

Prosthetic Medical Equipment Purchase and Repairs

As Hospital Liaison for Paralyzed Veterans of America Oregon Chapter, one of the most common issues members contact me about are delays obtaining new prosthetic equipment and repairs to prosthetic equipment issued through the VA. Many of our members endure long waits not only for customized wheelchairs, patient lifts, and other high-dollar prosthetics equipment, but lower cost non-customized prosthetic equipment as well. How does the prosthetic purchasing and equipment repair process work, how long should I wait before contacting prosthetics and who do I contact? My goal is to try and answer some of those questions.

I will first talk about purchase/repair of durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs, hospital beds, patient lifts and etc. Then second, how long a veteran should wait before contacting prosthetics and who the veteran should contact.

Prosthetic Medical Equipment Purchase and Repair

Medical Equipment Purchase

Typically the process for obtaining new or replacement prosthetic equipment is as follows:

Physician, primary care provider or rehab specialist i.e. physical/occupational therapist submits prescription/consult to prosthetics. That consult should go directly to veteran's assigned prosthetic representative.

The prosthetic representative will confirm veteran's eligibility then send VA form F 10-90 request for quote to medical equipment vendor identified in the consult. If no medical equipment vendor is identified, the prosthetic representative should contact the veteran to determine veterans preferred medical equipment vendor. Then send VA form F 10-90 request for quote to veteran's preferred vendor.

Once the prosthetic representative receives the quote back from the vendor he/she will do one of the following.

- a) If less than \$3,500 notify the purchasing unit that the request is ready for the purchasing agent to enter a purchase order into the system and notify the vendor the purchase is authorized. The vendor will then fulfill the purchase order. The equipment will be sent to the veteran or VA based on information in the consult. If not sent directly to the veteran the prescribing provider will follow up with the veteran. The vendor cannot begin to work until the purchase order is received.

b) If \$3,500 or more the VA prosthetic representative is required to forward the consult to VA contracting. A VA contracting officer will create a purchase order to purchase prescribed equipment according to Federal Acquisition Regulations. Once the VA contracting officer enters the purchase order into the system he/she will notify your prosthetics representative that a purchase order to purchase the prescribed equipment has been entered into the system authorizing purchase. Then the prosthetic representative should follow through and make sure the veteran or prescribing provider receives prescribed equipment. If the veteran will either receive the equipment delivered to their home or will be delivered to the veteran's provider depending on directions in the consult. If equipment is going to the provider he/she will follow up with the veteran.

Medical Equipment Repair

If the veterans prosthetic equipment issued from the VA breaks down and/or needs repair, maybe a wheelchair flat tire, power wheelchair needs new batteries or power wheelchair electronic control module goes out. The following is the typical process for getting prosthetic equipment issued from the VA repaired or replaced.

The veteran has a couple options

The veteran can contact their primary provider or rehab specialist and request a medical equipment repair consult be sent to prosthetics. The consult should go directly to the veteran's prosthetic representative.

- a) Then the VA prosthetic representative will send VA form F 10-90 request for quote to medical equipment repair vendor identified in the consult. If no medical equipment repair vendor is identified, the prosthetic representative should contact the veteran to determine veterans preferred medical equipment repair vendor. Then send VA form F 10-90 request for quote to veteran's preferred vendor.
- b) Once veterans prosthetic representative receives the quote back from the vendor he/she should enter a purchase order into the system and notify the vendor the repair is authorized.
- c) The vendor will then make arrangements with the veteran to repair the medical equipment identified in the purchase order

The veteran can call or go to the medical equipment repair vendor of their choice and let them know they are having problems with their prosthetic equipment. Then that medical equipment repair vendor must contact VA prosthetics who will notify veteran's prosthetics representative and notify them the veteran needs a medical equipment repair. (Sometimes the repair vendor will include a quote at the time they notify prosthetics the veterans equipment needs repaired)

- a) The prosthetic representative will then contact the veteran's primary provider to request a consult for medical equipment repair confirming that the veteran's current equipment still meets the veteran's needs. If your primary provider thinks the veteran's medical equipment

no longer meets his/her needs, prosthetic will work with the provider in determining if veteran needs new equipment and/or modification to his/her current equipment.

b) Once the VA prosthetic representative receives a consult from veteran primary provider he/she will send VA form F 10-90 request for quote to medical equipment repair vendor identified in the consult. If no medical equipment repair vendor is identified, the prosthetic representative should contact the veteran to determine veterans preferred medical equipment repair vendor. Then the prosthetics representative will send VA form F 10-90 request for quote to veteran's preferred repair vendor. (Note: at times veteran prosthetics representative will already have a quote from repair vendor, if repair vendor is the one who notified prosthetics the veteran needed a repair and included a quote with the notification.)

c) Once the veteran's prosthetic representative has a quote from the repair vendor he/she should enter a purchase order into the system and notify the vendor that the repair is authorized.

If the repair cost exceeds the \$3,500 threshold the prosthetic representative is required to forward the request to contracting for the purchase order to be provided to the vendor.

d) The vendor will then contact the veteran and set up a time to complete the repair.

