

# DVA Quick Tips for Health Providers for Compensation Claims Completing a Liability/Diagnosis form



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

**Determination of Liability\*** is the first and critical step that allows veterans to access:

- ✓ **treatment at DVA's expense;**
- ✓ **permanent impairment compensation;** and a
- ✓ **range of other benefits.**

To assist DVA in determining liability, diagnostic and related information is required from a medical practitioner.

There are a number of different forms used for this purpose, but the **key information we need from you is the same...**

## \*Liability

is the finding that the veteran's military service contributed to the development or worsening of a health condition.

## Ensure the medical diagnosis/es you provide are:

### Specific

- Provide the side, site and condition rather than a symptom.
- In most cases, the diagnosis will already be known, but further investigation may be required. A 'working' or presumptive diagnosis is not sufficient. DVA can fund necessary claim-related investigations.
- Provide the underlying disease rather than a pathological or clinical process (e.g. Ischaemic Heart Disease instead of angina).
- An "incidental" finding, or radiological finding should not be included unless clinically significant.

### Current

- While historic injuries can still be assessed, they are rarely relevant to current impairment or treatment needs.

### Inclusive

- Provide all the conditions related to the veteran's claimed condition, symptoms or impairment. There may be more than one diagnosis related to the claim.

## The Basis for Diagnosis (i.e. how the diagnosis was made)

Needs to include:

- **Symptoms** and **signs**.
- Any **relevant investigations** and **specialist input**. Forward DVA a copy of any relevant reports or correspondence.

Keeping in mind that:

- In general, **the evidence** that we require for a diagnosis **aligns with good clinical practice**. Page 2 of the D9287 Diagnosis Form outlines the evidence we require for commonly claimed conditions.
- **Uncommon conditions** are likely to **require more evidence** to confirm the diagnosis.
- **Mental health diagnoses** will *always* need to be **confirmed by a psychiatrist** and be **based on the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria**.

## The Date of Onset

- **Is when the veteran first experienced symptoms** or signs that would enable a medical professional to make the diagnosis.
- **Is *not* the date of the precursor trauma, injury, or condition.**
- **Should be based on clinical notes** (*where possible*). Backdating the onset prior to your involvement needs to be well explained, clinically reasonable, and consistent with other information.

## Causation

*For many claims, an opinion on causation is not required as the legislation provides a mechanism for assessing causation.*

When asked to comment on causation:

- **List the causes and significant risk factors present** in your patient; the mechanism needs to be consistent with scientific literature and with the rest of the clinical history.
- **Identify the specific activity, exposure, incident, or pre-existing disease**. It's not sufficient to state that a condition was caused by "military service".

## Aggravation

which is:

- any **permanent worsening of a condition** beyond its natural history.
- treated as a **separate entity**.

may require:

- **additional information** to confirm the aggravation and identify any additional or different causative factors.