

Training Coordinator's Module Guide for Rate a Claim for a Temporary Total Disability Due to Hospitalization/Convalescence



November 5, 2013

For Training Purposes Only

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Section 1 - Introduction

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Section 1 - Introduction

Introduction

Welcome to the *Rate a Claim for a Temporary Total Disability Due to Hospitalization/Convalescence* Module of the Basic Ratings Training and Performance Support System. Please read this Module Guide in its entirety. Due to the length of the module title, future references may be shortened to Hospitalization/Convalescence Module. Feel free to highlight certain portions or write down notes as you read through this document.

Within these pages, you will find the information you need to set up and implement this course successfully.

Section 1 includes an introduction to this module, including Module Overview and Module Map; a list of the specific resources required to support this training module.

Section 2 contains the Module Master Planning Chart which lays out instructional activities and course events including time and resource requirements.

Section 3 contains summaries for each of the lessons in this module. Use this information to familiarize yourself with the module contents and also as a review for your students before they complete the posttests.

Remember: To evaluate student performance and answer any student questions, you must either:

- (1) Be thoroughly familiar with the task - Rate a Claim for a Temporary Total Disability Due to Hospitalization/Convalescence, or
- (2) Identify the Subject Matter Expert (SME) to whom you may refer any specific technical or task-related questions. Ensure this person is available to provide any one-on-one training and/or feedback as necessary.

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Module Overview

This module is entitled *Rate a Claim for a Temporary Total Disability Due to Hospitalization/Convalescence*. It contains the following two custom-designed, computer-based lessons with several case-based interactive training exercises:

Lesson 1 - Initial Review and Determination of Hospitalization or Convalescence

Lesson 2 - Finalizing the Claim

Who Will Take This Module?

The target population for this module consists of rating personnel with some experience rating original Compensation cases.

Students who take this module should have either failed the Rate a Claim for a Temporary Total Disability Due to Hospitalization/Convalescence Module Pretest or opted not to take the pretest.

Note: The pretest is optional. Students who want to take the Hospitalization/Convalescence Module may choose to take the pretest, or may choose to go directly to the lessons.

All students selected to take this module should take each lesson to ensure that he/she has (or gains) a comprehensive understanding of rating a claim for a temporary total disability due to Hospitalization/Convalescence from start to finish.

TPSS Materials

Everything that your students need to complete the Compensation Module is available to them within the module online. Once you provide the students with a proper briefing, your role, other than monitoring their progress throughout and conducting test briefings, will be to score the test answer sheets that they print from the system and give them feedback.

You can access the test scoring instructions and answer keys from the VBA Learning Catalog, where you found this Module Guide. Search for TMS Item #1380385.

TPSS Equipment

The computers for the students should be set up with dual monitors so that the students can open the online cases and look at other reference material during the training and testing.

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Dual Moni tors

In the Module Introduction, the students are provided with the following information about opening instructional cases with or without dual monitors:

As you work your way through the lessons, you will use online cases that are based on actual Veterans' cases which have been altered for training purposes and to protect the privacy of the individuals involved with the claim.

You will access these online cases by clicking the Cases button in the upper part of the screen.

- If you have dual monitors, when you select a case using the button, it will open in a new window. You may move it to the other monitor and expand it to fit the entire screen.
- If you do not have dual monitors, when you select a case using the button, it will open in a new window, and you must toggle between the case and the courseware.

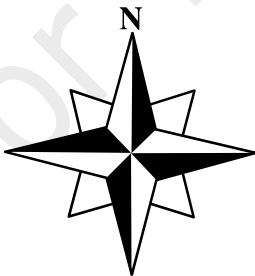
Note: The cases have bookmarks for each form, letter, etc., within the case. You may select a bookmark to advance to that document within the case. Or you may scroll up and down throughout the case by using the scrollbar on the right-hand side of the window.

Throughout this module, you will be prompted when to open a given case and when to close it." You may want to reinforce this information during your briefing and make sure when they come to their first online case, they understand what to do with it.

