



Liability Assessments for Compensation Claims

Quick Reference Guide

Liability assessments determine whether a veteran's military service contributed to the development or worsening of a health condition. Medical providers play an important role in providing information about the diagnosis, onset of the condition, and any known causes or risk factors. DVA approved acceptance of liability provides the veteran with access to DVA-funded treatment and other benefits. In completing a liability assessment, the following should be considered:

- ☒ Record each diagnosed condition separately where more than one condition contributes to symptoms
- ☒ Specify the affected side or anatomical location, where relevant
- ☐ Avoid listing investigation findings, symptoms, or signs of disease (e.g. organ failure) as diagnoses
- ☐ Avoid acronyms and lay terminology
- ☒ Explain how the diagnosis was established, including relevant:
 - clinical history and examination findings
 - investigation results
 - specialist opinions
- ☒ Where investigation findings are inconclusive or inconsistent with the diagnosis, or there is a diagnosis of exclusion, briefly explain the clinical reasoning supporting the diagnosis

If the diagnosis was made by another practitioner:

- ☒ Confirm the diagnosis remains valid
- ☒ Confirm it continues to explain the veteran's symptoms and impairment
- ☒ Consider whether a more appropriate diagnosis has subsequently emerged

A focused review of your records is sufficient.

A comprehensive review of all medical records used during a veteran's Australian Defence Force service is not required.

Provide onset information including:

- ☒ Date of first symptom(s) attributable to the diagnosed condition
- ☒ Date of diagnosis, if known

Where exact dates are unavailable provide your best estimate to month and year.

Provide an objective clinical opinion regarding any known causes or risk factors, such as:

- ☒ Previous injuries or trauma
- ☒ Occupational activities or exposures
- ☒ Relevant comorbidities
- ☒ Family history
- ☒ Smoking history
- ☒ Other clinically relevant risk factors

If no known causes or risk factors have been identified, state this.

Common pitfalls

- ☐ Providing symptoms instead of a diagnosis
- ☐ Using non-specific terms or acronyms
- ☐ Recording investigation findings without explaining the underlying condition
- ☐ Omitting onset dates or clinical reasoning
- ☐ A judgment of whether the condition is "service related" – this is for the DVA delegate to determine