

# **PROCESSING RATINGS**

## **TRAINEE HANDOUT**

### **REFERENCES**

- Rate Table
- M21-1 Part I, Appendix A – Rating Codes
  - Appendix B – Rate Tables
  - Appendix C – BDN Table and Codes
- M21-1MR III.v.2.A, *Award and Denial Authorization*
- M21-1MR III.v.2.B, *Award and Denial Notification*
- M21-1MR.III.v.2.B.9, *Notification Letter Requirements*
- VBMS Tip Sheets
- VBMS ADL SOP
- ADL VSR In and Out Cheat Sheet

## **TOPIC 1: 0-20% RATINGS**

### **The characteristics of a service connected award and notification letter for combined evaluation of 0% to 20% rating decisions**

**What initiates a 0-20% service connected rating?** Any claimed disability that is granted service connection.

- Compensable evaluations of 10% to 20% or
- Non compensable evaluations of 0% or
- 10% based on multiple 0% under (38 CFR 3.324)

#### **Characteristics of a 0-20% rating decision**

- Claim Types:
  - Original,
  - Non-Original
    - New condition, Increase, Secondary, Reopen grant

#### **What to look for when processing a 0-20% rating decision**

- Check rating decision for the following:
  - Date of claim
  - Effective Dates
  - Payment dates
  - Reason for decision
  - Consistency with issues claimed (i.e. § 5103 notice)

#### **What to look for in the system for processing a 0-20% rating decision**

- Check SHARE/VBMS for the following:
  - Correct Veteran and C-Number
  - Name and Address of Veteran
  - Correct Date of claim
  - Changes in dates
  - Consistency with last rating, if applicable
  - Military Payment Information to include Retried Pay, Severance or Separation Pay
  - Rating decision condition matches VBMS-A/VETSNET data

## Notification Letter Requirements

- Notification Letter: ADL/PCGL format for Grant, Increase and 0% combined. If a notification letter cannot be completed in ADL, the notification letter must be done in PCGL

(Please see VBMS-A Tip sheet of September 6, 2013 -*Uploading VETSNET Awards and PCGL Decision Notification letters into VBMS* to upload VETSNET Awards and PCGL decision notification letters into VBMS)

- The decision made
- A summary of the evidence considered
- Reason for the decision
- Include payment information
- Any benefits being withheld and the reason for the withholding
- A notice of procedural due process and appellate rights of the claimant
- Include additional benefits, if applicable

## **TOPIC 2: 30% OR HIGHER RATING DECISION**

### **The characteristics of a service connected award and notification letter for combined evaluation of 30% Rating Decisions or Higher**

**What initiates a 30% or higher service connected rating?** Any claimed disability that is granted service connection.

- Compensable evaluations of 30% and higher or
- Can be Individual Unemployability or
- Can be Permanent and Total and entitled Ancillary Benefits
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#### **Characteristics of a 30% or higher rating decision**

- Claim Types:
  - Original,
  - Non-Original
    - New condition, Increase, Secondary, Reopen grant

#### **What to look for when processing a 30% or high rating decision**

- Check rating decision for the following:
  - Date of claim
  - Effective Dates
  - Payment dates
  - Reason for decision
  - Consistency with issues claimed (i.e. § 5103 notice)

#### **What to look for in the system for processing a 30% or higher rating decision**

- Check SHARE/VBMS for the following:
  - Correct Veteran and C-Number
  - Name and Address of Veteran
  - Correct Date of claim
  - Changes in dates
  - Consistency with last rating, if applicable
  - Military Payment Information to include Retired Pay, Severance or Separation Pay
  - Rating decision condition matches VBMS-A/VETSNET data
  - Dependency information

## Notification Letter Requirements

- Notification Letter: ADL/PCGL format for Grant, Increase and 0% combined. If a notification letter cannot be completed in ADL, the notification letter must be done in PCGL

(Please see VBMS-A Tip sheet of September 6, 2013 -*Uploading VETSNET Awards and PCGL Decision Notification letters into VBMS* to upload VETSNET Awards and PCGL decision notification letters into VBMS)

