

Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 – 2024 Health Care Eligibility Changes

March 11, 2024



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Purpose

This presentation provides an update on health care eligibility offered through the PACT Act including:

- PACT Act overview refresher
- **New 2024 health care authority**
 - **Section 103**
- Toxic Exposure Risk Activity overview
- How you can help
- Resources to help you answer questions from Veterans and their families



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PACT Act Overview



VA will **improve the decision-making process** for determining what medical conditions will be considered for presumptive status.



The Act **requires research studies** on the mortality of Veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War; Post-9/11 Veteran health trends; and Veteran cancer rates.



Every enrolled Veteran will **receive an initial toxic exposure screening** and a follow-up screening every five years. Veterans who are not enrolled, but who are eligible to enroll, will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.



The Act will help VA **build a stronger, more skilled workforce** to meet the growing demand for benefits and services.



VA health care staff and claims processors will receive **toxic exposure-related education and training**.



The Act **authorizes 31 new facilities** across the country, providing greater access to VA health care.



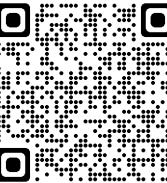
Vietnam



Gulf War Era



Post-9/11 Afghanistan and Iraq



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2024 PACT Act Health Care Eligibility: What Changed?

- Under the PACT Act, all toxic exposed Veterans were supposed to become eligible for VA care – in increments – between now and 2032.
- VA eliminated the phased-in approach – meaning that three new cohorts of Veterans are now eligible to enroll in VA health care as of March 5, 2024.

Veterans must first meet the minimum active duty service and discharge requirements to qualify for VA health care under PACT Act authorities.



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Section 103: Eligibility Criteria by Cohort

- Cohort 1: Veterans who participated in a **toxic exposure risk activity (TERA)**, as defined by law, while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training. **Must meet basic eligibility requirements to apply for this authority.*
- Cohort 2: Veterans who were assigned to a duty station in (including airspace above) **certain locations during specific periods of time**:
 - **On or after August 2, 1990**, in the following countries: Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, or the United Arab Emirates
 - **On or after September 11, 2001**, in the following countries: Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Uzbekistan, or any other country determined relevant by VA. (**Note:** VA has not determined any other country relevant at this time.)
- Cohort 3: Veterans who were **deployed in support of** Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Inherent Resolve, and Resolute Support Mission.



What Is Considered a Toxic Exposure Risk Activity (TERA)?

VA has determined that Veterans who were exposed to one or more of the following hazards or conditions during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training participated in a TERA:

- Air pollutants (burn pits, sand, dust, particulates, oil well fires, sulfur fires).
- Chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, depleted uranium with embedded shrapnel, contaminated water).
- Occupational hazards (asbestos, industrial solvents, lead, paints including chemical agent resistant coating, firefighting foams).
- Radiation (nuclear weapons handling, maintenance and detonation, radioactive material, calibration and measurement sources, X-rays, nuclear weapon technicians and dental technicians, served on nuclear submarine and other nuclear ships or in shipyards, or were involved in nuclear weapons handling and maintenance, including clean-up after accidents).
- Warfare agents (nerve agents, chemical and biological weapons).

This is not a comprehensive list, and there's no timeline. Veterans can view additional military exposure categories on VA's Public Health website at <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/>.



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How You Can Help

- Please encourage Veterans in your networks to apply for VA health care in one of the following ways, and **indicate their Section 103 qualifying service on the 10-10EZ form.**
 1. Online: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction>, or
 2. By calling the toll-free hotline: 877-222-8387, or
 3. In person at the nearest VA medical facility, or
 4. By mailing VA Form 10-10EZ to:
Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Rd., Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329
- Utilize materials in the stakeholder toolkit to spread the word! Share details on VA outreach events happening in your area!



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Other Resources

- Veterans can learn more about the PACT Act at www.va.gov/PACT.
- How to apply for VA health care:
 - [Apply For Health Care | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#)
- How to submit a VBA claim:
 - [File for disability compensation with VA Form 21-526EZ | Veterans Affairs](#)
- Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry: [HOME - Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry \(va.gov\)](#)
- Visit [this blog post](#) to access a suite of external products (included translated versions).





Questions?



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