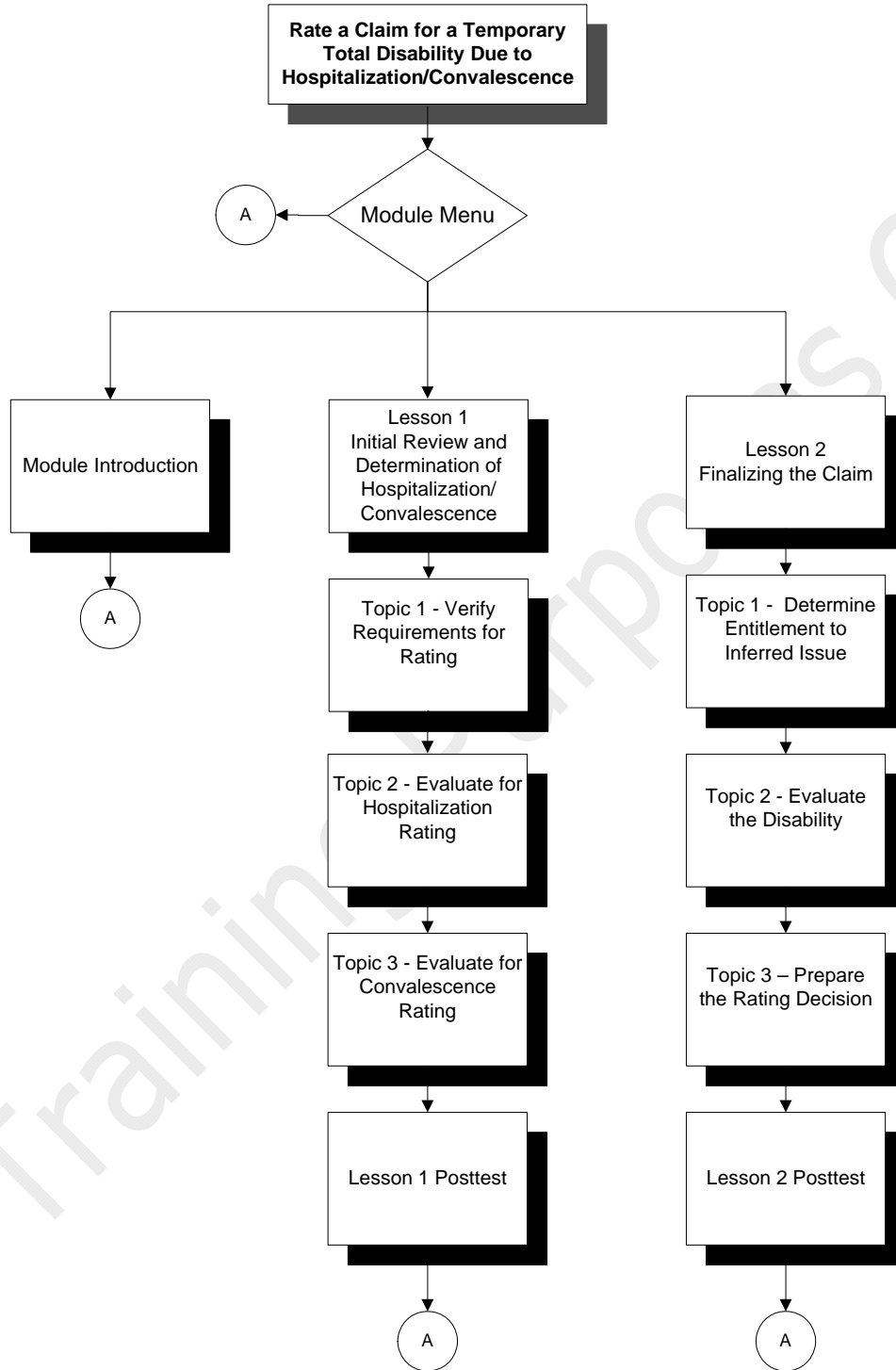
To get an overview of how the module is laid out, take a look at the Module Map that follows.

As you can see, the Hospitalization/Convalescence Module is comprised of two lessons. The students must take the lessons in the order they are presented. A student may not proceed to the next lesson until they have successfully completed the previous lesson's posttest.

