

"What Can I Do?"

▶ **Ask for Help.**

- ▶ You are not alone. Talk to CGSUPRT*, your command, medical personnel, the Chaplain Corps*, Work-Life staff, a PDES attorney*, Navy Wounded Warrior - Safe Harbor, etc. We're here to help.

▶ *Communications with these resources are confidential.

▶ **Document.**

- ▶ Make sure all treatment related to your conditions are documented in your health records. Keeping a copy of all documents for your personal records can also be helpful.

▶ **Plan Ahead.**

- ▶ Whether you are going back to the fleet or into the civilian world, there are resources you can use to help with the transition.

▶ **Exercise Your Rights.**

- ▶ Don't be afraid to use your chain of command or to contact a PDES attorney. Federal law governs the PDES process and it can have an impact on the rest of your life.

References

References

- Title 10, United States Code, Chapter 61
- PDES Manual, COMDTINST M1850.2 (series)
- Medical Manual, COMDTINST M6000.1 (series)
- Military Separations Manual, COMDTINST M1000.4 (series)
- Veterans Affairs Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD), 38 CFR Book C
- PDES Info
www.uscg.mil/legal/LMA.asp

HAVE QUESTIONS? ASK US!

- For questions regarding your medical treatment, contact your medical provider.

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- For administrative/processing questions, contact the PSC Ombudsman:
Phone: (202) 795-6633
Email: PSCombudsman@uscg.mil

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- For legal consultations/advice, contact a PDES attorney:
Phone: (202) 795-6918
Email: PDESinfo@uscg.mil
All legal communications with lawyers are kept confidential. We can answer questions about waivers, retention requests, discharge characterization, etc.

United States Coast Guard

Physical Disability Evaluation System (PDES)

A Member's Guide



The disability evaluation and compensation process for ill and injured CG members involves three major components:

Health Services

Medical providers have the best knowledge of, and insight into, members' conditions and their impacts on work performance.

Personnel Services Division

The Disabilities Evaluations branch (-de) applies CG retention standards to rate unfitting conditions in accordance with Veteran Affairs guidelines.

Member Advocacy Division

Members are entitled to legal consultation at every stage of the process and can have counsel advocate on their behalf.

The PDES Process

The PDES process focuses on determining whether a member is fit or unfit for retention in a non-adversarial manner. Once the MEB report is forwarded to PSC, each medical condition will be evaluated as to whether it is unfitting. Under federal law, the CG must consider all conditions that individually or collectively render a member unfit. Each unfitting condition will be given a rating and disability percentage, which will determine whether you will be separated or retired.

Stages of the Process

1

MEDICAL EVALUATION BOARD (MEB)

An MEB is convened when an injury or illness makes a member unfit for duty.

The MEB report recommends whether you are medically fit to perform the duties of your *office, grade, rank, or rating*. The MEB report is written by a medical officer and identifies conditions that do not meet retention standards.

You may consult with a PDES attorney at this stage.

2

INFORMAL PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARD (IPEB)

The CG applies the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities. A two-person board assigns your unfitting conditions a rating and disability percentage.

A PDES attorney can help you to:

- 1) *Accept* the findings,
- 2) Submit a *reconsideration* request, or
- 3) *Reject* the findings; proceed to a formal board.

3

FORMAL PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARD (FPEB)

Federal law entitles you to a full and fair hearing.

A three-person board holds an administrative hearing to re-evaluate your fitness for duty and make recommendations consistent with the findings.

You have the right to appear in front of this fact-finding body to advocate for your best interests.

You can submit a rebuttal to these findings as well.

Possible Outcomes

Fit for Full Duty

If you are granted a waiver or your condition is not unfitting, you return to duty.

Separation w/o Severance

You may be eligible for Transitional Assistance Management Program benefits.

Separation with Severance

If rated 20% or less, Monthly BASE PAY x 2 x YRS of active service.

Temporary Retirement

If not stable/permanent, retired for up to 5 years, and periodically reevaluated.

Retirement

If rated 30% or more, you will be retired and receive all benefits (proportionate pay, *Tricare*, legal, etc.)