Live link: <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/pre-need-eligibility/after-you-apply/>

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[Meta description] Find out what happens after you apply for a pre-need eligibility determination for burial in a VA national cemetery.

[H1] After you apply for an eligibility determination

[Intro] Find out what happens after you apply for a pre-need eligibility determination for burial in a VA national cemetery.

[H2] How long does it take VA to make a decision?

**The amount of time it takes to review your application depends on:**

* The number of applications we’re reviewing, **and**
* How much information you provided in your application, **and**
* Whether you provided your (or your sponsor’s) DD214 or other separation documents along with your application

**Note:** We’ve received a large number of pre-need eligibility applications, and it’s slowing down our approval process. We’ll let you know when we’ve received your application and how long we think it’ll take to make a decision. We’re sorry for the delay.

For more information, you can call us at 800-535-1117 (TTY: 711). We’re here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET.

Please wait to hear back about your application rather than applying again. You don’t need to do anything while you wait. We’ll contact you if we need more information to make a decision.

[H2] If you qualify for burial benefits

You’ll receive a VA burial and memorial benefits folder from us in the mail.

**Your folder will include:**

* A letter telling you if you can be buried in a VA national cemetery. This is called your pre-need decision letter.
* A National Cemetery Administration brochure and a burial benefits information sheet. These will tell you more about the benefits you’ll receive.
* A copy of the supporting documents you submitted with your application.

[H2] What should I do after I receive my pre-need decision letter and folder?

Keep your pre-need decision letter and folder in a safe place. Talk to your family members or authorized representative about your burial wishes—including any memorialization requests and inscriptions—and make sure they know where your benefits folder is located. They’ll need this information to request your burial at the time of need.

You may also want to choose a funeral home to help you with pre-need funeral plans. Provide a copy of your pre-need decision letter to your funeral director and tell them about your plans to be buried in a national cemetery.

[H2] What do my family members need to do to request my burial at the time of need?

At the time of need, the person arranging your burial should call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117 (TTY: 711) to request a burial. We’re here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET. They’ll need your pre-need decision letter at that time.

We’ll also keep a copy of your pre-need application, the decision letter, and your supporting documents in our system to help speed up burial arrangements. When your family member or authorized representative requests your burial, we’ll confirm your pre-need eligibility determination based on the laws in effect at that time.

[Learn more about planning a burial for a family member (in English)](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/schedule-a-burial/)

[H2] Will my family have to pay for my burial?

No. If you qualify for burial in a VA national cemetery, you’ll receive burial benefits at no cost to your family.

**Burial benefits include:**

* Opening and closing of the grave
* A burial liner provided by the government
* A headstone or marker provided by the government
* Perpetual (ongoing) care of the gravesite

The person arranging your burial can also request additional honors and memorial items.

[Learn more about honors and memorial items (in English)](https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/)

If you’re a Veteran, your surviving spouse or other family members may also qualify for survivor benefits, including help paying for funeral costs.

[Learn more about survivor benefits](https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation-esp/)

[H2]What if I change my mind and don’t want to be buried in a VA national cemetery?

Your family members can make arrangements for your burial at a private cemetery even if we’ve already sent you a pre-need decision letter. There’s no need to contact VA about this change of plans.

However, even if you’re buried at a private cemetery, your family members can still request a headstone or marker at the time of need. The family member can make this request using the Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker (VA Form 40-1330).

[Get VA Form 40-1330 to download (in English)](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-40-1330/)

To make this request, print and fill out the form, and mail it to:

Memorial Products Service (41B)

Department of Veterans Affairs

5109 Russell Road

Quantico, VA 22134-3903

[H2]If you don’t qualify for burial benefits

We’ll send you a denial decision letter explaining the reasons or basis of our denial. We’ll also send you a form called Your Right to Seek Review of Our Decision (VA Form 20-0998) and your denial letter. This form explains your rights to appeal or to request another review, and how to submit more evidence. You can send us more supporting documents whether or not you choose to appeal the pre-need decision.

[Get VA Form 20-0998 to download (in English)](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-20-0998/)

[Learn more about appeals and reviews of VA claims (in English)](https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/)

[Check your VA claim status (in English)](https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status/)

[H3]How much time do I have to appeal the decision or request another review?

It depends on which option you use to request a review or to appeal. Each option has a different time requirement. Your options include:

* Add new and relevant evidence (file a Supplemental Claim)
* Ask for a higher-level reviewer to review your case (request a Higher-Level Review)
* Appeal to a Veterans Law Judge (request a Board Appeal)

[Get time requirements for each type of claim appeal and review (in English)](https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/)

[Learn how to file your claim using VA Form 20-0998 (in English)](https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-20-0998/)

[H3]Can my family member or authorized representative still apply for my burial in a VA national cemetery at the time of need?

Yes. Laws and personal circumstances may change earlier eligibility decisions. We’ll make the final decision of whether you qualify for burial at the time of need.

[H2] How to update your information

You can update your information at any time. Call our toll-free hotline at 800-535-1117. We’re here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET.