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## Ways to Earn Tinnitus VA Rating

### 1. Submit Your Intent to File

You must first submit an Intent to File, even if you don't yet have an official diagnosis for your tinnitus. An Intent to File sets your "effective date," or the date on which the VA says you become eligible for benefits.



### 2. Get a Tinnitus Diagnosis from Your Medical Provider

You must be diagnosed with tinnitus by a medical professional (private or VA) to get a tinnitus VA rating. Tinnitus presents differently from person to person, and no test can detect subjective tinnitus since the sound is inside your head. You need a current diagnosis for your VA claim, regardless of which type of tinnitus you're experiencing.



### 3. Prove a Service Connection

Veterans are at a greater risk for head injuries and exposure to loud noises and ototoxic chemicals. All of these risks can contribute to tinnitus. To get your tinnitus included in your VA rating, you must be able to show a connection between your service and your tinnitus. The VA will not approve your claim without a service connection.



### 4. Submit Your Claim

Use form 21-526EZ to submit your tinnitus claim. Make sure you submit a Fully-Developed Claim (FDC), which means you are providing all the evidence needed. You can also submit a Standard Claim, but this leaves it to the VA to gather your medical evidence and slows down the process.



### 5. Prepare for your C&P Exam

The VA will usually order a Compensation and Pension Exam to determine your VA rating for tinnitus. Read through your records (military and medical) before the exam so you're familiar with the evidence. Bring hard copies of your documents with you to the exam.



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