

Medical Vocational Guidelines - “The Grid”

NC SOAR MEETING
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I. 5 STEP SEQUENTIAL EVALUATION PROCESS

- 1 - Achieving Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA - <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/sga.html>)
- 2 - Severe Impairment (“An impairment is not severe if it does not significantly limit your physical or mental abilities to do basic work activities”)
- 3 - Meet or Equal a Listing (<https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/AdultListings.htm>)
- 4 - Capable of Past Relevant Work (PRW)
- 5 - Capable of Adjusting to Other Work (here is where the Grid is applied)

II. MEDICAL VOCATIONAL GUIDELINES (https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/cfr20/404/404-app-p02.htm)

Considers a claimant’s Residual Functional Capacity (RFC), age, education, PRW and skills acquired through PRW, and transferability of such skills in making a disability determination.

III. RFC - EXERTIONAL LIMITATIONS

Exertional Activities: Examples - Sitting, Standing, Walking, Lifting, Carrying, Crouching, Stooping, Squatting, Pushing, Pulling

Sedentary:

- Lift/Carry - Occasionally up to 10lbs
- Walking/Standing - No more than 2 hours

Light:

- Lift/Carry - Occasionally up to 20 lbs; Frequently up to 10lbs
- Walking/Standing - Approximately 6 out of 8 hrs/day

Medium:

- Lift/Carry - Occasionally 20 to 50 lbs; Frequently 10 to 25 lbs
- Walking/Standing - Approximately 6 out of 8 hrs/day

Heavy:

Lift/Carry - Frequently up to 50 lbs.

Walking/Standing - Approximately 6 out of 8 hrs/day

IV. FREQUENCY DEFINITIONS

Occasionally: Up to 1/3 of of 8-hour workday

Frequently: 1/3 to 2/3 of 8-hour workday

Constantly: 2/3 or more of 8-hour workday

V. AGE (https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/cfr20/404/404-1563.htm)

Young: Under age 50; SSA generally does not consider age to seriously affect a claimant's ability to adjust to other work.

Closely approaching advanced age: Age 50-54; SSA does consider that a claimant's age along with a severe impairment(s) and limited work experience may seriously affect ability to adjust to other work.

Advanced age: Age 55 or older; SSA considers that a claimant's age significantly affects a claimant's ability to adjust to other work.

Closely approaching retirement age: 60 or older

VI. EDUCATION (https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/cfr20/404/404-1564.htm)

Illiteracy: Inability to read or write a simple message such as instructions or inventory lists even though the claimant can sign his or her name; Little or no formal schooling.

Marginal education: 6th grade level or less of formal education; Ability in reasoning, arithmetic, and language skills which are needed to do simple, unskilled types of jobs.

Limited education: 7th grade through the 11th grade level of formal education; Ability in reasoning, arithmetic, and language skills, but not enough to allow a claimant with these educational qualifications to do most of the more complex job duties needed in semi-skilled or skilled jobs.

High school education and above: Formal schooling at a 12th grade level or above; Includes GED; Abilities in reasoning, arithmetic, and language skills acquired through; SSA considers that a claimant with these educational abilities can do semi-skilled through skilled work.

[HAS BEEN ELIMINATED AS A CATEGORY] Inability to communicate in English: Since the ability to speak, read and understand English is generally learned or increased at

school, SSA may consider this an educational factor; It may be difficult for someone who doesn't speak and understand English to do a job, regardless of the amount of education the person may have in another language.

VII. PAST RELEVANT WORK (https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/rulings/di/02/SSR82-61-di-02.html)

Work performed within past 15 years at level of SGA which lasted long enough for the claimant to learn techniques, acquire necessary information, and develop facilities needed for average performance of job.

An unsuccessful work attempt can be excluded from PRW, even if performed at the level of SGA, if lasted less than six months and ended due to impairments (https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/rulings/di/03/SSR84-25-di-03.html).

VIII. SKILLS LEVELS (https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/cfr20/404/404-1568.htm)

Unskilled: Requires little or no judgement; Simple tasks; Can be learned in a short period of time (~1 month); SVP 1-2; Examples: Marker (DOT: 209.587-034), Nut Sorter (DOT: 521.687-086), Laundry Worker (DOT: 302.685-010), Cafeteria Attendant (DOT: 311.766-010).

Semi-skilled: Needs some skills but does not require more complex work duties; Requires ability to remain alert and pay attention to detail and/or protecting against risks; 3-6 months to learn; SVP 3-4; Examples: Fast Food Cook (DOT: 313.374-101), Loader (DOT: 921.687-018), Waiter/Waitress (DOT: 311.477-030, 026), Electrician Helper (DOT: 829.684-022), Receptionist (DOT: 237.367-038).

Skilled: Specific qualifications, use of judgment, and knowledge of how to perform mechanical or manual tasks to create a product or material, or provide a service; May require reading specifications, measuring, estimating, and making calculations; Requires close work with others, or with figures, facts, or ideas that require complex, abstract, or critical thinking; 6 months or more to train for and learn; SVP 4+; Example: Plumber (DOT: 862.381-030), HVAC Installer (DOT: 637.261-014), Respiratory Therapist (DOT: 076.361-014).

IX3. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES SHOWING INABILITY TO MAKE AN ADJUSTMENT TO OTHER WORK (https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/cfr20/404/404-1562.htm)

Adverse Work Profile: At least 55 years old; severe, medically determinable impairment(s); limited education or less; and no past relevant work experience.

Arduous Unskilled Work Profile: No more than a marginal education; work experience of 35 years or more during which claimant did only arduous unskilled physical labor; not currently working; and no longer able to do this kind of work because of a severe impairment(s).