

New Commissary Authorized Users Experiencing Some System Hiccups

Veterans and caregivers newly eligible to shop at commissaries have been unable to use the MyCommissary portal to register for benefits since 1 JAN, a Defense Commissary Agency spokesman said via email 16 JAN. American Forces Travel (AFT), the official Morale, Welfare and Recreation travel site, is experiencing similar issues with online accounts for the new patrons, it announced via Facebook earlier this month. The issues affect new groups who became eligible to shop 1 JAN, including Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war, veterans with any service-connected disability and caregivers registered with the VA's Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers program.

Customers who had access before Jan. 1, such as retired service members, Medal of Honor recipients and veterans with a service-related disability rating of 100%, are not affected. Without an online account, new commissary shoppers cannot register a Commissary Rewards Card, download digital coupons onto it or access the Click2Go curbside pickup at select stores. "Whenever you introduce a new category of patrons to an online system that requires verification of their authorized credentials to access it, that system has to be modified to allow access," the spokesman wrote. "That's what our system operators are doing now, and our goal is to have this modification in place no later than the spring time frame."

New patrons still have access to other online features, such as information on current sales promotions, links to coupons and Your Everyday Savings (YES!) program. Meanwhile, AFT is advising new patrons to try its site daily to check for access and to watch into its Facebook page, not its website, for updates. "In order to accommodate the new DoD patrons, four different DoD agencies are actively working to update the customer database, which includes millions of records," AFT staff wrote Jan. 2 on Facebook. "Even though significant progress is made every hour, it will still take some time to finalize." New shoppers have also reported local issues when implementing the new policy, with several readers saying they were unable to bring a guest with them to shop in exchanges, commissaries and MWRs on secure bases. "We ask the new customer groups to be patient," the commissary spokesman said. "We will announce when MyCommissary access is available."