

Residual Functional Capacity in a Disability Claim

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A Key Factor in Your SSDI/SSI Claim



You may hear the acronym RFC thrown around by Social Security Disability employees or attorneys and wonder what it means and why is it important. It is, in fact, a rather important document. RFC stands for Residual Functional Capacity. The RFC form considers the physical or mental disabilities and rates the claimant's ability to perform normal daily activities based on this information.

Our last blog discussed the role of a DDS examiner. The examiner makes a decision to approve or deny a claim based on the medical evidence and they provide a write up to the claimant regarding the decision which includes a completed copy of the RFC. The DDS also has medical and psychological consultants that evaluate the physical or mental medical evidence. Based on the information in the medical records, the consultant completes the form and provides it to the DDS examiner to assist them in making a decision.

There are two types of RFC forms - physical and mental. The Physical RFC is completed by a DDS physician and is used to rate the claimant's ability to perform normal daily activities considering the physical limitations that the claimants suffer from due to their disability. It often evaluates activities such as walking, lifting, sitting, or standing for certain periods of time. The Mental RFC is completed by a DDS psychologist or psychiatrist and is used to rate the claimant's ability to complete normal daily activities as well. However, it focuses on things such as memory, ability to concentrate, ability to comprehend new information, logical or illogical thinking and being able to engage in normal everyday tasks.

We highly recommend that you have your doctor complete your own RFC form. Many attorney's offices including The Khaki Law Firm call this form a Medical Source Statement or MSS. Because

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the RFC form completed by the DDS consultant isn't often very favorable towards a claimant, it's important to have your doctor complete your own RFC or MSS form and submit it to the SSA as medical evidence. If you've hired an attorney, they will provide this form to you to take to your next doctor's appointment and submit to the SSA once it is complete. Your doctor is in the best position to give educate insight into your disability and how it affects your ability to work; much more so than any DDS consultant who has never met you. They make their judgements based on medical records. Your doctor can make his or her judgements based on personal experience with you.

If your attorney asks you to get this form complete, then they feel that it's important to your case. By not getting it complete, you may risk not getting a favorable decision. That being said, it's important to note that if your doctor completes the form and it's not favorable to your claim, you or your attorney may choose not to submit it to the SSA. Either way, ensure that you follow through with your attorney's request to have your doctor complete your own RFC.