

Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Frequently Asked Questions

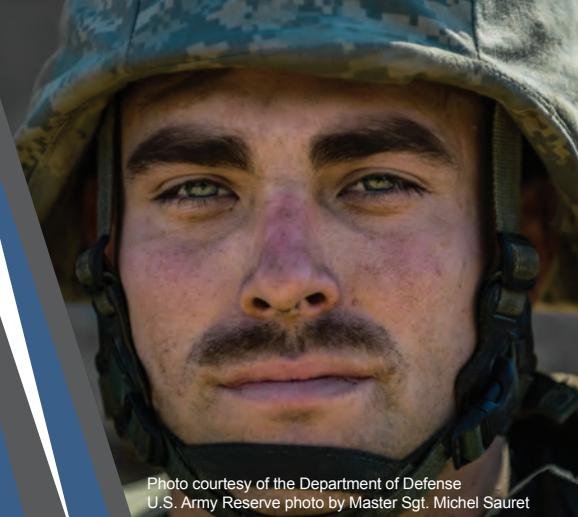


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U.S. Army Reserve photo by Master Sgt. Michel Sauret

General Information

Q1: What is the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry?

The registry is a database of health information voluntarily provided by service members and veterans that will help the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) collect, analyze, and publish data on health conditions that may be related to environmental exposures experienced during deployment. The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry consists of an online questionnaire and a recommended medical evaluation.

In June 2014, Public Law 112-260, as described in the [Federal Register](#), mandated VA create an Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. The requirement was established to help put data to work for service members and veterans through research about potential health effects of burn pit exposure and other airborne hazards. The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry allows eligible veterans and service members to document environmental exposures, such as smoke from burn pits, oil well fires, or pollution during deployment, as well as record health concerns, through an online questionnaire. Information reported by participants is maintained in a secure database and is used to inform research studies.

The registry is completely voluntary and does not affect access to VA health care or compensation benefits. Upon completion of the questionnaire, registry participants are highly encouraged to schedule a free medical evaluation to review their responses and health concerns with a medical provider. The registry helps participants proactively identify health concerns, while helping researchers to study the health effects of exposure to burn pits and other airborne hazards.

Q2: What is an airborne hazard?

Airborne hazards can be any number of airborne environmental contaminants that may cause short- and long-term health effects to exposed individuals. Examples of airborne hazards include burn pit smoke, oil well fire smoke, sand, dust, and particulate matter.

Q3: What is an open burn pit?

The Department of Defense (DoD) defines an open burn pit as an area of land used for the open-air combustion of trash and other solid waste products. The use of open burn pits, or open-air burn pits, was a common waste disposal practice at military sites outside of the U.S. such as in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Q4: How do I participate in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry?

The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry consists of an online questionnaire and a recommended medical evaluation. You must have a Premium DS Logon (Defense Self-service Logon) Level 2 account to sign in to the [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#). Once you log in, you will need to verify your deployment information is correct before you proceed to the questionnaire. Upon completion, click "Submit," then save and print the questionnaire for your records. Service members are encouraged to contact their local military hospital or clinic for a free medical evaluation to discuss exposures and health concerns with a provider.



Q5: What is a DS Logon?

A DS Logon is a secure ID that is used by DoD and VA to allow individuals access to several websites with one user name and password. Service members must have a Premium DS Logon Level 2 account before attempting to register. You can obtain, update, or recover a DS Logon at the [Defense Manpower Data Center \(DMDC\) Identity Management](#) website. Once you have your DS Logon information, log in and complete the registry questionnaire. If you have trouble with your DS Logon or have questions regarding the process for obtaining a DS Logon, visit the [DMDC Identity Management FAQ page](#).

To receive account assistance, you can also call the DMDC Support Center at 1-800-477-8227, select option 2, and then select option 2 again. For technical support, call the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Help Desk from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time at 1-877-470-5947. The Help Desk can assist with any technical issue you may be having with this application.

Q6: Why is it important for service members to sign up for the registry?

If eligible, you can document exposures and proactively identify health concerns, create a "snapshot" of your health to guide discussions with your health care provider, help VA and DoD better understand the long-term effects of airborne hazard exposures, and improve programs and health care for service members and veterans.

Q7: I'm a service member, but the registry link points me to a VA website. Am I in the right place?

Yes. The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry was developed by VA for both service members and veterans. While the registry is owned and managed by VA, DoD works closely with VA to support service member participation and efforts in ongoing exposure research and policy.

Eligibility and Deployment Verification

Q8: Am I eligible to participate?

The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is open to service members and veterans who deployed to **the Southwest Asia theater of operations or Egypt on or after August 2, 1990, or in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, or Uzbekistan on or after September 11, 2001.** These regions include the following countries, bodies of water, and the airspace above these locations: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and the waters of the Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea.

You do not have to have been exposed to specific airborne hazards or have related health concerns to participate in the registry.

Q9: The Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry says I do not have any eligible deployments, but I have deployed to locations that are listed as eligible. How can I correct this?

You must initiate a manual review of deployment information by selecting "Request an Eligibility Review." The registry will ask you to enter your contact information and eligible deployment information. VA will review the information you submit and, if necessary, ask you to provide documentation that indicates your eligible deployment(s). Please note that it may take up to 90 days for your deployment information to be verified. Upon verification, you may continue to the questionnaire.

