

SEVERANCE VERSUS REDUCTION

One removes service connection. The other changes the evaluation.



SEVERANCE
Service-connected status ends

REDUCTION
Evaluation becomes lower

COMMON NEED
Proposal and response analysis

RULE FILE

Severance and reduction can both decrease compensation, but the legal questions are different. The notice should identify which action VA is proposing.

SPLIT 01 | COMPARE THE ACTION

TWO DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT BURDENS

SEVER

Severance of service connection

Before ten-year protection attaches, VA generally must show the service-connection grant was clearly and unmistakably erroneous. The burden is on the Government.

REDUCE

Reduction in evaluation

VA must show that the disability picture supports a lower evaluation and comply with any stabilization, total-rating, or other applicable safeguard.

SPLIT 02 | WHAT CHANGES

READ THE CODESHEET RESULT

STATUS

After severance

The condition is no longer service connected unless the action is reversed.

RATE

After reduction

The condition remains service connected at a lower percentage, which can include zero percent.

PAY

Payment impact

Either action can affect the combined evaluation, ancillary benefits, or monthly payment.

SPLIT 03 | RESPONSE FOCUS

MATCH EVIDENCE TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

S

Severance response

Defend the legal and factual validity of the original service-connection grant and address VA's alleged clear and unmistakable error.

Was the original grant undebatably wrong?

R

Reduction response

Challenge the improvement finding, examination quality, rating-criteria application, and applicable protection.

Was a lower severity lawfully established?

B

Both actions

Separate the issues and evidence when one notice proposes severance for one condition and reduction for another.

Build an issue-by-issue response

NAMES MATTER

A zero percent service-connected evaluation is not severance. The condition remains service connected even though it produces no monthly payment by itself.

