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Benefits of Filing an Intent to File Early

1. It Opens the Door to More Compensation

The day you submit your ITF is established as your effective date. After filing your ITF, you will have one year to submit your full claim, but your benefits (if approved) will be paid retroactively back to your effective date. Waiting until you've gathered everything first might feel thorough, but it could cost you a great deal of potential back pay.



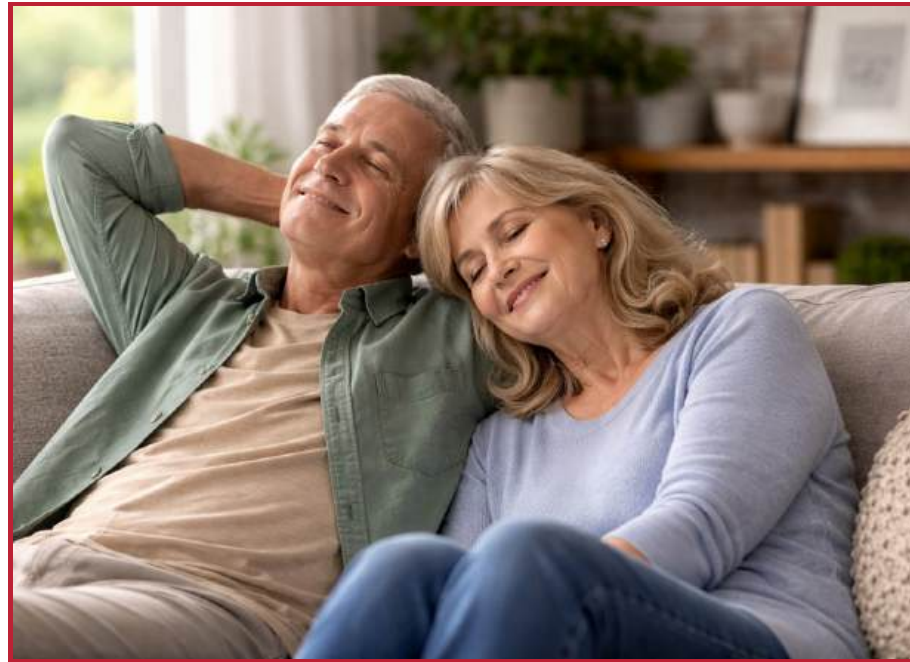
2. It Buys You Time to Gather Strong Evidence

You don't want to rush through your claim paperwork or shortchange your supporting documentation. Filing an ITF gives you up to 365 days to build a solid case without worrying about losing your place in line. This breathing room can help you request old military or medical records, get a current diagnosis, and seek independent medical opinions or "nexus letters" verifying that your condition is service-connected.



3. It Reduces Stress

Too often, veterans delay filing because they don't feel "ready." But the VA claim can quickly become that big question mark in the sky. It looms over you and keeps you wondering and worrying about the future. Submitting an Intent to File is a way to take action. You stop fretting about the future and start shaping it.



4. It Applies to New Claims, Increases, and Secondary Conditions

Some veterans believe the Intent to File is only for first-time claims, but that's not the case. You can use an ITF when filing a brand-new claim for a service-connected condition, requesting a VA rating increase for an already-rated condition, and connecting a new secondary condition to a service-connected one.



5. It Helps You Avoid Regret Down the Road

Many veterans wait until their symptoms are unbearable before filing. Others don't file because they think the process will be too complicated. Filing an Intent to File now protects your future self from saying, "I wish I'd started this sooner." Even if you're still on the fence about what to claim or how to do it, locking in that effective date means you won't look back with regret if things get worse or time slips away.



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