

Exposure to Water Contamination at Camp Lejeune Means Possible VA Benefits for Ill Veterans

From the 1950s through the 1980s, people living or working at the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, were potentially exposed to drinking water contaminated with industrial solvents, benzene, and other chemicals. Because of this exposure, the VA (Veteran's Administration) has established a presumptive disability service connection for Veterans, Reservists, and National Guard members exposed to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune from August 1, 1953 through December 31, 1987 and who later developed one of the following eight diseases:

- Adult leukemia
- Aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- Bladder cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Liver cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

This means that if a veteran contracts one of these eight illnesses and served at Camp Lejeune during the dates listed above, they are eligible to receive disability pay and health care from the VA. Also, in accordance with the 2012 Camp Lejeune health care law, VA provides cost-free VA health care for another set of conditions to Veterans who served at least 30 days of active duty at Camp Lejeune from January 1, 1957 and December 31, 1987. Veterans eligible for health care under the 2012 Camp Lejeune health care law may enroll in VA health care and receive medical services for the 15 covered health conditions at no cost (including copayments).

Qualifying health conditions include:

- Esophageal cancer
- Breast cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Renal toxicity
- Female infertility
- Scleroderma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Lung cancer
- Bladder cancer
- Leukemia
- Myelodysplastic syndromes
- Hepatic steatosis
- Miscarriage
- Neurobehavioral effects

Health Care for Family Members Family members of Veterans who also resided at Camp Lejeune during the qualifying period are eligible for reimbursement of out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the 15 covered health conditions. The VA can only pay treatment costs for

care received on or after set dates and only for costs that remain after payment from other health plans.

If you were stationed at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between 1953 and 1987, and you have one of the 8 or 15 listed illnesses, you can contact the Shawano County Veteran Service Office (715-526-9183) for more information. The office is also available to help answer questions and provide assistance in applying for other benefits.