

Beneficiary Travel & Compensated Work Therapy Program Payments

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will this change occur?

A. This change is occurring now. If you are a Veteran who currently receives VBA benefits by direct deposit, you may have already been enrolled to receive your beneficiary travel and compensated work therapy payments by direct deposit through an automated process. Check with the point of contact provided in this information packet if you are not sure. After August 1, 2013 cash will not be available for beneficiary travel reimbursement – exceptions do apply.

Q: Why is the VA making this change?

A: The U.S. Department of Treasury has directed that federal non-tax payments, with few exceptions, will be made by EFT as a part of government-wide cost reduction.

Q: What is the benefit of these changes to me?

A: EFT provides a faster and more reliable method of reimbursement than paper checks through the mail. EFT payment processing is more efficient and accurate. Waiting in long lines to receive payment is eliminated.



Q: How do I sign up for electronic payments?

A: Signing up for direct deposit is easy. All you need to do is complete and submit the Direct Deposit Enrollment form provided in this packet. Unsigned or incomplete direct deposit enrollment forms or incorrect banking information will delay payment. Also, any change to your banking institution or bank account number will require that you notify accounting (422-1206) as soon as possible to avoid payment delays.

Q: What happens to the form after I fill it out and turn it in?

A: The VA will process the information, which is used solely for the purposes of enrolling you for direct deposit payments.

Q: Is there an easier way to request beneficiary travel?

A: Veterans eligible for this benefit will be able to fill out a travel reimbursement form and place it in a drop box after checking out from their appointment. A drop box is currently located outside of the beneficiary travel window – however this will be expanded to other drop boxes located in respective clinics in the future. Veterans will no longer have to visit the VAMC travel department and wait in multiple lines. Staff will collect the forms from the boxes multiple times during the day for processing.

Q: What if I don't have a bank or credit union account?

A: You need to open an account in order to receive payment by direct deposit.

Q: How does direct deposit work and is it safe?

A: The U.S. Department of the Treasury sends your money through a safe electronic transfer directly to your bank or credit union account. Your personal information is not sent over the internet.

Q: Once my direct deposit is set up, what do I need to do to get my beneficiary travel reimbursement?

A: You will still request reimbursement for each day of travel, following the local process at the facility where you receive care. Avoid the lines and submit using travel form and drop box for your convenience.

Q: I receive care at a VA outpatient clinic or CBOC. How will this impact me?

A: Veterans treated at the Outpatient Clinics and Community-Based Clinics will also receive payment by direct deposit. Please continue to submit your travel request using the form provided at the CBOC.

Q: Will I still be able to receive some of my reimbursement in cash?

Cash will remain available to Veterans that meet Treasury exemption guidelines, and to Veterans (on a **one-time basis after August 1, 2013**) in order to return home as we implement this payment process change. However, you will be required to carry sufficient cash with you to return home for all future appointments. You will be asked to sign a form acknowledging receipt of the one-time payment.

Q: What are the exceptions from the U.S. Department of Treasury?

A: A formal process is also being developed for Veterans to request a waiver from direct deposit and debit card. The allowable exceptions are limited and include:

- Individuals born prior to May 1, 1921, and who are receiving payments by check on March 1, 2013.
- Individuals who are ineligible for a Direct Express® card, because the card is suspended or cancelled by the financial agent.
- Individuals who have filed a waiver request with Treasury certifying that payment by EFT would impose a hardship because of the individual's inability to manage an account at a financial institution or a:
 - Mental impairment and Treasury has not rejected the request
 - Living in a remote geographic location lack the infrastructure to support electronic financial transactions and Treasury has not reject the request.

Q: What if I don't want to receive my payment by direct deposit?

A: If you decline receiving payment by direct deposit, you will be issued a Direct Express Debit MasterCard as soon as the debit card program is available at our facility.

Q: If I have questions about this change in process, who should I contact?

A: Questions regarding the beneficiary travel payment change should be directed to the VA travel office and/or agent cashier.