

WAC 296-20-2010 General rules for impairment rating examinations by attending doctors and consultants. These general rules must be followed by doctors who perform examinations or evaluations of permanent bodily impairment.

(1) Impairment rating examinations shall be performed only by doctors currently licensed in medicine and surgery (including osteopathic and podiatric) or dentistry, and department-approved chiropractors subject to RCW 51.32.112. The department or self-insurer may request the worker's attending doctor conduct the impairment rating when appropriate. If the attending doctor is unable or unwilling to perform the impairment rating examination, a consultant, at the attending doctor's request, may conduct a consultation examination and provide an impairment rating based on the findings. The department or self-insurer can also request an impairment rating examination from an independent medical examination (IME) provider. A chiropractic impairment rating examination may be performed only when the worker has been clinically managed by a chiropractor.

(2) Whenever an impairment rating examination is made, the attending doctor or consultant must complete a rating report that includes, at a minimum, the following:

(a) Statement that the patient has reached maximum medical improvement (MMI) and that no further curative treatment is recommended;

(b) Pertinent details of the physical examination performed (both positive and negative findings);

(c) Results of any pertinent diagnostic tests performed (both positive and negative findings). Include copies of any pertinent tests or studies ordered as part of the exam;

(d) An impairment rating consistent with the findings and a statement of the system on which the rating was based (for example, the AMA *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* and edition used, or the Washington state category rating system - refer to WAC 296-20-19000 through 296-20-19030 and WAC 296-20-200 through 296-20-690); and

(e) The rationale for the rating, supported by specific references to the clinical findings, especially objective findings and supporting documentation including the specific rating system, tables, figures and page numbers on which the rating was based.

(3) It is the responsibility of attending doctors and consultants to be familiar with the contents of the *Medical Examiner Handbook* section on how to rate impairment.

(4) Attending doctors and consultants performing impairment ratings must be available and willing to testify on behalf of the department or self-insurer, worker or employer and accept the department fee schedule for testimony.

(5) A complete impairment rating report must be sent to the department or self-insurer within fourteen calendar days of the examination date, or within fourteen calendar days of receipt of the results of any special tests or studies requested as a part of the examination. Job analyses (JAs) sent to the IME provider at the time of the impairment rating exam must be completed and submitted with the impairment rating report.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 51.32.055, 51.32.112, 51.32.114, 51.36.060, and 51.36.070. WSR 04-04-029, § 296-20-2010, filed 1/27/04, effective 3/1/04.]