Module Map



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Hospitalization/ Convalescence Test Design

The lesson posttests measure a portion of the entire rating process from reviewing the claims folder to producing the rating decision. The Hospitalization/ Convalescence Module pretest and a portion of the last lesson posttest each consist of various cases which students will review and evaluate to determine if they require additional development or if they are ready to rate.

If they determine a case requires additional development, they will prepare a deferred rating decision using a copy of a Deferred Rating Decision Form (21-6789), and if necessary, a C&P Exam Request Form. Both of these are available from Rating Tools under the Tools button within the module online.

However, if they determine the case is ready to rate, they will prepare a rating decision and code sheet using the Compensation Rating Template and the TPSS Rating Text, which are also available from Rating Tools under the Tools button.

There is no module posttest for this module.

Module Pretest

Taking the module pretest is optional. A student may choose to take the test to determine if he or she can opt out of taking the module, or they may choose to go directly to the lessons.

There are four cases in the module pretest. The passing criteria for the module pretest are provided in the test directions/answer keys which can be accessed in the VBA Learning Catalog. Search for TMS Item #1380385.

While you do need to administer the module pretest, you do not need to enter the test scores. After you score the test answer sheets and provide feedback to the students, you will email the test scores to the TPSS Help Desk (CDSHelpDesk@vba.va.gov). You can email the scores for multiple students at the same time. The email must include the following information for each student: student's TMS student identifier/TMS user name, module name, test name, test score of P or F, and test date.

Lesson Posttests

Once students complete a lesson, they will be prompted by the computer to take the lesson posttest. There are two available variants of each lesson posttest. When administering the lesson posttest you will assign test variants to the students. Instruct the students to take Variant 1 first and then Variant 2, if needed. If

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a student does not pass a lesson posttest, then the student must take that lesson posttest's variant,

Note: Your Training Coordinator's Guide offers tips and guidelines for providing test feedback, and prescribing remediation.

The lesson posttests are designed to test the material specifically covered in each lesson. However, Lesson 2 contains a part in the test in which the students are tested on the whole rating process from start to finish.

For the most part, instructions for the lesson posttests contain an Assumptions and Conditions section which informs the student of characteristics inherent to the cases used in the testing environment.

Because it is important to demonstrate the "building" process of rating cases, some cases will be re-visited in subsequent lesson posttests. Specifically, the two cases used in the Lesson 1 Posttest will be used again in the Lesson 2 Posttest. For this reason, it is important that the student have the correct answers at the end of the Lesson 1 Posttest. **You may want to have them write down the answers before proceeding to the next lesson posttest.**

The passing criteria vary for each lesson posttest. Refer to the test scoring instructions/answer keys for more information. You can access the test scoring instructions and answer keys from the VBA Learning Catalog. Search for TMS Item #1380385.

Important: While you do need to administer the lesson test, you do not need to enter the lesson test scores.

Module Posttest

There is no module posttest at the end of this module. In order to pass the Hospitalization/Convalescence Module, the students must pass both the Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 Posttests.

Compensation Rating Template and TPSS Rating Text

During the Lesson 2 cooperative exercise, the Lesson 2 posttest, and the module pretest, students will prepare rating decisions using the Compensation Rating Template to show they can perform the task.

The Compensation Rating Template is an electronic file that is formatted to look like a rating decision. It has

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fields in which students must enter specific information about the claim. Students are to complete the Compensation Rating Template by typing in the necessary information for each field after they have reviewed and evaluated the case.

Students will use the TPSS Rating Text to copy and paste the appropriate wording for each issue into the Reasons for Decision section of the Rating Template.

Both the Compensation Rating Template and the TPSS Rating Text are available from Rating Tools under the Tools button within the module.

Students must demonstrate they can perform the task of evaluating a claim for a temporary total disability due to hospitalization or convalescence by preparing a rating decision—they just won't be using RBA2000 to do it.

It will be up to the Stations to provide training after TPSS to teach and practice actual generation of the rating document using RBA2000.

Be sure to collect ALL completed rating decisions (both paper-based and electronic) from the students after discussion.

