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Blue Water Veterans and Agent Orange Exposure

Veterans who served on open sea ships off the shore of Vietnam during the Vietnam War are sometimes called “Blue Water Veterans.”

- [Exposure to Agent Orange](#)
- [Institute of Medicine report on Agent Orange exposure](#)
- [VA benefits](#)
- [Need help determining exposure or eligibility?](#)

Exposure to Agent Orange



Blue Water Veterans must have actually stepped foot on the land of Vietnam or served on its inland waterways anytime between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 to be presumed to have been exposed to herbicides when claiming service-connection for [diseases related to Agent Orange exposure](#).

Some offshore vessels docked to the shore of Vietnam, operated in Vietnam's close coastal waters and sent smaller vessels ashore, or conducted operations on the inland waterways of Vietnam.

Check VA's list of [U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships that operated in Vietnam](#). Evidence **confirmed through military records** must show that the Veteran was aboard one of these ships.

Blue Water Veterans who did **not** set foot in Vietnam or serve aboard ships that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam anytime between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 **must show on a factual basis** that they were exposed to herbicides during military service in order to receive disability compensation for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure. These claims are decided on a case-by-case basis.

Exception: Blue Water Veterans with [non-Hodgkin's lymphoma](#) may be granted service-connection without showing inland waterway service or that they set foot in Vietnam. This is because VA also recognizes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma as related to service in Vietnam or the **waters offshore of Vietnam** during the Vietnam Era.

Institute of Medicine report on Agent Orange exposure

VA asked the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine (IOM) to review the medical and scientific evidence regarding Blue Water Veterans' possible exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides.

IOM's report [Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans and Agent Orange Exposure](#) was released in May 2011. The report concluded that "there was not enough information for the IOM to determine whether Blue Water Navy personnel were or were not exposed to Agent Orange."

VA benefits

Veterans

Eligible Veterans may receive the following VA benefits:

- [Health care benefits](#): A full range of medical benefits. There are many ways that a Veteran may qualify for VA health care benefits.
- [Disability compensation benefits](#): A monthly payment for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure. Blue Water Veterans who did not set foot in Vietnam or serve aboard ships that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam must show on a factual basis that they were exposed to herbicides during military service in order to receive disability compensation for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure (other than [non-Hodgkin's lymphoma](#)).
- [Other benefits](#): Home loans, vocational rehabilitation, education, and more

Survivors

Surviving spouses, dependent children and dependent parents of Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and died as the result of diseases related to Agent Orange exposure may be eligible for [survivors' benefits](#).