- The decision made
- A summary of the evidence considered
- Reason for the decision
- Include payment information
- Any benefits being withheld and the reason for the withholding
- A notice of procedural due process and appellate rights of the claimant
- Dependency Information
- Include additional benefits, if applicable

***SOMETHING TO REMEMBER*** – *Your job as a VSR is to ensure the accuracy of the Rating Decision and notify the veteran of the decision that was made. Your job is not to question the opinion/evaluation of the Rating Decision or the RVSR.*

## JOB AID 1: ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND REQUIRED FORMS

**These attachments are required for PCGL Notification letters. Additional benefits paragraphs are included in ADL notification letters.**

Combined Evaluation	Additional Benefits	Enclosures
<b>0%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Disabled Veterans Insurance</li> <li>• Veterans Health Administration (VHA): No charge for medical treatment to a rated service connected disability</li> </ul>	VA Form 4107
<b>10%-20%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Disabled Veterans Insurance</li> <li>• Veterans Health Administration (VHA): No charge for medical treatment to a rated service connected disability</li> <li>• Vocational Rehab: Financial assistance for Post Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA Form 28-1900</li> <li>• VA Form 28-8890</li> <li>• VA Form 21-8764</li> <li>• VA Form 4107</li> </ul>
<b><u>30%-90%; No IU</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Disabled Veterans Insurance</li> <li>• Veterans Health Administration (VHA): No charge for medical treatment to a rated service connected disability</li> <li>• Vocational Rehab: Financial assistance for Post Education</li> <li>• Dependency Solicitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA Form 28-1900</li> <li>• VA Form 28-8890</li> <li>• VA Form 21-8764</li> <li>• VA Form 21-686(c)</li> <li>• VA Form 4107</li> </ul>
<b><u>100% or IU;</u> <u>NOT P&amp;T</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Disabled Veterans Insurance</li> <li>• Veterans Health Administration (VHA): No charge for medical treatment to a rated service connected disability</li> <li>• Vocational Rehab: Financial assistance for Post Education</li> <li>• Dependency Solicitation</li> <li>• Department of Education Disability Discharge Loan Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA Form 28-1900</li> <li>• VA Form 28-8890</li> <li>• VA Form 21-8764</li> <li>• VA Form 21-686(c)</li> <li>• VA Form 4107</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>100% P&amp;T or IU</u></b> <b><u>P&amp;T</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Disabled Veterans Insurance</li> <li>• Veterans Health Administration (VHA): No charge for medical treatment to a rated service connected disability</li> <li>• Vocational Rehab: Financial assistance for Post Education</li> <li>• Dependency Solicitation</li> <li>• Department of Education Disability Discharge Loan Program</li> <li>• Commissary</li> <li>• Insurance Waiver</li> <li>• ChampVA</li> <li>• DEA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VA Form 21-8764</li> <li>• VA Form 21-8760</li> <li>• VA Form 28-1900</li> <li>• VA Form 28-8890</li> <li>• VA Form 21-686(c)</li> <li>• VA Form 22-5490</li> <li>• VA Pamphlet 22-73-3</li> <li>• VA Form 4107</li> </ul>
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## **JOB AID 2: POST-D CHECK LIST**

### **Post-D Check List**

- Confirm and Verify correct Veteran and C-file
- Confirm and Verify correct Date of Claim established
- Check SHARE (Corporate record, if no Master record or processing initial award)
  - Name and Address
  - POA
  - VID screen (Service Information)
  - Svc is verified either VADS/Verified Note: If service is not verified the VSR must verify service via Participant Profile to process award.
- Check Military Payment Information
  - Severance
  - Separation
  - Retired Pay
- Review Rating Decision for correct C-file and Signature (electronic)
- Confirm and Verify claim type and all issues have been addressed and properly developed
- Confirm and Verify all conditions on rating decision
- Input Award via VBMS-A/VETSNET C&P Awards
- Notify claimant via ADL or PCGL Letter
  - Date of Claim correct
  - Rates, Dates and Reasons
  - Is there any withholdings
  - Additional dependency benefits
  - All claimed disability information: condition, rating % and effective date
  - If multiple conditions don't add up = combined para
  - Additional development (if applicable)
  - Additional Benefits included (if applicable)
  - Notice of appeal rights
  - Required Attachments and Forms included



