is changing its monetary burial benefits regulations to simplify the program and pay eligible survivors more quickly and efficiently. These regulations will authorize VA to pay, without a written application, most eligible surviving spouses basic monetary burial benefits at the maximum amount authorized in law through automated systems rather than reimbursing them for actual costs incurred.

- Under the current regulations, VA pays for burial and funeral expenses on a reimbursement basis, which requires survivors to submit receipts for relatively small one-time payments that VA generally pays at the maximum amount permitted by law.
- The new burial regulations will permit VA to pay, at a flat rate, burial and plot or interment allowances thereby enabling VA to automate payment of burial benefits to most eligible surviving spouses and more efficiently process other burial benefit claims.
- The burial allowance for a non-service-connected death is $300, and $2,000 for a death connected to military service.

Benefit

Service-related Death

VA will pay up to $2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001, or up to $1,500 for deaths prior to September 11, 2001. If the Veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased may be reimbursed.

Non-service-related Death

VA will pay up to $796 toward burial and funeral expenses for deaths on or after October 1, 2019 (if hospitalized by VA at time of death), or $300 toward burial and funeral expenses (if not hospitalized by VA at time of death), and a $796 plot-interment allowance (if not buried in a national cemetery). For deaths on or after December 1, 2001, but before October 1, 2011, VA will pay up to $300 toward burial and funeral expenses and a $300 plot-interment allowance. For deaths on or after April 1, 1988 but before October 1, 2011, VA will pay $300 toward burial and funeral expenses (for Veterans hospitalized by VA at the time of death).

An annual increase in burial and plot allowances for deaths occurring after October 1, 2011 began in fiscal year 2013 based on the Consumer Price Index for the preceding 12-month period.

Eligibility Requirements

- You paid for a Veteran's burial or funeral, **AND**
- You have not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased Veteran's employer, **AND**
- The Veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, **AND**
  - The Veteran died because of a service-related disability, **OR**

RESOURCES

Appeals Modernization

Military Sexual Trauma Coordinators

Agent and Attorney Fee Coordinators

Appeals

Benefits A-Z

Federal Benefits Guide

Benefit Rates

VA Code of Federal Regulations

New/Update Military ID Card

Claims Adjudication Procedures Manual/Live Manual

Link to subscribe to receive email notice of changes to the Live Manual

5103 Notice Acknowledgement

- The Veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death, **OR**
- The Veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay, **OR**
- The Veteran died while hospitalized by VA, or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility, **OR**
- The Veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at VA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care, **OR**
- The Veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date or death, **OR**
- The Veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home.

NOTE: VA does not pay burial benefits if the deceased:

- Died during active military service, **OR**
- Was a member of Congress who died while holding office, **OR**
- Was a Federal prisoner

Evidence Requirements:

- Acceptable proof of death as specified in 38 CFR 3.211., **AND**
- Receipted bills that show that you made payment in whole or part, **OR**
- A statement of account, preferably on the printed billhead of the funeral director or cemetery owner. The statement of account must show:
  - The name of the deceased Veteran for whom the services and merchandise were furnished, **AND**
  - The nature and cost of the services and merchandise, **AND**
  - All credits, **AND**
  - The amount of the unpaid balance, if any

How to Apply

- You can apply online at Vets.gov, **OR**
- To submit a paper application, download and complete VA Form 21P-530, *Application for Burial Allowance* and mail it to the Pension Management Center that serves your state, **OR**
- Work with an accredited representative, **OR**
- You may also go to your local regional benefit office and turn in your application for processing.

Additional Information

Other information regarding VA burial benefits such as flags, headstones and markers is provided by the National Cemetery Administration.

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