

In a [report](#) published on August 25, 2022, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) disclosed its findings that the VA has improperly processed more than one-third of all disability claims filed in relation to the contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune from 1953 through 1987. The OIG's report indicates that the improper processing is due to several factors, including the fact that staff members at many VA regional offices "lacked experience processing these claims."

If the VA wrongfully denied your claim related to the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, you may still be entitled to compensation. Passed in August 2022, the [Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022](#) allows veterans and other individuals to file claims to recover compensation for exposure-related losses.

## **The VA Underpaid At Least \$13.8 Million in Benefits for Camp Lejeune Water Contamination in Just Four Years**

The OIG's investigation focused on claim decisions during the four-year period from March 14, 2017, through March 31, 2021. During this time, the OIG concluded the VA improperly processed 21,000 of the 57,500 claims filed for exposure to Camp Lejeune's contaminated water. This improper processing led to the wrongful denial of "at least \$13.8 million" in veterans' benefits.

In March 14, 2017, the VA established "a presumption of military service connection for eight illnesses related to veterans' exposure to [Camp Lejeune's] contaminated water." Despite this presumption, the VA continued to improperly deny benefits—with most improper denials resulting from two main errors:

- "[P]rematurely denying claims (17,200) by not sending required letters to veterans requesting evidence needed to document exposure;" and,
- "[A]ssigning incorrect effective dates for benefit entitlement (2,300 claims)."

## **Veterans Have a New Option for Filing Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Claims**

Regardless of why the VA denied your [Camp Lejeune water contamination claim](#)—and even if you are receiving VA benefits for an illness caused by Camp Lejeune’s contaminated water—you may be entitled to compensation under the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022. While veterans and other eligible individuals have until August 2024 to file their claims, due to the high volume of claims being filed, it is important to file claims as soon as possible.

If you would like to know more about your legal rights as a victim of contaminated water exposure at Camp Lejeune, contact us for a free, no-obligation consultation. To speak with a Camp Lejeune water contamination lawyer in North Carolina in confidence, call 800-662-1234 or [tell us how we can reach you online](#) now.