



VHA Office of Community Care Ambulance Transportation

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the authority to provide or reimburse land or air ambulance transport of certain eligible Veterans in relation to VA care or VA community care.

Authorized Ambulance Transport

Pre-authorized ambulance transport for eligible Veterans to or from a VA facility or VA-authorized community care facility is approved and arranged in advance of care. Some emergent transportation may be associated with authorized emergency care and evaluated for eligibility by the local VA Beneficiary Travel Office. A list of contacts is available at https://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/vtp/beneficiary_travel_pocs.asp

Veterans must meet the following administrative requirements to qualify for authorized transport:

- Have a service-connected (SC) disability or combined rating of 30 percent or more (travel for care relating to any condition), *or*

Emergency Transportation

During a medical emergency, Veterans should immediately seek care at the nearest medical facility without delay. A medical emergency is an injury, illness or symptom so severe that without immediate treatment, an individual believes his or her life or health is in danger. If a Veteran believes his or her life or health is in danger, call 911 or report to the nearest emergency department right away. Veterans do not need to check with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) before calling an ambulance or going to an emergency department.

VA has three legal authorities under which emergency treatment in a community facility may be paid for by VA, but specific requirements must be met. The legal authority under which the emergency treatment falls dictates eligibility requirements for associated emergent transportation.

Emergency Treatment	Associated Ambulance Transport	Eligibility Reference
Authorized Emergency Treatment - 38 CFR 17.4020(c)	Authorized Transport	Authorized Ambulance Transport
Unauthorized Emergency Treatment (Service-Connected) - 38 USC §1728	Unauthorized Transport (must meet authorized ambulance transport eligibility)	Authorized Ambulance Transport
Unauthorized Emergency Treatment (Nonservice-connected) - 38 USC §1725	Unauthorized Emergency Treatment (Nonservice-connected) - 38 USC §1725	Unauthorized Emergency Treatment (Nonservice-connected)

- Be in receipt of a VA pension, *or*
- Previous calendar year income does not exceed maximum VA pension rate, *or*
- Projected income in travel year does not exceed maximum VA pension rate, *or*
- Travel is in connection with care for a SC disability, *or*
- Travel is for a Compensation and Pension exam, *or*
- Travel is to obtain a service dog, *or*
- Travel relates to VA transplant care, *and*
- A VA clinician determines and documents that special mode transportation is medically required.

Note: Income related eligibility must be verified and on file with VA on or before the date of transport.

To arrange non-emergent transportation, or ask whether a Veteran's emergent transportation qualifies for authorization, contact the local VA [Beneficiary Travel Office](#).



Unauthorized Emergency Treatment

VA can pay ambulance transports associated with unauthorized emergency treatment approved under 38 USC §1728 and 38 USC §1725 if the Veteran meets the eligibility criteria.

Unauthorized Emergency Treatment (Service-Connected) - 38 USC §1728

Ambulance transports associated with emergent treatment approved under 38 USC §1728 will be assessed in accordance with Authorized Ambulance Transport eligibility.

Unauthorized Emergency Treatment (Nonservice-connected) - 38 USC §1725

Ambulance transports associated with emergent treatment approved under 38 USC §1725 will be assessed in accordance with 38 USC §1725 eligibility.

Under 38 USC §1725 VA must receive and adjudicate a claim for the emergency treatment received as part of the emergency transportation. If no claim is received for the associated treatment, VA cannot pay for the emergency transportation unless one of the following two exceptions are met:

1. Other health insurance or a third party paid for the emergency treatment (leaving no liability for the treatment) excluding the emergency transportation itself; **or**
2. 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.

To learn more about how emergency treatment eligibility determinations are made, visit https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/info_EmergencyCare.asp

Reimbursement Payment Rates

Ambulance Transport	Eligibility Reference	Payment Rate
Authorized Transport & Unauthorized Emergency Transport tied to (Service-Connected) 38 USC §1728	Authorized Ambulance Transport	Generally billed charges
Unauthorized Emergency Transport tied to (Nonservice-connected) - 38 USC §1725 episode of care	Unauthorized Emergent Transport (Nonservice-connected) - 38 USC §1725	Generally, 70% Medicare

All ambulance claims,* to be considered for payment, should be sent to:

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI): Payer ID is **12115**

Mail: Paper claims vial mail:

VHA Office of Community Care
P.O. Box 30780
Tampa, FL 33630-3780

*Ambulance claims should ***always*** be submitted to VA and ***never*** to TriWest or Optum.