

Veterans Benefits Administration



February, 2016

Adjudication and Rating Process



Objectives

- Define terms and roles associated with rating decisions
- Overview of the rating process and notification process

References

38 CFR Part 3 - Adjudication
38 CFR Part 4 – Rating Schedule
M21-1 MR Part III.i-v



Roles

A VSR has the Authority to:

- Make entitlement decisions, and deny benefits if an issue involves basic eligibility determination.
- Deny a claim for service-connected (SC) compensation without a rating decision if there is a legal bar to entitlement, and/or any necessary development has been completed and time limitations have expired
- Add/remove dependents
- Make income related award adjustments
- Promulgate Rating Decisions

A RVSR has the Authority to:

- Make decisions and take other actions on claims requiring a rating decision.
- Apply provisions of all pertinent laws and regulations governing VA.
- Review all evidence of record to ensure completeness and adequacy.
- The RVSR is prohibited from denying a claim before all efforts to obtain evidence have been exhausted.
- The RVSR must list all relevant evidence in the "Evidence" portion of the rating, including any evidence not obtainable.



Anatomy of a Rating Decision

The Code Sheet Contains:

- a historical record of all conditions claimed and whether they were granted or denied
- service connected conditions will have an assigned disability percentage, and the effective date of the grant
- Combined Evaluation for Compensation Rate
- Diagnostic Codes

The Narrative Contains:

- Introduction
- Decision
- Evidence
- Reasons for Decision
- References
- The “Decision” section, the Narrative will only address conditions currently being claimed.



Deferred Issues and Special Notations

- Contentions are deferred when additional evidence is needed.

How you can help:

Assist with gathering the requested evidence

- For all deferred issues, a subsequent Rating Decision will be needed once the development actions stated by the RVSR have been completed.
- There may be a special notation box at the bottom of the code sheet containing directions from the RVSR to the VSR.
- The RVSR may also include additional notes about the rating decision that do not pertain to the VSR's responsibilities.



Filing and Distributing the Rating Decision

- A completed rating decision is automatically uploaded from VBMS-R and available for viewing in the documents tab in VBMS.
- The VSR will promulgate or process an award and prepare a notification letter for the Veteran.
- Once awarded in VBMS-A, an Automated Decision Letter (ADL) can be generated for many rating decision End Products (EPs).
- The ADL will include the decision reasons from the rating decision for each issue within the body of the letter.
- The Veteran will not get a copy of the rating decision as it is included in the ADL notification letter.



Summary

You are now able to:

- Define terms and roles associated with rating decisions
- Overview of the rating process and notification process



Questions