

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is warning veterans that there are scammers looking to cash in on their PACT Act benefits. Veterans and their benefits are the targets of many types of fraud, including mail, telephone and online fraud. VA is working to prevent these incidents, but the veteran is the best line of defense against this criminal activity.

The number of email phishing, scam phone calls and social media scams targeting veterans has increased as veterans begin to apply for PACT Act benefits. VA offers these tips about being contacted regarding your VA benefits:

- If you receive correspondence from VA concerning a claim, and you don't remember filing a claim, contact VA directly at (800) 827-1000 to confirm details.
- VA will never charge you for processing a claim or request a processing fee prior to releasing benefit payments.
- VA will never ask for your personal information via email. This includes verification of your SSN, address, and/or bank information. VA only addresses personal information via mailed letters.
- VA may check in with you by phone, email or text message. If you are unsure about any call, email, or text, confirm details with VA directly at (800) 827-1000.
- VA does not threaten claimants with jail or lawsuits.
- Be cautious of telephone numbers on your caller ID. Scammers can change the telephone number (spoofing) to make a call appear to come from a different person or place.
- When in doubt, hang up and call VA directly at (800) 827-1000, or call your power of attorney representative.
- If you receive an email or letter from VA notifying you that your direct deposit information was updated, or that your eBenefits account information was updated, and you don't remember doing so — immediately contact VA at (800) 827-1000. Do not ignore the email or letter. It could be your first sign that your information has been compromised. The Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A. provides veterans with assistance in filing disability claims free of charge and with no membership requirement. Veterans will not be charged by the Legion at any point while filing their claims and will be guided through the process by VA-accredited representatives through a national network of more than 3,000 accredited service officers.

To learn more about protecting yourself from fraud, and how to report it, visit [va.gov/oig/hotline/default.asp](http://va.gov/oig/hotline/default.asp). For more details on how to avoid scams, go to [fcc.gov/veterans-targeted-benefits-scams](http://fcc.gov/veterans-targeted-benefits-scams). Download free financial scam awareness resources at [consumerfinance.gov/aboutus/blog/helping-prevent-scams-targeted-veterans/](http://consumerfinance.gov/aboutus/blog/helping-prevent-scams-targeted-veterans/)