

Social Security

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## Program Operations Manual System (POMS)

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DI 25001.001 Medical and Vocational Quick Reference Guide

**CITATIONS:** Social Security Act - 216(i)(1), 223(d)(2), 1614 (a)(3)(A) and 1614 (a)(3)(B)

Regulations - 20 CFR §§ 404.1520, 416.920, 404.1545 through 404.1567, 416.965 through 416.967

Social Security Rulings – SSR 03-3p, SSR 00-4p, SSR 96-9p, SSR 96-8p, SSR 85-15, SSR 83-14, SSR 83-12, SSR 83-11, SSR 83-10, SSR 82-63, SSR 82-62, SSR 82-61, SSR 82-41, SSR 82-40

The Preface Materials and Appendices of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) and Selected Characteristics of Occupations (SCO)

### A. Quick Reference Guide For Medical And Vocational Evaluation

This section provides a brief overview and a central starting point for medical and vocational evaluations. It also provides references to more specific instructions needed to complete sequential evaluation steps 4 and 5. The list of terms in this subsection provides the following information:

1. Summaries of commonly applied vocational concepts;
2. Definitions of commonly used terms for medical-vocational evaluations;

3. Terms relating to jobs or occupations that share the same definition that the Department of Labor uses in its publications, such as the:
  - Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT); or
  - Selected Characteristics of Occupations (SCO) defined in the DOT and words with a two-letter SCO acronym after them; and
4. Basic information about using the medical-vocational guidelines.

### **1. Accommodation (Ac)**

Adjustment of the lens of the eye to bring an object into sharp focus.

### **2. Age**

Refers to chronological age and the extent to which it affects a claimant's ability to adjust to other work. A claimant reaches a particular age the day before his or her birthday. There are three age categories and two age subcategories. For detailed information on age as a vocational factor, see DI 25015.005.

The medical-vocational rules use the subcategory "younger individual age 45-49" in the sedentary medical-vocational table and "closely approaching retirement age" in the medium medical-vocational table. For the medical-vocational guidelines, see DI 25025.035.

The age categories and subcategories are:

a. Age categories

1. Younger - under age 50
2. Closely approaching advanced age - age 50-54
3. Advanced age - age 55 or over

For more information on age categories see DI 25015.005D.

b. Age subcategories

1. Younger individual age 45-49; and
2. Closely approaching retirement age - age 60 or older.

### 3. Arduous work

Physical work requiring a high level of strength or endurance. No specific physical action or exertional level denotes arduous work. Such work may be arduous if it demands a great deal of stamina such as repetitive bending or lifting at a very fast pace. For additional information on arduous work see DI 25010.001B.1.

### 4. Atmospheric conditions (AC)

An environmental factor, rated in the SCO, meaning exposure to conditions that affect the respiratory system, eyes, or the skin such as:

- fumes,
- noxious odors,
- dusts,
- mists,

- gases, and
- poor ventilation.

## **5. Balancing (Ba)**

Maintaining body equilibrium to prevent falling when:

- walking,
- standing,
- crouching,
- running on narrow, slippery, or erratically moving surfaces; or
- performing gymnastic feats.

## **6. Borderline age issue**

For information on how to apply borderline age policy, see DI 25015.006 Borderline Age.

A borderline age issue exists when the claimant is:

- A few days to a few months from attaining the next higher age category;
- Use of the higher age category results in a finding of “disabled;” and
- Use of the chronological age category results in a finding of “not disabled.”

## **7. Carrying**

Transporting an object; usually holding it in the hands, arms or on the shoulder.

## **8. Climbing (Cl)**

Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles, ropes, and the like, using the feet and legs or hands and arms.

## **9. Color vision (CV)**

Ability to identify and distinguish colors.

## **10. Composite job**

Work that required significant elements of two or more occupations and that has no counterpart in the DOT. For information on how to determine if work was a composite job and how to consider a composite job at step 4 of sequential evaluation see DI 25005.020B.

## **11. Constantly**

Use of this term in the RFC or SCO means that the activity or condition occurs two-thirds or more of an eight-hour day.

## **12. Crawling (Cw)**

Moving about on the hands and knees or hands and feet.

## **13. Crouching (Co)**

Bending the body downward and forward by bending the legs and spine.

## **14. Depth perception (DP)**

Ability to judge distances and spatial relationships to see objects where and as they actually are in three-dimensional vision.

## **15. DOT worker function codes chart**

A DOT code is comprised of nine numbers subdivided into three sets containing three numbers. In the DOT classification system, each digit has a specific purpose or meaning. Together, these nine numbers provide a unique code that identifies an individual occupation from all others listed in the DOT.

