

# Caseflow Certification – Training Guide

Caseflow Certification is a web-based tool that streamlines the certification process by checking case documents for readiness and ensuring accuracy of the Veteran's representative and hearing preferences. The tool was built by the United States Digital Service at the Department of Veterans Affairs, in close collaboration with Decision Review Officers and other employees in VA regional offices all over the country.

## How to access and use Caseflow Certification:

### Launch Caseflow Certification from VACOLS

Log in to VACOLS and search for the ID of the appeal you'd like to certify. Once the dates for the Form 9, NOD, SOC, and any required SSOC have been entered into VACOLS, click the Certify Appeal button from the process menu. Since you are certifying a paperless appeal, you should select VBMS eFolder.

This screenshot shows the VACOLS search interface. At the top, there are input fields for 'Appellant Id' and 'Last Name', each with a corresponding 'Find' button. Below these is a table with columns: Appeal Id, Dec Date, Disp, Name, Status, NOD, RO, Type, and Action. The table contains one row with the following data: Appeal Id (redacted), Dec Date (redacted), Disp (redacted), Name (redacted), Status (ADV (Cert)), NOD (9/1/2015), RO (RO13), Type (1 - Original), and Action (redacted). At the bottom of the interface, there is a row of buttons: 'View Appeal', 'Update Appeal', 'Certify Appeal' (highlighted with a red circle), 'Dispatch Appeal', 'RO Transfer', and 'Travel Board'.

This screenshot shows the VACOLS certification form. It contains several date fields: 'Notification' (08/30/15), 'NOD' (09/01/15), 'DRO Elect' (09/02/15), 'SOC' (09/03/15), 'SSOC' (00/00/00), and 'Form 9' (09/05/15). There are also checkboxes for 'Ready to rate?' and 'DRO Id:'. The 'SOC' section has radio buttons for 'Partial Grant', 'Denial' (selected), 'Informal', and 'Formal Hearing'. The 'SSOC' section has radio buttons for 'Cert to BVA' and 'Sent to BVA'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Certify Appeal' button highlighted with a red circle.

This screenshot shows the VACOLS certification form. It contains input fields for 'Appellant Id', 'Name', and 'Form 9' (09/05/15). Below these is a 'Certification Date' field (12/01/15) with a 'mm/dd/yy' label. There is a 'Folder Type' section with two radio buttons: 'Hardcopy claims folder or Virtual VA' and 'VBMS paperless e-folder' (highlighted with a red circle). At the bottom, there are 'Certify' and 'Exit' buttons.

## Check Documents

Caseflow Certification will check to see if documents in the VBMS eFolder (such as the NOD, SOC, and Form 9) match the dates entered in VACOLS. Caseflow Certification will let you know if it cannot locate the documents in VBMS.

### Check Documents



#### All documents found with matching VBMS and VACOLS dates.

SOC and SSOC dates in VBMS can be up to 4 days before the VACOLS date to be considered matching.

Document	VACOLS date	VBMS date	Status
NOD	09/01/2015	09/01/2015	✓ Found in VBMS
Form 9	10/15/2015	10/15/2015	✓ Found in VBMS
SOC	01/01/2016	01/02/2016	✓ Found in VBMS

Sometimes, a document may appear to be missing if the date and/or label associated with the document is not consistent in VACOLS and in VBMS.

**Note:** The Form 9 and NOD dates must match in both VBMS and VACOLS. However, the SOC and SSOC date in VBMS can be up to 4 days less than the SOC and SSOC date in VACOLS.

### Check Documents



#### Some documents could not be found in VBMS.

Document	VACOLS date	VBMS date	Status
NOD	09/01/2015	—	✗ Not found in VBMS
Form 9	10/15/2015	—	✗ Not found in VBMS
SOC	01/01/2016	01/02/2016	✓ Found in VBMS

If there is an inconsistency, updating the date and/or label will allow you to move forward in the process. If a document is truly missing from the VBMS eFolder, the appeal cannot be certified using Caseflow Certification and should be certified outside of Caseflow Certification.

## Confirm Case Details

Once all the documents have been detected, you can confirm case details.

Review the VBMS and VACOLS representative info on the screen. If it matches, select yes and proceed to the next step.

### Confirm Case Details

Review information about the appellant's representative from VBMS and VACOLS.

From VBMS	From VACOLS
National Veterans Legal Services Program Service organization	Jay Chisholm Attorney

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Does the representative information from VBMS and VACOLS match? Answer yes if the only differences are due to typos or differences in punctuation. *Required*

☒ Yes ☐ No

If the representative information does not match, select No. You'll be asked to select the correct information source. Select whether the correct representative information is from VBMS or VACOLS, then update the incorrect source. You may be required to enter the representative's address in VACOLS if it was not found in VBMS (Note: Caseflow Certification only updates the representative information in VACOLS, not VBMS). Proceed to the next step.

### Confirm Case Details

Review information about the appellant's representative from VBMS and VACOLS.

