

CME Self-Assessment Test
Independent Medical Exams (IMEs) and Impairment Ratings
Medical Examiners' Handbook



See reverse side for
instructions and exam.





AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
OCCUPATIONAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE

Dear Doctor:

The time you spend with the Medical Examiners' Handbook can pay you dividends.

The *Medical Examiners' Handbook* contains useful information about independent medical exams (IMEs) and impairment ratings for workers covered under Washington State Workers' Compensation.

It also includes a self-assessment test to help you meet your continuing medical education requirements. Earn 3 hours of Category 1 CME credit by completing the test on the following pages.

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education through the Joint Sponsorship of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine and the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries.

The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine designates this educational activity for a maximum of 3 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)*[™]. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

After reading these materials and taking the self-assessment test, you should be able to:

- Describe the IME examiner's responsibilities in an examination.
- Describe the criteria for allowance of an occupational disease.
- Select the appropriate rating system for rating impairment.
- Describe the five components of all impairment rating reports.

To receive a transcript verifying the credit earned, the reader should first review the materials contained in the monograph, and respond to the items contained in the self-assessment test.

Mark your answers by filling in the circle next to the letter corresponding to your choice of the correct answer. The completed answer sheet and the program evaluation form should be folded and taped closed so the pre-printed address of the department faces out.

Shade circles like this:



Not like this:



Please mail the completed test to:

Office of the Medical Director
Department of Labor and Industries
Hal Stockbridge, MD, MPH
P.O. Box 44321
Olympia, WA 98504-4321

Credit will be awarded only to those persons who attain a score of 70 percent or higher on the self-assessment test.

If the CME test is missing from this booklet, write to the above address to request another copy.

Free CME Credits!

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9. What is meant by the phrase "lighting up"?
- a. When a pre-existing, asymptomatic, non-disabling condition is made symptomatic and disabling due to an occupational injury or disease.
 - b. When an occupational injury or disease causes an inability to perform work.
 - c. Neither of the above.
10. What is the significance of "lighting up"?
- a. In accordance with the case of Miller v. L&I (1939), where a condition is "lighted up" by an industrial injury or disease, the entire permanent partial disability is the responsibility of the workers' compensation insurer and the examiner should NOT segregate (apportion) the impairment rating.
 - b. In accordance with the case of Hamilton v. L&I (1988), the injured worker is awarded a pension.
 - c. Neither of the above.
11. Why does the Washington workers' compensation system require doctors to notify the insurer when the injured worker's condition has reached maximum medical improvement?
- a. It determines the point where treatment benefits must be concluded.
 - b. The claim must then move towards evaluation of permanent impairment, if any.
 - c. Neither a nor b.
 - d. Both a and b.
12. Which of the following cannot be taken into account by a claim manager determining a permanent partial disability award for a Washington injured worker?
- a. The objective findings of the examining doctor.
 - b. The impairment rating of an examining doctor, stated on a more-probable-than-not basis.
 - c. The education of the injured worker.
 - d. Whether the examiner has used the appropriate rating system to determine impairment.
 - e. All of the above.
13. Which of the following approaches should be used for a worker who has had a laminectomy at T5 and a fusion at C3?
- a. Use WAC 296-20-230 and 296-20-240 only (for cervical and cervico-dorsal impairments).
 - b. Use WAC 296-20-230 and 296-20-240 (for cervical and cervico-dorsal impairments) for the C3 fusion and WAC 296-20-250 and 296-20-260 (dorsal impairments) for the T5 laminectomy.
 - c. Use the AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment.
 - d. None of the above.
14. A clear description of the rationale for all ratings and conclusions is essential in all IME reports and rating examinations by attending doctors, approved examiners, or consultants.
- a. True
 - b. False
15. Workers are required to attend IMEs scheduled by L&I or the self-insurer. They generally don't have any input into the selection of the examiner. If they don't attend, their benefits may be terminated. Consequently, many workers find IMEs to be very uncomfortable and adversarial. To treat the worker with dignity and respect and to reduce the risk of expensive litigation, it is especially important for providers to convey to the worker a sense that the IME will be fair and unbiased.
- a. True
 - b. False
16. Mrs. A. had a partial medial meniscectomy for a work-related condition and is now completely asymptomatic. Which impairment rating system should be used?
- a. RCW 51.32.080.
 - b. The Category Rating System.
 - c. The AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment.
17. IME providers must be familiar with diagnostic and treatment guidelines established by the Department of Labor and Industries. These can be found in publications such as Medical Treatment Guidelines and Provider Bulletins, all of which are available at [HYPERLINK "http://www.lni.wa.gov/main/providertopics.asp"](http://www.lni.wa.gov/main/providertopics.asp) <http://www.lni.wa.gov/main/providertopics.asp>. Which of the following topics is NOT covered in a Provider Bulletin?
- a. Thoracic outlet syndrome
 - b. Lumbar fusion
 - c. Carpal tunnel syndrome
 - d. Asbestosis
 - e. Fibromyalgia
 - f. Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)
 - g. Psychiatric evaluation
18. L&I strongly encourages doctors to submit impairment rating worksheets whenever possible with each report to ensure that the important elements have not been omitted and to summarize findings in a format that will be easy to understand for claim managers and others reviewing your report. Worksheets are available in the Medical Examiners' Handbook for all of the following conditions EXCEPT (choose one):
- a. Lumbo-sacral spine
 - b. Hearing loss
 - c. Thoracic spine
 - d. Lower extremity
 - e. Cervical and cervico-dorsal spine

