

# The VA Claim Binder Starter

Build a claim file a stranger could navigate — physical or digital

Use these exact tabs (physical binder) or folders (digital). Name files:

YYYY-MM-DD\_Condition\_DocType.pdf — e.g., 2026-03-14\_LowerBack\_MRI-Report.pdf. If a stranger can't find a document in 30 seconds, it isn't organized yet.

<b>TAB 1 — IDENTITY &amp; SERVICE</b>	DD-214(s) · orders · awards list · deployment records · personnel file extracts.
<b>TAB 2 — CONDITION LIST &amp; STRATEGY</b>	Master condition inventory · claim priority list · secondary-condition map · evidence gap list.
<b>TAB 3 — SERVICE TREATMENT RECORDS</b>	Complete STRs with flagged pages. Add a one-page index of every entry that mentions a claimed condition.
<b>TAB 4 — POST-SERVICE MEDICAL RECORDS</b>	VA (Blue Button) and civilian records, grouped by provider, newest first.
<b>TAB 5 — DIAGNOSES &amp; TEST RESULTS</b>	Current diagnosis documentation per condition: imaging, sleep studies, audiograms, lab work.
<b>TAB 6 — PERSONAL STATEMENTS</b>	Your statement per major condition (VA Form 21-4138 or statement format), dated and signed.
<b>TAB 7 — LAY / BUDDY STATEMENTS</b>	Spouse, family, battle buddy, coworker statements with writers' contact info.
<b>TAB 8 — SYMPTOM LOGS &amp; TRACKERS</b>	Daily symptom log · flare-up log · migraine/sleep logs · appointment tracker.
<b>TAB 9 — VA CORRESPONDENCE</b>	Intent to File confirmation · claim submission receipts · VA letters · exam notices — everything, in date order.
<b>TAB 10 — DECISIONS &amp; APPEALS</b>	Decision letters · favorable findings notes · appeal deadline tracker · appeal submissions.

**Digital version:** create the same ten folders, numbered 01–10. Back up to one cloud service. Never keep the only copy of anything on one device.