
Veterans Health & Safety Act of 2006

Veterans Health and Safety Act of 2006: What is it?

This new law requires the Secretary of the California Department of Veteran Affairs to assist eligible members or veterans in obtaining a best-practice health screening for exposure to depleted uranium (DU).

Who is eligible?

A member or veteran is eligible when he or she returns to this state after service in specified combat zones, or areas where DU was used, or has been referred for screening by the VA, or has reason to believe he or she may have been exposed to DU during their service.



What does “exposure” to DU mean?

The DoD defines 3 levels of DU exposure:

- Level I—personnel struck by DU munitions or fragments, or who were in, on, or less than 50m from an armored vehicle at the time (or shortly after) it was struck;
- Level II—personnel who routinely entered DU damaged vehicles, or who fought fires involving DU munitions;
- Level III—incidental exposures to DU: Personnel who may have driven through smoke from a DU fire; climbed on or entered battle-damaged vehicles.

Who should be screened and tested?

Current DoD regulations require bioassay urine testing of all level I and level II exposures. Level III testing is voluntary, and is required if an eligible member requests testing.

Consideration for testing is especially important for those members who have unexplained illnesses and suspect they may have been exposed to DU.

Exposure scenario examples

Eligible members are those who handled, came in contact with, or had likelihood of contact with DU munitions while on active duty, including those who:

- were exposed to smoke from burning vehicles containing DU munitions or fires at depots where DU munitions were stored;
 - worked within environments containing DU dust or residues from DU munitions;
 - were within a structure or vehicle while it was struck by a DU munition;
 - climbed on or entered equipment or structures struck by a DU munition; or
 - were medical personnel who provided initial treatment to members described above.
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If you served in an area where DU was used and have any unexplained health conditions, you should self-refer for DU screening.

The process begins with a questionnaire given by your VA medical clinic. If you are found to be at risk for potential exposure, you will be advised to take a physical exam and submit a 24-hour urine specimen. You will become part of the Baltimore VA DU monitoring program.

It is important for any eligible member with any unexplained illness to report to a VA clinic so your condition is documented. DU may affect your health in years to come, and any benefit may relate to the first report date.

Lastly, the DoD uses a test recommended to be taken within 180 days of exposure. It isn't as sensitive as tests available in the UK that can detect DU 10 years after exposure, and is more exact. It is expensive, but more accurate for some exposures.

The Veterans Health and Safety Act of 2006 was initiated by members of the DU/WMD Committee of Veterans For Peace Humboldt Bay Chapter 56 and carried to the Senate under the leadership of State Senator Wes Chesbro.



**VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY CHAPTER 56**

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**Good news for California
Veterans and Armed Service
Members who may have been
exposed to Depleted Uranium**

Passed by the
California State Senate
on August 23, 2006



Signed into law by
Governor Schwarzenegger
on September 29, 2006
