

What is a Veteran Identification Card (VIC) and how do I get one?

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The Veterans Identification Card Act 2015 (Public Law 114-31) was enacted on July 20, 2015. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is drafting regulations that will allow VA to implement and enforce the legislation. However, this is a lengthy process that requires time for a public comment period as well as approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The rule making process is expected to take 12 months or more. VA is also in the process of developing procedures and policies to implement the VA ID card program. VA currently estimates the program will be implemented in 2017.

In the meanwhile, the Department of Veterans Affairs continue to provide a Veterans Identification Card (VIC) for veterans to use at VA medical facilities. The VIC will be issued only to veterans who are eligible for VA medical benefits and only for the purpose of identification and check-in for VA medical appointments. The new card protects personal privacy by not showing Social Security Numbers or dates of birth on the front of the cards.

VA has Service Connected, POW and Purple Heart (PH) indicators on the new VIC. Veterans who have been awarded service-connected status after their VIC has been issued or SC status is not properly documented on their card, will need to present their letter showing their SC rating to the eligibility clerk at the local VA Medical Center where they obtain treatment. After verification, the eligibility clerk will submit a request to National Card Management Directory (NCMD) System for a new card to be issued to the veteran.

Once a veteran has his/her picture taken for the new card at the VA medical facility, the card will be mailed to the veteran at the address that has been provided. To ensure that a veteran receives the new VIC card, the veteran should please verify that VA has the correct address on file. If the U.S. Postal Service cannot deliver the card, it will be returned to the facility at which the card was requested. The card will then be held in a secure location at the facility for 90 days. If the card is not picked up within the 90-day period, the card will be destroyed.

With regard to the use of veteran ID cards for store discounts, please note: If these are valid store discounts for Veterans, a Veteran's DD-214 and a driver's license or non-driver's license should be appropriate. The VIC is the only ID card offered for veterans by VA; if a store will not accept this proof of veteran status, please check with your State's division of Veterans Affairs to see if they offer this service.

For all information about Veterans Identification Cards (what it is, how to get one, what to do if lost or stolen, when it can be used, etc.) go to http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/access/veteran_identification_card.asp for details.

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