

### CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook defines the clothing allowance program and establishes procedures for the administration of the clothing allowance benefit.
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** This revised VHA Handbook provides updated guidance on the process and procedures when administering one or more clothing allowance(s).
- 3. RELATED ISSUES:** VHA Handbooks 1173.1 through 1173.14.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Deputy Chief Patient Care Services Officer, Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services (10P4R) is responsible for the content of this Handbook. Questions may be addressed at 202-461-7444.
- 5. RESCISSION:** VHA Handbook 1173.15, dated May 17, 2007 is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of May 2020.

Carolyn M. Clancy, MD  
Interim Under Secretary for Health

**DISTRIBUTION:** Emailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List on 5/19/2015.

**CONTENTS**  
**CLOTHING ALLOWANCE**

<b>PARAGRAPH</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<u>1. Purpose .....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>2. Definitions .....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>3. Scope .....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>4. Eligibility to Apply for the Clothing Allowance .....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>5. Entitlement Criteria .....</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>6. Clinical Evaluations/Re-evaluations .....</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>7. Schedule of Payment .....</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>8. Prosthetics, Orthopedic Appliances and Skin Medications .....</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>9. System Procedures .....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>10. Responsibilities .....</u>	<u>7</u>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
<u>A Determining Entitlement .....</u>	<u>A-1</u>
<u>B Eligibility Notifications .....</u>	<u>B-1</u>

## CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook defines and describes the procedures to administer the annual clothing allowance benefit to Veterans. Veterans with service-connected disabilities and disabilities compensable under Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) section 1151 who are prescribed a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance that tends to wear out or tear the clothing of a Veteran and/or a skin medication that causes irreparable damage to the Veteran's outer garments are entitled to receive a clothing allowance to replace or repair their clothing. **AUTHORITY:** 38 CFR 3.810.

**2. DEFINITIONS:** For purposes of this Handbook, the following definitions apply (see paragraph 8):

a. **Prosthetic/Orthopedic Appliance.** Prosthetic/orthopedic appliances are aids, parts or accessories required to replace, support, or substitute for impaired or missing anatomical parts of the body.

b. **Outergarment.** An outergarment is a type of garment worn over other garment (e.g., shirt, blouse, pants, skirt, coat, jacket, blazer).

c. **Skin Medication.** Skin medication is a cream, salve, ointment, lotion, or semisolid medicine that is used to treat, prevent, heal, protect and alleviate symptoms from a skin condition.

d. **Undergarment.** An undergarment is a garment worn under outergarments next to the skin (e.g., stockings, panties, boxers, briefs, trunks, bra, bathing suit).

**3. SCOPE:** The clothing allowance program is jointly administered with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) for Veterans who have qualifying service-connected disabilities and Veterans with disabilities compensable under section 1151. Under this collaborative effort, entitled Veterans are paid one or more clothing allowance benefit each year. Evidence in support of a Veteran's claim is to be obtained from VHA clinicians or records, e.g., VHA prescriptions, health care consultations, medical evaluations, rehabilitation assessments, or prosthetic and sensory aids services (see paragraph 6).

### 4. ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY FOR THE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE:

a. A rating specialist from VBA's Veterans Service Center is responsible for confirming whether a Veterans disability is service-connected or is compensable under 38 U.S.C. 1151 as if it were service-connected. In positive cases, the specialist is responsible for notifying the Veteran in writing that he or she may be entitled to an annual clothing allowance if: (1) the Veteran applies for the benefit and (2) the claim is ultimately determined by VHA to meet the criteria of Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3.810(a). An application (VA Form 10-8678, Application for Annual Clothing Allowance located at: <http://www.va.gov/vaforms>) by the Veteran is required before these benefits may be paid. Veterans determined to be entitled to the allowance

will receive an annual lump sum payment. See paragraphs 9 and 10.a. for a full description of the application and renewal procedures.

b. In cases where a Veteran applies for the clothing allowance and is determined to be entitled to the benefit but dies before receiving it, the Veteran's estate may apply for accrued benefits using form VA Form 21-601, Application for Accrued Amounts Due A Deceased Beneficiary, or VA Form 21-534EZ, Application for Dependency Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits, on behalf of the Veteran. All accrued benefit applications are forwarded by the receiving parties to the nearest VBA Regional Office for processing. A list of VBA Regional Offices can be found at: <http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/ro/index.htm>, or by calling 1-800-827-1000. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VBA Web site that is not available to the public.*

