

VA DIRECTIVE 6320
Appendix B
APRIL 14, 1997

VA TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

1. **ABBREVIATIONS.** If an abbreviation *that may not be familiar to the reader* is used, the spelled-out word or phrase is followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. After this first definition of its meaning, the abbreviation may be used without further explanation.

2. FIRST REFERENCE TO THE DEPARTMENT

a. Except as provided in paragraph c below, when Department is first referenced the full title "Department of Veterans Affairs" is spelled out with the abbreviation "VA" in parentheses without punctuation. Subsequent references may be either "the Department" (using capital "D") or "VA." The abbreviation "DVA" is not authorized for use under any circumstances. In some cases, it may be necessary to distinguish the Department from State departments of veterans affairs. This is done by inserting "U.S." in front of the full title so that the phrase reads "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs."

b. The abbreviation "VA" stands for "Veterans Affairs" which is only part of the Department's full title. "The" is not used before the abbreviation when it is used as a noun. If "VA" is used as an adjective, then "the" will be used in front of "VA." Example, "The VA field facility will prepare the report."

c. Paragraph a, above, does not apply to letters to persons whom we know are already familiar with the "VA" abbreviation, e.g., Members of Congress, other federal officials, veterans service organizations, and the General Accounting Office.

3. REFERENCES TO THE DEPARTMENT'S MAJOR OPERATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS

a. The full titles and abbreviations of the major administrations are Veterans Health Administration (VHA); Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA); and National Cemetery System (NCS). When these elements are first referenced, the full title followed by the abbreviation in parentheses is used. In all subsequent references, the abbreviation is used.

b. Under certain circumstances, to avoid redundancy or over-repetition of the abbreviations, a general term "administration" may be used. When VHA, VBA, and NCS are referred to as a group, the generic term "administrations" may be used.

c. When referring to VA facilities, the formal title is "Department of Veterans Affairs (facility type)." The common usage incorporating the "VA" abbreviation is "VA (facility type)."

4. REFERENCE TO THE DEPARTMENT'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT

OFFICIALS. The head of the Department is formally titled "Secretary of Veterans Affairs." When the title is first referenced, the full title is used; subsequent references are "Secretary" or "VA Secretary." The first reference to the Deputy Secretary is "Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs" and subsequent references as "Deputy Secretary" or "VA Deputy Secretary."

5. ADMINISTRATION HEADS, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, AND OTHER KEY OFFICIALS

a. When referring to the heads of VHA, VBA, or NCS, use "Under Secretary for Health," "Under Secretary for Benefits," or "Director, National Cemetery System," respectively. Collectively they are referred to as Administration Heads.

b. To refer to an Assistant Secretary use "Assistant Secretary for (designated title)." Reference to the Deputy Assistant Secretary is "Deputy Assistant Secretary for (designated title)." Reference to Other Key Officials identified in paragraph (c) below is by their title.

c. The title "Other Key Officials" refers to the General Counsel (GC); the Inspector General (IG); Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA); Chairman, Board of Contract Appeals (BCA); Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU); Director, Center for Minority Veterans (CMV); and Director, Center for Women Veterans (CWV).

d. Reference to all senior management officials as a group is in the manner and order as follows: Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials, and Deputy Assistant Secretaries. When it is not necessary to list all the management officials, delete the titles of the officials that are not required, but retain the order given above. An example is "Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials."