

AIVetGuide

Condition-Specific Evidence Guide

Evidence ideas for common VA disability topics.

Important

Use this guide as educational preparation only. It is not legal advice, medical advice, or a guarantee of VA benefits. For official help, contact VA or an accredited representative.

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Condition-Specific Evidence Guide

Different conditions often need different kinds of supporting evidence. This guide gives veterans plain-language ideas for organizing evidence by condition without promising an outcome.

Important

VA decisions depend on the facts, records, law, rating criteria, and evidence in the individual claim. Use this as an organizer, not a guarantee.

PTSD, anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions

- [] Diagnosis or treatment records from VA, private providers, counselors, therapists, or psychiatrists.
- [] Information about in-service stressor or event when required.
- [] Personal statement explaining onset, symptoms, triggers, avoidance, sleep, mood, panic, memory, concentration, relationships, and work impact.
- [] Buddy or family statements describing behavior changes, isolation, anger, sleep changes, panic, or functional decline.
- [] Hospitalizations, crisis care, medications, therapy history, and safety concerns if applicable.
- [] Use required VA mental health/PTSD forms when applicable.

Tinnitus and hearing loss

- [] Noise exposure history, MOS/duty role, weapons, aircraft, vehicles, machinery, explosions, or hazardous noise environments.
- [] Audiology records, hearing tests, hearing aids, or tinnitus complaints.
- [] Personal statement describing onset, continuity, ringing pattern, sleep impact, concentration impact, and communication problems.
- [] Buddy statements if others noticed hearing difficulty or complaints of ringing.

Migraines and headaches

- [] Diagnosis, medication, neurology records, imaging if available, ER/urgent care visits.
- [] Headache log with dates, duration, severity, triggers, nausea, light/sound sensitivity, and whether lying down is required.
- [] Work impact: missed work, reduced productivity, accommodations, or inability to function during attacks.
- [] Lay statements from people who observe migraine episodes or recovery time.

Sleep apnea

- [] Sleep study results and diagnosis.
- [] CPAP or other treatment records, compliance notes, and ongoing symptoms.

- [] Service records or lay statements showing snoring, witnessed breathing pauses, daytime fatigue, morning headaches, or sleep issues during or soon after service.
- [] Secondary theory evidence if claimed as linked to another service-connected condition.

Back, neck, knees, shoulders, hips, arms, legs, and joints

- [] Service records showing injury, repetitive strain, physical duties, profiles, treatment, or accident.
- [] Current diagnosis, imaging, physical therapy, injections, surgery, medication, braces, cane, or assistive devices.
- [] Range of motion, pain on movement, flare-ups, repeated-use limitations, weakness, instability, falls, or functional limits.
- [] Work and daily-life impact: lifting, standing, sitting, walking, stairs, driving, sleep, household tasks.
- [] Nerve symptoms such as numbness, tingling, radiating pain, weakness, or foot drop if applicable.

Secondary conditions

A secondary claim needs evidence that the new condition exists and that it was caused or aggravated by an already service-connected condition. Examples may include pain causing altered gait, medication side effects, mental health effects, sleep problems, or other medically supported relationships.

- [] Name the primary service-connected condition.
- [] Name the secondary condition.
- [] Gather medical records for both conditions.
- [] Explain the timeline of how the secondary condition developed or worsened.
- [] Consider medical opinion evidence when the relationship is not obvious.

Condition worksheet

Prompt	Notes
Condition	
Current diagnosis / symptoms	
Service event or secondary theory	
Evidence already available	
Evidence missing	
Frequency / severity / duration	
Functional impact	
Work impact	

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Official Sources Used

These guides summarize public VA information and should be checked against the official source before filing or responding to a VA decision.

- [Evidence Needed For Your Disability Claim](#)
- [File Additional Forms For Your Disability Claim](#)
- [Public Disability Benefits Questionnaires \(DBQs\)](#)
- [About Disability Ratings](#)
- [Types Of Disability Claims And When To File](#)

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