The following table contains information that identifies the various code numbers used to represent the middle three codes (also known as the worker function codes). The worker function codes consist of data function (fourth digit), people function (fifth digit), and things function (sixth digit) of occupations defined in the DOT.

<b>Worker functions – The Middle Three Codes</b>					
<b>Code</b>	<b>Data 4th Digit</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>People 5th Digit</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Things 6th Digit</b>
0	Synthesizing	0	Mentoring	0	Setting up
1	Coordinating	1	Negotiating	1	Precision Working
2	Analyzing	2	Instructing	2	Operating-Controlling
3	Compiling	3	Supervising	3	Driving-Operating
4	Computing	4	Diverting	4	Manipulating
5	Copying	5	Persuading	5	Tending
6	Comparing	6	Speaking-Signaling	6	Feeding-Off Bearing
		7	Serving	7	Handling
		8	Taking Instructions-Helping		

## 16. Education

Formal schooling or other training that contributes to the ability to meet vocational requirements (for example, reasoning ability, communication skills, and arithmetical ability). For additional information on education as a vocational factor, see DI 25015.010.

We classify education into five adjudicative categories:

### 1. Illiterate:

- The inability to read in any language,
- The inability to write in any language, or
- The inability to read and write in any language

**NOTE:** Regardless of formal education level, use this category for claimants who cannot read or write a simple message, such as instructions or inventory lists, in any language.

### 2. Marginal education

Formal schooling completed at the sixth grade level or less.

### 3. Limited education

Formal schooling completed at the seventh through 11<sup>th</sup> grade level.

### 4. High school education or above

Formal schooling completed at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level and above. We usually, consider a GED certificate to be in this category.

### 5. Recent education that provides for direct entry into skilled or semiskilled work

For additional information on how to determine if recent education or training provides for direct entry into skilled or semiskilled work see DI 25015.010F.

## 17. Environmental conditions

Conditions that may exist in work environments such as extremes in temperature, humidity, noise, vibrations, fumes, odors, presence of toxic substances, dust, poor ventilation, or hazards.

## 18. Environmental limitation

An impairment-related inability to tolerate exposure to one or more environmental conditions in a workplace. For additional information on environmental limitations, see DI 25020.015.

## 19. Exertional activity

One of the primary strength activities:

- sitting,
- standing,
- walking,
- lifting,
- carrying,
- pushing, and
- pulling.

## 20. Exertional level

A work classification defining the functional requirements of work in terms of the range of the primary strength activities required (that is, sedentary, light, medium, heavy, and very heavy).

The following table details the limits within the ranges for occasional, frequent, and constant exertion:

<b>Limits of Weights Lifted/Carried or Force Exerted by Strength Level</b>			
	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Constantly</b>
<b>Rating</b>			
Sedentary	* to 10	*	N/A



Limits of Weights Lifted/Carried or Force Exerted by Strength Level			
	Occasionally	Frequently	Constantly
Light	* to 20	* to 10	*
Medium	20 to 50	10 to 25	* to 10
Heavy	50 to 100	25 to 50	10 to 20
Very Heavy	100+	50+	20+

\*=Negligible Weight; N/A= Not applicable

**NOTE:** Do not use this information to determine remaining occupational base. Do not determine that a claimant has a remaining occupational base for medium work if he or she can lift 20 pounds occasionally and 10 pounds frequently or if he or she can lift 25 pounds occasionally and 10 pounds frequently.

A claimant must be capable of doing substantially all of the range of work represented by the exertional requirements of a rule in order to use that rule to direct a determination of disability. For that reason, assume that an RFC for less than the top level of weight for an exertional level in the exertional level table represents an RFC falling between two exertional levels of work. For information on how to adjudicate a case in which the RFC falls between two rules, see DI 25025.015.

**IMPORTANT:** The chart of lifting and carrying requirements is from Appendix C: Components of the Definition Trailer, Component IV. PHYSICAL DEMANDS - STRENGTH RATING (Strength); and reflects how Department of Labor analysts classified jobs into a particular strength level.

Per 20 CFR 404.1567 and 416.967 , SSA uses the strength classifications that are in the DOT.

## 21. Exertional limitation

An impairment-related limitation that reduces the capacity to sit, stand, walk, lift, carry, push, or pull.

## 22. Exposure to weather (We)

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning exposure to outside atmospheric

conditions.

### **23. Exposure to electrical shock (ES)**

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning possible bodily injury from electrical shock.

### **24. Exposure to radiation (Ra)**

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning possible bodily injury from radiation.

### **25. Exposure to toxic, caustic chemicals (TC)**

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning possible bodily injury from toxic or caustic chemicals.

### **26. Extreme cold (Co)**

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning exposure to nonweather-related cold temperatures.

### **27. Extreme heat (Ho)**

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning exposure to nonweather-related hot temperatures.

### **28. Far acuity (FA)**

Clarity of vision at 20 feet or more.

### **29. Feeling (Fe)**

Perceiving attributes of objects and materials such as size, shape, temperature, or texture, by means of receptors in the skin, particularly those of the fingertips.

### **30. Field of vision (FV)**

The entire area that can be seen when the eye is directed forward, including that which is seen with peripheral vision.

### **31. Fingering (Fi)**

Picking, pinching, or otherwise working with the fingers primarily (rather than with the

whole hand or arm as in “Handling”).

### 32. Framework determination

A medical-vocational determination that uses the [Appendix 2 Rules](#) as adjudicative guidance because the RFC or a vocational factor does not match an Appendix 2 rule. The RFC and vocational factors of age, education, and past work experience must meet all the rule criteria to **direct** a determination. For additional information on using the medical vocational rules as a framework for a determination see DI 25025.005C.

### 33. Frequently

Use of this term in the SCO or RFC means that the activity or condition occurs one-third to two-thirds of an 8-hour workday.

### 34. Frequency of physical demands and environmental condition components in the SCO

The following chart describes the absence or presence of physical demand and environmental condition components:

SCO Code	Frequency	Definition
N	Not Present	Activity or condition does not exist.
O	Occasionally	Activity or condition exists up to one-third of the time.
F	Frequently	Activity or condition exists from one-third to two-thirds of the time.
C	Constantly	Activity or condition exists two-thirds or more of the time.

### 35. Full range of work

All or substantially all of the unskilled occupations existing at an exertional level.

### 36. Handling (Ha)

Seizing, holding, grasping, turning, or otherwise working with the hand or hands. Fingers are involved only to the extent that they are an extension of the hand (rather than as in

“Fingering”).

### **37. Hearing (He)**

Perceiving the nature of sounds by ear.

### **38. Heavy work**

Heavy work involves lifting no more than 100 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 50 pounds. For the range of lifting and carrying requirements the Department of Labor considered when determining whether to classify work as heavy see DI 25001.001A.20. in this section.

Heavy work:

- Requires walking or standing for a significant part of the day.
- Usually requires frequent to constant stooping and crouching.
- Usually involves grasping, holding, and turning objects, but does not require use of the fingers for fine activities to the extent required in most sedentary work.
- Usually includes the functional capacity to perform medium, light, and sedentary work.

### **39. Job**

A position within a work site with significant tasks. Workers may perform the significant tasks slightly differently at different work sites.

**Example of work site differences:** A server at one restaurant may take orders and check to make sure everything is satisfactory while an assistant carries the food to the table. A server at another restaurant may be required to both take the order and carry the food to the table.

### **40. Kneeling (Kn)**

Bending the legs at the knees to come to rest on the knee or knees.

### **41. Lifetime commitment to a field of work profile**

For complete information on the lifetime commitment profile see DI 25010.001B.3. A lifetime commitment requires 30 years or more of work in one field. Work should be of a similar nature, but does not have to be for the same employer.

## **42. Lifting**

Raising or lowering an object from one level to another. Includes upward pulling.

## **43. Light work**

Light work involves lifting no more than 20 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 10 pounds. Even though the weight lifted may be very little, a job is in this category when it requires a good deal of walking or standing, or when it involves sitting most of the time with some pushing and pulling of arm or leg controls.

The Department of Labor rated an occupation as light when it requires walking or standing to a significant degree, sitting most of the time while pushing or pulling arm or leg controls, or working at a production rate while constantly pushing or pulling materials even though the weight of the materials in these situations is negligible. For the range of lifting and carrying requirements the DOL considered when determining whether to classify work as light see DI 25001.001A.20. in this section.

Light work usually:

- Requires walking or standing for approximately 6 hours of the day.
- Requires only occasional, rather than frequent stooping and no crouching.
- Involves grasping, holding and turning objects, but does not require use of the fingers for fine activities to the extent required in most sedentary work.
- Includes the functional capacity to perform sedentary work.
- Performed primarily in one location with the ability to stand being more critical than the ability to walk.

## **44. Material discrepancy**

A discrepancy that affects the ultimate decision of “disabled” or “not disabled.”