Publications



Ensure that students have access to Hospitalization/Convalescence-relevant reference materials, such as:

- M21-1MR, Parts III and IV
- 38 CFR, Parts III and IV
- Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA) decisions/decision assessment documentation
- VBA Circulars, "Fast Letters," Training Letters, and Policy Letters
- Merck Manual
- Dorland's or comparable Illustrated Medical Dictionary
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)—latest edition

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To report problems with the computer courseware:



Contact your local IRM support.

If your local IRM support is not available or does not know how to troubleshoot the problem,



Contact the VBA TPSS Help Desk!

Email: CDSHelpDesk@vba.va.gov



Connect to the Intranet

Access the comments database web form, go to the Compensation Service Home Page (<http://cptraining.vba.va.gov>). From here, select the "Training" button, then the TPSS button. On the page that appears, select the comments feedback form.



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Section 2 - Module Master Planning Chart

Rate Claim for a Temporary Total Disability Due to Hospitalization/Convalescence

The Module Master Planning Chart is designed to provide you with the information you need to effectively plan the scheduling and resource requirements for this module.

Note: The estimated range of time required to complete the online content, including cooperative exercises and a single version of the Lesson Posttests, is 10 hours, 45 minutes to 17 hours, 45 minutes.

This Module Master Planning Chart is based on the average time that students required during the validation of this module. Be aware that the actual times for students may be more or less than the time listed here.

- Estimated total Student time for online course and a single version of the Lesson Posttests: **14 hours, 15 minutes**
- Estimated total Student time for Module (aka, total “seat” time): **15 hours, 15 minutes**
(**Note:** All estimated total “seat” times for modules include module orientation, the online courseware and cooperative exercises, if applicable, along with, when given, a single variant of the Lesson Posttest(s), and feedback.)
- Estimated total Training Coordinator Time for administrative duties: **4 hours, 15 minutes**
(**Note:** This total includes the additional time required by the TC to perform briefings, feedback, and any administrative duties such as grading tests and emailing TPSS Help Desk, i.e., those shaded line items that are specifically TC times only. Total time accounts for administration of a single variant of the Lesson Posttest(s), when given. Module Pretest preparation and grading is not included in the total. Although the TC is listed as personnel for all of the online lessons and all tests, the TC does not have to be present for the entire time the students are working in a lesson or taking a test. The TC may be working with other students or even performing other duties while students are working in TPSS. The TC needs to be available to answer questions as needed. That time will vary depending on how familiar with TPSS the students are.)

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Duration			
hrs	min	Activity	Notes/Tips
	10	Module Pretest Preparation	Includes giving student access to <i>Rate a Claim for a Temporary Total Disability Due to Hospitalization/Convalescence</i> in TMS.
8	00	Module Pretest, if applicable	Conducted sometime prior to and Day 1 of the training.
1	00	Module Pretest Grading	Scoring instructions and answer keys can be accessed in the VBA Learning Catalog.
	30	Administrative Functions	Includes emailing TPSS Help Desk with Module Pretest results, if applicable, assigning student privileges, notifying students of course schedule, and preparing a briefing.
1	30	Orientation/Briefing	Includes setting up students with workstation and required materials. Ensure students understand logging into the course on the computer, understand how to navigate through the course using the buttons and prompts, and understand what online "Tools" are available to help.
	5	Module Introduction (online)	Includes Module Objective and Lesson Titles
3	00	Lesson 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Introduction – Students will read the lesson objective(s). • Topic 1: Verify Requirement for Rating • Topic 2: Evaluate for a Hospitalization Rating • Topic 3: Evaluate for a Convalescence Rating - First Cooperative Exercise of this module. Students will review the cases for Leon H. Black, Larry H. Gonzales, and Darren H. Casey to verify the requirement for Hospitalization/Convalescence rating activity action and to determine if the claimant is eligible for a total disability rating due to Hospitalization and/or Convalescence. If the claimant is eligible, students will determine the effective date.
	25	Lesson 1 Posttest Variant 1 Briefing	Includes reviewing results of any cooperative exercises and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student.
3	00	Lesson 1 Posttest Variant 1	Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring.
	30	Lesson 1 Posttest Variant 1 Grading	Scoring instructions and answer keys can be accessed in the VBA Learning Catalog.
	15	Lesson 1 Posttest Variant 1 Feedback	Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, you must provide remediation to the student until the student feels confident enough to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. At that time, you will administer the variant to the student in the same way you administered the Lesson Posttest and provide feedback based on the student's results of the variant.

