

## Agent Orange Claims Processes

- Seek Veteran Service Organization representation
- File immediately
- Obtain and copy all medical records and correspondence
- Report all address and phone changes to the Veterans Health Administration



## Important Contact Information

- American Legion National Headquarters  
(202) 861-2772 or  
[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)
- Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office  
1-800-827-1000 or  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
- Agent Orange Review,  
Environmental Agents Service  
VA Central Office  
810 Vermont Avenue  
Washington DC  
(202) 273-8580

### **Other brochures available:**

- **Guide to Agent Orange Benefits**
- **Institute of Medicine and Agent Orange Research**

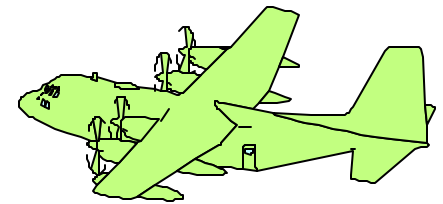


### **For more information contact:**

**Veterans Affairs &  
Rehabilitation Commission.  
The American Legion  
1608 "K" Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 861-2772  
[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)**

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# *Vietnam Veterans*



## **Guide to Understanding Agent Orange**



# The Role of Agent Orange in the Vietnam War

This brochure was created to provide general knowledge of what Agent Orange was and how it was used in Vietnam. The American Legion seeks to inform all veterans and their families of exposures encountered and benefits owed to them by the government.

During the Vietnam War (January 9, 1962 to May 7, 1975) US Troops were exposed to herbicides used to remove jungle foliage in order to uncover enemy troops. One herbicide that was used more frequently than others was named Agent Orange. The name was derived from the orange band that identified the drums that stored the herbicide. The compounds which make up Agent Orange are two herbicides, 2,4-D (2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid) and 2,4,5-T (2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid). Dioxin, the most dangerous element in Agent Orange, was created during the manufacturing of 2,4,5-T.

The Department of Veteran Affairs recognizes a number of cancers and other conditions as resulting from Agent Orange exposure. The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine periodically releases a report based on investigations of the possible link between illness and Agent Orange exposure. All research concerning an illness and Agent Orange is evaluated for its scientific strength and proof of association. Each condition is placed into a category;(1)positive association and VA "should" compensate, (2)possible association, (3)probably not an association and (4)no association. Depending upon these findings VA compensations policies may change. The next report is due in late 2000.

## Service Connected Conditions Found to be Related to Agent Orange Exposure

- chloracne
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- multiple myeloma
- respiratory cancers
  - lung
  - trachea
  - larynx
  - bronchus
- prostate cancer
- soft tissue sarcoma
- Hodgkin's disease
- porphyria cutanea tarda
- peripheral neuropathy
- spina bifida in children of Vietnam veterans



## Agent Orange Registry

The VA established a registry for veterans who served in Vietnam. The registry exam consists of a physical, medical history, and a series of basic laboratory tests. There is no test to confirm or deny a veteran was exposed to Agent Orange. Tests do exist that detect and identify levels of dioxins in a persons body. However such tests do not confirm when exposure occurred nor the level of exposure in Vietnam. The reason is that all human beings have dioxin found in their bodies. Therefore, VA does not offer this testing. If a veteran is interested in becoming part of this registry they must contact the nearest VA Medical Center. Participating in the registry and filing a claim are two separate processes. If you wish to file a claim you must do so aside from your involvement with the registry.

## Agent Orange Product Liability Litigation

A group of Vietnam veterans and their families sued seven chemical manufacturing companies for injuries they believed resulted from herbicide exposure. The chemical companies settled out of court for \$180 million. These funds do not involve VA nor compensation received from the VA. The deadline for applications pertaining to this money was January 17, 1995. There are no longer any funds available to veterans from this lawsuit.

**The American Legion is the largest veterans organization with 2.8 million members in 14,000 posts. The Legion was the creator of the original GI Bill. Are you a Legionnaire?**