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VA Claim Document Checklist

A starting checklist for organizing the records and information many veterans gather before filing a disability compensation claim. This is not a list of what the VA requires in every case — it's a starting point to help you get organized before you file or meet with an accredited representative.

1. Service records

- ■ DD-214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), or equivalent separation document
- ■ Any service treatment records (STRs) already in your possession
- ■ Orders documenting deployments, duty stations, or special assignments relevant to your claim
- ■ Records of any in-service incidents, injuries, or exposures you plan to reference

2. Medical evidence

- ■ Current diagnosis documentation for each condition you're claiming
- ■ Treatment records connecting the condition to your time in service, where applicable
- ■ Private medical records not already in the VA's system (VA facilities may already have VA-provided care on file)
- ■ A personal symptom log: onset dates, frequency, and how the condition affects daily function and work

3. Supporting statements

- ■ Buddy statements from fellow service members who witnessed relevant events or changes in your condition
- ■ Statements from family members describing observed changes since service, if relevant to your claim
- ■ Your own personal statement connecting service events to your current condition(s)

4. Claim logistics

- ■ VA.gov or eBenefits account set up and access confirmed
- ■ A copy of any prior claims, decisions, or ratings already on file

- [ ] Contact information for an accredited Veterans Service Officer (VSO), attorney, or claims agent, if you plan to use one
- [ ] A folder (physical or digital) where every document and confirmation number related to this claim will live

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Educational only — not legal advice. This checklist does not guarantee any claim outcome and is not a substitute for guidance from an accredited Veterans Service Officer (VSO), claims agent, or attorney. Smith Helping Hands is not affiliated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or any state veterans agency. Always verify current requirements at va.gov.

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