

Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 3.340

claimant when the request for an independent medical opinion has been approved with regard to his or her claim and shall furnish the claimant with a copy of the opinion when it is received. If, in the judgment of the Secretary, disclosure of the independent medical opinion would be harmful to the physical or mental health of the claimant, disclosure shall be subject to the special procedures set forth in §1.577 of this chapter.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5109, 5701(b)(1); 5 U.S.C. 552a(f)(3))

[55 FR 18602, May 3, 1990]

§ 3.329 [Reserved]

§ 3.330 Resumption of rating when veteran subsequently reports for Department of Veterans Affairs examination.

Such ratings will be governed by the provisions of §3.158, "Abandoned Claims," and §3.655, "Failure to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination." The period following the termination or reduction for which benefits are precluded by the cited regulations will be stated in the rating. If the evidence is insufficient to evaluate disability during any period following the termination or reduction for which payments are not otherwise precluded, the rating will contain a notation reading "Evidence insufficient to evaluate from _____ to _____."

CROSS REFERENCE: Failure to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination. See §3.655.

[29 FR 3623, Mar. 21, 1964]

§§ 3.331-3.339 [Reserved]

§ 3.340 Total and permanent total ratings and unemployability.

(a) *Total disability ratings*—(1) *General*. Total disability will be considered to exist when there is present any impairment of mind or body which is sufficient to render it impossible for the average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation. Total disability may or may not be permanent. Total ratings will not be assigned, generally, for temporary exacerbations or acute infectious diseases except where specifically prescribed by the schedule.

(2) *Schedule for rating disabilities*. Total ratings are authorized for any disability or combination of disabilities for which the Schedule for Rating Disabilities prescribes a 100 percent evaluation or, with less disability, where the requirements of paragraph 16, page 5 of the rating schedule are present or where, in pension cases, the requirements of paragraph 17, page 5 of the schedule are met.

(3) *Ratings of total disability on history*. In the case of disabilities which have undergone some recent improvement, a rating of total disability may be made, provided:

(i) That the disability must in the past have been of sufficient severity to warrant a total disability rating;

(ii) That it must have required extended, continuous, or intermittent hospitalization, or have produced total industrial incapacity for at least 1 year, or be subject to recurring, severe, frequent, or prolonged exacerbations; and

(iii) That it must be the opinion of the rating agency that despite the recent improvement of the physical condition, the veteran will be unable to effect an adjustment into a substantially gainful occupation. Due consideration will be given to the frequency and duration of totally incapacitating exacerbations since incurrence of the original disease or injury, and to periods of hospitalization for treatment in determining whether the average person could have reestablished himself or herself in a substantially gainful occupation.

(b) *Permanent total disability*. Permanence of total disability will be taken to exist when such impairment is reasonably certain to continue throughout the life of the disabled person. The permanent loss or loss of use of both hands, or of both feet, or of one hand and one foot, or of the sight of both eyes, or becoming permanently helpless or bedridden constitutes permanent total disability. Diseases and injuries of long standing which are actually totally incapacitating will be regarded as permanently and totally disabling when the probability of permanent improvement under treatment is remote. Permanent total disability ratings may not be granted as a result of

§ 3.341

any incapacity from acute infectious disease, accident, or injury, unless there is present one of the recognized combinations or permanent loss of use of extremities or sight, or the person is in the strict sense permanently helpless or bedridden, or when it is reasonably certain that a subsidence of the acute or temporary symptoms will be followed by irreducible totality of disability by way of residuals. The age of the disabled person may be considered in determining permanence.

(c) *Insurance ratings.* A rating of permanent and total disability for insurance purposes will have no effect on ratings for compensation or pension.

[26 FR 1585, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 46 FR 47541, Sept. 29, 1981]

§ 3.341 Total disability ratings for compensation purposes.

(a) *General.* Subject to the limitation in paragraph (b) of this section, total-disability compensation ratings may be assigned under the provisions of § 3.340. However, if the total rating is based on a disability or combination of disabilities for which the Schedule for Rating Disabilities provides an evaluation of less than 100 percent, it must be determined that the service-connected disabilities are sufficient to produce unemployability without regard to advancing age.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

(b) *Incarcerated veterans.* A total rating for compensation purposes based on individual unemployability which would first become effective while a veteran is incarcerated in a Federal, State or local penal institution for conviction of a felony, shall not be assigned during such period of incarceration. However, where a rating for individual unemployability exists prior to incarceration for a felony and routine review is required, the case will be reconsidered to determine if continued eligibility for such rating exists.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5313(c))

(c) *Program for vocational rehabilitation.* Each time a veteran is rated totally disabled on the basis of individual unemployability during the period beginning after January 31, 1985, the Vo-

38 CFR Ch. I (7-1-13 Edition)

ational Rehabilitation and Employment Service will be notified so that an evaluation may be offered to determine whether the achievement of a vocational goal by the veteran is reasonably feasible.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1163)

[46 FR 47541, Sept. 29, 1981, as amended at 50 FR 52774, Dec. 26, 1985; 55 FR 17271, Apr. 24, 1990; 58 FR 32445, June 10, 1993; 68 FR 34542, June 10, 2003]

§ 3.342 Permanent and total disability ratings for pension purposes.

(a) *General.* Permanent total disability ratings for pension purposes are authorized for disabling conditions not the result of the veteran's own willful misconduct whether or not they are service connected.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1502(a))

(b) *Criteria.* In addition to the criteria for determining total disability and permanency of total disability contained in § 3.340, the following special considerations apply in pension cases:

(1) Permanent total disability pension ratings will be authorized for congenital, developmental, hereditary or familial conditions, provided the other requirements for entitlement are met.

(2) The permanence of total disability will be established as of the earliest date consistent with the evidence in the case. Active pulmonary tuberculosis not otherwise established as permanently and totally disabling will be presumed so after 6 months' hospitalization without improvement. The same principle may be applied with other types of disabilities requiring hospitalization for indefinite periods. The need for hospitalization for periods shorter or longer than 6 months may be a proper basis for determining permanence. Where, in application of this principle, it is necessary to employ a waiting period to determine permanence of totality of disability and a report received at the end of such period shows the veteran's condition is unimproved, permanence may be established as of the date of entrance into the hospital. Similarly, when active pulmonary tuberculosis is improved after