**5. ENTITLEMENT CRITERIA:** VA will pay one or more annual clothing allowance payment(s) to a Veteran: (1) Who has a service-connected disability or a disability compensable under 38 U.S.C. 1151 as if it were service-connected and (2) who meets the clinical eligibility requirements of 38 CFR 3.810. Section 3.810 provides in substance as follows:

a. **One Clothing Allowance.** A Veteran is entitled to one annual clothing allowance if:

(1) A VA examination or a hospital or examination report from a facility specified in section 3.326(b) establishes that the Veteran, because of a service-connected disability or disabilities due to loss or loss of use of a hand or foot compensable at a rate specified in section 3.350(a), (b), (c), (d), or (f), wears or uses one qualifying prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (including, but not limited to, a wheelchair) which tends to wear or tear clothing; or

(2) The Under Secretary for Health, or a designee, certifies that

(a) A Veteran, because of a service-connected disability or disabilities, wears or uses one qualifying prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (including, but not limited to, a wheelchair) which tends to wear or tear clothing; or

(b) A Veteran uses a skin medication prescribed by a physician for one skin condition, which is due to a service-connected disability that causes irreparable damage to the Veterans outergarments.

b. **More than One Clothing Allowance.** A Veteran is entitled to more than one annual clothing allowance if:

(1) Multiple types of garments are affected. A Veteran is entitled to an annual clothing allowance for each prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (including, but not limited to, a wheelchair) or skin medication used by the Veteran if each prostheses, appliance or skin medication:

(a) Satisfies the requirement of paragraph (a)(1) of section 3.810; and

(b) Affects a distinct type of article of clothing or outergarment.

(2) Single type of garment is affected. A Veteran is entitled to two annual clothing allowances if a Veteran uses more than one prosthetic or orthopedic appliance (including, but not limited to, a wheelchair), skin medication for more than one skin condition, or an prosthetic, orthopedic appliance and a skin medication, and the prostheses, orthopedic appliance(s) or skin medication(s):

(a) Each satisfies the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) of section 3.810; and

(b) Together tend to wear or tear a single type of article of clothing or irreparably damage a type of outergarment at an increased rate of damage to the clothing or outergarment due to a second orthopedic appliance or skin medication.

c. The Under Secretary for Health designee is the Prosthetic Representative. If a clinical determination is required under paragraph 6 of this Handbook, then the Under Secretary for Health designee will be the appropriate clinician (e.g., VHA clinician, Prosthetist, Orthotist, or Pharmacist). To determine that a Veteran is entitled to the allowance, the Under Secretary for Health designee must find and document that:

(1) The use of the prosthetic, orthopedic appliance, or skin medication is medically necessitated for a service-connected disability or disabilities;

(2) The prosthetic, orthopedic appliance, or skin medication meets the definition in this Handbook; and

(3) The prosthetic or orthopedic appliance tends to wear out or tear the clothing of the Veteran and/or the skin medication causes irreparable damage (e.g., permanent irreversible staining, bleeding or damage not removable with laundering or dry cleaning) to the Veteran's outergarments.

d. See Appendix A and examples of prosthetics, appliances, and skin medications that are generally covered in paragraph 8 below.

## 6. CLINICAL EVALUATIONS/RE-EVALUATIONS:

a. If insufficient medical evidence of record exists to award the claim, then, a clinical review and/or physical evaluation of the prosthetic, orthopedic appliance, and/or skin medication is warranted. As part of the clinical review, the Under Secretary for Health designee will require the Veteran to provide the prosthetic, orthopedic appliance, or skin medication to assist with making an entitlement decision.

b. The treating physician will re-evaluate the Veteran to determine whether the prosthetic, orthopedic appliance or skin medication is still medically necessary for their service-connected disability or disabilities. An annual re-evaluation of the Veterans prosthetic, orthopedic appliance or skin medication is recommended. **NOTE:** *In no circumstances will the Veteran be instructed to provide any articles of clothing for clinical evaluations/re-evaluations (e.g., requiring Veterans to bring in clothing to VA*

medical facility). For unusual circumstances Veterans can submit pictures to certify their prescribed prosthetic or orthopedic appliance, or skin medication causes wear, tear or irreparable staining. Submission of pictures by the Veteran is considered sufficient evidence.

