VAC.claims

Cancer Claim Preparation Workbook

A practical tool for organizing service history, possible exposures, medical records and claim evidence

Purpose: This workbook helps you organize information for a possible VAC disability benefit claim involving cancer or a suspected service-related exposure. It does not determine eligibility or replace medical, legal or representative advice.

How to use this workbook

• Complete only the sections that apply. If you do not know a date or detail, write “unknown” or label your best estimate.

• Keep copies of supporting records and note where each item came from. Do not alter original records.

• Separate what you personally remember from what documents say or what another person has told you.

• Use the workbook to prepare for a discussion with VAC or a qualified representative. Follow current official forms and instructions.

• Store this workbook securely. It may contain sensitive service and health information.

Important notice

This is an independent educational resource, not an official Government of Canada form, legal advice, medical advice or a guarantee of benefits. A cancer diagnosis or possible exposure does not automatically establish service connection. VAC assesses individual claims based on the applicable rules and evidence.

Veteran name / preferred identifier (optional): _____

Date started: _____ Last updated: _____

1. Claim snapshot

Use this page to summarize the issue before gathering details.

Prompt	Your notes
What cancer diagnosis is involved?	
When diagnosed? (exact date or estimate)	
What service period or duties may be relevant?	
Possible exposure or service circumstance?	
Current claim stage	■ Not started ■ Preparing ■ Submitted ■ Waiting ■ Entitlement ■ Assessment ■ Review / appeal
Main question or concern	

2. Service history

Record relevant service facts and what duties you performed.

Dates / period	Unit, ship, base or location	Trade / duties / activity	Record or source

Service records to locate or request

Record / document	Where to obtain it	Requested	Received / notes

Record / document	Where to obtain it	Requested	Received / notes

3. Possible exposure chronology

Describe the suspected exposure accurately. You do not need technical measurements to begin. Avoid guessing or presenting uncertain details as facts.

Question	Your notes
Where did it happen? (ship, base, building, workshop, deployment, other)	
When did it happen? (dates or approximate service period)	
What material, substance, process or hazard do you suspect? How do you know?	
What were you doing? What were your duties?	
How might contact have occurred? (only if known)	
How often and for how long?	
Protective equipment or ventilation used? What do you remember?	
Who else may have direct knowledge? What did they observe?	
What is uncertain or needs confirmation?	

Exposure event log

Approx. date	Location / duty	What I recall or observed	Supporting record / witness

Approx. date	Location / duty	What I recall or observed	Supporting record / witness

Accuracy matters: Distinguish direct recollection from information found later in documents or research. If the substance or amount is unknown, state that it is unknown.

4. Medical timeline

List the main events in the diagnosis and treatment history. Include only information relevant to the claim and store this workbook securely.

Date / period	Event (symptoms, test, diagnosis, treatment)	Provider / facility	Record available?

Medical records checklist

- ■ Diagnostic / pathology report confirming cancer type and site, if available.
- ■ Relevant specialist consultations, imaging and test results.
- ■ Surgery, treatment, follow-up and recurrence records, where relevant.
- ■ Summary of relevant symptoms and approximate onset, if known.
- ■ List of records still needed and who may hold them.
- ■ Questions for a clinician or representative about possible additional medical opinion evidence.

Questions to ask a clinician or representative

_____

_____

_____

5. Evidence tracker

Track what you have, what you need, and what each item helps establish. Keep a copy of every document you submit.

Item / file name	What fact does it support?	Source / date	Requested / received	Submitted / date

Evidence gap review

Key fact or question	Evidence available	What is missing / next action

6. Personal statement planner

Use this outline to plan a clear, factual statement. The separate VAC.claims Personal Statement Guide provides a longer template.

A. Service background

Relevant dates, branch, trade, units, ships, bases, deployments and duties.

_____

_____

B. Event, duty or possible exposure

What happened, where, when, how often and what you personally observed. Identify estimates and unknown details.

_____

_____

C. Health timeline

When symptoms began, when medical attention was sought, diagnosis and important treatment milestones.

_____

_____

D. Impact of the condition

Specific, accurate examples of effects on daily activities or function, where relevant.

_____

_____

E. Supporting records

List documents that support your account and explain missing records or differences in dates.

_____

_____

F. Uncertainties and follow-up

What you do not know, what needs confirmation and what records or advice you plan to seek.

_____

_____

Do not overstate causation: You can describe your service, possible exposure and diagnosis without asserting a medical cause that has not been established.

7. Submission and contact log

Date	Person / office contacted	Question or document sent	Response / next action

Before submitting

- ■ I used current official VAC application instructions and forms.
- ■ I checked names, dates and sequence for accuracy.
- ■ I labelled estimates and identified details I cannot confirm.
- ■ I kept a complete copy of the application and attachments.
- ■ I recorded the submission date and confirmation details.
- ■ I considered getting help from a qualified veterans' representative.

8. If a decision is issued

Read the entire decision letter. Record the date received and identify the exact issue, reasons and next-step instructions. Do not assume that asking for clarification pauses a deadline.

Decision review prompt	Your notes
Date of decision / date received	
What did VAC decide?	
Reasons or evidence gaps identified	
Evidence possibly overlooked or misunderstood	

Decision review prompt	Your notes
Who will confirm options and deadline?	
Deadline / date confirmed / by whom	

Act promptly: Review and appeal routes depend on the decision and applicable rules. Confirm current options and deadlines directly with VAC, VRAB, BPA or a qualified representative.

9. Useful resources

• **VAC disability benefits:**
https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/financial-programs-and-services/compensation-illness-or-injury/disability-benefits

• **VAC hazardous material and radiation exposure policy:**
https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/about-vac/reports-policies-and-legislation/policies/hazardous-material-and-radiation-exposure

• **VAC.claims — Cancer & Toxic-Exposure Claims:** https://vac.claims/claims/cancer-toxic-exposure.asp

• **VAC.claims — Evidence Checklist:** https://vac.claims/claims/evidence-checklist.asp

• **VAC.claims — Personal Statement Guide:** https://vac.claims/claims/personal-statement.asp

• **Veterans with Cancer Inc.:** https://veteranswithcancer.com/

• **Veterans Review and Appeal Board:** https://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca/en

My next three actions

Action	Target date	Completed
		■
		■
		■

Privacy reminder: This workbook may contain sensitive medical and service information. Keep it secure and share it only with people or organizations you trust and intend to assist you.