

Law Office of
Sativa Boatman-Sloan, LLC
 417 ELDER LAW • 417 BUSINESS LAW

NEWSLETTER



Volume 13

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VA Aid and Attendance Pension Changes October 18

Wartime veterans or their surviving spouse with limited income may be eligible to receive the VA Aid and Attendance benefit to help pay for assistance they may need in everyday activities or with long-term elder care, home care aids, skilled nursing, or adult daycare. The VA announced new rules going into effect on October 18, 2018 which changes qualification for the benefit. The two most significant changes are implementing a look back period and a new approach in calculating net worth.

Look Back Period

The addition of a three-year look back period for gifting may have the most negative impact on applicants. Beginning October 18, the VA will begin to look at asset transfers that the applicant made in the **past 3 years**. If a transfer was made for less than fair market value, the VA will consider it a gift and will impose a penalty.

Net Worth Criteria

Previously, the VA determined eligibility through a subjective approach. It would look at the applicant's total countable assets, which could be no more than \$30,000.00-\$80,000.00, in conjunction with several other factors such as income and expected life span. The new rules take a more objective approach and looks at an applicant's net worth.

For VA purposes, net worth is determined by the combination of assets and income. Now, to be eligible for

the program, the applicant's net worth **cannot exceed \$123,600.00**.

This is a positive change because it takes away the guesswork when determining eligibility. Acceptable ways in which net worth can decrease is through asset decrease, income decrease, or both.

Asset decrease can be done by spending money on things which are purchased for fair market value. Some examples include household goods, appliances, electronics or other consumer goods and services. It would even be acceptable to spend money on travelling to see your grandchildren!

One way to accomplish income decrease is by deducting out of pocket (or "unreimbursed") medical expenses from your total income calculation. The VA considers expenses to include activities of daily living such as shopping, food preparation, housekeeping, and laundering. Adaptive services, payments for service animals care, transportation expenses for medical purposes, health insurance premiums, and smoking cessation products are examples that can be deducted from your total income calculation, resulting in income decrease.

At Law Office of Sativa Boatman-Sloan, LLC, we can help you understand your legal options and advise you along the path to a sound estate plan to include which government benefits you may qualify for. We will work with you and help you achieve peace of mind knowing your estate is protected.

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The choice of a lawyer is an important decision and should not be based solely upon advertisements.

7 Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Creep

Calories lurk around every corner from Halloween all the way to New Year's. Eating healthy and warding off those extra holiday pounds is a challenge. Here are a few tips to help you stay on track.

- **Portion control.** Experts say this is the number one reason for gaining extra pounds. You can load up on calories without even noticing on break room goodies, buffets and pot lucks.
- **Don't arrive hungry.** Munch on a few healthy snacks, such as veggies, before you go to a holiday function. You will eat less and if the dining does not start on time, you won't be starving and sample everything in sight.
- **Plan ahead.** Being aware of your schedule will help you to plan your food intake for the day and you can adjust other meals to compensate for those extra goodies you may have at the office party.
- **Shift your focus.** Holiday parties are more than just about the food. Chat it up and enjoy the company of family and friends.
- **Drink water.** Drinking more water will keep you feeling full, remind you not to snack, and give you more energy.



- **Limit alcohol consumption.** Alcohol has notoriously high amounts of calories and sugar. Do your research and find out which drinks have fewer calories, limit the number of drinks, and switch to zero-calorie beverages when that limit is reached.
- **Walk it off.** Make a new holiday tradition – the family walk. Besides burning some extra calories, it will get everyone away from the food for a while and focus on family.

By starting or reinforcing your healthy holiday eating plan now, you can sail right through the holidays without gaining those dreaded pounds and start the New Year with energy and enthusiasm.



Avoid Stress: Assign TODs to All Your Vehicles

It makes sense for you to name a transfer-on-death (TOD) beneficiary for your vehicles. That way, your vehicle can be transferred to the beneficiary quickly and easily, without probate court approval. (Beware: the beneficiary inherits any outstanding debts on the vehicle, as well as the vehicle.) If you have a Trust, be sure to make the TOD beneficiary the name of your Trust.

You may have already applied for and received a new certificate of ownership with TOD beneficiary(s) listed for your current transportation sitting in your garage or driveway, but what about that “little gem” sitting in storage or in the barn? How about your project car, the one you are going to restore someday? Not having a TOD on these vehicles can create real paperwork problems when it comes time for your heirs to sell, or heaven forbid, junk!

Take an inventory of your cars, motorcycles, boats, motor homes, and trailers, no matter their condition. Update the TOD if necessary. It is an easy procedure that you can do at the local DMV office.

New Blood Test Could Predict Onset of Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease affects over 5 million people in the US, where the estimated cost of caring for Alzheimer patients in 2017 was \$259 billion.

There is no treatment available for Alzheimer's disease. However scientists have developed a new blood test in which a tiny drop of blood could be enough to predict the onset of the disease.

Scientists agree that the presence of amyloid beta (AB) deposits or plaques are generally thought to be the main drivers of Alzheimer's. Much research has gone into developing a method to detect these proteins. Currently, costly tests like brain scans or painful spinal fluid extraction are the means to measure amyloid beta in patients. But usually, physicians rely on diagnosing based on symptoms, at which time the disease may be well advanced.

This new blood test could be the early warning needed to be able to detect Alzheimer's and would prompt some early lifestyle changes in patients, reducing the impact of the disease. It would also be an invaluable tool for researchers to identify people suitable for clinical trials, giving us a faster route to an eventual cure.

Scientists are encouraged by the progress being made even though it is a slow process.



Pumpkin Spice Crazy

Fueled by the success of Starbucks' popular Pumpkin Spice Latte, the seasonal pumpkin-flavored trend is bigger than ever.

This popular flavor is found in products everywhere – restaurants, grocery stores, gift shops, with products like yogurt, baby food and salty snacks seeing substantial growth last year. More people consume pumpkin spice treats on October 31 than any other day of the year.

You can make this popular flavor using this recipe:

- ¼ cup ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon ground allspice
- 1 tablespoon ground nutmeg

Mix spices and store in an air tight container. Makes ½ cup.

Holiday Fun Facts

- Americans spend \$3.4 billion on costumes and \$2.7 billion on Halloween candy.
- Over 51 million turkeys are consumed on Thanksgiving Day.
- Over \$220 million worth of poinsettias are sold during the holidays.
- It takes an average of seven years to grow a Christmas tree.
- More than 34 million real Christmas trees are sold each year in the U.S.
- “Auld Lang Syne,” the song traditionally sung on New Year’s eve means “times gone by.”
- 2,000 pounds of confetti is dropped at midnight in Times Square.

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In this Issue:

- *VA Aid and Attendance Pension Changes October 18*
- *7 Tips to Avoid Holiday Weight Creep*
- *Avoid Stress: Assign TODs to All Your Vehicles*
- *New Blood Test Could Predict Onset of Alzheimer's Disease*
- *Pumpkin Spice Crazy*
- *Holiday Fun Facts*

Christmas Mile & 5K 2018
December 8

Season's Greetings.

In warm appreciation of our association during the past year, we extend our very best wishes for a happy holiday season.

From all the team at The Law Office of Sativa Boatman-Sloan, LLC

A perfect way to celebrate the season with your family. Party with Santa, grab a snack, enjoy the quiet neighborhoods near Cox Meyer Center all while getting exercise and supporting a great cause.



All proceeds benefit Senior Foundation of the Ozarks... funding help and hope for seniors since 1989.

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