

**WAC 296-20-19030 To what extent is pain considered in an award for permanent partial disability?** The categories used to rate unspecified disabilities incorporate the worker's subjective complaints. Similarly, the organ and body system ratings in the *AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* incorporate the worker's subjective complaints. A worker's subjective complaints or symptoms, such as a report of pain, cannot be objectively validated or measured. There is no valid, reliable or consistent means to segregate the worker's subjective complaints of pain from the pain already rated and compensated for in the conventional rating methods. When rating a worker's permanent partial disability, reliance is primarily placed on objective physical or clinical findings that are independent of voluntary action by the worker and can be seen, felt or consistently measured by examiners. No additional permanent partial disability award will be made beyond what is already allowed in the categories and in the organ and body system ratings in the AMA guides.

For example:

- Chapter 18 of the 5th Edition of the *AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* attempts to rate impairment caused by a patient's pain complaints. The impairment caused by the worker's pain complaints is already taken into consideration in the categories and in the organ and body system ratings in the AMA guides. There is no reliable means to segregate the pain already rated and compensated from the pain impairment that Chapter 18 purports to rate. Chapter 18 of the 5th Edition of *AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* cannot be used to calculate awards for permanent partial disability under Washington's Industrial Insurance Act.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 51.04.010, 51.04.020, 51.04.030, 51.32.080, 51.32.110, 51.32.112, 51.36.060. WSR 02-21-105, § 296-20-19030, filed 10/22/02, effective 12/1/02.]