## 7. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENT:

a. Payment of the clothing allowance is made in a lump sum annually to Veterans when entitlement is established prior to August 1<sup>st</sup>, otherwise known as the anniversary date (anniversary dates are only August 1<sup>st</sup>). If entitlement and processing is completed before August 1<sup>st</sup> of the benefit year, VBA will release the annual clothing allowance payment(s) September 1<sup>st</sup> - October 31<sup>st</sup> of the same benefit year. Current clothing allowance rates can be found at:

[http://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/special Benefit Allowances 2013.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/special%20Benefit%20Allowances%202013.asp).

b. Veterans who are incarcerated during the clothing allowance year will have their payment prorated for each day in which the Veteran is incarcerated. **NOTE:** The VETSNET system prorates automatically using VBA information (CFR 3.810(d)).

c. In order to establish an anniversary date, the Veteran will have a service-connected disability prior to August 1<sup>st</sup>, prescribed and utilizing the qualifying prosthetic, orthopedic appliance, and/or skin medication. The Veteran can apply using VA Form 10-8678, Application for Annual Clothing Allowance, for that given year's benefit up to 1 year from the established anniversary date. The clothing allowance benefit year spans from August 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year.

Example: A Veteran receives a service-connected rating for arthritis, for which the Veteran is prescribed a rigid knee brace that causes irreparable damage to his or her pants on May 10, 2012. Since the anniversary date is August 1, 2012, the Veteran will have until July 31, 2013 to apply for a clothing allowance for benefit year 2012.

d. If a Veteran establishes eligibility for the clothing allowance as of August 1<sup>st</sup> or later of any year, the Veteran is not entitled to any payment for that year. No amount is payable until the annual payment becomes due on the following August 1<sup>st</sup>. Likewise, a partial refund is not required if the Veterans entitlement is terminated during a period after the annual clothing allowance is furnished.

Example: A Veteran is service-connected for an ankle condition and is prescribed an orthosis on September 10, 2012. The anniversary date is August 1, 2013. The Veteran has until July 31, 2014 to apply for the 2013 annual clothing allowance, but is not eligible to receive a clothing allowance for benefit year 2012 since the anniversary date falls after the August 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.

**8. PROSTHETICS, ORTHOPEDIC APPLIANCES AND SKIN MEDICATIONS:** While the ultimate determination is left to the individual treating provider, the following guidance is provided:

a. Examples of items that tend to tear and wear clothing include: Prostheses, rigid braces, ankle/foot orthosis (AFO) with hooks, rigid AFO, manual wheelchairs without clothing guards, specialized wheelchairs with sliding board/sliding transfer functionalities, and wheelchairs with positioning and posturing adaptations, crutches, wrist braces, prosthesis, rigid orthotics, service dogs, colostomy or ileostomy, cervical braces. A guide and updated listing created by the Orthotic and Prosthetic (O&P) Field Advisory Committee identifies prostheses and orthotics that may cause wear and tear to outergarments. It is available under the Clothing Allowance folder on the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids SharePoint at: <http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/prosthetics/default.aspx>.

**NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.* Prostheses and orthotics not included in the guide should be reported to VHA's Rehabilitation and Prosthetics Services (10P4R). The O&P Field Advisory Committee will review the prostheses and orthotics to determine its impact on clothing. Consultation with local VHA Orthotists and Prosthetists can substitute when a prompt decision is needed. This list is updated by the O&P Field Advisory Committee on a semi-annual basis, provided new prostheses and orthotics may qualify for the clothing allowance benefit.

b. Examples of items that do not tend to tear and wear clothing include: Soft orthotics, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) units, shoes, shoe inserts, non-specialized wheelchairs (sedentary/sitting purposes), scooters, canes, rollador, walkers, elastic/flexible braces, items with Velcro stays, hinged braces covered in fabric (metal stays covered), braces with plastic stays covered in fabric.

c. A guide and updated listing created by the Prosthetic and Pharmacy workgroup identifies skin medications, ointments, or lotions that may cause irreparable staining, discoloration, bleeding, and damage not removable by laundering or dry cleaning. It is available under the Clothing Allowance folder on the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids SharePoint at: <http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/prosthetics/default.aspx>. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.* Skin medications not included in the guide should be reported to VHA's Rehabilitation and Prosthetics Services (10P4R). The Prosthetic and Pharmacy workgroup will review the skin medication to determine its impact on clothing. Consultation with a local VHA Pharmacist can substitute when a prompt decision is needed. This list is updated by the Prosthetic and Pharmacy workgroup on a semi-annual basis, provided any new skin medication, ointment, or lotion may qualify for the clothing allowance. Over-the-counter skin medications, ointments and lotions that are prescribed by a VHA physician are to meet the same criteria in paragraph 5 of this Handbook.

