Prestabilization Ratings

Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 1 Hour

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| Lesson Description | |
| The information below provides the instructor with an overview of the lesson and the materials that are required to effectively present this instruction. | |
| TMS # | 61920 |
| Prerequisites | Prior to this lesson, RVSRs should have completed the RVSR Challenge curriculum and have intermediate level experience with rating. |
| target audience | The target audience is Post-Challenge RVSRs.  Although this lesson is targeted to teach the Post-Challenge RVSR employee, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher type training. |
| Time Required | 1 hour |
| Materials/ TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:   * Prestabilization Ratings PowerPoint Presentation * Prestabilization Ratings Lesson Plan * Prestabilization Ratings Trainee Handouts * Prestabilization Ratings Exercise * Prestabilization Ratings Exercise Answer Key |
| Training Area/Tools | The following are required to ensure the trainees are able to meet the lesson objectives:   * Classroom or private area suitable for participatory discussions * Seating, writing materials, and writing surfaces for trainee note taking and participation * Handouts, which include a practical exercise * Large writing surface (easel pad, chalkboard, dry erase board, overhead projector, etc.) with appropriate writing materials * Computer with PowerPoint software to present the lesson material   Trainees require access to the following tools:   * VA TMS to complete the assessment |
| Pre-Planning | * Become familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Lesson Plan while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding PowerPoint slides. This will provide you the opportunity to see the connection between the Lesson Plan and the slides, which will allow for a more structured presentation during the training session. * Become familiar with the content of the trainee handouts and their association to the Lesson Plan. * Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between this Lesson Plan, the trainee handouts, and the PowerPoint slides and ensure your timing is on track with the length of the lesson. * Ensure that there are copies of all handouts before the training session. * When required, reserve the training room. * Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (as needed). * Talk to people in your office who are most familiar with this topic to collect experiences that you can include as examples in the lesson. * This lesson plan belongs to you. Feel free to highlight headings, key phrases, or other information to help the instruction flow smoothly. Feel free to add any notes or information that you need in the margins. |
| Training Day | * Arrive as early as possible to ensure access to the facility and computers. * Become familiar with the location of restrooms and other facilities that the trainees will require. * Test the computer and projector to ensure they are working properly. * Before class begins, open the PowerPoint presentation to the first slide. This will help to ensure the presentation is functioning properly. * Make sure that a whiteboard or flip chart and the associated markers are available. * The instructor completes a roll call attendance sheet or provides a sign-in sheet to the students. The attendance records are forwarded to the Regional Office Training Managers. |

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| Introduction to Prestabilization Ratings | | | |
| INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION | | Complete the following:   * Introduce yourself * Orient learners to the facilities * Ensure that all learners have the required handouts | |
| time required | | .75 hours | |
| Purpose of Lesson  Explain the following: | | |  | | --- | | The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the trainees to the concept of prestabilization ratings.  This lesson will present the following material to the trainee: |  * When they are appropriate for use * When they are **not** appropriate for use * Minimum required entries | |
| Lesson Objectives  Discuss the following:  Slide 2  Handout 2 | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the RVSR will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.  The RVSRwill be able to:   * Identify the references for the topic * Determine when to prepare a prestabilization rating * Determine when a 100% or a 50% is appropriate * Correctly determine duration of the grant * Prepare a prestabilization rating | | |
| Explain the following: | Each learning objective is covered in the associated topic. At the conclusion of the lesson, the learning objectives will be reviewed. | | |
| Motivation | Properly used, prestabilization ratings are a quick and easy way to initially rate cases of recently discharged, disabled Veterans whose disabilities have not yet stabilized. | | |
| References  Slide 3 | Explain where these references can be found.   * [38 CFR 4.28, Prestabilization rating from date of discharge from service](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/publicat/Regs/Part4/4_28.htm) * [M21-1, Part IV, subpart ii.2.J, Prestabilization Ratings Under 38 CFR 4.28](https://vaww.compensation.pension.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ka/) | | |
| Topic 1: When to Prepare a Prestabilization Rating | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | This topic will allow the trainee to identify when it is and when it is **not** appropriate to use a prestabilization rating |
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| Prestabilization Ratings (Paragraph 28)  Slide 4  Handout 2 | | | | Prestabilization ratings (also referred to as “Paragraph 28 ratings”, after the paragraph in the Rating Schedule that allows for them) were created to assure earliest payment to those veterans most likely to be in need and least likely to be self-sufficient.  Ratings can be based on medical evidence contained in STRs or recent military, VA, or private hospitalization reports. |
| When to Prepare/ Criteria  Slide 5 - 6  Handout 2 | | | | A prestabilization rating can be prepared without additional development or examination if a Veteran has a substantial SC disability that will continue for an indefinite period.  The rating can be based on medical evidence contained in service medical records or recent military, VA, or private hospitalization reports.  Note: A VA examination is not required in order to prepare a prestabilization rating.  If the medical evidence shows the existence of an unstabilized condition for which SC can be granted, a prestabilization evaluation of 50% or 100% can be assigned. |

