Why is VIM requiring access via ECA certificate?

DoDI 8520.2 Mandates the use of DoD PKI identity certificates when accessing DoD information systems. The DoD established the External Certification Authority (ECA) program to support the issuance of DoD-approved certificates to industry partners and other external entities and organizations. ECA certificates enable contractors to securely communicate with the DoD and authenticate themselves to DoD Information Systems.

What are ECA Certificates?

ECA Certificates are individually issued digital identity credentials. The DoD relies upon these credentials to ensure the identity of the user in online environments or when a certificate holder tries accessing DoD Information Systems. ECA Certificates are stored either on hardware devices (smart cards or USB devices) or software versions (stored on your computer's hard drive). You will use your certificate to:

1) Establish your identity when trying to access a protected site
2) Legally "sign" a document, form or application
3) Encrypt messages (email) or documents to ensure confidentiality

Much like a driver's license or a passport, they are unique to each individual, and cannot be shared. It is against DoD Regulations to share a username and password or allow someone to access another's ECA certificate for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in the immediate revocation of the original owner's certificate.

How can I obtain an ECA Certificate?

IMPORTANT: First, please decide which computer you will use to submit your application. The computer from which your request is initiated MUST BE the same computer used to download your ECA Certificate upon receipt of confirmation that your ECA Certificate request has been approved. Therefore each Subscriber must perform the Online Application for themselves. You may NOT make an Online Application for another individual. Therefore it is highly recommended that your request is initiated on the computer that you most frequently use for work related purposes!!!

The following are the three entities authorized by the DoD to issue ECA Certificates. Review and apply for an ECA Certificate from one of the below organizations. For any questions regarding the certificate purchasing and installation process, please contact the organization you selected.

1) IdenTrust: http://www.identrust.com/certificates/eca/index.html
2) ORC (Operational Research Consultants): http://eca.orc.com/
3) VeriSign: https://eca.verisign.com/

I have an ECA Certificate, how do I access VIM now?

Simply log into VIM with your existing User ID and Password as usual and then follow the steps:

1) Under Menu, click the "Certificate Registration" option
2) Read the brief instruction and then click "Continue"
3) Your certificate will display in a pop-up. Select the certificate and click "Continue"
4) You will be prompted to enter your current password for confirmation and click "OK"
5) The message displays "Your Certificate has been successfully registered…" Click "OK" to complete the process. You will be logged out of VIM and prompted to login with your certificate.
6) Click "Accept" to the Terms and then select "Certificate Login".
7) Your certificate will display in a pop-up. Select the certificate and click "OK" and you will be logged into your VIM account.

Remember, your old login credentials will no longer be valid and you will use your certificate to login into VIM.