

When You Disagree With a VA Decision

A practical guide to the three main VA decision-review options and the first steps to take.

DO NOT IGNORE THE DATE ON YOUR DECISION LETTER

For most VA benefits, you generally have 1 year from the date on the decision letter to request a Higher-Level Review or Board Appeal. A Supplemental Claim can be filed later, but VA recommends filing within 1 year when preserving the effective date matters. Follow the deadline stated in your letter.

1 | Read the decision letter completely

- Identify each issue VA decided.
- Read VA's reasons for the decision and the evidence it considered.
- Mark the deadline on your calendar.
- Decide whether you have new evidence or believe VA made an error based on the existing record.

Choose the review path that matches the problem

SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIM

Use when you have NEW AND RELEVANT EVIDENCE, or another qualifying basis for supplemental review. VA Form 20-0995.

[FILE / LEARN ABOUT A SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIM →](#)

HIGHER-LEVEL REVIEW

Use when you want a more senior reviewer to look again at the existing record. You CANNOT submit new evidence. VA Form 20-0996.

[REQUEST A HIGHER-LEVEL REVIEW →](#)

BOARD APPEAL

Use when you want a Veterans Law Judge at the Board of Veterans' Appeals to review the case. Different Board dockets have different evidence/hearing rules. VA Form 10182.

[REQUEST A BOARD APPEAL →](#)

2 | Get help before choosing if you are unsure

[FIND YOUR STATE VETERANS AGENCY →](#)

[COMPARE VA DECISION-REVIEW OPTIONS →](#)