

# Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry Frequently Asked Questions



Photo courtesy of the Department of Defense  
U.S. Army Reserve photo by Master Sgt. Michel Sauret

## General Information

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

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) developed the [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](#) to better understand the potential health effects of exposure to airborne hazards during military service, support ongoing research, and inform future decisions around airborne hazards to keep service members and veterans healthy and safe.

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 VA recently redesigned the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry based on both service members' and veterans' feedback, as well as reports from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) and the VA Inspector General's Office. The recently redesigned Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry automatically enrolls eligible veterans and service members that have been deployed to eligible regions where they may have been exposed to environmental exposures, such as smoke from burn pits, oil well fires, or pollution during deployment.

Inclusion in the registry does not affect access to VA health care or compensation benefits. The registry helps 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: Why is it important for service members to be included in the registry?

Inclusion of service member data supports VA research efforts, and in turn, enables informed care and benefits for your fellow soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines. This information will also 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.

### Q5: 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.

For more information about the registry and to explore helpful resources, please visit [Health.mil/AHBurnPitRegistry](https://Health.mil/AHBurnPitRegistry)



### Eligibility and Enrollment

#### Q6: Am I eligible for inclusion in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry?

If you were deployed in the Southwest Asia theater of operations, Egypt, or Somalia from August 2, 1990, to August 31, 2021, OR in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, or Yemen, from September 11, 2001, to August 31, 2021, you are eligible and may have been automatically enrolled in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. 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, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen, and the waters of the Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea.

**Exposure to specific airborne hazards and/or related health concerns are not prerequisites for automatic enrollment in the registry.**

#### Q7: How do I check my enrollment status in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry?

Eligible service members and veterans are now automatically included and data from military databases are automatically integrated into the registry. VA will send an email confirming your auto-enrollment in the registry. If you do not receive a notification email you may still have been automatically enrolled. To check, please go to the VET-HOME site at <https://vethome.va.gov/inquiry> and select "Registry Eligibility" from the "Topic" dropdown menu. Then select "Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit" from the "Registries" dropdown menu.

Service members and veterans may opt out of the registry by going to <https://vethome.va.gov/BurnPitRegistryOptOut> and submitting an opt out inquiry.

### Scheduling and Completing a Medical Evaluation

#### Q8: What if I have health concerns related to airborne hazards or burn pit exposures?

If you have any health or exposure concerns, you may contact your local military hospital or clinic to schedule an appointment. 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.

#### Q9: I would like to schedule a medical evaluation. What do I do next?

As a service member, you should contact your local military hospital or clinic to schedule an appointment if you have health concerns related to environmental exposures during deployment.

Active duty service members, including activated Reserve and Guard, must contact their local military hospital or clinic to schedule an appointment. When you call, please state that you are requesting an appointment specifically to address health concerns related to military environmental exposures.

Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and Reserve members, whether discharged or still serving, are eligible for a medical evaluation provided by VA. Veterans and inactive/separated National Guard members and Reservists may also proactively contact their local VA Environmental Health Coordinator to schedule a medical evaluation.

#### Q10: What can I expect from a medical evaluation?

Your provider will 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 review exposure history and health concerns with your provider.

If you have questions regarding the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, you can visit <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry> or visit VA's FAQ page.

For assistance with any technical issues, call the Technical Support Desk at 1-877-470-5947.

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