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Duration			
hrs	min	Activity	Notes/Tips
	10	Lesson 1 Posttest Variant 2 Briefing (if applicable)	Includes ensuring students have had enough feedback and remediation to feel prepared for Variant 2.
2	00	Lesson 1 Posttest Variant 2	Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring.
	30	Lesson 1 Posttest Variant 2 Grading	Scoring instructions and answer keys can be accessed in the VBA Learning Catalog.
	15	Lesson 1 Posttest Variant 2 Feedback	Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If the student who failed the first version of the Lesson Posttest also fails the variant, provide additional assistance to the student before he/she retakes the Lesson Posttest.
5	00	Lesson 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Introduction – Students will read the lesson objective(s). • Topic 1: Determine Entitlement to Inferred Issues - Cooperative Exercise. Students will review the cases for Leon Black, Larry Gonzales, and Darren Casey to determine if they are eligible for SMC. • Topic 2: Evaluate the Disability. • Topic 3: Prepare the Rating Decision - Cooperative Exercise. Students will prepare the rating for Darren H. Casey and Larry H. Gonzales using the Compensation Rating Template. This will be done in the two parts to Cooperative Activity 2.3. In 2.3a, students will prepare the rating for Darren H. Casey while in 2.3b students will prepare the rating for Larry H. Gonzales.
	25	Lesson 2 Posttest Variant 1 Briefing	Includes reviewing results of any cooperative exercises and ensuring that students are ready to take the test. Includes assigning a test variant to each student.
3	00	Lesson 2 Posttest Variant 1	Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring.
	45	Lesson 2 Posttest Variant 1 Grading	Scoring instructions and answer keys can be accessed in the VBA Learning Catalog.
	15	Lesson 2 Posttest Variant 1 Feedback	Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If a student fails the Lesson Posttest, you must provide remediation to the student until the student feels confident enough to take a variant of the Lesson Posttest. At that time, you will administer the variant to the student in the same way you administered the Lesson Posttest and provide feedback based on the student's results of

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Duration			
hrs	min	Activity	Notes/Tips
			the variant.
	10	Lesson 2 Posttest Variant 2 Briefing (if applicable)	Includes ensuring students have had enough feedback and remediation to feel prepared for Variant 2.
3	00	Lesson 2 Posttest Variant 2	Students access the test online and turn in any printed documents to TC for scoring.
	45	Lesson 2 Posttest Variant 2 Grading	Scoring instructions and answer keys can be accessed in the VBA Learning Catalog.
	15	Lesson 2 Posttest Variant 2 Feedback	Feedback times will vary depending on the number of items a student missed. If the student who failed the first version of the Lesson Posttest also fails the variant, provide additional assistance to the student before he/she retakes the Lesson Posttest.
Notes:			
1) There are no Module Posttests for the <i>Rate a Claim for a Temporary Total Disability Due to Hospitalization/Convalescence</i> TPSS Module.			

Section 3 - Module Summary

Training Coordinator Notes:

After all students have completed each lesson, review the entire lesson by reading the following summary (or your own personalized version). Respond to any questions they may have before they continue to the lesson posttest.

After you have presented the lesson review, if a student does not feel ready to continue to the lesson posttest, allow him or her some time to review specific topics or issues within the lesson before administering the lesson posttest.

Tell students:

“Now that you have completed each of the lessons in this module, you should find it easier to understand the multiple actions involved in rating a claim for a temporary total disability due to hospitalization/convalescence. There are myriad details that must be checked and rechecked in the course of the rating process. And no detail, regardless of how insignificant it may seem on the surface, can be overlooked. This practice is mandated by law in the duty to assist doctrine.”