## 9. SYSTEM PROCEDURES:

a. When a Veteran rating decision is processed that initially establishes service-connection or entitlement to 38 U.S.C. 1151 benefits, the Veteran is informed by VBA's Veterans Service Center of potential entitlement to the clothing allowance benefit. The Veteran is instructed accordingly by the notification letter released by VBA's Veterans Service Center to apply for the clothing allowance benefit utilizing VA Form 10-8678, Application for Annual Clothing Allowance, located at: <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/> and submitting it to the nearest Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service. All foreign clothing

allowance claims are submitted by the claimant to the nearest VBA Regional Office for processing. **NOTE:** *Multiple clothing allowances are not authorized prior to the 2012 clothing allowance cycle. The Veteran is allowed from the date of eligibility until July 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year to apply.*

Example: A Veteran's service-connected disability is established on March 2, 2011. If entitled, the Veteran's clothing allowance benefit or anniversary date is August 1, 2011. The Veteran can apply any time between March 2, 2011, and July 31, 2012, for the clothing allowance benefit.

b. When Veteran Service Organizations or personnel at the VA medical facility or VBA Regional Office identifies a Veteran with potential eligibility, assistance to complete the form is provided to the Veteran by completing VA Form 10-8678, Application for Annual Clothing Allowance. Once the completed application is received via mail or in person, the nearest VHA Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS) will process within 5 business days. \*All foreign clothing allowance claims are accepted and processed at the designated VA medical facility. Documentation of all actions, favorable or unfavorable, is recorded in the Veterans electronic prosthetic record.

\*South America, Central America and Mexico territories (Houston PSAS); European countries and territories (Pittsburg PSAS); and Canada and surrounding foreign territories (Denver PSAS).

c. When the Veteran applies for a clothing allowance and there is no record of a prescription for the prosthetic, orthopedic appliance and/or skin medication, an administrative review and/or physical evaluation is scheduled by the Under Secretary for Health designee prior to making a determination. The Under Secretary for Health designee, usually the Prosthetic Representative, will follow guidance in paragraph 6 on "Evaluations/Re-evaluations" of this Handbook. **NOTE:** *Reasonable doubt is resolved in favor of the Veteran.*

d. When the entitlement determination is favorable, the Prosthetic Representative will annotate VA Form 10-2319, Automated Date Processing (ADP), Record of Prosthetic Service, on page 6; to reflect receipt of VA Form 10-8678, as follows:

(1) Access the Add/Edit Clothing Allowance option under the PSC/Entitlement Records section of the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS) official's menu. Enter the Veterans name at the prompt, and then complete the remainder of the fields beginning with the date the claim is processed by the PSAS activity.

(2) Enter the name of the Prosthetic Representative determining the clothing allowance entitlement decision. Enter appropriate identifying information at the "Clothing Allowance Description" prompt, including the appliance for which the claim is approved per the following format:

Desc: FY12 Wyatt Ointment-approved; Rt Knee Brace-approved



e. When entitlement is unfavorable, annotate VA Form 10-2319 (ADP), Record of Prosthetic Service, on page 6 to reflect receipt of VA Form 10-8678, as follows:

(1) Access the Add/Edit Clothing Allowance option under the PSC/Entitlement Records section of the PSAS official's menu. Enter the Veterans name at the prompt, and then complete the remainder of the fields beginning with the date the claim is processed by the PSAS activity.

(2) Enter the name of the Prosthetic Representative determining the clothing allowance entitlement decision. Enter appropriate identifying information at the "Clothing Allowance Description" prompt to include the appliance for which the claim is disapproved per the following format:

Desc: FY12 Wyatt Ointment-denial 1173.15 Sec D,e3; Rt Knee Brace-Denial 1173.15 Sec D,e1.