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Please complete the following survey:

1. The number of workers covered under Washington State Workers' Compensation I see each month is:

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1-5	<input type="radio"/> 6-20	<input type="radio"/> >20
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2. I consider my understanding of independent medical exams to be:

<input type="radio"/> Minimal	<input type="radio"/> Satisfactory	<input type="radio"/> Good	<input type="radio"/> Excellent
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3. Have you previously received any formal training in impairment ratings?

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
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4. The number of impairment ratings I have performed in the last year is:

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1-5	<input type="radio"/> 6-20	<input type="radio"/> >20
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Monograph Evaluation

*Please assist us in improving the value and effectiveness of our educational materials.
Please fill in the circle next to the number on the scale next to each question that best characterizes your opinion.*

- | | <u>Strongly Disagree</u> | | <u>Strongly Agree</u> | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| This monograph improved my knowledge about IMEs and impairment ratings. | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 |
| The resource manual will serve as a valuable reference in the future. | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 |
| This educational activity will help me to better accomplish my responsibilities as a health provider involved in workers' compensation. | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 |
| If offered, I would be interested in other training in this area. | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 |
| | Too Simple | | Too Advanced | |
| The level of material presented is: | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 |
| | Poor | | Excellent | |
| The overall quality of this monograph is: | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 |

What additional topics should be included in future revisions of the Medical Examiners' Handbook?

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Survey Date (mm / dd / yy)

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Provider Account Number

Specialty _____

Print Name and Address

Fill in the circle for one of the following:

- MD DO DC DPM DDS

Other _____

Signature of person completing survey

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HONE YOUR SKILLS! Fill in the circle next to the item which best answers each question. Answer only one item per question. Use either pen or pencil.

1. Which ONE of the following is FALSE?
 - a. IME providers are required by regulation to allow the worker to be accompanied at the physical exam by an adult family member or friend, as long as that individual is not disruptive or compensated in any manner (except interpreters, who may be reimbursed for interpretive services).
 - b. If an IME involves more than one doctor, whenever possible, the doctors should examine the patient on the same day and in the same location, partly to assure that they have the opportunity to discuss the worker's condition together and formulate conclusions on which they agree.
 - c. According to regulation, IME reports must include a summary statement of the objective medical findings upon which conclusions are based.
 - d. According to department policy, IME providers must allow workers to make video- and audio-recordings of IMEs.

2. Claim managers need IME reports that do all of the following EXCEPT (choose ONE):
 - a. Offer a fair, reasonable, unbiased assessment.
 - b. Avoid impairment ratings that are either unreasonably high or unreasonably low, since such ratings increase the risk of litigation and create unnecessary problems for all parties involved.
 - c. Include a discussion about the doctor's personal opinions on retraining.
 - d. Include a clear statement of the rationale on which the impairment rating and other conclusions are based.

