



VA APPEALS IN ONE PAGE

Read the decision, identify what is missing, and choose the review lane that matches the record.



FIRST TASK	MAIN CHOICE	DEADLINE CONTROL
Read the Reasons for Decision	Evidence, error, or Board review	Use the date on the decision notice

REVIEW FIRST

A review lane is not a general second chance. Each lane controls who reviews the dispute, whether new evidence is accepted, and which form starts the process.

STEP 01 | DECODE THE DECISION

START WITH THE EXACT REASON THE VA DID NOT GRANT

- 1

List every issue
Separate each denied, partially granted, deferred, or effective-date issue. Different issues can need different responses.
- 2

Mark favorable findings
Identify findings the VA accepted, such as a diagnosis, qualifying event, exposure, or service-connected primary condition.
- 3

Find the missing element
Underline the factual or legal reason for the outcome. Build the next step around that specific gap.

STEP 02 | MATCH THE LANE

THREE MAIN DECISION REVIEW LANES

HIGHER-LEVEL REVIEW

VA FORM 20-0996

Use the same evidentiary record to identify a factual or legal error.

- No new evidence
- Optional informal conference
- Higher-level VA reviewer

SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIM

VA FORM 20-0995

Add or identify new and relevant evidence that addresses the prior decision.

- New and relevant evidence
- VA may assist with identified records
- Can be filed after another review

BOARD APPEAL

VA FORM 10182

Ask a Veterans Law Judge to review the issue on one of three Board dockets.

- Direct Review
- Evidence Submission
- Hearing

STEP 03 | PROTECT THE RECORD

BEFORE FILING THE REVIEW REQUEST

- ✓

Use the decision-notice date
For most benefits, HLR and Board review requests generally must be filed within one year.
- ✓

Match every issue to the correct lane
Do not submit new evidence with HLR or Direct Review.
- ✓

Address the prior reason
A new document matters only if it proves or disproves a point relevant to the claim.
- ✓

Keep proof of submission
Save the form, evidence list, upload receipt, fax confirmation, or date-stamped copy.
- ✓

Track the next decision
A later review can create another deadline and another choice of lane.

STEP 04 | KEEP THE BOUNDARY CLEAR

A REMAND, DENIAL, AND PARTIAL GRANT ARE DIFFERENT OUTCOMES

- G

Grant or partial grant
Check the percentage, effective date, payment details, and any issue that remains denied.
- R

Remand
The issue returns for additional action. A remand is not a final grant or denial of that issue.
- D

Denial
Read the stated reason and the available review rights before choosing the next step.

LANE CHOICE MATTERS

Do not choose a lane from a headline, estimated wait, or generalized success percentage. Choose it from the decision, the evidence record, the desired reviewer, and the applicable deadline.

