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VA prioritizing all pending Veterans benefits appeals claims for victims of hurricanes Florence and Michael

WASHINGTON — Veterans impacted by recent hurricanes [Florence](#) and [Michael](#) will now have their pending appeals claims for benefits prioritized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), department officials announced.

VA's [Board of Veterans' Appeals](#) has determined that the significant effects of hurricanes Florence and Michael were sufficient cause for the Board to advance the appeals for counties in Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia determined to be disaster areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

"Accelerating the decision process on pending appeals claims for those Veterans and their families affected by hurricanes Florence and Michael is the right thing to do," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

By regulation, the Board may advance appeals on its docket by a motion of the chairman if sufficient cause is shown. All Veterans and other appellants with an appeal currently pending before the Board whose addresses of record are in one of the affected counties will have their appeal automatically advanced on the Board's docket. No action from Veterans or appellants are needed if their addresses are current. Visit the list of counties affected by hurricanes Florence and Michael at this link: <https://www.bva.va.gov/>.

The [advancement on docket \(AOD\)](#) for these two storms is expected to last for six months from the date of the events. Therefore, Florence counties will be AODed from Oct. 1, 2018, to March 31, 2019; and counties affected by Hurricane Michael will be AODed from Nov. 1, 2018, to April 30, 2019. The Board will reassess AOD for these two storms once the six-month periods end.

The Board's mission is to conduct hearings and decide appeals in a timely manner. For more information about VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals, visit www.bva.va.gov/.

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