3. Which is TRUE regarding the IME examiner's responsibility to provide quality service, and avoid complaints from workers, claim managers, employers, attending doctors, and other parties?
 - a. IME examiners should acknowledge receipt and review of x-rays with the worker and in the IME report.
 - b. IME examiners should review x-rays and summarize their findings in the report.
 - c. A pattern of complaints about an IME examiner may result in action by the department to revoke the provider number(s) of the examiner.
 - d. The worker should be fully clothed when the IME examiner interviews the worker and takes the history.
 - e. All of the above.

4. Mr. X developed occupational carpal tunnel syndrome with abnormal nerve conduction studies and an abnormal electromyogram (EMG). Before recommending carpal tunnel surgery, the doctor should be familiar with L&I guidelines found in:
 - a. The Provider Bulletin on Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.
 - b. The Category Rating System.
 - c. The physical demands of his job.

5. A 35 year-old painter has chronic low back pain which has been established to be work-related. X-ray revealed grade 2 spondylolisthesis. After nine months he underwent lumbar fusion. Currently, x-rays reveal the presence of one-level lumbar fusion at L5-S1. Examination is entirely within normal limits. There are no neurological symptoms or signs. The most appropriate rating is:
 - a. Category 1
 - b. Category 2
 - c. Category 3
 - d. Category 4

6. A worker sustained an amputation of his right thumb in an accepted industrially related injury. Attempted replantation failed and subsequently the worker underwent reconstruction of the right thumb with a second toe transfer from the right second toe to the right thumb. You are asked to rate the impairment. Choose the ONE answer below that best describes which rating system(s) to use:
 - a. Specified disabilities using RCW 51.32.080.
 - b. AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment.
 - c. Washington State Category Rating System (WACs).
 - d. Total bodily impairment.
 - e. a and b

7. In the IME report, unless requested, a doctor should not address which of the following?
 - a. Detailed chronology of the industrial injury or condition.
 - b. Answers to each of the questions asked in the examination request letter.
 - c. A statement whether or not the worker is able to work.
 - d. Objective medical information to support conclusions and/or rating.
 - e. Any pre-existing conditions and new conditions.

8. You performed an IME and find the worker is not at maximum medical improvement (fixed and stable). You should do all of the following EXCEPT (select one answer):
 - a. Offer to treat the worker and outline the treatment plan in the report.
 - b. In the report, state the worker has not reached maximum medical improvement.
 - c. In the report, state specific treatment recommendations, the goal of further treatment, whether treatment is curative or palliative, how long treatment should continue and the result expected.

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19. Review of job analyses is one of the important services doctors are asked to provide. Which of the following is FALSE?
- a. The central question for doctors reviewing job analyses is, "Can the worker physically and/or mentally perform the tasks as described?"
 - b. You find the worker temporarily cannot perform the tasks in the job analysis and give a timeframe to get an updated review of physical abilities.
 - c. You list pre-existing condition(s) or a condition that occurred following the industrial injury that are preventing employment.
 - d. You consider wages or personal issues and state "The worker cannot work."
20. All impairment rating reports must include these 5 required elements, whether performed by an IME examiner, an attending doctor, or a consultant:
- A statement that the patient has reached maximum medical improvement (MMI) and that no further curative treatment is recommended.
 - Pertinent details of the physical examination.
 - Pertinent results of any diagnostic tests performed.
 - An impairment rating consistent with the findings and a statement of the system on which the rating was based.
 - The rationale for the rating, including a re-statement of all objective findings.
- a. True b. False
21. Is the following statement on complaints of pain TRUE or FALSE?
- According to WAC 296-20-19030 and Provider Bulletin 02-12, the impairment caused by a worker's pain complaints is already taken into consideration in the Category Rating System and in the organ and body system ratings in the AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment.
- a. True b. False
22. Seemingly harmless comments in your report can sometimes create unintended consequences for all parties involved. Your IME report should NOT include which of the following types of statements?
- a. "The department should keep the claim open."
 - b. "This worker needs vocational retraining."
 - c. "The insurer should pay for this worker to get a high school diploma."
 - d. "The worker has reached MMI but requires six more weeks of physical therapy."
 - e. "The worker was partly at fault for causing his injury."
 - f. All of the above.
-

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