

Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry
OMB 2900-XXXX
VA Form 10-10066

Supplementary Materials on Registry Promotion and Recruitment

The following materials will be used to promote the registry and to recruit participants. –

1: DRAFT Press Release

**VA is Establishing Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits Registry
to Improve Understanding of Related Health Effects**

WASHINGTON—The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced the launch of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry for Servicemembers and Veterans who may have been exposed to airborne hazards such as burn pits, oil-well fires, and dust storms.

“Some Veterans and Servicemembers have returned from service with mild to severe respiratory illnesses possibly related to exposures during deployment,” said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. “These Veterans deserve the best treatment possible. This registry will enhance our understanding of the long-term health effects of exposure to burn pits and other airborne hazards during deployment—ultimately leading to better health care.”

Participation in the registry is voluntary and open to any Veteran or Servicemember who served in: Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation New Dawn (OND), or in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, or anywhere in the Southwest Asia theater of operations after August 2, 1990 to include Djibouti, Africa after September 11, 2001. Veterans meeting the eligibility criteria are strongly encouraged to enroll in the registry. Eligible Servicemembers and Veterans can enroll in the registry by completing a self-assessment questionnaire on-line at <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry>. Participants will be asked about deployments, environmental and work-related exposures, health care usage, and current health.

Veteran participants are eligible for an optional no-cost medical evaluation by VA to discuss their completed questionnaire. Participants already enrolled in VA health care should contact their primary care provider to schedule an evaluation. Veterans not already enrolled should contact an Environmental Health Coordinator at the nearest VA facility or call 1-877-222-8387. Servicemembers should discuss any concerns or health issues with their health care provider.

Registry participation is not a means to apply for other VA benefits, such as disability compensation payments. The registry and the disability compensation processes are separate and not related. Veterans can find information on how to submit a claim for disability compensation through VA at the following link:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/>.

For more information on the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry please visit:

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures>.

2: DRAFT Postcard Flyer

Audience: Veterans meeting the eligibility criteria for the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. Veterans may or may not be enrolled in VA health care.

Front

Learn about the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is a database of health related information about Veterans and Servicemembers. Individuals may enroll by completing an online questionnaire about their symptoms, health conditions, environmental and work-related exposures, and health care usage.

Eligibility

Any Veteran or Servicemember who served in:

- OEF/OIF/OND or in Djibouti, Africa after September 11, 2001, or
- Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm or the Southwest Asia theater of operations after August 2, 1990.

Note: The Southwest Asia Theater of operation includes the following locations after August 2, 1990: Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, waters of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, and Red Sea.

Back

You can make a difference in your health and the health of fellow Veterans and Servicemembers in the future.

Join the registry to...

- become more aware of your health,
- help VA learn more about the potential health effects of exposure to burn pits and other airborne hazards,
- help improve VA's deployment health programs, and
- receive information about ongoing health studies and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Enroll: <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/>

Learn more: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov> or call 1-877-222-8387

3: DRAFT Pre-Enrollment Fact Sheet

Audience: Veterans and Servicemembers considering enrolling in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

Your Guide to the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits Registry

Veterans and Servicemembers who were close to burn pit smoke or exposed for longer periods may be at greater risk for health problems. Health effects from burn pit exposure will vary and depend on a number of factors such as the kind of waste being burned, pre-existing conditions, and wind direction.

There is not enough medical or scientific information to conclude that short or long-term health effects have occurred from exposures to smoke from burn pits or other airborne hazards during recent deployments. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to study the health of Veterans who have deployed to recent conflicts. VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) are working on initiatives that address clinical issues and the need for long-term studies.

Who is the registry for?

The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is a database of health information about Veterans and Servicemembers. Registry participation is open to any Veteran or Servicemember who served in:

- OEF/OIF/OND or in Djibouti, Africa after September 11, 2001, or
- Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm or the Southwest Asia theater of operations after August 2, 1990.

Note: The Southwest Theater of operations includes the following locations after August 2, 1990: Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, waters of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea.

Why should I participate in the registry?

By participating in the registry, you can make a difference in your health and the health of fellow Veterans and Servicemembers in the future. Participate in the registry to become more aware of your own health and to receive information about ongoing health studies and VA services. Veteran participants also become eligible for a no-cost medical evaluation in which to discuss their completed questionnaire with a VA health provider. In addition, your participation in the registry may help VA to learn more about the potential health effects of exposure to burn pits and other airborne hazards.