(a) Appliance causing wear or tear is not worn, or skin medication causing damage is not used;

(b) Appliance not worn for service-connected condition, or skin medication not used for service-connected condition; and/or

(c) Appliance worn not medically prescribed, or skin medication used not medically prescribed; and

f. Notification letters for all determinations, favorable or unfavorable, are sent to each Veteran and, if applicable, their designated Power of Attorney. In the case of denials, a VA Form 4107, Your Rights to Appeal our Decision, will accompany all favorable and unfavorable entitlement decisions.

g. Appeals are handled according to the local official appeals process administered by the Chief Business Officer and VBA's Regional Office. Boards of Veterans Appeals Handbooks/Directives are located at: [http://vaww.bva.va.gov/BVA\\_Materials.asp](http://vaww.bva.va.gov/BVA_Materials.asp).

**NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.*

(1) No clothing allowance award is terminated, reduced or otherwise adversely affected unless the Veteran is notified of such adverse action, and is provided a period of 60 days in which to submit evidence for the purpose of showing that the adverse action is not warranted (38 CFR 3.103(b)(2)).

(2) If the Veteran does not submit any evidence to support such adverse action, then the Prosthetic Representative will terminate or reduce the clothing allowance benefit.

h. PSAS is responsible for the award action on the annual re-certification portion of the clothing allowance benefit. However, the funding for the clothing allowance remains in the VBA benefit appropriation. The Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Prosthetic Representative (VPR) coordinates the award action at the VA medical facility level and ensures all appropriate staff are trained in the procedures of processing

payment for clothing allowance benefits in VETSNET as applicable. All training and user guides are accessible under the clothing allowance folder located on the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Web site at:

<http://vawww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/prosthetics/default.aspx>. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.*

## 10. RESPONSIBILITIES:

### a. **Prosthetic Representative.** The Prosthetic Representative will:

(1) Review VA Form 10-8678, Application for Annual Clothing Allowance; VA Form 21-6796, Rating Decision; VA Form 10-2319, Record of Prosthetic Services, SHARE, VETSNET and other medical documentation to determine entitlement for the clothing allowance benefit;

(2) Determine entitlement, consult and notify the Veteran in writing of entitlement status whether the decision is favorable or unfavorable;

(3) Consult appropriate clinician (e.g., VHA clinician, Orthotist, Prosthetist, or Pharmacist) on clinical determinations. See paragraph 6 of this Handbook to determine when clinical evaluations/re-evaluations are warranted.

(4) Generate and/or authorize award actions using VETSNET;

(5) Record decisions in the Veterans Prosthetic Record using procedures in paragraph 9 of this Handbook; and

(6) Complete and file Statement of Case, when necessary.

b. **Clothing Allowance Super Users.** The Clothing Allowance Super Users (e.g., Chief of Prosthetics, Supervisory Prosthetic Representatives, Subject Matter Experts, etc.) will:

(1) Assist with identifying technical and system issues by reporting them to the PSAS and VBA's Central Offices;

(2) Assist with completing necessary paperwork for access to VETSNET;

(3) Provide refresher training at the VA medical facility and VISN levels;

(4) Partner and collaborate with VBA's Clothing Allowance Coordinators, other Clothing Allowance Super Users, and Prosthetic Representatives to streamline processes and procedures;

(5) Verify and authorize award action, if the Veteran is eligible for more than three clothing allowances; and

(6) Coordinate and collaborate with VBA's Clothing Allowance Coordinators.

c. Veterans Benefit Administration. VBA will:

(1) Notify eligible Veterans on an annual basis on how to apply for the annual clothing allowance benefit;

(a) The anniversary date will depend on when the Veteran is notified of his or her rating decision.

(b) Each annual clothing allowance application requires eligibility on or before August 1 of the year for which payment is requested (e.g., A Veteran eligible as of July 1, 2013, is entitled to receive the 2013 clothing allowance benefit) (see Appendix B).

**NOTE:** *(If a Veterans status is static/recurring and receives an annual clothing allowance he or she will continue to receive a recurring automatic payment without having to reapply each year. However, as of August 1, 2012, if the Veterans status is static/recurring and applies or receives more than one clothing allowance, he or she MUST RE-APPLY each year. A Veteran who applies for the first time after August 1, 2012 must APPLY on an annual basis).*

(2) Designate and provide VHA's Prosthetic Representatives with updated information for all Clothing Allowance Coordinators on a semi-annual basis; and

(3) Provide resources to VHA upon request on data management, Information Technology support, and appropriation management, training, and updated User Guides.

