



## South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Policy Statement for Representation

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Thank you for choosing the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) to assist you with your claim for benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The SDDVA serves as the accredited representative for the following organizations.

American Legion	SD Department of Veteran Affairs
American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc.	The Retired Enlisted Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States	

We can best serve your interest if you work directly with our Service Officers and/or your local County/Tribal Veterans Service Officer. The purpose of having a representative is to have an advocate, skilled in veterans' benefits, working for you. To do this we must be involved in every step of the claims process. Please do not take any action directly with the VA, and do not try to work the claim yourself. You must understand that the SDDVA and your local Veterans Service Officer is not responsible for any actions taken by the claimant directly with the VA.

### What You Need to Do to Assist SDDVA

- Be truthful with us and the VA at all times.
- Provide adequate information in a timely manner whenever requested by us or the VA.
- Be alert for time-sensitive deadlines, e.g. filing appeals, requesting waivers, etc.
- Provide all legal documentation/evidence required to process your claim directly to our office.
- Report to all examinations requested by the VA or call us for other arrangements.
- Reply to any VA requests for information through our office.
- Notify us immediately of any change in your address and/or telephone number.

### What SDDVA Will Do For You

As your advocate, we will review the facts and circumstances of your claim and develop it for presentation to the VA. We will ensure that your claim is properly filed and will monitor it as it proceeds through the VA claims process. We will advise you of significant developments with respect to your claim and do all we ethically can to see that your claim is decided in your favor. If the VA decides against you, we will, at your request, advise you about the appellate process and, based on controlling laws and regulations, the probable outcome of your particular case. The decision to appeal is your decision and right, but it is vital that you fully understand the process.

We are pleased to serve as your representative, however, we will withdraw representation if you:

- Threaten abuse, mistreat, or harass any employee of the SDDVA
- Knowingly present a fraudulent claim.
- Initiate any action that would result in a conflict of interest in pursuing benefits with the VA.
- Fail to cooperate with SDDVA in the prosecution of your claim.
- Create or become involved in any situation that makes it inappropriate for SDDVA to continue as your representative.

Your understanding and cooperation with the SDDVA's policy for representation is appreciated. Be assured that our Service Officers want to assist you and that we will work hard for you. We appreciate the confidence you have placed in the SDDVA.

Applicant

Claim #

VSO

Date