



VA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGISTRY PROGRAMS

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide information about:

- Six VA Environmental Health Registry Programs (this includes two VA health surveillance programs)
- Eligibility requirements for Veteran participation
- Potential benefits for both Veterans and their providers when a Veteran participates in a registry

WHAT IS A REGISTRY EVALUATION?

VHA's Environmental Health Registry Evaluations are voluntary, focused medical evaluations for Veterans who may have been exposed to certain environmental hazards during their military service.

The registry evaluations are:

- Free to eligible Veterans (no co-pay) even if not enrolled in VHA medical care.
- NOT compensation and pension (C&P) exams—Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) handles C&P benefit claims. However, data collected through participation in a VHA registry could possibly be used to support a benefits claim.

HOW DOES A PROVIDER OR VETERAN INITIATE A VHA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGISTRY EVALUATION?

For most registries, local Environmental Health Clinicians/Coordinators are the first points of contact to initiate the enrollment process and guide the Veteran in completing the registry. Providers and Veterans can locate a local Environmental Health Clinician/Coordinator by visiting:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp>

Note: Veterans can visit the Veteran Portal listed below for participation in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

VA ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGISTRY EVALUATIONS

The Environmental Health Registry Evaluations track and monitor the health of specific groups of Veterans. A Veteran might be eligible to participate in more than one registry evaluation. For example, some Veterans meet the criteria for enrollment in the Gulf War Registry and the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. All of the six registries are separate and Veterans are encouraged to participate in as many registries as applicable.

BENEFITS OF REGISTRY INVOLVEMENT

Veteran participation in a VHA Environmental Health Registry evaluation is beneficial to both providers and Veterans. VA providers will have access to the Registry evaluation information which may facilitate future Veteran care. The registry exam process serves Veterans by identifying health issues and helping VA understand and respond to these health problems more effectively.





AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY

VA’s newest registry is the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry (AHOBPR). Veterans can report exposures to airborne hazards (such as smoke from burn pits, oil- well fires, or pollution during deployment), as well as other exposures and health concerns. The Veteran must initiate the process by filling out the registry questionnaire on-line. After completing the questionnaire, a Veteran can ask for a free in-person medical evaluation at their local VA facility. This registry exam can be completed by either a primary care doctor or an Environmental Health Clinician. A template exists in VA’s CPRS for providers conducting the in-person evaluation. The template can be found in CPRS by going to the Notes tab, clicking on new note, and searching the note title drop down list by typing “burn pit” or “airborne”. If a Veteran with respiratory concerns has completed the registry and in-person evaluation, a primary care provider can access the registry via the clinician portal (link below) and use the information to promote better follow up care and address Veteran concerns.

Eligibility:

Veterans who served in Operation Desert Storm, Operation Desert Shield, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and Operation Freedom’s Sentinel. Veterans and Service members who have deployed to the Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990 as well as those who have deployed to Afghanistan or Djibouti after September 11, 2001.

For more information:

- Veteran Portal: <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home>
- Clinician Portal: <https://vaww.virp.registries.aac.va.gov>.
- AHOBPR In-Person Evaluation: <https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/WARRELATEDILLNESS/AHBPCE/evaluation.asp>

GULF WAR REGISTRY

This registry is an in-person health exam by a local VA Environmental Health Clinician. It includes an exposure and medical history, a physical exam, and possible laboratory tests if appropriate. The Registry results are discussed with the Veteran and outlined in the record for follow up care.

Eligibility:

Veterans who served in the Gulf during Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn are eligible for the Gulf War Registry exam.

For more information:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/benefits/registry-exam.asp>





IONIZING RADIATION REGISTRY

This in-person Registry exam is completed by a local VA Environmental Health Clinician. It includes an exposure and medical history, a physical exam, and laboratory tests as needed. The results are discussed with the Veteran.

