

Clothing allowance benefits for vets with service related disability or injury **By Ted Puntillo, Director of Veterans Services for Solano County, CA**

Veterans who have unique clothing needs as a result of a service-related disability or injury may be eligible for a clothing allowance to supplement their disability compensation provided by the Veteran Administration (VA). Applications for reimbursement are due August 1 for 2017 – so act now!

The clothing allowance reimburses veterans whose clothes become permanently damaged by a prosthetic and / or orthopedic appliance they wear as a result of a service-related injury. The allowance also includes clothing that gets ruined or stained by medications used on the skin as prescribed by the VA.

If eligible, veterans will receive either a one-time payment or a yearly allowance for reimbursement. Payments are based on the rate table set by law. The current reimbursement rate is set at \$777.39. Additional clothing allowances may be provided if more than one prosthetic or orthopedic appliance or medication is being used or affects more than one type of clothing garment.

The clothing allowance benefit is offered to veterans who use either of the following, including:

- Prosthetic or orthopedic appliances, including wheelchairs and crutches. Soft and flexible devices, such as an elastic stocking are not included.
- Medication prescribed by a physician for a service-connected skin condition that causes permanent stains or otherwise damages garments.

Veterans must establish eligibility by August 1 of the year for which they wish to claim payment in order to receive the clothing allowance benefit. With the deadline fast approaching, now is the time to apply.

Veterans must submit VA Form 10-8678, the Application for Annual Clothing Allowance to the prosthetic representative at their local VA medical center. Individuals who have not submitted a claim for disability compensation in the past must complete that application prior to filling out the clothing allowance form.

Compensation payments will be made between September 1 and October 31, 2017. This is an annual payment and will only be made during this time frame.

Veterans who have questions about this benefit program, including eligibility, application and compensation benefits are encouraged to call or stop by the Solano County Veteran Service Office. We help thousands of veterans like you get connected to the benefit programs and services you deserve. We're here to help and we look forward to meeting with you soon. As always, thank you for your service to our country.

Ted Puntillo is Director of Veteran's Services for Solano County. Reach him at (707) 784-6590 or TEPuntillo@SolanoCounty.com. The Solano County Veteran's Services Office, 675 Texas St. in Fairfield, is open from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.