



## Veterans Group

For more information, go to [nalc.org/veterans](http://nalc.org/veterans)

# Veterans and on-the-job injuries

**T**he Postal Service has a long history of employing military veterans. Unlike some employers who are reluctant to hire veterans, to its credit, the Postal Service hires military veterans, even if they have prior service-connected disabilities. Most of our military veterans enjoy long and productive careers as letter carriers. However, due to the physical nature of our work, letter carriers with pre-existing injuries may aggravate or accelerate service-connected injuries.

Letter carriers who suffer such on-the-job injuries or illnesses are entitled to certain benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). They include necessary medical care at no cost, reimbursement for transportation (or mileage) needed to obtain that care, wage-loss compensation when the injury results in disability from work, and schedule awards when there is permanent impairment.

Some veterans with service-connected disabilities may be reluctant to file claims for injuries that are suffered as postal employees. The FECA provides for coverage if postal work duties, in any way, cause, aggravate or accelerate pre-existing conditions, including those conditions caused during military service. Military veterans should not hesitate to file claims for injuries suffered as letter carriers.

**The FECA provides benefits that** sometimes exceed those of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), such as the right to see a doctor of your choice. If you report an injury, the Postal Service is required to notify you of the right to see the doctor of your choice. Some postal districts have contracts with medical clinics to provide initial examinations to injured workers. Federal regulations require an injured worker submit to the examination, but does not allow the contract clinic to treat the injured worker with-

out the worker's consent.

Choosing the doctor who treats your work-related injury may be the most important decision in the life of your claim.

In most cases, it is in the best interest of injured workers to choose the doctor who treats them. Veterans injured on the job are not limited to DVA doctors. In the case of a traumatic injury incurred during one work day or shift, the injured worker should request a form CA-16, Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment. Federal regulations require that the Postal Service issue you a Form CA-16 within four hours of reporting the injury.

The CA-16 is a payment voucher that pays all medical benefits for up to 60 days. Form CA-16 must contain the full name and address of the qualified physician or qualified medical facility authorized to provide service. The authorizing official must sign and date the form and must state his or her title. The Postal Service is not required to issue a Form CA-16 more than one week after the occurrence of the claimed injury, so the form should be requested immediately.

Form CA-16 authorizes treatment for 60 days from the date of injury, unless the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) terminates the authorization sooner. For musculoskeletal injuries, letter carriers are best served by getting treatment from a board-certified orthopedic surgeon. OWCP gives greater weight to the opinion of an orthopedic surgeon than that of a family practitioner.

The DVA is staffed by many qualified orthopedic specialists who provide great care for our injured veterans. During the claims process, OWCP requires ongoing medical reports from a qualified doctor. One of the benefits of being treated by a DVA doctor is the easy access that veterans have to DVA medical records.

Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment

U.S. Department of Labor  
Office of Workers' Compensation Programs

1. Name and Address of the Medical Facility or Physician-Authorized to Provide the Medical Service

2. Employer Identification (incl. SIC, MSHA, SSI#)

3. Date of Injury (incl. Day, Yr)

4. Description of Injury or Disease

5. Date of Onset

6. You are authorized to provide medical care for the employee for a period of up to 60 days from the date shown in item 3, subject to the conditions established by OWCP and that payment by OWCP will be made for payment in full for said services.

7. I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the employee has been examined by a physician or other qualified medical professional and that the employee has been advised of the right to see a doctor of his or her choice.

8. Signature of Authorizing Official

9. Name and Title of Authorizing Official (Print or print clearly)

10. Date (incl. Day, Yr)

11. Name and Address of Employee's Place of Employment

12. Bureau or Office

13. Local Address (including ZIP Code)

14. Signature of Employee

15. Date (incl. Day, Yr)

16. Local Address (including ZIP Code)

If scheduling a timely appointment at a DVA clinic or hospital is difficult, the CA-16 can provide an injured veteran the ability to see a qualified doctor sooner. In traumatic injury cases, getting a medical report swiftly is essential to gaining entitlement to continued income through FECA Continuation of Pay (COP) provisions.

**Letter carriers injured on the job can** find step-by-step instructions on how to file workers' compensation claims on the "Injured on the Job" page at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

## Join the NALC Veterans Group

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members—both active and retired letter carriers—who are also military veterans the ability to connect with fellow NALC veterans and stay informed on issues of importance to letter carrier veterans. **It is free to join.**

Members receive a pin as a symbol of gratitude for their military service and membership in NALC.

**If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card at [nalc.org/veterans](http://nalc.org/veterans).**