Eligibility

- On-site participation in a test involving the atmospheric detonation of a nuclear device, whether or not the testing nation was the United States
- Participation in the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki from August 6, 1945 through July 1, 1946
- Internment as a prisoner of war in Japan during World War II
- Receipt of nasopharyngeal (NP)— nose and throat— radium irradiation treatments while in the active military, naval, or air service

- Involved in the following “radiation-risk activities”: Service at Department of Energy gaseous diffusion plants at Paducah, KY, Portsmouth, OH, or the K25 area at Oak Ridge, TN, for at least 250 days before February 1, 1992 under certain conditions. Proximity to “Longshot,” “Milrow,” or “Cannikin” underground nuclear tests at Amchitka Island, AK, before January 1, 1974.

Note: Veterans with health concerns related to ionizing radiation who do not qualify for this registry are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their primary care provider who may consult with the Environmental Health Registry Clinician..

For more information:

- <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/radiation/benefits/registry-exam.asp>

TOXIC EMBEDDED FRAGMENT SURVEILLANCE CENTER

VA’s Toxic Embedded Fragment Surveillance Center (TEFSC) at the Baltimore VA Medical Center offers medical surveillance including:

- Analyses of fragments to determine their composition and analysis of surrounding tissues if fragments were surgically removed
- Urine biological monitoring (via mail) to identify elevated concentrations of 14 metals often found in fragments
- Veterans are identified and electronically enrolled following completion of screening questions from two VA clinical reminders. Veterans who screen positive are encouraged to complete an exposure questionnaire and enroll in this program.

Eligibility

Veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn are eligible. The Veteran must have, or likely have, an embedded fragment as the result of injury received while serving in an area of conflict.

For more information:

- https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/toxic_fragments/surv_center.asp





DEPLETED URANIUM FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM

VA and the Department of Defense established the Depleted Uranium (DU) Follow-up Program at the Baltimore VA Medical Center to screen and monitor Veterans for health problems associated with DU exposure. For Veterans involved in friendly fire incidents who had inhalational exposure to DU or who have DU embedded fragments or contaminated wounds, the DU Follow-Up Program offers on-going medical surveillance through detailed clinical assessment visits performed at the Baltimore VA Medical Center. The DU program also does DU screening through completion of a questionnaire and urine testing for Veterans who have DU concerns. Environmental Health Clinicians/ Coordinators or VA primary care providers can contact the DU Follow- Up Program to arrange for this testing. Results will be mailed to both the Veteran and the Veteran’s primary care provider, which can inform follow-up care.

Eligibility

VA requires active duty service in any of the following conflicts: Gulf War; Bosnia; Operation Enduring Freedom; Operation Iraqi Freedom; Operation New Dawn. The DU Follow-Up Program is especially geared to Veterans who were on, in or near vehicles hit with “friendly fire”; rescuers entering burning vehicles and those near burning vehicles; salvaging damaged vehicles; or near fires involving DU munitions. However, any Veteran concerned about possible DU exposure may submit a urine sample to the DU Follow-up program for testing via mail.

For more information:

- https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/depleted_uranium/followup_program.asp

AGENT ORANGE REGISTRY

This registry is an in-person health exam completed by a local VA Environmental Health Clinician. It includes an exposure and medical history, physical exam, and any tests if needed. The results are discussed with the Veteran and in a follow-up letter.

Eligibility

- Service in Vietnam 1962-1975, regardless of length of time
- Veterans who served aboard smaller river patrol and swift boats that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam (also known as “Brown Water Veterans”).
- Veterans who served in a unit in or near the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) anytime between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971.
- U.S. Army and Air Force Veterans who served in Thailand at certain anytime between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975.

- Blue Water Navy Veterans who served on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia (as defined by Public Law 116--23)
- Veterans who state that they flew on or worked on a C-123 aircraft between 1969 and 1986.
- Veterans who may have been exposed to herbicides during a military operation or as a result of testing, transporting, or spraying herbicides for military purposes.

For more information:

- <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/benefits/registry-exam.asp>

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