From VBMS	From VACOLS
National Veterans Legal Services Program Service organization	Jay Chisholm Attorney

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Does the representative information from VBMS and VACOLS match? Answer yes if the only differences are due to typos or differences in punctuation. *Required*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Which information source shows the correct representative for this appeal? *Required*

☐ VBMS  
☒ VACOLS  
☐ None of the above

Great! Caseflow will keep the representative information as it exists now in VACOLS.

If it's None of the above and the representative is an attorney, agent or other, update their name and address in VACOLS.

Does the representative information from VBMS and VACOLS match? Answer yes if the only differences are due to typos or differences in punctuation. *Required*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Which information source shows the correct representative for this appeal? *Required*

☐ VBMS  
☐ VACOLS  
☒ None of the above

What type of representative did the appellant request for this appeal? *Required*

☐ Attorney  
☐ Agent  
☒ Service organization  
☐ Other  
☐ No representative

Service organization name: *Required*

Military Order of the Purple Heart ▼

Great! Caseflow will update the representative type, name, and address information for the selected service organization in VACOLS.

If it's a service organization, Caseflow Certification will update this information for you if the organization is listed in the dropdown menu. If the organization is not listed, choose Unlisted Service Organization from the dropdown menu and enter their name into Caseflow Certification. You need to enter their address into VACOLS. Proceed to step 3.

## Confirm Hearing

Once the Veteran's representative information has been updated, you can confirm their hearing preference.

First check to see if there was a hearing request or cancelation after the Veteran's Form 9 date (e.g. 4/23/17).

### Confirm Hearing

Check the appellant's eFolder for a hearing cancellation or request added after **04/23/2017**, the date the Form 9 (or statement in lieu of Form 9) was uploaded.

Was a hearing cancellation or request added after **04/23/2017**? *Required*

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, indicate the type of request.

### Confirm Hearing

Check the appellant's eFolder for a hearing cancellation or request added after **04/23/2017**, the date the Form 9 (or statement in lieu of Form 9) was uploaded.

Was a hearing cancellation or request added after **04/23/2017**? *Required*

☒ Yes ☐ No

What did the appellant request in the document you found? *Required*

- ☒ They cancelled their hearing request.
- ☐ They requested a board hearing via videoconference.
- ☐ They requested a board hearing in Washington, DC.
- ☐ They requested a board hearing at a local VA office.

If no, you'll be asked to define the type of appeal document (Form 9 or statement in lieu of Form 9) that appears on the screen.

## Confirm Hearing

Check the appellant's eFolder for a hearing cancellation or request added after **04/23/2017**, the date the Form 9 (or statement in lieu of Form 9) was uploaded.

Was a hearing cancellation or request added after **04/23/2017**? **Required**

☐ Yes ☒ No

Caseflow found the document below, labeled as a Form 9, from the appellant's eFolder. What type of substantive appeal is it? **Required**

☐ Form 9 ☐ Statement in lieu of Form 9

form9\_pdf 1 / 2

(Continue on the back, or attach sheets of paper, if you need more space.)

**10. OPTIONAL BOARD HEARING**  
**IMPORTANT:** Read the information about this block in paragraph 6 of the attached instructions. This block is used to request an optional Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) hearing. **DO NOT USE THIS FORM TO REQUEST A HEARING BEFORE VA REGIONAL OFFICE PERSONNEL.** Check one (and only one) of the following boxes:

A. ☒ I DO NOT WANT AN OPTIONAL BOARD HEARING. (Choosing this option often results in the Board issuing its decision most quickly. If you choose, you may write down what you would say at a hearing and submit it directly to the Board.)

I WANT AN OPTIONAL BOARD HEARING:

B. ☐ BY LIVE VIDEOCONFERENCE AT A LOCAL VA OFFICE. (Choosing this option will add delay to issuance of a Board decision.)

C. ☐ IN WASHINGTON, DC. (Choosing this option will add delay to issuance of a Board decision.)

D. ☐ AT A LOCAL VA OFFICE.\* (Choosing this option will add significant delay to issuance of a Board decision.)  
\*This option is not available at the Washington, DC, or Baltimore, MD, Regional Offices.

11. SIGNATURE OF PERSON MAKING THIS APPEAL J. Snuffy	12. DATE (MM/DD/YYYY) 12/03/2013	13. SIGNATURE OF APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE, IF ANY (Not required if signed by appellant. See paragraph 6 of the instructions.)	14. DATE (MM/DD/YYYY)
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VA FORM 9  
JUL 2016

Select the document type.

☒ Form 9 ☐ Statement in lieu of Form 9

form9\_pdf 1 / 2

(Continue on the back, or attach sheets of paper, if you need more space.)

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C. ☐ IN WASHINGTON, DC. (Choosing this option will add delay to issuance of a Board decision.)

D. ☐ AT A LOCAL VA OFFICE.\* (Choosing this option will add significant delay to issuance of a Board decision.)  
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VA FORM 9  
JUL 2016

Which box did the appellant select for the Optional Board Hearing question above? Depending on the Form 9, this may be Question 8 or Question 10. **Required**

- ☐ A. I do not want an optional board hearing
- ☐ B. I want a hearing by videoconference at a local VA office.
- ☐ C. I want a hearing in Washington, DC.
- ☐ D. I want a hearing at a local VA office.
- ☐ No box selected.