Of note, if you were deployed before 9/11, were a part of special forces, returned from an eligible deployment less than 3 months ago, or were re-deployed within 3 months, you may get a notification in the registry portal that you do not have an eligible deployment. If you recently returned from deployment, please wait until at least 90 days post-return to try again; otherwise, please click the blue "Request Eligibility Review" banner and follow the prompts.



Q10: What should I do if I cannot find the name of a base where I deployed?

If for any reason you cannot find your base name when adding a new deployment to the questionnaire, leave the base entry blank. You will be able to fill it in later in the questionnaire.

If you served in Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, or New Dawn, but don't see the base name, check for an alternate spelling. If you served in Operations Desert Storm/Desert Shield, Kuwait, or Djibouti, the name of the base where you served will likely not be listed.

Q11: May I sign up for the registry while on deployment to an eligible location?

You cannot join the registry while on an eligible deployment. It may take up to 90-120 days after your return for your deployment information to be linked from DoD records to the registry; therefore, the system may not recognize your eligibility if you are still deployed. We recommend waiting to register until at least 90 days following your return from deployment; this reduces the likelihood that you will need to request a manual eligibility review and possibly provide documentation supporting eligibility. It also enables you to complete the questionnaire based on your full deployment experience by capturing your exposures and health concerns.

Completing the Registry Questionnaire

Q12: How long will it take me to complete the questionnaire?

The online questionnaire will take about an hour to complete, depending on your number of deployments. You can fill out the questionnaire in multiple sittings by saving your information and returning later to complete it.

Q13: What types of questions should I be prepared to answer?

You will be asked a series of questions in the following categories:

- Where and when you were deployed
- Conditions and health issues that cause difficulty with daily activities

- Current and past health symptoms
- Where you've lived
- The type of work you do and have done
- Dust, gas, vapors, or fumes exposures
- Home environment and hobbies
- How and when you seek health care
- Contact preferences

Q14: Can I add a deployment after I submit my questionnaire?

Yes, if you deploy to an eligible region after submitting your questionnaire, you may add that deployment to the registry. Please wait at least 90 days after your return to log in and update the registry.

Q15: Why does the questionnaire ask questions about my current job and hobbies?

It is important for medical providers to have a complete picture of your health. The questionnaire asks a broad range of questions because an individual's health is greatly influenced by their lifestyle. Health conditions can worsen over time from additional or prolonged exposures experienced during work or recreation. Your current or past jobs, hobbies, civilian exposures, and lifestyle will not affect eligibility for benefits.

Q16: When I add personal information to the registry, will other people see my answers?

Your personal information will be secure and VA will review it for authorized purposes only. Registry data will be provided to other government agencies (including DoD), research institutions, and the general public, but your identity will not be linked to it. You are responsible for protecting your personal information that you print out or download.

Q17: Will my provider be able to access my completed questionnaire at my registry evaluation or during other medical exams?

DoD providers can access completed questionnaires in the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER).



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However, to avoid technical issues, **please bring a printed copy of your questionnaire or securely submit an electronic copy** when you attend your registry evaluation and/or your next routine health assessment (such as your Periodic Health Assessment or Post-Deployment Health Assessment). Sharing your completed questionnaire can help your provider obtain a comprehensive picture of your health and potential health concerns.

Q18: Can I print or download a copy of my questionnaire?

Yes, everyone who registers for the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry can download and/or print a copy of their completed questionnaire upon submission. You can also log back in to the registry to access it anytime.

Scheduling and Completing the Recommended Medical Evaluation

Q19: I finished the questionnaire and would like to participate in the medical evaluation. What do I do next?

DoD will provide a free, optional medical evaluation upon request. As a service member, you are responsible for scheduling an evaluation with your local military hospital or clinic. **Completing the questionnaire does NOT cue DoD to contact you to schedule an appointment.**

Active duty service members, including activated Reserve and Guard, must contact their local military hospital or clinic to schedule an appointment for a voluntary medical evaluation. When you call, please state that you are requesting an appointment specifically to address health concerns related to Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry exposures.

Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and Reserve members, whether discharged or still serving, are eligible for a no-cost medical evaluation provided by VA. Veterans and inactive/separated National Guard members and Reservists who indicated an interest in the evaluation will be contacted directly by VA; these registrants may also proactively contact their local [VA Environmental Health Coordinator](#) to schedule a no-cost medical evaluation.

There is no deadline to schedule your registry medical evaluation. Even if you completed your questionnaire during active duty and have since separated from the military, you may schedule an appointment (through VA).

Q20: What can I expect from the medical evaluation?

Your provider will review your questionnaire results and ask you about your exposure history. They will also evaluate any symptoms you may have in a comprehensive manner. Further suggested testing, including specialty evaluations, may be ordered by your provider based on your health concerns and symptoms. It is important for you to bring your completed questionnaire to the exam to review exposure history and health concerns with your provider.

Q21: Do I need to finish the questionnaire to receive medical care related to airborne hazards or burn pit exposures?

If you are eligible, we strongly encourage you to complete the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry questionnaire to document your exposures in advance of a discussion with your provider. If you have any health or exposure concerns, you may contact your local military hospital or clinic to schedule an appointment for a voluntary medical evaluation. If you are experiencing any urgent symptoms, you should go to the nearest emergency room, call 911, or contact your primary care manager for instructions.

If you have questions regarding the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, you can find instructions for completing the registry at <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry> or visit [VA's FAQ page](#).

For assistance with any technical issues, call the Registry Help Desk from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time at 1-877-470-5947.

Visit <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry> to access the registry