# ATTACHMENT: SAMPLE RATING DECISION

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Anywhere Regional Office**  
**PO Box 1111**  
**Anywhere, USA 33333**

**Joe Q. Veteran**

**VA File Number**  
**C/CSS #**

Should match with  
the C-file Name  
and number

**Represented by:**  
**AMERICAN LEGION**

Verify 21-22 in  
VBMS documents

**Rating Decision**  
**August 4, 2014**

## INTRODUCTION

The records reflect that you are a veteran of the Vietnam Era. You served in the Navy from May 12, 1965 to April 4, 1967. You filed a new claim for hearing loss and tinnitus that was received on May 27, 2014. Based on a review of the evidence listed below, we have made the following decision(s) on your claim.

All claimed disabilities should be  
addressed in rating decision

## DECISION

1. Service connected for tinnitus is granted with an evaluation of 10 percent effective May 27, 2014.
2. Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is granted with an evaluation of 10 percent effective May 27, 2014

All received evidence should be  
stated in rating decision

## EVIDENCE

- VA Form 21-526EZ, Fully Developed Claim received May 27, 2014
- VA Audio examination dated June 20, 2014
- VA 21-22 Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative received on May 27, 2014
- Medical Clinic outpatient treatment records from February 24, 2011 through June 16, 2012
- Service Treatment Records

## **REASONS FOR DECISION**

### **1. Service connection for tinnitus.**

Service connection for tinnitus is granted with an evaluation of 10 percent. The VA examiner's opinion did support an increase to your service connected disability. This is the maximum evaluation granted for this condition.

### **2. Service connection for bilateral hearing loss.**

Service connection for bilateral hearing loss is service connected. Evidence found in the Service Treatment Records did show evidence of hearing loss. The VA examiner's opinion that your current hearing loss is related to noise exposure during your military service, therefore service connection for hearing loss is granted.

*Note: The rating decision will include a statement providing what is required for an increased rating. (if applicable)*

### **REFERENCES:**

Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Pensions, Bonuses and Veterans' Relief contains the regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs that govern entitlement to all veteran benefits. For additional information regarding applicable laws and regulations, please consult your local library, or visit us at our web site, [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

Military data should match introduction and VID data.

ACTIVE DUTY			
EOD	RAD	BRANCH	CHARACTER OF DISCHARGE
05/12/1965	04/04/1967	Navy	Honorable

LEGACY CODES			
ADD'L SVC CODE	COMBAT CODE	SPECIAL PROV CDE	FUTURE EXAM DATE
	1		None

**JURISDICTION:** Original Disability Claim Received 05/27/2013

Same as Date of Claim (DOC)

EP should be 110 based on Original Disability

**ASSOCIATED CLAIMS(s):** 110; Initial Live Comp <8 issues: 05/27/2014

**SUBJECT TO COMPENSATION (1. SC)**

- 6260 TINNITUS  
Service Connected, Vietnam Era, Incurred  
10% from 05/27/2014
- 6100 BILATERAL HEARING LOSS  
Service Connected, Vietnam Era, Incurred  
10% from 05/27/2014

All conditions should match with disabilities in Decision with Original Claim

**COMBINED EVALUATION FOR COMPENSATION:**

20% from 05/27/2014

Effective Date

I certify that I have reviewed and electronically signed  
This decision

## PRACTICAL EXERCISE

*A review is a tool used to judge the level of knowledge the group has acquired as a result of the training. It is not used for individual evaluation.*

1. Explain what it means to have a rating decision of 20% or less

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2. Explain what it means to have a rating decision of 30% or higher

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3. What is the main difference between a rating decision of 20% or less and 30% or higher

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4. A VSR should do all of the following except

- a. Become familiar with the current Rating Decision
- b. Check accuracy of name, address, POA etc
- c. Question the evaluation of the Rating Decision
- d. Generate the notification letter using ADL or PCGL