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| Topic 2: Establishing the Rating (Evaluation and Duration) | |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to correctly assign a 100% or 50% prestabilization evaluation level and enable them to apply the correct duration. |
| 100% or 50%  *Slide 7 - 10*  Handout 3 | The 100% evaluation is applicable when there is an unstabilized condition with severe disability and substantially gainful employment is either not feasible or advisable.  A 100% prestablization evaluation should not be assigned in any case where a total evaluation could be immediately assigned under either the regular provisions of the schedule or on the basis of individual unemployability.  The 50% evaluation is applicable when there are unhealed or incompletely healed wounds or injuries and material impairment of employability is likely.  A 50% prestabilization evaluation should not be assigned in any case where an evaluation of 50% or higher could be immediately assigned under the regular provisions of the rating schedule. |
| Duration of Grant  Slide 11 - 12  Handout 3 - 4 | Prestabilization ratings should be used in the immediate post-discharge period. They continue for a 12-month period following discharge or separation from active service.  A routine future exam (RFE) should be established covering all service-connected conditions between six and 12 months following service discharge. Once the examination report is received, reevaluation of the of the SC disability(ies) should be expedited.  A prestabilization rating can be changed to a regular schedular rating at any time if the regular rating results in an increased evaluation.  Subsequent reductions of prestabilization ratings cannot occur until after the expiration of 12 months from date of discharge or separation, and must follow the requirements of 38 CFR 3.105(e). |
| Topic 3: Additional Considerations (SMC, Severance Pay) | |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to identify issues impacting the prestabilization rating decision such as possible Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) and severance pay. |
| Potential SMC Exists  Slide 13  Handout 4 | Special monthly compensation (SMC) can be assigned in a prestabilization rating if supported by the medical evidence of record.  If there is evidence of possible entitlement to SMC, but not sufficient to make a full determination, evaluate disabilities in a prestabilization rating at the loss level that is shown and request an “at once” examination to determine the full extent of disability. |
| Severance Pay Awarded  *Slide 14*  *Handout 4* | If disability severance pay has been awarded for any disability for which the prestabilization rating is granted, a separate evaluation must be assigned to it to permit Authorization to properly offset the award of compensation benefits. |

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| Rating Decision  Slide 15 - 16  Handout 4 - 5 | As in all ratings, the rating decision must address all disabilities claimed or noted. However, the issue of a prestabilization rating should not be deferred for development of other issues.  The coded conclusion for the prestabilization rating need only contain one diagnostic code, for the most severe condition, followed by all other unstable service-connected disabilities, but without separate diagnostic codes. |
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| Regional Office Specific Topics | **This row should be included ONLY in the last topic before the Practical Exercise.**  At this time add any information pertaining to:   * Station quality issues with this lesson * Additional State specific programs/guidance on this lesson |

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| Practical Exercise | |
| EXERCISE  *Encourage group discussion of the 4 “IF/THEN” scenarios to check comprehension of the concept.* | **If** Veteran’s *total SC disability picture* reflects unhealed or incompletely healed wounds or injuries that would materially impair employment and that, if individually evaluated (exclusive of any SMC) ***would approach but not equal or exceed*** a 50% evaluation in combination, **then** prepare prestabilization rating at 50% with RFE in 6-12 months.  **If** Veteran’s *total SC disability picture* reflects unhealed or incompletely healed wounds or injuries that would materially impair employment and that, if individually evaluated (exclusive of any SMC) ***would equal or exceed*** a 50% evaluation in combination, but does not approach the requirements for a 100% prestabilization evaluation, **then** you *cannot* use a prestabilization rating. You must evaluate each disability separately.  **If** Veteran’s *total SC disability picture* reflects an unstabilized condition with severe disability that would render substantially gainful employment not feasible or inadvisable and that, if individually evaluated (exclusive of any SMC) ***would approach but not equal*** a 100% evaluation in combination or ***not warrant a total evaluation*** based on individual unemployability, **then** prepare a prestabilization rating at 100% with RFE in 6-12 months.  **If** Veteran’s *total SC disability picture* reflects an unstabilized condition with severe disability that would render substantially gainful employment not feasible or inadvisable and that, if individually evaluated (exclusive of SMC) ***would equal*** a 100% evaluation in combination, or ***warrant a total evaluation*** based on individual unemployability, **then** you *cannot* use a prestabilization rating. You must evaluate each disability separately.  Ask if there are any questions about the information presented in the exercise, and then proceed to the Review. |
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| Lesson Review, Assessment, and Wrap-up | |
| Introduction  Discuss the following: | The Prestabilization Rating lesson is complete.  Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments. |
| Time Required | .25 hours |
| Lesson Objectives | You have completed the Prestabilization Ratings lesson.  The trainee should be able to:   * Identify the references for the topic * Determine when to prepare a prestabilization rating * Determine when a 100% or a 50% is appropriate * Correctly determine duration of the grant * Identify SMC and Severance pay issues when preparing prestabilization grant |
| Assessment | Remind the trainees to complete the on-line assessment in TMS to receive credit for completion of the course.  The assessment will allow the participants to demonstrate their understanding of the information presented in this lesson. |