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Lesson 1 Initial Review and Determination of Hospitalization/ Convalescence

Total disability for Hospitalization/Convalescence ratings are provided as support for Veterans who are hospitalized, unable to work, or unable to resume normal activities due to convalescence from surgery or treatment.

First, conduct an initial review of a claims folder to determine if the claimant is eligible for a temporary total disability based on the requirements for Hospitalization or Convalescence.

You can start reviewing a claim by checking it for administrative completeness. That is, make sure the Veteran's name, claim number, and social security number match on all documents in the file. Then, visually scan the claims folder to determine if the claimant has any service-connected disabilities.

There are four ways to establish service connection for a disability. Service connection by aggravation is granted when a claimant has a condition that worsens during his or her military service. Pre-existing injuries or diseases with increasing disabilities during service are considered to have been aggravated by active service. If a claimant develops a disease specified in 38 CFR to a compensable level within the applicable time limits after leaving the service, he or she will be granted presumptive service connection. Proximate service connection is granted when a secondary condition develops as a direct result of a service-connected disability.

After establishing that the condition is service connected, review evidence which supports eligibility for Hospitalization/Convalescence. In your initial review of the claims folder to determine eligibility for temporary total disability, you should ensure that hospital treatment is for a service-connected disability, and that hospitalization is in excess of 21 days.

Determine if the Veteran is entitled to Hospitalization benefits, and then determine the effective date of the benefits. Generally, the effective date of the Hospitalization benefits is the date on which entitlement to the temporary 100% disability begins.

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Convalescence ratings apply to a Veteran when treatment for a service-connected disability necessitates a recovery period that requires him or her to be removed from normal activities for a specified amount of time. Convalescence claims are sometimes initiated by the Veteran or by information contained in hospital or outpatient documents.

After determining that the claimant is entitled to a temporary total disability due to Convalescence, you must determine the effective date of the evaluation, which is generally either the date of hospital admission or the date of entitling treatment. The total disability rating for Convalescence should continue through the month of the discharge and for at least one month but no more than three months following discharge.

Some Rating Schedule diagnostic codes provide mandatory convalescent evaluations for a set period of time following surgery. Once the mandatory convalescent period is complete, you will reduce the 100% evaluation to a percentage based on either the diagnostic code minimum evaluation or on new medical evidence.

Lesson 2 Finalizing the Claim

In order to finalize a claim, you must first determine eligibility for inferred issues based on SMC requirements. Even if inferred issues are not specifically claimed, they must still be considered.

You must consider entitlement to A&A when a Veteran is rated at 100%. If entitlement to A&A is denied, you must consider entitlement to Housebound. The inability to feed one's self, attend to the needs of nature, or clean one's self are all factors that show the need for A&A. For Housebound, the disability must be so severe that the Veteran is substantially confined to his or her premises on a permanent basis, or has a schedular entitlement (a separate 60% disability or disabilities).

Once Hospitalization or Convalescence has been established and the temporary total disability has been awarded, you will need to re-evaluate the disability to either restore or change the prior evaluation.

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A concurrent case occurs when a claim for Paragraph 29 (38 CFR 4.29) or Paragraph 30 (38 CFR 4.30) benefits is initiated while the Veteran is hospitalized or recuperating during the convalescence period. You will need to prepare an open-ended rating to award the temporary total disability once you have determined that the Veteran has met the requirements for Paragraph 29 (38 CFR 4.29) or Paragraph 30 (38 CFR 4.30) for a concurrent case.

When you re-evaluate the disability to determine if you will restore or change the prior evaluation, you will need evidence that supports the condition of the disability upon termination of the period of Hospitalization or Convalescence. The hospital summary provided after the Veteran has been discharged from the hospital is sufficient for Hospitalization cases. With Convalescent cases, surgical reports, outpatient reports, and a hospital summary are sufficient.

After you have decided that the evidence is sufficient to evaluate the disability, you must determine the disability percentage found in the Rating Schedule.

All ratings must contain the issues reviewed, evidence reviewed, complete rationale for the decision, and a conclusion to include supporting data e.g., disability codes, individual and combined percentage evaluations and effective dates.