

Navigating Your Way on the Road to RFC (Residual Functional Capacity)

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Village of
Veritas
CITY LIMIT

“Many times I’ve been alone
And many times I’ve cried
Anyway, you’ll never know
The many ways I’ve tried”

-Paul McCartney, from
“The Long and Winding Road”

As you pull in and let the engine cool, there is only one more task to complete- your travel log. For IC PTD examinations,

this requires expert medical and mental health professions to document a keen knowledge of the affected body parts and body systems, the facts of the case, the symptoms expressed by the injured worker, as well as the presence or absence of pertinent objective examination findings.

It is doubtful McCartney was singing about Industrial Commission (IC) specialist examinations when he wrote these lyrics. Never the less, these words do evoke a feeling examiners might experience when wrestling with how to express the concept of RFC when responding to question #3 in IC Permanent Total Disability (PTD) examinations. And, no doubt, there have been “many ways they’ve tried.”

Here’s a road map. It starts with “maximum medical improvement” (MMI), that is, permanency. You know you’ve arrived at this first stop of permanency when there has been no recent significant change in symptoms, treatment, or function, and none is expected (in your expert opinion) in the foreseeable future, with current care. That’s how you know you’re in the village of MMI, and your “rationale” of how you got there should reflect that.

The next stop is impairment. You can envision this as a drop off point. What’s dropped off here are the losses or loss of function of body parts or body systems. These are accounted for as numerical representations according to formulas from the AMA Guides. They are recorded as percentages of a 100% whole person.

Finally, we come rolling up the road to RFC. This is the last stop in this leg of the PTD journey. This is where we report how much gas is left in the tank, how much tread is left on the tires, and how many cylinders are still firing. RFC refers to the capacity of an injured worker to function, after accounting for the impairment (loss) encountered along the way.

Stop 1

Maximum Medical Impairment

Based on the information above, the examiner is asked to present a summary in response to question #3 and discuss limitations arising from the impairment due to the allowed condition(s). *

*Pro tip: Limitations are different from the impairment (loss) itself- limitations are a result of the impairment and should be documented as such. For example, “Due to a torn right rotator cuff (the history and the loss), resulting in weakness and decreased ROM on examination (objective findings of the loss), the IW is limited to no lifting greater than 10 pounds, and no working above shoulder level with the right arm (the limitations).”

*For Mental and Behavioral Health specialists, this is already in place for many mental health conditions by the Job Accommodation Network, on the website “AskJAN”.
(<https://askjan.org/>) Check it out before your next road trip!

Stop 2

Whole Person Impairment

Stop 3

Residual Function Capacity



The Travel Log: Documentation & Reporting
Completing Question #3
The examiner must provide a summary and discuss specific limitations arising from the allowed conditions.

The Objective Evidence Path
Your report must document the facts of the case, reported symptoms and the presence or absence of objective examination findings.

Distinguish Loss vs. Limitation
Impairment is the “loss” (e.g., a torn rotator cuff), while a limitation is the “result” (e.g., cannot lift more than 10lbs).

Mental Health Resources
For Behavioral Health specialists, the Job Accommodation Network (AskJAN.org) provides established frameworks for mental health limitations.

AskJAN.org

**“Don’t keep me waiting here
Lead me to your door”**

**-Paul McCartney, from
“The Long and Winding Road”**



Did You Know? McCartney testified that an unauthorized change in this song (adding an orchestral and choral overdub) by the producer (Phil Spector) was a reason for the Beatles’ breakup.



Did You Know? In countries of the British Commonwealth, the acronym “RFC” refers to “Rugby Football Club”, in the same way “FC” refers to soccer teams (e.g., Manchester United FC). Notable examples of carryovers to Ohio include the Cincinnati Wolfhounds RFC, the Cleveland Rovers RFC, and the Scioto Valley RFC, all who have a regional and national presence in American rugby.

The Pit Stop: Pop the hood on your expertise.

DIRECTIONS AND SUBMISSION

After reviewing the material in the newsletter, please fill in your name, date, time spent on the activity, and your answers to the review questions.

When completed, you may print this page and fax it to 614-466-1051, attention Medical Services, subject “*MediScene* Review Questions”, to be placed in your file and held for your future reapplication. Alternatively, you may save your completed form to your computer by choosing “Print”, and then choose “Destination” as “Save to PDF”. Please email the saved document as an attachment to medical.services@ic.ohio.gov with the subject line stating “*MediScene* Review Questions”.

Your Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Time Spent on CME Activity: _____ (Maximum 30 minutes)

- An adequate rationale for an opinion that the injured worker has reached maximum medical improvement (MMI) includes a statement that there have been no recent significant changes in symptoms, treatment, or function, and none is expected in the foreseeable future.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- MMI means the injured worker has received appropriate treatment for a reasonable amount of time.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- Impairment is a numeric representation of the amount of loss or loss of function of a body part or body system.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- Which of the following is true?
 - A. An impairment may bring functional limitations.
 - B. Limitations due to impairment should be self-evident to a non-medical reader of a specialist examiner’s report.
- Before describing residual functional capacity, a specialist examiner must have and document a summary of which of the following:
 - A. Knowledge of the affected body parts and body systems.
 - B. Knowledge of the facts of the case.
 - C. A clear understanding of the injured worker’s reported symptoms.
 - D. Knowledge of the presence or absence of objective findings related to allowed conditions.
 - E. All the above.



NOTE: This activity is not a certified AMA category 1 activity, and so it cannot be used as credit toward medical board licensure in Ohio. However, it can be used toward the Ohio Industrial Commission requirement for continuing education credit specific to impairment rating at the time of your five-year application for reappointment to the specialist examiners’ panel.