

for any activity described in this section or as a result of formal disciplinary proceedings. Also see §§ 220.53 and 220.57(b).

### Subpart H—Evaluation of Disability

#### § 220.100 Evaluation of disability for any regular employment.

(a) *General.* The Board uses a set evaluation process, explained in paragraph (b) of this section, to determine whether a claimant is disabled for any regular employment. This evaluation process applies to employees, widow(er)s, and children who have applied for annuities under the Railroad Retirement Act based on disability for any regular employment. Regular employment means substantial gainful activity as that term is defined in § 220.141.

(b) *Steps in evaluating disability.* A set order is followed to determine whether disability exists. The duration requirement, as described in § 220.28, must be met for a claimant to be found disabled. The Board reviews any current work activity, the severity of the claimant's impairment(s), the claimant's residual functional capacity, and the claimant's age, education, and work experience. If the Board finds that the claimant is disabled or is not disabled at any step in the process, the Board does not review further. (See § 220.105 if the claimant is not currently disabled but was previously disabled for a specified period of time in the past.) The steps are as follows:

(1) *Claimant is working.* If the claimant is working, and the work is substantial gainful activity, the Board will find that he or she is not disabled regardless of his or her impairments, age, education, or work experience. If the claimant is not performing substantial gainful activity, the Board will follow paragraph (2) of this section.

(2) *Impairment(s) not severe.* If the claimant does not have an impairment or combination of impairments which significantly limit his or her physical or mental ability to do basic work activities, the Board will find that the claimant is not disabled without consideration of age, education, or work experience. If the claimant has an im-

pairment or combination of impairments which significantly limit his or her ability to do basic work activities, the Board will follow paragraph (3) of this section. (See § 220.102(b) for a definition of basic work activities.)

(3) *Impairment(s) meets or equals one in the Listing of Impairments.* If the claimant has an impairment or combination of impairments which meets the duration requirement and such impairment is listed or is medically equal to one which is listed in the Listing of Impairments, the Board will find the claimant disabled without considering his or her age, education or work experience. (The Listing of Impairments is contained in appendix 1 of this part.) If the claimant's impairment or combination of impairments is not listed or is not medically equal to one which is listed in the Listing of Impairments, the Board will follow paragraph (4) of this section. (Medical equivalence is discussed in § 220.111).

(4) *Impairment(s) must prevent past relevant work.* If the claimant's impairment or combination of impairments is not listed or is not medically equal to one which is listed in the Listing of Impairments, the Board will then review the claimant's residual functional capacity (see § 220.120) and the physical and mental demands of past relevant work (see § 220.130). If the Board determines that the claimant is still able to do his or her past relevant work, the Board will find that he or she is not disabled. If the claimant is unable to do his or her past relevant work, the Board will follow paragraph (5) of this section.

(5) *Impairment(s) must prevent any other work.* (i) If the claimant is unable to do his or her past relevant work because of his or her impairment or combination of impairments, the Board will review the claimant's residual functional capacity and his or her age, education and work experience to determine if the claimant is able to do any other work. If the claimant cannot do other work, the Board will find him or her disabled. If the claimant can do other work, the Board will find the claimant not disabled.

(ii) If the claimant has only a marginal education (see § 220.129) and long work experience (i.e., 35 years or more)

in which he or she only did arduous unskilled physical labor, and the claimant can no longer do this kind of work, the Board will use a different rule (see § 220.127) to determine disability.

(c) Once a claimant has been found eligible to receive a disability annuity, the Board follows a somewhat different order of evaluation to determine whether the claimant's eligibility continues as explained in § 220.180.

**§ 220.101 Evaluation of mental impairments.**

(a) *General.* The steps outlined in § 220.100 apply to the evaluation of physical and mental impairments. In addition, in evaluating the severity of a mental impairment(s), the Board will follow a special procedure at each administrative level of review. Following this procedure will assist the Board in—

(1) Identifying additional evidence necessary for the determination of impairment severity;

(2) Considering and evaluating aspects of the mental impairment(s) relevant to the claimant's ability to work; and

(3) Organizing and presenting the findings in a clear, concise, and consistent manner.

(b) *Use of the procedure to record pertinent findings and rate the degree of functional loss.* (1) This procedure requires the Board to record the pertinent signs, symptoms, findings, functional limitations, and effects of treatment contained in the claimant's case record. This will assist the Board in determining if a mental impairment(s) exists. Whether or not a mental impairment(s) exists is decided in the same way the question of a physical impairment is decided, i.e., the evidence must be carefully reviewed and conclusions supported by it. The mental status examination and psychiatric history will ordinarily provide the needed information. (See § 220.27 for further information about what is needed to show an impairment.)

(2) If the Board determines that a mental impairment(s) exists, this procedure then requires the Board to indicate whether certain medical findings which have been found especially rel-

evant to the ability to work are present or absent.

(3) The procedure then requires the Board to rate the degree of functional loss resulting from the impairment(s). Four areas of function considered by the Board as essential to work have been identified, and the degree of functional loss in those areas must be rated on a scale that ranges from no limitation to a level of severity which is incompatible with the ability to perform those work-related functions.

For the first two areas (activities of daily living and social functioning), the rating is done based upon the following five-point scale; none, slight, moderate, marked, and extreme. For the third area (concentration, persistence, or pace), the following five-point scale is used: never, seldom, often, frequent, and constant. For the fourth area (deterioration or decompensation in work or work-like settings), the following four-point scale is used: never, once or twice, repeated (three or more), and continual. The last two points for each of these scales represent a degree of limitation which is incompatible with the ability to perform the work-related function.

(c) *Use of the procedure to evaluate mental impairments.* Following the rating of the degree of functional loss resulting from the impairment(s), the Board then determines the severity of the mental impairment(s).

(1) If the four areas considered by the Board as essential to work have been rated to indicate a degree of limitation as "none" or "slight" in the first and second area, "never" or "seldom" in the third area, and "never" in the fourth area, the Board can generally conclude that the impairment(s) is not severe, unless the evidence otherwise indicates that there is significant limitation of the claimant's mental ability to do basic work activities (see § 220.102).

(2) If the claimant's mental impairment(s) is severe, the Board must then determine if it meets or equals a listed mental impairment. This is done by comparing the Board's prior conclusions based on this procedure (i.e., the presence of certain medical findings considered by the Board as especially relevant to a claimant's ability to