What will I need to enroll?

You may enroll in the registry by completing a web-based health questionnaire at <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry>. To access the questionnaire, you will need your Department of Defense Self-Service logon (DS Logon). You may apply for a DS Logon account at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dsaccess> if you do not already have one. The DS Logon is a secure, self-service identification that allows active-duty Servicemembers and Veterans to access several websites using a single username and password. VA will use deployment data provided by DoD to determine your eligibility for the registry.

What types of questions should I be prepared to answer?

We estimate that the questionnaire should take no longer than 40 minutes to complete. The questions have been designed to give a broad picture of your health and current and past exposures. You will be asked a series of questions in the following categories:

- Deployment dates and bases to which you were stationed
- Conditions and health issues that cause difficulty with daily activities
- Current and past health symptoms
- Residential history (where you've lived)
- Occupational history (where you've worked)
- Dust, gas, vapors or fumes exposures
- Home environment and hobbies
- Health care utilization
- Contact preferences

Why does the questionnaire ask questions about my current job and hobbies?

It is important for medical providers to have a complete picture of your health. The questionnaire asks a broad range of questions because an individual's health is greatly influenced by their lifestyle. Health conditions can worsen over time from additional or prolonged exposures received during work or recreation.

Note: Your current or past jobs, hobbies, civilian exposures, and lifestyle will not affect eligibility for benefits.

I am experiencing symptoms that I believe are related to exposure to burn pits. What should I do?

Help is available at VA. Medical professionals with expertise in military exposures and health care benefits are available at VA medical centers nationwide. Veterans who are already enrolled in VA health care should talk to their primary care provider. Veterans who are not already enrolled should talk to an Environmental Health Coordinator at the nearest VA medical center. Find a local Environmental Health Coordinator by visiting <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp>, or calling 1-877-222-8387. Servicemembers should discuss any concerns or health issues with their health care provider.

40 minutes of your time can make a difference.

Enroll: <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/>

Learn more: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov> or call 1-877-222-8387.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Public Health (10P3)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420
www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures

January 2014

4: DRAFT Post-Enrollment Fact Sheet

Audience: Veterans who have enrolled in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. This fact sheet will accompany the participant letter.

Airborne Hazards & Open Burn Pit Registry

Now that you are enrolled, what's next?

Research:

Veterans and Servicemembers who were close to burn pit smoke or exposed for longer periods may be at greater risk for health problems. Individual health effects will vary and may depend on a number of other factors such as the kind of waste being burned and wind direction. Current research does not show evidence of long-term health problems from exposure to burn pits. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues to study the health of deployed Veterans. The high level of fine dust and pollution common in Iraq and Afghanistan may pose a greater danger for respiratory illnesses than exposure to burn pits, according to a 2011 Institute of Medicine report.

VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) have developed a joint action plan and are now working on initiatives that address clinical issues, the need for long-term studies, outreach, and clinician education of health effects related to airborne hazards. VA will update registry participants of future developments as information becomes available.

Medical Evaluations:

Veterans and Servicemembers are encouraged to bring a copy of their completed health questionnaire to their optional medical evaluation.

If you are enrolled in the VA health care system, please contact your primary care provider or Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) to schedule an appointment for a medical evaluation.

If you are not already enrolled in the VA health care system, please contact a VA Environmental Health Coordinator (EHC) in your area by visiting <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp>

Registry Usage:

VA and DoD will use information from the registry along with information from other studies to ensure Veterans and Servicemembers enrolled in the registry receive:

- Outreach and health communication materials
- An optional in-person no-cost VHA medical evaluation

Additionally, the registry will help VA and DoD track the health of Veterans and information gathered in the registry may contribute to future research studies of the health of Veterans.

The registry is **not** a means to apply for other VA benefits, such as disability compensation. The disability compensation process is separate from the registry.

Resources:

- Learn more at: www.publichealth.va.gov
- Share the registry with others:
<https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/>
- 2011 Institute of Medicine report: <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2011/Long-Term-Health-Consequences-of-Exposure-to-Burn-Pits-in-Iraq-and-Afghanistan.aspx>
- Environmental Health Coordinators:
www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp
- Apply for disability compensation: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/>

- For information on PTSD: www.ptsd.va.gov
- Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, press 1