



HLR INFORMAL CONFERENCE GUIDE

Use one focused call to identify existing-record factual or legal error.



CONFERENCE Optional	LIMIT One per HLR	EVIDENCE No new evidence
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REVIEW FIRST

An informal conference is not a hearing, testimony session, or opportunity to submit new evidence. It is a call with the higher-level reviewer to identify errors in the prior decision.

CHOOSE DELIBERATELY | VALUE AND TRADEOFFS

WHEN THE CALL MAY ADD VALUE

CONSIDER REQUESTING IT

- The error is difficult to explain in a short written statement.
- Several record citations need to be connected clearly.
- The legal issue is narrow and can be stated precisely.
- A representative is prepared to identify the exact error.

CONSIDER WRITTEN ARGUMENT ONLY

- The error is already clear and fully cited in writing.
- The goal is to submit new evidence, which the call cannot accept.
- The claimant is not prepared to identify specific errors.
- A conference delay would not add useful information.

PREPARATION | ONE-PAGE CALL SHEET

PREPARE ONE PAGE FOR THE CONFERENCE

Issue and decision date

State the exact issue before discussing the error.

Error sentence

Describe the factual or legal mistake in one direct sentence.

Existing-record citations

List the document, date, page, and relevant finding already in the file.

Controlling rule

Identify the statute, regulation, rating criterion, or VA rule at issue.

Requested correction

State the specific result requested from the existing record.

Questions for the reviewer

Keep them tied to the identified error, not general claim status.

CALL CONTROL | WHAT HAPPENS

CONFERENCE BOUNDARIES



Coordinate with the representative

If a representative will speak, agree on the error outline and who will answer scheduling contacts.



Watch for scheduling contact

VA may call, email, or text a scheduling link and generally makes two contact attempts.



Stay inside the prior record

Use the call to direct the reviewer to existing evidence and legal error.



Do not treat it as testimony

The conference is not a formal hearing and does not create an open evidence window.



Keep notes

Record the date, reviewer, issues discussed, and any stated next action.

OPTIONAL MEANS OPTIONAL

Requesting a conference is not automatically better. VA states that it may take longer. Use it when a focused conversation helps explain an existing-record error.