#### **45. Maximum sustained work capacity**

The highest functional level a person can perform on a regular and continuing basis.

#### **46. Medium work**

Medium work involves lifting no more than 50 pounds at a time with frequent lifting or carrying of objects weighing up to 25 pounds. If someone can do medium work, we determine that he or she can also do sedentary and light work. For the range of lifting and carrying requirements the Department of Labor considered when determining whether to classify work as medium see DI 25001.001A.20. in this section

Medium work usually:

- Requires walking or standing for approximately 6 hours of the day.
- Requires frequent stooping and crouching.
- Requires the ability to grasp, hold, and turn objects.
- requires the ability to frequently lift or carry objects weighing up to 25 pounds, which is often more critical than being able to lift up to 50 pounds at a time.
- Includes the functional capacity to perform sedentary and light work.

**NOTE:** There are very few medium occupations in the national economy performed primarily in a seated position.

#### **47. Near acuity (NA)**

Clarity of vision at 20 inches or less.

#### **48. Never**

An RFC rating that means not even once during an eight-hour day.

#### **49. Noise level**

A rating in the SCO based on the following coding system:

Code	Level	Illustrative Examples
1	Very quiet	Isolation booth for hearing test
2	Quiet	Library, many private offices
3	Moderate	Department or grocery store
4	Loud	Large earth movers, heavy traffic
5	Very loud	Rock concert, jack hammer

### **50. No work experience**

No relevant work experience. For the definition of relevant work experience see DI 25001.001A.59.

### **51. Nonexertional limitation**

An impairment-caused limitation on a work activity that is not one of the seven strength factors (that is, lifting, carrying, standing, walking, sitting, pushing, and pulling).

### **52. Not present**

Use of this rating in the SCO means that the activity or condition does not exist.

### **53. Occasionally**

Use of this term in the SCO or RFC means that the activity or condition occurs at least once up to one-third of an 8-hour workday.

### **54. Occupation**

A group of jobs in many different worksites with a common set of tasks. In order to look at the millions of jobs in the U.S. economy in an organized way, the DOT groups jobs into "occupations" based on their similarities and defines the structure and content of all listed occupations. Occupational definitions are the result of comprehensive studies of how workers performed similar jobs in worksites across the nation and are composites of data collected from diverse sources. The DOT organizes work in a variety of ways. Nearly every job in the economy is performed slightly differently from any other job due

to technological, economic, and sociological influences. Every job is also similar to a number of other jobs.

The term "occupation," as used in the DOT, refers to this collective description of a number of individual jobs performed, with minor variations, in many establishments.

There are seven basic parts to an occupational definition. The following list displays the parts in the order that they appear in every definition:

- a. The Occupational Code Number
  
- b. The Occupational Title
  
- c. The Industry Designation
  
- d. Alternate Titles (if any)
  
- e. The Body of the Definition
  1. Lead Statement
  
  2. Task Element Statements
  
  3. "May" Items
  
  4. Glossary words
  
  5. Unbracketed Reference Title
  
  6. Bracketed Title
  
- f. Undefined Related Titles (if any)
  
- g. Definition Trailer



## 55. Occupational base

The number of unskilled occupations that a claimant is capable of performing. If a claimant has transferable skills or direct entry into skilled work, he or she may have some skilled and semi-skilled occupations in his or her occupational base. For additional information on occupational base, see DI 25025.001.

## 56. Occupational code number

Occupational code numbers use the following format:

- a. The first three digits of a code number identify the occupational group:
  - The first digit is one of nine broad categories.
  - The categories are divided into 83 more specific divisions (the first two digits).
  - The divisions are then divided into small groups (the first three digits). The DOT contains 564 groups.
- b. The middle three digits of the occupational code address the worker functions. For a list of the middle three-digit designations see DI 25001.001A.15. in this section.
- c. The last three digits differentiate a particular occupation from all others:
  - When a six-digit code is applicable to only one occupation, the final three digits are always 010.
  - When there is more than one occupation with the same first six digits, the final three are usually assigned in multiples of four, such as: 010, 014, 018, and 022.

## 57. Other environmental conditions (Ot)

An environmental factor rating in the SCO used to capture uncategorized environmental conditions. These conditions may include:

- Demolishing parts of buildings to reach and combat fires and rescue persons endangered by fire and smoke;
- Mining ore or coal underground;
- Patrolling assigned beat to prevent crime or disturbance of peace and subjected to bodily injury or death from law violators;
- Diving in the ocean and subjected to the bends or other conditions associated with high water pressure and oxygen deprivation; and
- Patrolling ski slopes prior to allowing public use and exposed to danger of avalanches.

