

Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

VA establishes presumptive service connection for rare respiratory cancers for certain Veterans

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WASHINGTON — As part of [President Biden’s Unity Agenda](#) commitment to support the nation’s Veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs is adding nine rare respiratory cancers to the list of presumed service-connected disabilities due to military environmental exposures to fine particulate matter.

The following list of rare respiratory cancers have been added to [VA’s regulations through an Interim Final Rule](#) published in the Federal Register on April 26, 2022:

- Squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx.
- Squamous cell carcinoma of the trachea.
- Adenocarcinoma of the trachea.
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea.
- Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung.
- Large cell carcinoma of the lung.
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung.
- Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung.
- Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung.

VA determined through a focused review of scientific and medical evidence there is biological plausibility between airborne hazards and carcinogenesis of the respiratory tract — and the unique circumstances of these rare cancers warrant a presumption of service connection.

The rarity and severity of these illnesses and the reality these conditions present, is a situation where it may not be possible to develop additional evidence, prompted VA to take this action.

“Last year we made promises to fundamentally change and improve how we establish and expedite presumptions — now we’re keeping them,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “We are taking a new approach to presumptives that takes all available science into account, with one goal in mind — getting today’s Veterans — and Vets in the decades ahead — the benefits they deserve as fast as possible.”

VA will begin processing disability compensation claims for Veterans who served any amount of time in the [Southwest Asia theater of operations](#) beginning Aug. 2, 1990, to the present, or Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Syria or Djibouti beginning Sept. 19, 2001, to the present.

Any Veteran who has or had one of the listed cancers at any time during or after separation from military service may be eligible for disability compensation benefits. VA will contact impacted Veterans and survivors to inform them about their eligibility and will provide information on how to apply.

Veterans, survivors or dependents who had claims previously denied for any of these respiratory cancers are encouraged to file a [supplemental claim](#) for benefits. If you are a Veteran, survivor or dependent applying for the first time, file a new claim [here](#).

To apply for benefits, Veterans and survivors may visit [VA.gov](#) or call toll-free at 800-827-1000.

View the interim final rule for [Presumptive Service Connection for Rare Respiratory Cancers Due to Exposure to Fine Particulate Matter](#) published in the Federal Register.