How Long Should I Wait-Who Should I Contact-Regarding Prosthetic Equipment and Repair Delays

How Long Should I Wait

This is somewhat dependent on the specific issue. If it is a critical issue, such as the power for your power wheelchair has gone out and you have no mobility you might not be able to wait hours. In this situation you may want to contact your primary care provider directly and ask them to enter a consult to prosthetics. Then follow up the next day to ensure your prosthetic representative received the consult and sent VA form F 10-90 request for quote to repair vendor. If they received the consult and say they have sent VA form F 10-90 request for quote to the repair vendor but have not received a quote back. You may want to follow up with the vendor and make sure they have received the F 10-90 on their end and encourage them to expedite sending it back to your prosthetic representative.

If the tires on your wheelchair are wearing out and need replacing soon but not immediately you might want to wait a week or two. Then if you have not heard anything, follow-up with your prosthetics representative to see the status of your repair request.

If it has to do with automotive adaptive equipment make sure all the appropriate paperwork is submitted

A copy of a certified VA Form 21-4502

A copy of veteran valid driver's license and is capable of operating a motor vehicle, if operational equipment is authorized.

Reimbursement for a replacement vehicle does not exceed two vehicles in any 4-year period. All adaptive equipment authorized is consistent with VA policy, e.g., cost limitations have not been exceeded, the equipment has been approved for issue to VA beneficiaries, etc. Prescriptions have been written and are supported by medical findings for all items where a prescription is required. The supplier has certified that the amounts billed do not exceed the usual and customary cost for the items or services furnished. The equipment furnished has been inspected (if required). The veteran's request for adaptive equipment is processed within 5 days after all information, invoices, prescriptions, reviews, inspections, etc., have been completed. If all information identified above for automotive adaptive equipment is included, number eight indicates the veterans request for adaptive equipment is to be processed within five days. Remember these are business days and do not include weekends or holidays and the prosthetic rep may need to contact the vendor to answer a question. Ten business days may be a realistic expectation versus five business days.

Try to be realistic and remember while the prosthetic representatives are there to serve veterans, if veterans bombard them with phone calls we take them away from processing the paperwork for our prosthetic equipment and repairs. That said it is important that veterans advocate for timely prosthetic services and hold all prosthetic representative's accountable.

If you're seeking personal reimbursement for an Auto Adaptive Equipment repair that you paid for have the repair vendor sign and date the following statement on your invoice **"amount billed is not above standard/customary cost for this service."**

Prosthetic Representatives serving veterans served by the Portland/Vancouver VA

Last 2 of Social Security #

00-19 Curtis Walker	Phone 1-800-949-1004 ext. 53469
20-39 Joe Heredia	Phone 1-800-949-1004 ext. 52162
40-59 Craig Dwyer	Phone 1-800-949-1004 ext. 54014
60-79 Rand Mello	Phone 1-800-949-1004 ext. 31902
80-99 Theron Cameron	Phone 1-800-949-1004 ext. 33448

Prosthetic Representatives serving veterans served by the Seattle/American Lake VA

Last 2 of Social Security #

00-16	Jordan Bignell	Phone (206) 227-3420 Fax (206) 764-2554
17-33	Kim Langone	Phone (253) 583-1821 Fax (253) 589-4081
34-50	Robert Johnsen	Phone (253) 583-1898 Fax (253) 589-4081
51-67	Brian Selby	Phone (206) 277-3544 Fax (206) 764-2554
68-83	Alexis Niiyama	Phone (253) 583-1802 Fax (253) 589-4081
84-99	Mai Dang	Phone (206) 277-3534 Fax (206) 764-2554

Prosthetic Representatives serving veterans served by the Roseburg VA

Last 2 of Social Security #

00-49	Kay Harris	Phone (541) 440-1221 press 1
50-99	Nancy Johnson	Phone (541) 440-1221 press 2

Who Should I Contact

You should contact your veteran prosthetic representative first. As you may have noticed in the above discussions veteran prosthetic representatives were mentioned several times.

This is because the VA assigns veterans receiving prosthetic services to a prosthetics representative. Veterans are assigned to a prosthetics representative based on the last two digits of their Social Security number. If you have contacted your prosthetic representative regarding delays in processing equipment consults for new equipment and/or equipment repairs and you feel processing time frames are unreasonable you can contact any of the following for help.

OPVA Hospital Liaison, Mike Rosenbalm at 360-713-3075

PVA National Service Officer, Ken Fink 800-795-3627

Portland VA Medical Center, Chief Of Prosthetics, Tracy Brown 503-721-1429

Seattle VA Medical Center, Chief Of Prosthetics, Valerie Bishop 206-764-2554

PVA National Office has been concerned with the increasing prosthetic delays over the past several years and has notified the VHA Network Directors that it's going to bring problems in the network directly to their attention. PVA National Service Officers (NSO) will bring all prosthetic delays more than 30 days old that they are aware of to the attention of the national office. PVA will take those cases to the VA central office to review and resolve.

Veterans with spinal-cord injuries or disease, members of PVA or not, should bring prosthetic delays or problems to a PVA NSO, who will forward that to the national office to resolve. PVA will hold VHA accountable.

Oregon PVA members if you experience a prosthetics delay of more than 30 days.

Please complete the Prosthetics Delay Report Form on the next page- Fax the completed form to (202) 416-7754 or email to prosthetics@pva.org