## **58. Other work**

Work other than a claimant's past relevant work.

## **59. Past relevant work (PRW)**

Work that:

- Was performed by the claimant within the relevant work period. (For the relevant work period chart see DI 25001.001A.64. in this section) ;
- Was substantial gainful activity (SGA); and

- Lasted long enough for the claimant to learn to do it.

In evaluating this last factor, it should have been sufficient time for the claimant to:

- a. learn the techniques;
- b. acquire the necessary information; and,
- c. develop the competence needed for average performance in the job situation.

**See also:**

DI 25005.001 Determination of Capacity for Past Relevant Work (PRW) --Basics of Step 4 of the Sequential Evaluation Process

DI 25005.005 Expedited Vocational Assessment at Steps 4 and 5 of Sequential Evaluation

DI 25005.010 Whether Past Relevant Work Must Exist in Significant Numbers in the National Economy (SSR 05-1c)--U.S. Supreme Court Decision in the Case of Jo Anne B. Barnhart, Commissioner of Social Security v. Pauline Thomas

DI 25005.015 Determination of Capacity for Past Work-- Relevance Issues

DI 25005.020 Past Relevant Work (PRW) as the Claimant Performed It

DI 25005.025 Past Relevant Work (PRW) as Generally Performed in the National Economy

DI 25005.050 Making the Past Relevant Work (PRW) Determination

## **60. Pulling**

Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves toward the force.

## **61. Pushing**

Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves away from the force.

## **62. Range of work**

Occupations existing at an exertional level (that is sedentary, light, medium, heavy, and very heavy).

### 63. Reaching

Extending the hands and arms in any direction.

### 64. Relevant work period

When we can consider a period of the claimant's past work as past relevant work (PRW).

This table provides the most common scenarios of the relevant work period:

<b>TYPE OF CLAIM</b>	<b>RELEVANT PERIOD</b>
Title II Disability Insurance Benefits (DIB) - Date Last Insured (DLI) in the future	Within the 15 years before adjudication*
Title II DIB - DLI in the past	Within the 15 years before DLI
Title II Widow or Widower, or Surviving Divorced Spouse (DWB) Prescribed Period (PP) not expired	Within the 15 years before adjudication *
Title II DWB – PP expired	Within the 15 years before expiration of the PP
Title II or Title XVI Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) projected to a future date.	Within the 15 years before the projected date is reached
Title II Full Retirement Age (FRA) in the past	Within the 15 years before FRA
Title II Childhood Disability Beneficiaries (CDB) – Initial claim filed before age 22	Within the 15 years before adjudication*
Title II CDB – Initial claim filed after age 22, no relevant work after age 22	Within the 15 years before age 22
Title II CDB – Reentitlement Claim, 7-year period applies and ended in the past	Within the 15 years before the end of the reentitlement period

<b>TYPE OF CLAIM</b>	<b>RELEVANT PERIOD</b>
Title II CDB – Reentitlement Claim, 7 year period applies and has not yet ended, or 7-year period does not apply	Within the 15 years before adjudication*
Title XVI Adult	Within the 15 years before adjudication*
Title II or Title XVI Continuing Disability Review (CDR)	Within the 15 years before CDR adjudication**
Appeal of Title II or Title XVI CDR medical cessation	Within the 15 years prior to the initial CDR medical cessation determination**
Any type of claim – closed period of disability ***	Within the 15 years before the end of the closed period

\* Indicates the date we adjudicate the claim at the initial, reconsideration, administrative law judge levels or for Appeals Council decisions. The date of adjudication does not freeze at the initial determination but is the date of determination or decision at any level of review.

\*\* We will not consider work performed during the current period of disability as PRW or as work experience for CDR cases per DI 28005.015A.7. However, SGA done during a current period of disability may change a claimant’s vocational profile for the purposes of applying collateral estoppel to a new claim. For additional information on a changed vocational profile, see DI 27515.010.

\*\*\* A closed period of disability is when the claimant was unable to engage in SGA for a continuous period of at least 12 months, but by the time we make the determination or decision, improvement has occurred and the claimant is no longer disabled.

## **65. Remaining occupational base**

The occupations that a claimant is capable of adjusting to considering his or her RFC, age, education, and past work experience.

## **66. Residual functional capacity (RFC)**

An administrative assessment of a claimant’s maximum remaining capacity for work on

a sustained basis.

