



AMA REVIEW LANE DECISION TREE

Match the record and the desired reviewer to the correct post-decision path.



START

A VA decision you disagree with

CLOSED RECORD

HLR or Board Direct Review

NEW EVIDENCE

Supplemental or eligible Board docket

REVIEW FIRST

This tree is an orientation tool. The decision notice and the rules for the benefit control. A claimant can choose different review options for different issues when the forms and deadlines allow it.

QUESTION 01 | IS MORE EVIDENCE NEEDED?

DOES THE EXISTING RECORD ALREADY CONTAIN WHAT THE VA NEEDED?



The evidence is already in the file

Identify the factual or legal error and the exact record that supports the correction.

GO TO QUESTION 2



The file needs new proof

Develop evidence that directly addresses the element, rating fact, or effective-date fact identified in the decision.

GO TO QUESTION 3

QUESTION 02 | WHO SHOULD REVIEW IT?

FOR A CLOSED RECORD, CHOOSE THE REVIEWER

HLR

Higher-level VA reviewer

Use HLR to seek a new look at the same evidentiary record and identify factual or legal error. An informal conference is optional.

BDR

Veterans Law Judge

Use Board Direct Review when a judge should review the record without a hearing and without new evidence.

QUESTION 03 | HOW SHOULD NEW EVIDENCE ENTER THE RECORD?

FOR NEW EVIDENCE, CHOOSE THE RECORD WINDOW

SC

Supplemental Claim

Submit or identify new and relevant evidence. VA may make applicable Duty to Assist efforts for identified records.

BES

Board Evidence Submission

Submit evidence with VA Form 10182 or within 90 days after the Board receives the appeal.

BH

Board Hearing

Testify before a Veterans Law Judge and submit evidence at the hearing or within 90 days after it.

FINAL CHECK | FILING CONTROL

BEFORE THE FORM LEAVES YOUR HANDS



Confirm the issue and decision date

The form must identify the issue and the decision being reviewed.



Confirm the evidence rule

Do not attach new evidence to HLR or Board Direct Review.



Confirm the deadline

Most HLR and Board requests use a one-year period, but exceptions and shorter benefit-specific deadlines exist.



Confirm the desired reviewer

HLR stays within VA adjudication. A Board Appeal goes to a Veterans Law Judge.



Preserve the filing record

Keep a copy of the form, listed issues, attachments, and proof of receipt.

NO UNIVERSAL BEST LANE

The correct lane depends on the specific issue, the existing record, whether new evidence is needed, and who should review it. Published outcome patterns do not answer those questions.



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Review options can change after each decision. Recheck the current notice.

VISUAL GUIDE 03
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