

FILING FOR AN INCREASE WITHOUT THE MYTHS

Replace the phrase poking the bear with a condition-by-condition evidence and protection review.



FILING DOES Places claimed severity before VA	FILING DOES NOT Erase existing protections	BEST CONTROL Review the codesheet and next-tier criteria
--	---	---

RULE FILE

A claim for increase can lead VA to obtain current evidence and evaluate the condition placed at issue. That is not the same as saying every claim opens every rating or that asking for an increase automatically causes a reduction.

INCREASE 01 | BEFORE FILING

RUN THE FILE REVIEW

CODE

Find the diagnostic code

Read the current rating criteria and identify the exact findings required for the next evaluation.

DATE

Map protection dates

Record the service-connection date, current evaluation date, earlier levels, and any P&T or static notation.

EVIDENCE

Compare current severity

Use current medical and lay evidence to determine whether the next-tier criteria are actually supported.

INCREASE 02 | REPLACE MYTHS

WHAT FILING CAN AND CANNOT DO

CAN

Current examination

VA may schedule an examination when current evidence is needed to decide the increase.

CAN

Relevant review

Evidence can support an increase, continuation, or lower evaluation for the condition being evaluated, subject to applicable safeguards.

CANNOT

Erase protections

Filing does not cancel section 3.344, 3.343, 3.951, 3.957, or due-process protections.

CANNOT

Guarantee only upside

A request for increase is a request for a current severity decision, not an automatic increase.

INCREASE 03 | DECISION TEST

FILE WHEN THE RECORD IS READY

1

Criteria match

Identify the symptoms, measurements, treatment, or functional impairment required for the higher evaluation.

Use the current rating schedule

2

Evidence match

Confirm that qualified medical evidence and competent lay evidence document those facts across time.

Do not rely on labels alone

3

Risk review

Identify contradictory records, outdated exams, improvement evidence, and protection status before submission.

Resolve avoidable gaps

4

Submit a focused claim

Name the condition accurately, include organized evidence, and prepare for the examination.

Accuracy beats fear

NO SLOGAN DECIDES THE CASE

The phrase poking the bear is not a legal standard. The real questions are what condition is being evaluated, what the evidence shows, and which protections apply.