**See details:**

- DI 24510.001 Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) Assessment - Introduction
- DI 24510.005 General Guidelines for Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) Assessment
- DI 24510.006 Assessing Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) in Initial Claims (SSR 96-8p)
- DI 24510.010 Medical Source Statements About What Claimants Can Still Do
- DI 24510.020 Projecting the RFC
- DI 24510.050 Completion of the Physical RFC Assessment Form
- DI 24510.055 Physical RFC Assessment Form SSA-4734-BK - Exhibit
- DI 24510.057 Sustainability and the Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) Assessment
- DI 24510.060 Mental Residual Functional Capacity Assessment
- DI 24510.061 Summary Conclusions and Narrative Statement of Mental RFC
- DI 24510.062 Completion of Heading of SSA-4734-F4-SUP
- DI 24510.063 Completion of Section I of SSA-4734-F4-SUP
- DI 24510.064 Completion of Section II of SSA-4734-F4-SUP - Remarks
- DI 24510.065 Section III of SSA-4734-F4-SUP - Functional Capacity Assessment
- DI 24510.066 Options to Simplify Case Processing

- DI 24510.090 Mental RFC Assessment Form SSA-4734-F4-SUP - Exhibit

## 67. Restriction

A restriction is what a claimant should not do because of an impairment-related risk to self or others or because it would be medically inadvisable. A restriction can be exertional or non-exertional.

## 68. Sedentary work

For the range of lifting and carrying requirements the Department of Labor considered when determining whether to classify work as sedentary see DI 25001.001A.20.

Most **unskilled** sedentary jobs require good use of the hands and fingers for repetitive hand-finger actions.

Regardless of skill level, sedentary work involves:

- Periods of standing or walking generally totaling no more than about 2 hours and sitting generally totaling approximately 6 hours of an 8-hour workday.
- Work performed primarily in a seated position, which entails no significant stooping.

## 69. Semi-skilled work

Semi-skilled work requires some skills but does not require complex duties. Usually, Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) of three or four as rated in the SCO. For the definition of SVP see DI 25001.001A.77.

## 70. Severe medically determinable impairment (MDI)

An MDI that significantly limits a claimant's physical or mental ability to perform one or more basic work activities needed to do most jobs. For additional MDI information see, Individual Must Have a Medically Determinable Severe Impairment per DI 24505.001.

## 71. Significant erosion

Significant erosion is a **considerable** reduction in the available occupations at a particular exertional level. Usually, we use a lower exertional rule as a framework for a decision when there is a significant erosion in the occupational base.

Slight erosion is a **minimal** impact in the available occupations at an exertional level. Where there is only slight erosion of an occupational base, do not use a lower level exertional rule as a framework for a determination.

For instructions on Using a Rule as a Framework When Exertional Capacity Falls between Two Rules see DI 25025.015 and for additional information on Applying the Medical-Vocational Rules When the Claimant has Exertional and Nonexertional Limitations see DI 25025.020.

## **72. Sitting**

Remaining in a seated position.

## **73. Skill**

For disability program purposes, claimants can gain skills from experience and demonstrated proficiency with work activities in past relevant skilled or semi-skilled work.

For disability program purposes, claimants cannot gain skills from:

- unskilled work,
- work that was not relevant,
- volunteer work or hobbies, or
- education.

For additional information about skills, see Transferability of Skills Assessment in DI 25015.017.

## **74. Skill level**

A work classification that divides occupations into unskilled, semi-skilled, or skilled work.

## **75. Skilled work**

Skilled work involves good cognitive functioning, skilled job functions, and has an SVP



of 5 to 9 in the SCO.

Cognitive function:

- Requires high levels of judgment and adaptability;
- Involves setting realistic goals or making plans independently;
- Requires understanding, carrying out, remembering complex instructions; and
- Encompasses abstract ideas and problem solving.

Skilled job functions require both:

- work activity exercising judgment beyond carrying out simple duties; and
- knowledge of principles and processes of an art, science, or applied trade and the ability to apply that knowledge in a proper and approved manner.

## **76. Special medical-vocational profiles**

Unfavorable combinations of vocational factors that adjudicators must consider before applying the medical vocational rules.

Find a claimant who cannot do past relevant work and meets a profile unable to adjust to other work. For a listing of the profiles, see DI 25010.001.

## **77. Specific vocational preparation (SVP)**

The amount of time required for a typical claimant to:

- Learn the techniques,
- Acquire the information, and
- Develop the facility needed for average performance in a job.

A claimant may acquire SVP in a school, military, institutional or vocational environment through such settings as:

- Vocational training,
- Apprenticeship training,
- In plant training,
- On-the-job training,
- Essential experience in other jobs.

