

On January 10, 2013, the President enacted Public Law (PL 112 260) requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish an open burn pit registry for Veterans who may have been exposed to burn pits in Iraq or Afghanistan (refer to Appendix A for Public Law 112 260). Section 201 of this PL requires the registry to be established not later than one year after the date of enactment and in coordination with the Secretary of Defense. The law indicates VA may include any information determined necessary to ascertain and monitor the health effects of the exposure of members of the Armed Forces to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits. As a result of uncertain exposure data, VA should consider all Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Veterans as potentially exposed to burn pits and eligible for registry participation. The law defines an Open Burn Pit as "designated by the Secretary of Defense to be used for disposing solid waste by burning in the outdoor air". However, open burn pits were used frequently in Iraq and Afghanistan and Department of Defense (DoD) did not require or maintain records for open burn pits prior to 2009. Based on existing registry participation for the Environmental Health Registries (roughly ten percent of prior era Veterans participate in in-person registry exams), the VA should anticipate roughly 200,000 of the more than 2 million Service Members (SM) who deployed to request in-person registry examinations over a multi-year period. Non-enrolled, enrolled, symptomatic, asymptomatic Veterans, and Veterans with significant concerns may request in-person registry evaluations. Presently, it is difficult to estimate how many Veterans without current symptoms will request entry into the registry.

This registry and all of its components provide a Open Burn Pit (OBP) screening and evaluation process for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Veterans, ensure the ability to track OBP care to monitor quality. It provides reporting capabilities on this Veteran population for VA management and Congress to allow for analysis and improvement of care.