**DETERMINING ENTITLEMENT**

a. **One Clothing Allowance.** A clothing allowance is approved for certain Veterans who wear or use a prescribed prosthetic, orthopedic appliance, and/or skin medication and who otherwise meet the criteria in paragraph 6 of this Handbook. For example: A Veteran is prescribed and uses a right knee brace for his or her service-connected condition. The right knee brace has rigid hinges which tears the Veterans pants. This Veteran qualifies for one clothing allowance payment.

b. **More Than One Clothing Allowance.** Multiple clothing allowances are approved if:

(1) A Veteran uses multiple qualifying prostheses, orthopedic appliances, and skin medications each satisfy the requirements in paragraph 6 of this Handbook; each approved prostheses, orthopedic appliance and skin medication impacts a distinct outergarment, i.e., upper outergarment (shirt/blouse) and lower outergarment (pants/skirt).

Example: Veteran is a service-connected paraplegic who uses a specialized wheelchair with adaptations for posturing and positioning. The Veteran also applies a prescribed skin cream known to stain clothing. Because the wheelchair wears and frequently tears the shirt, and the skin medication stains the shirt, the Veteran qualifies for two clothing allowance payments.

(2) The qualifying prostheses, orthopedic appliances and skin medications each satisfy the requirements in paragraph 6 of this Handbook, and together tend to tear or wear or irreparably damage an outergarment, requiring replacement at a faster rate than if the outergarment is affected by a single qualifying prosthetic, orthopedic appliance or skin medication.

Example: Veteran wears a prescribed rigid elbow brace for his or her service-connected condition, which satisfies requirements in paragraph 6 of this Handbook. The Veteran also uses a prescribed skin cream on the same arm that causes the shirt to fade at an increased rate. The Veteran qualifies for two clothing allowances payments, as both the rigid elbow brace and cream meet the requirements of paragraph 6 of this Handbook and together cause an increased rate of damage to a distinct outergarment (shirt/blouse).

Example: Veteran with paralysis due to a service-connected condition uses a specialized wheelchair adapted for sliding transfers that tears his or her upper and lower outergarments (shirts and pants). The Veteran also uses a prescribed skin cream and rigid AFO impacting his or her lower outergarments (pants) to wear out at a faster rate. The Veteran qualifies for three clothing allowance payments.

Example: Veteran is prescribed upper and lower prostheses for upper and lower amputations. A knee brace for the opposite leg of the lower prostheses is prescribed for another service-connected condition. The Veteran also is prescribed skin cream for

irritation on the opposite arm of the upper prostheses that causes the Veterans article of clothing (shirt/blouse) to fade. The Veteran qualifies for four clothing allowance payments.

-

### ELIGIBILITY NOTIFICATIONS

Example: If a Veteran is notified in March 2013 that a qualifying service-connected disability rating is awarded and effective September 2011. The Veteran is allowed one year from the date of notification to apply for retroactive clothing allowance payments. If the Veteran applies for clothing allowance benefit within one year from the date of notification, then the Prosthetic Representative can go back to August 1, 2012 and pay the clothing allowance for the years 2012 and 2013.

Example: A Veteran is notified in March 2012 that he or she is awarded a qualifying service-connected disability rating effective November 2008. The Veteran is allowed one year from the date of notification to apply for retroactive clothing allowance benefit. \*If the Veteran applies for the clothing allowance benefit on June 27, 2013 (not within 1 year of being notified) the clothing allowance is paid for the years 2012 and 2013.

*\*This is possible because the Veterans anniversary date is August 2012. The Veteran is allowed a year to file for a 2012 payment (from August 2012 to July 31, 2013). Since the Veteran filed in June 2013, this makes the Veteran eligible for 2012. The Veteran is also eligible for the 2013 payment since the Veteran applied during the allowance timeframe for 2013 (see Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3.810(c).*

Example: If a Veteran is notified in March 2010 that a qualifying service-connected disability rating is awarded, but the Veteran received an approved prostheses, orthopedic appliance and/or skin medication in January 2013, then the clothing allowance is paid for 2013 (August 2012 to July 2013). However, no retroactive payment from 2010-2012 is allowed as the Veteran did not receive his or her approved prosthetic, orthopedic appliance and/or skin medication until the anniversary date (August 2013).