

been canceled. The meeting on safety performance standards and safety assurance programs, scheduled for December 20, 1995, and announced in the same Federal Register notice has not been canceled and will be held as scheduled.

ADDRESSES: Requests for further information and comments may be directed to the Office of the Associate Administrator for Research and Development, NRD-01, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 6206, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. The telefax number is 202-366-5930.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NHTSA provides detailed presentations about its research and development programs in a series of public meetings. The series started in April 1993. The purpose is to make available more complete and timely information regarding the agency's research and development programs. The twelfth meeting in the series will be held on March 12, 1996, in Detroit, Michigan. Thereafter, the meetings on the agency's research and development programs only will be held biannually, with the meeting sites alternating between Washington, DC, and Detroit, Michigan, scheduled to be held in conjunction with the agency's quarterly meetings on safety performance standards and safety assurance programs. No other changes to the format for the research and development programs meetings are planned. Each meeting will be announced in the Federal Register along with a request for suggested presentation topics and deadlines for submission of topics and questions. Before the meeting, the agenda for the meeting listing the research and development topics to be presented will be published in the Federal Register.

NHTSA requests comments from interested parties on the proposed schedule change from quarterly to biannual meetings. Comments should be submitted by 4:15 p.m. on January 17, 1996, to the Office of the Associate Administrator for Research and Development, NRD-01, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 6206, 400 Seventh St., SW, Washington, DC 20590. The telefax number is 202-366-5930.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rita Gibbons, Staff Assistant, Office of Research and Development, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: 202-366-4862. Fax number: 202-366-5930.

Issued: December 12, 1995.
William A. Boehly,
Associate Administrator for Research and Development.
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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Cost-of-Living Adjustments and Headstone or Marker Allowance Rate

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: As required by law, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is hereby giving notice of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in certain benefit rates and income limitation. These COLAs affect the pension and parents' dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) programs. These adjustments are based on the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) during the one-year period ending September 30, 1995. VA is also giving notice of the maximum amount of reimbursement that may be paid for headstones or markers purchased in lieu of Government-furnished headstones or markers in Fiscal Year 1996, which began on October 1, 1995.

DATES: These COLAs are effective December 1, 1995. The headstone or marker allowance rate is effective October 1, 1995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul Trowbridge, Consultant, Regulations Staff, Compensation and Pension Service (211B), Veterans Benefit Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-7210.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under 38 U.S.C. 2306(d), VA may provide reimbursement for the cost of non-Government headstones or markers at a rate equal to the actual cost or the average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which the non-Government headstone or marker was purchased, whichever is less.

Section 8041 of Public Law 101-508 amended 38 U.S.C. 2306(d) to eliminate the payment of the monetary allowance in lieu of VA-provided headstone or marker for deaths occurring on or after November 1, 1990. However, in a precedent opinion (O.G.C. Prec. 17-90), VA's General Counsel held that there is no limitation period applicable to claims for benefits under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 2306(d).

The average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers during any fiscal year is determined by dividing the sum of VA costs during that fiscal year for procurement, transportation, Office of Memorial Programs and miscellaneous administration, inspection and support staff by the total number of headstones and markers procured by VA during that fiscal year and rounding to the nearest whole dollar amount.

The average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers for Fiscal Year 1995 under the above computation method was \$101. Therefore, effective October 1, 1995, the maximum rate of reimbursement for non-Government headstones or markers purchased during Fiscal Year 1996 is \$101.

Cost-of-Living Adjustments

Under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5312 and section 306 of Public Law 95-588, VA is required to increase the benefit rates and income limitations in the pension and parents' DIC programs by the same percentage, and effective the same date, as increases in the benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act. The increased rates and income limitations are also required to be published in the Federal Register.

The Social Security Administration has announced that there will be a 2.6 percent cost-of-living increase in social security benefits effective December 1, 1995. Therefore, applying the same percentage, the following increased rates and income limitations for the VA pension and parents' DIC programs will be effective December 1, 1995:

TABLE 1.—IMPROVED PENSION
[Maximum annual rates]

- | | |
|---|----------|
| (1) Veterans permanently and totally disabled (38 U.S.C. 1521): | |
| Veteran with no dependents, | \$8,246 |
| Veteran with one dependent, | \$10,801 |
| For each additional dependent, | \$1,404 |
| (2) Veterans in need of aid and attendance (38 U.S.C. 1521): | |
| Veteran with no dependents, | \$13,190 |
| Veteran with one dependent, | \$15,744 |
| For each additional dependent, | \$1,404 |
| (3) Veterans who are house bound (38 U.S.C. 1521): | |
| Veteran with no dependents, | \$10,080 |
| Veteran with one dependent, | \$12,634 |
| For each additional dependent, | \$1,404 |
| (4) Two veterans married to one another, combined rates (38 U.S.C. 1521): | |
| Neither veteran in need of aid and attendance or housebound, | \$10,801 |
| Either veteran in need of aid and attendance, | \$15,744 |
| Both veteran in need of aid and attendance, | \$20,686 |
| Either veteran housebound, | \$12,634 |

TABLE 1.—IMPROVED PENSION—
Continued
[Maximum annual rates]

