



Uploaded to the VFC Website

▶▶▶ 2016 ◀◀◀

This Document has been provided to you courtesy of Veterans-For-Change!

Feel free to pass to any veteran who might be able to use this information!

For thousands more files like this and hundreds of links to useful information, and hundreds of "Frequently Asked Questions, please go to:

[Veterans-For-Change](#)

If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?

Note:

VFC is not liable for source information in this document, it is merely provided as a courtesy to our members & subscribers.



Special Monthly Compensation for Blue Water Veterans

If you are a Blue Water veteran who is hoping to be awarded service connection for a condition caused by Agent Orange exposure due to the expected changes to VA law, you not only need to be aware of the all the conditions that are on the VA's list for presumptive service connection, you need to know the additional benefits for which you may be eligible. Today, we are going to talk special monthly compensation.

Hopefully in the near future, Blue Water veterans will begin receiving rating decisions awarding them service connection for their Agent Orange-related disabilities. Once this occurs, you may think that your claim is finally over. And while that may be true, there is another type of VA benefits to which you may be entitled. These are known as Special Monthly Compensation benefits, or SMC. SMC benefits are meant to provide additional compensation for things such as anatomical loss or loss of use, such as loss of use of a hand or foot, or impairment of the senses, such as loss of vision or hearing. SMC is also available for veterans who are housebound or who are in need of regular aid and attendance. Unlike the disability rating schedule, SMC is not meant to compensate a veteran for the effects that his or her disability has on earning potential, but rather for non-economic factors such as personal inconvenience, social inadaptability, or the profound nature of a disability.

Depending on the level of SMC a veteran is entitled to, it could equal a significant increase in monthly compensation benefits (see the current rate table on the VA's website). One type of SMC which is particularly advantageous to veterans is SMC(s). SMC(s) is available to veterans who (1) have a 100 percent rating and an additional disability rated at or combining to 60 percent or more, or (2) who are substantially confined to his or her dwelling or immediate premises as a result of a service connected disability. Note that the VA has a tendency to misinterpret SMC to require housebound status under the first set of requirements, but that is an incorrect standard. Also, the 100 percent rating can be for Total Disability based on Individual Unemployability (TDIU) instead of a schedular rating. But note, if a veteran wants to use a TDIU rating to get SMC(s), the 60 percent rating has to come from a disability that was not a basis for the grant of TDIU. For example, a veteran who is granted TDIU based on Parkinson's disease (which is on the presumptive list for service connection based on Agent Orange exposure) and is rated at 60 percent for a knee condition is entitled to SMC(s). But, if the TDIU were based on both the Parkinson's disease and the knee condition in combination, the knee condition could not be used for entitlement to SMC(s). The veteran would either need to have an additional disability rated at 60 percent or more, or get a medical opinion that Parkinson's disease alone renders him unable to obtain or maintain substantially gainful employment, without taking into account the veteran's knee condition.

Remember that SMC is an inferred issue, meaning the VA is supposed to consider SMC at the time they are deciding the claim, but it is often overlooked. Therefore, it is important to know when you might be entitled to SMC so you can get all of the benefits you deserve. For Blue Water veterans who will finally be eligible for presumptive service connection under the expected changes to VA law, it is important to know what benefits are available to you so you do not leave any benefits that you are owed on the table. Many veterans who are granted service connection after many years of back-and-forth with the VA are happy to finally be done, but Special Monthly Compensation can often mean substantial additional benefits.

03/01/16