



FOOT CLAIMS

FOOT SECONDARY-CONDITION CHAIN

An orthopedic blueprint for service connection, examination evidence, functional loss, and the current rating schedule.



STRUCTURAL FIELD REFERENCE

FOUR POINTS TO UNDERSTAND

UP

FOOT TO ANKLE, KNEE, HIP, OR BACK

Altered mechanics may support a secondary theory, but the individual link requires medical reasoning.

DOWN

OTHER DISABILITY TO THE FOOT

A service-connected knee, ankle, hip, or spine disability may cause or aggravate a separate foot condition.

BASE

PRIMARY MUST BE SERVICE CONNECTED

Secondary service connection depends on an already service-connected primary disability.

PROOF

DIAGNOSIS, TIMELINE, MECHANISM

A useful opinion addresses gait, loading, treatment, competing risks, causation, and aggravation.

Use the regulation in effect for the rating period. Measure functional loss accurately, keep distinct manifestations separate, and avoid compensating the same symptom twice.