We use the SVP rating as a guideline for determining how long it would take a claimant to achieve average performance in a job as part of our evaluation of whether the claimant's past work is relevant. At the skilled levels of SVP (5-9), education figures heavily into the SVP rating.

Consider the claimant's education when evaluating whether the claimant did the job long enough to learn it. Per the Department of Labor, a 4-year college degree is equal to 2 years of SVP. Each year of graduate school is equal to 1 year of SVP. For additional information on using SVP at **step 4** of sequential evaluation, see DI 25005.015D.

**Example of combined education and work experience:**

A registered nurse (RN) has an SVP of seven, which means that a claimant can learn this job in about 2-4 years. If the nurse has a 4 year college degree, which counts for 2 years of SVP, and 2 years of nursing experience, the adjudicator would determine that the claimant did the job long enough to learn it unless there was evidence to the contrary.

Level	Time
1	Short demonstration only.
2	Anything beyond short demonstration up to and including 1 month.
3	Over 1 month up to and including 3 months.
4	Over 3 months up to and including 6 months.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Time</b>
5	Over 6 months up to and including 1 year.
6	Over 1 year up to and including 2 years.
7	Over 2 years up to and including 4 years.
8	Over 4 years up to and including 10 years.
9	Over 10 years.

### **78. Standing**

Remaining on one's feet in an upright position at a workstation without moving about.

### **79. Stooping (St)**

Bending the body downward and forward by bending the spine at the waist.

### **80. Strength factors of work**

Lifting, carrying, standing, walking, sitting, pushing, and pulling are strength factors of work.

Any one of the following five levels can define the strength factor:

1. Sedentary,
2. Light,
3. Medium,
4. Heavy, and
5. Very Heavy.

When rating the strength factor of occupations, the Department of Labor considered how the claimant's body position and the frequency of the repetition of the task affected

the amount of energy expended.

## 81. Substantially all activities

Nearly all of the activities required in an exertional range of work.

## 82. Substantial gainful activity (SGA)

The performance of significant physical or mental activities in work for pay or profit or in work of a type usually performed for pay or profit. Work may be substantial even if seasonal or part-time, or even if the claimant:

- does less,
- is paid less, or
- has less responsibility than in previous work.

Although the field office has jurisdiction to determine if work since onset is SGA, the adjudicator must determine whether past work was at SGA level in order to determine if it was relevant.

If the claimant has not worked for a full year at a job, it is not appropriate to apply the yearly SGA limit to his or her earnings to determine if it represented earnings at the SGA level.

For SGA for blind employees see DI 10501.015.

The following is a Monthly SGA Chart for Nonblind Employees for countable earnings. NOTE: "Countable earnings" of employees indicate SGA if the amount is more per month than indicated in this chart:

### Monthly SGA CHART for Nonblind Employees

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
For mos./Yrs.	Mo.	Mos.	Mos.	Mos.	Mos.	Mos.	Mos.	Mos.	Mo
2020	\$1260	\$2520	\$3780	\$5040	\$6300	\$7560	\$8820	\$10,080	\$11

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>For mos./Yrs.</b>	<b>Mo.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mo</b>
2019	\$1220	\$2440	\$3660	\$4880	\$6100	\$7320	\$8540	\$9760	\$10980
2018	\$1180	\$2360	\$3540	\$4720	\$5900	\$7080	\$8260	\$9440	\$10620
2017	\$1170	\$2340	\$3510	\$4680	\$5850	\$7020	\$8190	\$9360	\$10500
2016	\$1130	\$2260	\$3390	\$4520	\$5650	\$6780	\$7910	\$9040	\$10170
2015	\$1090	\$2180	\$3270	\$4360	\$5450	\$6540	\$7630	\$8720	\$9810
2014	\$1070	\$2140	\$3210	\$4280	\$5350	\$6420	\$7490	\$8560	\$9630
2013	\$1040	\$2080	\$3120	\$4160	\$5200	\$6240	\$7280	\$8320	\$9360
2012	\$1010	\$2020	\$3030	\$4040	\$5050	\$6060	\$7070	\$8080	\$9090
2011	\$1000	\$2000	\$3000	\$4000	\$5000	\$6000	\$7000	\$8000	\$9000
2010	\$1000	\$2000	\$3000	\$4000	\$5000	\$6000	\$7000	\$8000	\$9000
2009	\$980	\$1960	\$2940	\$3920	\$4900	\$5880	\$6860	\$7840	\$8820
2008	\$940	\$1880	\$2820	\$3760	\$4700	\$5640	\$6580	\$7520	\$8460
2007	\$900	\$1800	\$2700	\$3600	\$4500	\$5400	\$6300	\$7200	\$8100
2006	\$860	\$1720	\$2580	\$3440	\$4300	\$5160	\$6020	\$6880	\$7740
2005	\$830	\$1660	\$2490	\$3320	\$4150	\$4980	\$5810	\$6640	\$7470
2004	\$810	\$1620	\$2430	\$3240	\$4050	\$4860	\$5670	\$6480	\$7290
2003	\$800	\$1600	\$2400	\$3200	\$4000	\$4800	\$5600	\$6400	\$7200
2002	\$780	\$1560	\$2340	\$3120	\$3900	\$4680	\$5460	\$6240	\$7020
2001	\$740	\$1480	\$2220	\$2960	\$3700	\$4440	\$5180	\$5920	\$6660
7/99-12/00	\$700	\$1400	\$2100	\$2800	\$3500	\$4200	\$4900	\$5600	\$6300

