

Processing times for claims

Many clients are experiencing long wait times.

On this page, you can view the average processing times, the reasons for delays, the actions we're taking, and advice on how you can reduce your wait time.

Last updated: 28 February 2024.

Average processing times for claims

The table below shows the average number of days it takes to process claims¹:

Types of claims	1 January to 30 June 2023	1 July to 31 December 2023
Disablement Pension	324	361
Funeral Expenses	68	50
Independence Allowance	328	292
Permanent Impairment Lump Sum	154	197
Surviving Spouse or Partner Pension	66	60
Weekly Compensation	80	111

¹This table includes over 90% of the entitlements that we administer.

Number of claims

The table below shows the total number of claims in different states of completion²:

State of completion	1 January to 30 June 2023	1 July to 31 December 2023
New claims	1,436	1,309
Processed claims	1,046	1,453
Claims in progress	2,702	2,393

²Any differences between the previous and current period's data are partially due to some of the claims being worked on at the time of the report. They weren't counted as 'Claims in progress'. Often, these differences are due to when the reports are run to create this data.

What we're doing to reduce processing times

We are:

- training more staff
- improving our processes
- triaging and prioritising claims
- checking all claims as they are received to identify and follow up on any missing information
- working with other veteran support groups to help veterans apply and submit a good application.

Why processing times vary

Some claims are relatively simple and normally processed quickly.

However, more complicated claims take longer to process. Those claims might:

- include complex conditions
- need further information from medical specialists.

The reasons for the waiting times

- **We are receiving more claims.**
Although we received fewer claims in the last period, the longer-term trend is that claim numbers are increasing.
- **We have been receiving more complex claims, which take longer to process.**
Complex claims are broadly described as claims where a client claims for multiple conditions. These take much longer to process.
- **It is taking longer to get the medical information we need to assess and decide on claims.**
This is due to pressures on the health system.

The average time that it takes to obtain the additional information required for a claim is currently 168 days

Requesting information from health specialists can take a long time. Some examples include:

- A full orthopaedic assessment was requested on 26 January 2023. We received it on 27 July 2023 (182 days).
- An ophthalmology assessment was requested on 26 February 2023. We received it on 24 August 2023 (179 days).
- An orthopaedic report was requested on 4 May 2023. We received it on 24 November 2023 (204 days).

Let us know if your situation changes

For example, if your condition deteriorates, or the delay is causing you financial difficulties, contact us. We may be able to escalate your application for an earlier assessment.

It is important that you continue to receive treatment from your health provider.

Contact us (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/contact-us/>)

How you can reduce your wait time

The most effective step that you can take to shorten the processing time for your claim is to provide all the information that we require when you send in your claim.

This means:

- having your GP or specialist confirm your diagnosis

- sending us all the documents we ask for on the claim form.

Tip: Use the checklist on the claim form to see what steps to take and what documents to include.

If we don't have everything we need to process your claim, we will have to ask you or your GP or specialist for the missing information. This will delay your claim.

Contact us if you're not sure what documents you need to support your claim.

Contact us (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/contact-us/>)

Priority for handling all claims

Claims are given the highest priority when a veteran:

- has a terminal illness
- has mental health issues
- is experiencing financial hardship.

Contact us if your health or financial circumstances change significantly while waiting for a decision on your claim.

Contact us (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/contact-us/>)

We will make sure that you don't miss out

If your claim is approved, we will backdate any payments to the date we received your completed application. We'll also consider reimbursing you for any reasonable medical costs related to that condition.