



My Next Steps: Military ID Cards at Transition from the Military



Question

What happens to our military ID cards when my service member transitions? How will we be able to show proof of our military affiliation?



Answer

Your service member's Common Access Card, or CAC, and your family's Uniformed Services ID cards provide access to Department of Defense benefits and privileges and identify you as an active duty military family. Depending on whether your service member retires or separates from the service, you may keep your DoD ID cards, or you may no longer be entitled to carry them.

If your service member retires, he or she will get a blue retiree military ID card, and you and your dependent children will retain your tan-colored dependent ID cards. Your family should plan to visit a RAPIDS site or ID card office to get new ID cards reflecting the retired status. These DoD-issued ID cards will continue to provide access to many of the same benefits for which you are eligible while your service member is on active duty. Other special categories exist, such as 100% disabled veterans and Medal of Honor recipients, in which veterans and their dependents also retain DoD ID cards and access to benefits.

If your service member is separating voluntarily or involuntarily, you may no longer be authorized to carry DoD ID cards. Note that some separating service members may qualify for the Transitional Assistance Management Program, or TAMP, which temporarily extends their eligibility for TRICARE benefits as well as other benefits such as commissary and exchange privileges. Your service member, you and any eligible dependents will be issued new ID cards to show TAMP-eligibility at separation. Check with the

nearest ID card office to determine your family's eligibility for a Uniformed Services ID card after transition.

Whether retiring or separating, service members are expected to turn in their CAC cards upon transition from the military. They will, therefore, lose access to DoD computer networks, including Enterprise email. Transitioning service members also lose the ability to use their CAC for authentication and access to DoD websites. For this reason, your service member is encouraged to establish a DS logon account before transition from the military to maintain access to secure DoD websites and information.

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While alternative ID cards proving military affiliation do not exist for spouses, options are available for your service member to have a veteran ID card to prove military service for some benefits and military discounts.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides all honorably discharged veterans with a hard-copy photo ID card from the VA. The Veteran ID Card, or VIC, allows

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Resources at a Glance

- [MilConnect](#)
- [DoD ID Card Reference Center](#)
- RAPIDS Site [Locator](#)
- Department of Veterans Affairs - [Veteran ID Cards](#), and [Veteran Health Identification Card](#)



Answer (cont.)

veterans to have a secure, portable way to demonstrate proof of service for discounts at private restaurants and businesses. The VIC does not grant access to military installations or prove eligibility for any federal benefits. Your service member can apply for a VIC by visiting va.gov and clicking on the “Get Veteran ID cards” link in the Records section.

While a VIC is likely the most secure and easiest option for proof of military service, veterans can also access the joint VA/DoD web portal, eBenefits, to print a paper “proof of service” card. Additionally, most U.S. states and territories have a veteran’s designation on their state driver’s license or state ID card. Your service member’s discharge paperwork,

including the DD Form 214, may also be shown as proof of military service.

If your service member is enrolled or will be enrolling in VA health care, he or she is eligible for a Veteran Health Identification Card to use at VA medical facilities. Although these cards are for the purpose of identification and check-in for VA medical appointments, they can also be shown as proof of veteran status. Veterans with service-connected disabilities who are enrolled in VA health care, as well as Purple Heart recipients and former prisoners of war, can use their VHIC for access to military installations to use authorized commissary and exchange shopping privileges as well as certain morale, welfare and recreation facilities.



Steps to Consider

These “Steps to Consider” are not meant as a checklist. Use the suggestions to facilitate a discussion with your service member.

- Ensure your family’s personal information is up-to-date in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System by visiting the [milConnect website](#) or by calling the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office at 800-538-9552.
- Remind your service member that his or her CAC will be turned in at transition, which will end access to Enterprise email and CAC authentication on DoD websites.
- Ask your service member about establishing a DS logon account. If he or she does not already have a DS logon account, establish one by using the [DS LOGON Self-Service Site](#) before transition. As a military spouse, you are advised to have your own DS logon account for continued access to DoD and other government agency websites.
- Discuss the terms of your service member’s transition from the military to understand the differences between retirement and voluntary or involuntary separation and how his or her conditions of discharge can impact future benefit eligibility.
- Visit the [DoD ID Card Reference Center](#) online to learn more about the DoD’s Uniformed Services ID cards, such as how often they have to be renewed, what to do if the card is lost or stolen and other important information.
- Locate the nearest [RAPIDS site or ID card office](#), and visit or call the office to ask about procedures for turning in your family’s active duty ID cards. If your service member is retiring or you are eligible for TAMP, ask how your family can get new ID cards reflecting your eligibility for continued benefits.
- Ensure your service member’s DD Form 214 or other discharge paperwork is stored in a safe and accessible place. This document is necessary to prove eligibility for federal and VA benefits.
- Research your service member’s eligibility for VA health care, and help your service member enroll if eligible. If enrolled, your service member will get a [Veteran Health Identification Card](#). Learn how your service member’s VHIC enables [installation access for commissary, exchange and morale, welfare and recreation activity privileges](#) if your service member has a disability rating or is a Purple Heart recipient or former prisoner of war.
- If your service member does not qualify for a VHIC, encourage him or her to apply for a [VIC](#) at va.gov.
- Visit the VA website for additional information about the other [types of veteran ID cards](#).
- Direct your service member to the [eBenefits](#) portal to print a [Proof of Service Card](#) to verify eligibility for military discounts until he or she receives the VIC, which may take some time. Your service member will need his or her CAC or a DS logon to access eBenefits.
- Contact your nearest Department of Motor Vehicles if your service member or veteran would like to have either a veteran designation on his or her state driver’s license, or a separate state veteran ID card.