Both veterans housebound, \$14,469
One veteran housebound and one veteran in need of aid and attendance, \$17,575
For each dependent child, \$1,404
(5) Surviving spouse alone and with a child or children of the deceased veteran in custody of the surviving spouse (38 U.S.C. 1541):
Surviving spouse alone, \$5,527
Surviving spouse and one child in his or her custody, \$7,240
For each additional child in his or her custody, \$1,404
(6) Surviving spouses in need of aid and attendance (38 U.S.C. 1541):
Surviving spouse alone, \$8,839
Surviving spouse and one child in his or her custody, \$10,548
For each additional child in his or her custody, \$1,404
(7) Surviving spouses who are housebound (38 U.S.C. 1541):
Surviving spouse alone, \$6,758
Surviving spouse and one child in his or her custody, \$8,466
For each additional child in his or her custody, \$1,404
(8) Surviving child alone (38 U.S.C. 1542), \$1,404

Reduction for income. The rate payable is the applicable maximum rate minus the countable annual income of the eligible person. (38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541 and 1542).

Mexican border period and World War I veterans. The applicable maximum annual rate payable to a Mexican border period or World War I veteran under this table shall be increased by \$1,867. (38 U.S.C. 1521(g))

Parents' DIC

DIC shall be paid monthly to parents of a deceased veteran in the following amounts (38 U.S.C. 1315):

TABLE 2

[One parent. If there is only one parent, the monthly rate of DIC paid to such parent shall be \$391 reduced on the basis of the parent's annual income according to the following formula:]

For each \$1 of annual income		
The \$391 monthly rate shall be reduced by	Which is more than	But not more than
\$0.00	\$0	\$800
.08	800	9,381

No DIC is payable under this table if annual income exceeds \$9,381.

One parent who has remarried. If there is only one parent and the parent

has remarried and is living with the parent's spouse, DIC shall be paid under Table 2 or under Table 4, whichever shall result in the greater being paid to the veteran's parent. In the case of remarriage, the total combined annual income of the parent and the parent's spouse shall be counted in determining the monthly rate of DIC.

Two parents not living together. The rates in Table 3 apply to (1) two parents who are not living together, or (2) an unmarried parent when both parents are living and the other parent has remarried. The monthly rate of DIC paid to each such parent shall be \$281 reduced on the basis of each parent's annual income, according to the following formula:

TABLE 3

For each \$1 of annual income		
The \$281 monthly rate shall be reduced by	Which is more than	But not more than
\$0.00	\$0	\$800
.06	800	900
.07	900	1,100
.08	1,100	9,381

No DIC is payable under this table if annual income exceeds \$9,381.

Two parents living together or remarried parents living with spouses. The rates in Table 4 apply to each parent living with another parent; and each remarried parent, when both parents are alive. The monthly rate of DIC paid to such parents will be \$264 reduced on the basis of the combined annual income of the two parents living together or the remarried parent or parents and spouse or spouses, as computed under the following formula:

TABLE 4

For each \$1 of annual income		
The \$264 monthly rate shall be reduced by	Which is more than	But not more than
\$0.00	\$0	\$1,000
.03	1,000	1,500
.04	1,500	1,900
.05	1,900	2,400
.06	2,400	2,900
.07	2,900	3,200
.08	3,200	12,611

No DIC is payable under this table if annual income exceeds \$12,611.

The rates in this table are also applicable in the case of one surviving parent who has remarried, computed on the basis of the combined income of the

parent and spouse, if this would be a greater benefit than that specified in Table 2 for one parent.

Aid and attendance. The monthly rate of DIC payable to a parent under Table 2 through 4 shall be increased by \$209 if such parent is (1) a patient in a nursing home, or (2) helpless or blind, or so nearly helpless or blind as to need or require the regular aid and attendance of another person.

Minimum rate. The monthly rate of DIC payable to any parent under Tables 2 through 4 shall not be less than \$5.

TABLE 5.—SECTION 306 PENSION INCOME LIMITATIONS

- (1) Veteran or surviving spouse with no dependents, \$9,381 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(a)).
- (2) Veteran with no dependents in need of aid and attendance, \$9,881 (38 U.S.C. 1521(d) as in effect on December 31, 1978).
- (3) Veteran or surviving spouse with one or more dependents, \$12,611 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(a)).
- (4) Veteran with one or more dependents in need of aid and attendance, \$13,111 (38 U.S.C. 1521(d) as in effect on December 31, 1978).
- (5) Child (no entitled veteran or surviving spouse), \$7,668 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(a)).
- (6) Spouse income exclusion (38 CFR 3.262), \$2,992 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(a)(2)(B)).

TABLE 6.—OLD-LAW PENSION INCOME LIMITATIONS

- (1) Veteran or surviving spouse without dependents or an entitled child, \$8,211 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(b)).
- (2) Veteran or surviving spouse with one or more dependents, \$11,840 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(b)).

Dated: December 8, 1995.

Jesse Brown,

Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

[FR Doc. 95-30643 Filed 12-15-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-M

Poverty Threshold

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is hereby giving notice of the weighted average poverty threshold in 1994 for one person (unrelated individual) as established by the Bureau of the Census.

DATES: The 1994 poverty threshold is for consideration effective October 5, 1995,