Indicate the Veteran's hearing preference.

☒ Form 9   ☐ Statement in lieu of Form 9

form9.pdf 1 / 2

(Continue on the back, or attach sheets of paper, if you need more space.)

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I WANT AN OPTIONAL BOARD HEARING:

B. ☐ BY LIVE VIDEOCONFERENCE AT A LOCAL VA OFFICE. (Choosing this option will add delay to issuance of a Board decision.)

C. ☐ IN WASHINGTON, DC. (Choosing this option will add delay to issuance of a Board decision.)

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VA FORM 9 JUL 2015

Which box did the appellant select for the Optional Board Hearing question above? Depending on the Form 9, this may be Question 8 or Question 10. **Required**

- ☐ A. I do not want an optional board hearing
- ☐ B. I want a hearing by videoconference at a local VA office.
- ☐ C. I want a hearing in Washington, DC.
- ☐ D. I want a hearing at a local VA office.
- ☐ No box selected.

## Sign and Certify

Now you're ready to sign and certify the appeal. Enter your name and select your title from the options provided. The other fields on this screen are pre-populated and cannot be edited.

### Sign and Certify

Fill in information about yourself to sign this certification.

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Name and location of certifying office: *Required*

Digital Service HQ, DC

Organizational elements certifying appeal: *Required*

DSUSER

Name of certifying official: *Required*

Title of certifying official: *Required*

☐ Decision Review Officer

☐ Rating Specialist

☐ Veteran Service Representative

☐ Claims Assistant

☐ Other

Decision date: *Required*

05/01/2017

Nice work!



## Cancelling a Certification

Please note that you can cancel the process in Caseflow Certification at any time by selecting "Cancel Certification". If you select this option, a modal will appear asking you to confirm your cancellation.

### Cancel Certification

Please explain why this case cannot be certified with Caseflow. Once you click **Cancel certification**, changes made to this case in Caseflow will not be saved.

Why can't this case be certified in Caseflow? *Required*

☐ VBMS and VACOLS dates didn't match and couldn't be changed

☐ Missing document could not be found

☐ Pending FOIA request

☐ Other

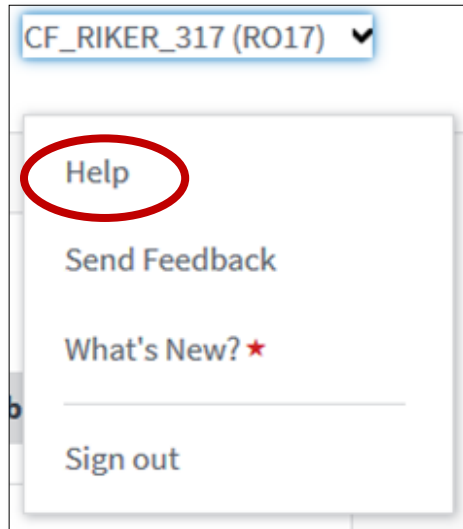
What's your VA email address? *Required*

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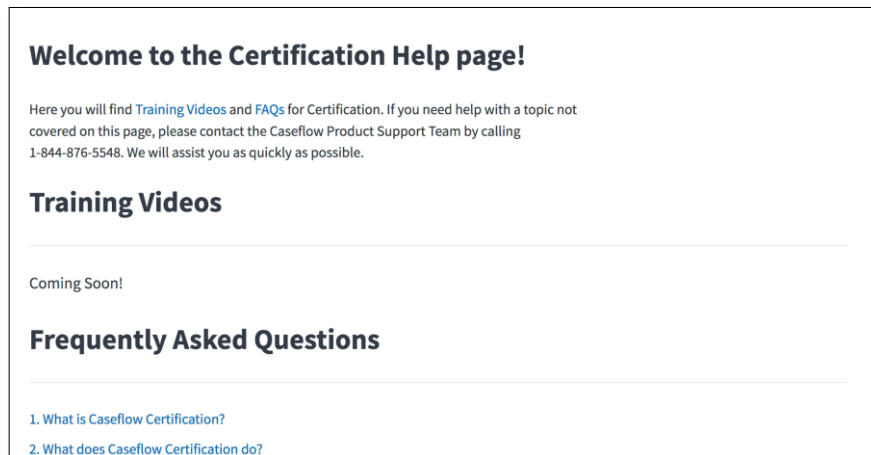
[<< Go back](#) [Cancel certification](#)

**Need  
Additional  
Help**

For more information, check out the Caseflow Certification Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), which are accessible within the application from the drop-down menu under your username.



Click on “Help” to view the FAQs.



*If you need technical support or you'd like to provide feedback, you can reach the Caseflow Support Team by phone or email: **1-844-876-5548** or [caseflow@va.gov](mailto:caseflow@va.gov)*