

Emergency Transportation (Ambulance)

If you believe your life or health is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room (ER) right away. During a medical emergency, Veterans should immediately seek medical care. A medical emergency is an injury, illness or symptom so severe that without immediate treatment, you believe your life or health is in danger.

Veterans **do not** need to check with VA before calling for an ambulance or going to an ER. However, **promptly notifying the nearest VA medical facility** of the emergency care and transportation is very important in VA being able to potentially reimburse costs.

When the nearest VA medical facility is notified of the emergency transportation, more information will be known of the Veterans medical condition, the availability of VA for transfer (if Veteran is stable), and other information to assist them in receiving the necessary medical care.

VA Payments for Emergency Transportation

VA can pay for emergency transportation provided by a community provider for a Veteran's service-connected condition and nonservice-connected condition, but there are **specific requirements that must be met** before VA can reimburse these costs*.

1. Prior Authorization and/or Prompt Notification.

VA must authorize transportation in advance, but in medical emergencies this may not be reasonable. As a result, promptly notifying the nearest VA medical facility of the emergency transportation can satisfy the prior authorization requirement. VA may be able to consider prompt notification of ambulance transportation, subject to the following requirements (a-c):

- a. Veteran (or someone on their behalf) notifies VA within 72-hours; **and**
- b. A VA or other Federal facility was not reasonably available to the Veteran; **and**



- c. The care the Veteran received was for a medical emergency related to a **service-connected** condition.

2. Emergency Transportation for nonservice-connected condition.

Along with the requirements above in 1(a) and 1(b), VA can pay for emergency transportation for a Veteran's nonservice-connected condition, subject to the additional following requirements (a-c):

- a. VA must receive and adjudicate a claim for the emergency care received as part of the emergency transportation (the administrative eligibility for payment of nonservice-connected emergency care can be reviewed [here](#)). If no claim is received for the associated treatment, VA cannot pay for the emergency transportation **unless the following two exceptions are met:**
 - i. Other health insurance or a third party paid for the emergency treatment (leaving no liability for the treatment) excluding the emergency transportation itself; **or**
 - ii. Death occurred during transportation to receive emergency care.

If VA cannot pay for emergency care outside of the above two exceptions, then it generally cannot pay for the associated emergency transportation.



- b. Veteran must be liable to the provider of the emergency transportation; **and**
- c. If the emergency condition was caused by an accident or work-related injury, the Veteran must first attempt to obtain reimbursement from a liable third party (i.e. employer, insurance, etc). If the Veteran's efforts to obtain reimbursement from a liable third party are denied or otherwise unsuccessful, VA may be able to pay for the emergency transportation costs.

Unless the above requirements are met, VA in general cannot pay for the emergency transportation for a Veteran's nonservice-connected condition.

*By law, VA cannot pay costs associated with a Veteran's health insurance deductibles, copayments, coinsurance or similar payments a Veteran may owe to the provider as required by their OHI

Support

- Call **1-877-466-7124** to speak to a customer service representative, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST).
- Visit www.va.gov/communitycare