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>For mos./Yrs.</b>	<b>Mo.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mos.</b>	<b>Mo</b>
1/90-6/99	\$500	\$1000	\$1500	\$2000	\$2500	\$3000	\$3500	\$4000	\$4500
1980-1989	\$300	\$600	\$900	\$1200	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100	\$2400	\$2700
1979	\$280	\$560	\$840	\$1120	\$1400	\$1680	\$1960	\$2240	\$2520

### **83. Training**

An instructional program designed to prepare a person (or further enhance his or her ability) for performing a specific type or field of work.

### **84. Transferability**

Applying work skills that a claimant has demonstrated in past relevant skilled or semi-skilled work to meet the requirements of other skilled or semi-skilled work. For a detailed discussion of transferability see, DI 25015.015 and DI 25015.017.

### **85. Transferable skills**

Skills obtained from performing past relevant skilled or semi-skilled work that a claimant can use to adjust to the requirements of other skilled or semiskilled work that falls within the claimant's RFC.

### **86. Unskilled work**

Work that requires little or no judgment to do simple duties that a claimant can learn on the job in a short period of time (i.e., 30 days or less). Usually SVP of 1 or 2 as rated in the SCO.

For the definition of SVP see DI 25001.001A.77. in this section.

### **87. Very heavy work**

For the range of lifting and carrying requirements the Department of Labor considered when determining whether to classify work as very heavy see DI 25001.001A.20.

Very heavy work usually:

- Requires walking or standing for a significant part of the day.
- Requires frequent to constant stooping and crouching.
- Involves grasping, holding and turning objects, but does not require use of the fingers for fine activities to the extent required in most sedentary work.
- Includes the functional capacity to perform heavy, medium, light, and sedentary work.

### **88. Vibration (Vi)**

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning exposure to a shaking object or surface.

### **89. Vocational factors**

The vocational factors are age, education, and past work experience. We consider the factors along with the claimant's RFC to determine whether we expect he or she could adjust to other work that exists in significant numbers in the national economy.

### **90. Vocational specialist**

A vocational specialist (VS) is a senior disability examiner, quality control supervisor, or other appropriately qualified staff, with specialized knowledge and experience who serves as a vocational resource for a state DDS or federal adjudicating unit. For additional information on the role of the VS see DI 25003.001.

### **91. Walking**

Moving about on foot.

### **92. Wet or Humid (Hu)**

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning contact with water or other liquids or exposure to nonweather-related humid conditions.

### **93. Work experience**

The experience acquired from a claimant's PRW.

#### **94. Working in high, exposed places (HE)**

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning exposure to possible bodily injury from falling.

#### **95. Working with explosives (Ex)**

An environmental factor rated in the SCO meaning exposure to possible injury from explosives.

## **B. Related References**

- DI 25003.010 Vocational Policy References
- DI 25025.001 The Medical-Vocational Guidelines
- DI 25025.005 Using the Medical-Vocational Guidelines
- DI 25025.010 Using Rule 204.00 as a Framework for a Determination
- DI 25025.015 Using a Rule as a Framework When Exertional Capacity Falls between Two Rules
- DI 25025.020 Applying the Medical-Vocational Rules When the Claimant has Exertional and Nonexertional Limitations
- DI 25025.022 Using a Medical-Vocational Rule as a Framework When the Issue of Transferable Skills is Not Material to the Determination
- DI 25025.025 Vocational Factors do Not Match a Medical-Vocational Rule
- DI 25025.030 A Significant Number of Jobs to Support a Framework "Not Disabled" Determination
- DI 25025.035 Tables No. 1, 2, 3, and Rule 204.00



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