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POCKET GUIDE TO THE PHYSICAL DISABILITY EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Physical Disability Evaluation System (PDES) is a complex and often misunderstood process, especially by those it is intended to serve. PDES exists to ensure equitable application of the provisions of Title 10, United States Code, Chapter 61, which relates to the separation or retirement of military personnel by reason of physical disability. To assist our members, their commands, and our medical providers to more easily navigate through the PDES, the Coast Guard Personnel Command (CGPC) developed a quick reference “Pocket Guide to the Physical Disability Evaluation System.”

The PDES Pocket Guide is meant to educate all stakeholders so that readers can develop some comfort level of understanding of the system and, hopefully, form realistic expectations as well. The guide includes information about all phases of the PDES, including medical evaluation of a potentially disabling condition, board and appeal process, legal representation, and final disposition. The guide also provides a convenient list of resources for those seeking additional information.

We understand that members in the PDES can be apprehensive about their health and their careers. Although complex, the system is meant to be fair and ensure all eligible members with service-connected conditions that are unfit for retention, are provided with appropriate benefits. The system also prevents the arbitrary separation of members who incur a disabling injury or disease, yet remain fit for duty.

Copies of the guide are being distributed as follows:

- ○ PCO/PXO/OINC School students
- ○ IDT Corpsman School students
- ○ Direct Commission Officer (Medical Officer) students
- ○ All Clinics and Super Sick Bays
- ○ All ISCs, Groups, and Sectors
- ○ All Coast Guard Legal Assistance Offices

Also, the guide is available online as a downloadable PDF document, via the CGPC-adm-1 website at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cgpc/adm/adm1.htm>. Additional copies can be obtained from CGPC-adm-1 by contacting the PDES Ombudsman, Mr. Jarvis Kolen, at jkolen@ballston.uscg.mil <mailto:jkolen@ballston.uscg.mil> or (202) 493-1737.

The guide will be updated when any significant changes are made to the PDES process. Updated versions will be published via the CGPC-adm-1 website, as well as distributed per the above plan.

I hope you find that the new Pocket Guide to the Physical Disability Evaluation System clears up some of the unintended mysteries of the system and gives you a better understanding of the steps in the overall PDES process.

Regards,

RADM Kenneth T. Venuto
Ken Venuto

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