

Railroad Retirement Board

§ 220.46

expense of the Board as explained in §§ 220.50 and 220.51.

(b) *Kind of evidence.* The claimant must provide medical evidence showing that he or she has an impairment(s) and how severe it is during the time the claimant claims to be disabled. The Board will consider only impairment(s) the claimant claims to have or about which the Board receives evidence. Before deciding that the claimant is not disabled, the Board will develop a complete medical history (i.e., evidence from the records of the claimant's medical sources) covering at least the preceding 12 months, unless the claimant says that his or her disability began less than 12 months before he or she filed an application. The Board will make every reasonable effort to help the claimant in getting medical reports from his or her own medical sources when the claimant gives the Board permission to request them. Every reasonable effort means that the Board will make an initial request and, after 20 days, one follow-up request to the claimant's medical source to obtain the medical evidence necessary to make a determination before the Board evaluates medical evidence obtained from another source on a consultative basis. The medical source will have 10 days from the follow-up request to reply (unless experience indicates that a longer period is advisable in a particular case). In order to expedite processing the Board may order a consultative exam from a non-treating source while awaiting receipt of medical source evidence. If the Board ask the claimant to do so, he or she must contact the medical sources to help us get the medical reports. The Board may also ask the claimant to provide evidence about his or her—

- (1) Age;
- (2) Education and training;
- (3) Work experience;
- (4) Daily activities both before and after the date the claimant says that he or she became disabled;
- (5) Efforts to work; and
- (6) Any other evidence showing how the claimant's impairment(s) affects his or her ability to work. (In §§ 220.125 through 220.134, we discuss in more de-

tail the evidence the Board needs when it considers vocational factors.)

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§ 220.46 Medical evidence.

(a) *Acceptable sources.* The Board needs reports about the claimant's impairment(s) from acceptable medical sources. Acceptable medical sources are—

- (1) Licensed physicians;
- (2) Licensed osteopaths;
- (3) Licensed or certified psychologists;
- (4) Licensed optometrists for the measurement of visual acuity and visual fields (a report from a physician may be needed to determine other aspects of eye diseases); and
- (5) Persons authorized to furnish a copy or summary of the records of a medical facility. Generally, the copy or summary should be certified as accurate by the custodian or by any authorized employee of the Railroad Retirement Board, Social Security Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, or State agency.

(b) *Medical reports.* Medical reports should include—

- (1) Medical history;
- (2) Clinical findings (such as the results of physical or mental status examinations);
- (3) Laboratory findings (such as blood pressure, x-rays);
- (4) Diagnosis (statement of disease or injury based on its signs and symptoms);
- (5) Treatment prescribed, with response to treatment and prognosis; and
- (6)(i) Statements about what the claimant can still do despite his or her impairment(s) based on the medical source's findings on the factors under paragraph (b)(1) through (5) of this section (except in disability claims for remarried widow's and surviving divorced spouses). (See § 220.112).
- (ii) Statements about what the claimant can still do (based on the medical source's findings on the factors under paragraph (b)(1) through (5) of this section) should describe—

(A) The medical source's opinion about the claimant's ability, despite his or her impairment(s), to do work-

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related activities such as sitting, standing, moving about, lifting, carrying, handling objects, hearing, speaking, and traveling; and

(B) In cases of mental impairment(s), the medical source's opinion about the claimant's ability to reason or make occupational, personal, or social adjustments. (See § 220.112).

(c) *Completeness.* The medical evidence, including the clinical and laboratory findings, must be complete and detailed enough to allow the Board to make a determination about whether or not the claimant is disabled. It must allow the Board to determine—

(1) The nature and limiting effects of the claimant's impairment(s) for any period in question;

(2) The probable duration of the claimant's impairment(s); and

(3) The claimant's residual functional capacity to do work-related physical and mental activities.

(d) *Evidence from physicians.* A statement by or the opinion of the claimant's treating physician will not determine whether the claimant is disabled. However, the medical evidence provided by a treating physician will be considered by the Board in making a disability decision. A treating physician is a doctor to whom the claimant has been going for treatment on a continuing basis. The claimant may have more than one treating physician. The Board may use consulting physicians or other medical consultants for specialized examinations or tests, to obtain more complete evidence, and to resolve any conflicts. A consulting physician is a doctor (often a specialist) to whom the claimant is referred for an examination once or on a limited basis. (See § 220.50 for an explanation of when the Board may request a consultative examination.)

(e) *Information from other sources.* Information from other sources may also help the Board understand how an impairment affects the claimant's ability to work. Other sources include—

(1) Public and private social welfare agencies;

(2) Observations by nonmedical sources;

(3) Other practitioners (for example, naturopaths, chiropractors, audiologists, etc.); and

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(4) Railroad and nonrailroad employers.

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§ 220.47 Purchase of existing medical evidence.

The Board needs specific medical evidence to determine whether a claimant is disabled. The claimant is responsible for providing that evidence. However, at its discretion, the Board will pay the reasonable cost to obtain medical evidence that it needs and requests from physicians not employed by the Federal government and other non-Federal providers of medical services.

§ 220.48 If the claimant fails to submit medical or other evidence.

The Board may request a claimant to submit medical or other evidence. If the claimant does not submit that evidence, the Board will make a decision on other evidence which is either already available in the claimant's case or which the Board may develop from other sources, including reports of consultative examinations.

Subpart G—Consultative Examinations

§ 220.50 Consultative examinations at the Board's expense.

A consultative examination is a physical or mental examination or test purchased for a claimant at the Board's request and expense. If the claimant's medical sources cannot provide sufficient medical evidence about the claimant's impairment(s) in order to enable the Board to determine whether the claimant is disabled, the Board may ask the claimant to have one or more consultative examinations or tests. The decision to purchase a consultative examination will be made on an individual case basis in accordance with the provisions of §§ 220.53 through 220.56. Selection of the source for the examination will be consistent with the provisions of § 220.64 (Program Integrity).

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