

CAMP LEJEUNE WATER CONTAMINATION: WHAT HEALTH CONDITIONS QUALIFY FOR BENEFITS THROUGH THE VA

Veterans and others may be eligible for healthcare and other compensation to deal with complications from exposure to contaminated water. by Nadia El-Yaouti

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*Leandros A. Vrionedes,
Personal Injury Attorney*

Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina was home to one of the nation's largest cases of water contamination. Between the 1950s and the 1980s, individuals who lived or worked at the camp were exposed to water contamination that would go on to spur injuries and illnesses over the coming decades, impacting over one million enlisted service men and women, their families, civilian staff, and others who lived at the military base.

The water contamination was the result of chemicals leaching into water wells at the base. Among these harmful chemicals, some of which have been classified as

known carcinogens by the EPA, were perchloroethylene (PCE), benzene, vinyl chloride, and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The contamination of the water wells was discovered in 1982, and impacted water wells were subsequently shut down in the years that followed.

Despite this, millions of servicemen and women and their families were harmed and would go on to battle an array of health issues, including a range of cancers and neurological illnesses.

Amid a flurry of litigation, some roadblocks followed making it difficult and in many cases impossible for victims to sue the federal government over their injuries. It was not until the House of Representatives passed the Camp Lejeune Justice Act in 2021 that victims were given the green light to sue. According to [Leandros A. Vrionedes](#), a New York personal injury attorney who accepts [Camp Lejeune water contamination](#) cases, individuals might be eligible for health care or other compensation depending on their status and the health conditions they suffered. “For veterans, reservists, and National Guard members with certain conditions, those conditions are presumed to be service-connected and eligible for VA disability benefits,” says Vrionedes. “In addition,” he continues, “veterans, family members and others who lived and worked on base

during the stated time period can be eligible for compensation if they experienced certain adverse health conditions.”

Eligibility for Disability Benefits From the VA

Many victims have been able to find relief through the Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012. Under this act, qualifying veterans can receive compensation for healthcare if they served on active duty in the camp.

To qualify for disability benefits from the VA, individuals must meet the following criteria:

Individuals must have served at Camp Lejeune or MCAS New River for at least 30 cumulative days from August 1953 through December 1987, and
Individuals did not receive a dishonorable discharge after leaving the military.

Additionally, individuals must show that they have a diagnosis for one or more of the following health conditions:

- Adult leukemia
- Aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- Bladder cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Liver cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma
- Parkinson’s disease

Individuals who are covered for disability health benefits by the VA include veterans, reservists, and guardsmen.

If you qualify for disability benefits from the VA, you could receive both healthcare and monetary compensation.

As stipulated by the Camp Lejeune Family Act of 2012, qualifying individuals will receive cost-free healthcare for the following qualifying health conditions:

- Esophageal cancer



Leandros A. Vrionedes, New York
Personal Injury Attorney

Breast cancer
Kidney cancer
Multiple myeloma
Renal toxicity
Female infertility
Scleroderma
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
Lung cancer
Bladder cancer
Leukemia
Myelodysplastic syndromes
Hepatic steatosis
Miscarriage
Neurobehavioral effects

For family members of veterans who served at Camp Lejeune, compensation is available for medical bills and costs incurred due to the treatment for one of the 15 covered health conditions above.

The reimbursement includes out-of-pocket medical expenses; however, the VA will only pay treatment costs and the remaining payments will be left up to a family member's health plan.

Family members who are seeking compensation must provide the following:

Documentation proving their dependent relationship to a veteran,

Documentation that they lived on the base for at least 30 days between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987.

Documentation that they paid healthcare expenses to cover the health condition in accordance with the following date ranges:

If you lived on Camp Lejeune between January 1, 1957, and December 31, 1987, then you can be reimbursed for care that you received on or after August 6, 2012, and up to two years before the date of your application

If you lived on Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1956, then you can be reimbursed for care that you received on or after December 16, 2014, and up to two years before the date you apply for benefits

Eligible individuals who qualify for compensation under the Camp Lejeune Justice Act are encouraged to contact an experienced injury attorney to better understand their rights and ability to make a claim against the government for the harm they or their loved one suffered due to the contamination.

Leandros A. Vrionedes

Leandros A. Vrionedes, P.C.

4055900455 ext.

[email us here](#)

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