Gulf War Benefits Brief

What the PACT Act changed and what to do now

Who Qualifies as a Gulf War Veteran

For VA purposes, "Gulf War" covers service in Southwest Asia from August 2, 1990 to the present. This includes Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Djibouti, and other locations. If you served in any of these areas, the presumptive rules apply to you.

What "Presumptive" Actually Means

Normally, you need three things for service connection: a current diagnosis, an in-service event, and a medical nexus linking them. Presumptive conditions eliminate the nexus requirement. You only need the diagnosis and qualifying service. The VA presumes the connection. This makes claims significantly easier to win.

New Presumptives Under the PACT Act

The PACT Act added 20+ conditions including:

- Asthma, chronic bronchitis, COPD, emphysema
- Chronic rhinitis and sinusitis
- Interstitial lung disease and pulmonary fibrosis
- Head, neck, respiratory, and gastrointestinal cancers
- Melanoma

If you have any of these and qualifying service, file now.

The Deadline Change

Before the PACT Act, Gulf War Illness presumptives (chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, IBS, undiagnosed illnesses) had to manifest within a certain period. The PACT Act extended these timelines significantly. If you were told "too much time has passed," that advice may be outdated.

Previously Denied? File Again.

If you were denied for a condition that is now presumptive, file a Supplemental Claim citing the PACT Act. You need "new and relevant" evidence - but the PACT Act itself can serve as the new basis. Include your diagnosis, proof of qualifying service (DD-214), and a statement referencing the specific presumptive condition.

Burn Pit Registration

If you were near burn pits, register in the VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. It's not a claim,

but it documents your exposure and can support future claims. It takes about 40 minutes online.

Want the complete step-by-step walkthrough with worksheets?

VA Files members get every guide in full at thevafiles.com