

# Understanding VA Disability Claims: Fully Developed vs. Standard | From a Veteran's Perspective

If you're a Veteran filing for a service-connected disability, you can choose between submitting a Fully Developed Claim (FDC) or a Standard Claim. Here's how the process, effort, and timeline compare.

## Fully Developed Claim

*Note: Submitting additional evidence later converts it to Standard automatically.*

1

### Onboarding

The Veteran need only notify the VA that he or she intends to submit a new claim by filing a Notice of Intent to File, which will start the clock for backpay calculation.

2

### Veteran Submits FDC Claim

The Veteran is responsible for gathering all relevant medical evidence and submitting all necessary forms, sometimes with help of claims consulting companies.

3

### Decision

The VA need only provide the veteran with a rating once the fully developed claim arrives at the VA.

## Standard Claim

1

### Onboarding

This is the phase where a VSO may help a veteran determine disability eligibility and also when a veteran would submit their Intent to File.

2

### VSO Submits Standard Claim

Typically, a Veteran Service Organization will submit a standard claim application on behalf of the veteran to begin the claims process.

3

### Federal Government

The VA begins the evidence gathering process by contacting state and federal government agencies, looking for relevant information.

4

### VA Facilities

The VA then must contact all state and federal VA facilities to retrieve all medical records from all VA clinics and hospitals.

8

### Decision

After a VA employee spends months tracking down medical evidence for the veteran, the VA will rate the Veteran's now fully developed claim.

7

### Buddy Statements

The VA may have to retrieve "buddy statements" to corroborate in-service events, describe symptoms and strengthen the credibility of the veteran's claim.

6

### Social Security

The VA is required to work with the Social Security Administration because VA benefits can impact SSI benefits.

5

### Private Providers

The VA must contact any private medical service providers that have treated the veteran to retrieve any relevant medical records.