

COUNSELING CHECKLIST FOR MILITARY HOMEBUYERS

1. Failure on the part of a borrower on active duty to disclose that he/she expects to leave the area within 12 months due to transfer orders or completion of his/her enlistment period may constitute "bad faith." If your loan is foreclosed under circumstances which include such bad faith, you may be required to repay VA for any loss suffered by the Government under the guaranty. (In ANY case in which VA suffers a loss under the guaranty, the loss must be repaid before your loan benefits can be restored to use in obtaining another VA loan.)
2. Although real estate values have historically risen in most areas, there is no assurance that the property for which you are seeking financing will increase in value or even retain its present value.
3. It is possible that you may encounter difficulty in selling your house, recovering your investment or making any profit, particularly if there is an active new home market in the area.
4. Receiving military orders for a permanent change of duty station or an unexpected early discharge due to a reduction in force will not relieve you of your obligation to make your mortgage payments on the first of each month.
5. "Letting the house go back" is **NOT** an acceptable option. A decision to do so may be considered "bad faith". A foreclosure will result in a bad credit record, a possible debt you will owe the government and difficulty in getting more credit in the future.
6. If unexpected circumstances lead to difficulty in making your payments, contact your mortgage company promptly. It will be easier to resolve any problems if you act quickly and be open and honest with the mortgage company.
7. **YOUR VA LOAN MAY NOT BE ASSUMED WITHOUT THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF VA OR YOUR LENDER.**
8. **DO NOT BE MISLED!** VA does not guarantee the **CONDITION** of the house which you are buying, whether it is new or previously occupied. VA guarantees only the **LOAN**. You may talk to many people when you are in the process of buying a house. Particularly with a previously occupied house, you may pick up the impression along the way that you need not be overly concerned about any needed repairs or hidden defects since VA will be sure to find them and require them to be repaired. This is **NOT TRUE!** In every case, ultimately, it is your responsibility to be an informed buyer and to assure yourself that what you are buying is satisfactory to you in all respects. Remember, VA guarantees only the loan - **NOT** the condition.
9. If you have any doubts about the condition of the house which you are buying, it is in your best interest to seek expert advice before you legally commit yourself in a purchase agreement. Particularly with a previously occupied house, most sellers and their real estate agents are willing to permit you, at your expense, to arrange for an inspection by a qualified residential inspection service. Also, most sellers and agents are willing to negotiate with you concerning what repairs are to be included in the purchase agreement. Steps of this kind can prevent many later problems, disagreements, and major disappointments.
10. Proper maintenance is the best way to protect your home and improve the chance that its value will increase.
11. If you are buying a previously owned house, you should look into making energy efficient improvements. You can add up to \$6,000 to your VA loan to have energy efficient improvements installed. Consult your lender or the local VA office.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT the lender has counseled me and I fully understand the counseling items set forth above.

(Borrower's Signature)

(Date)

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT the borrower has been counseled regarding the counseling items set forth above.

(Lender's Signature)

(Date)