



Major Depressive Disorder (MDD): VA Disability Rating Explained

The VA rates Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) under Diagnostic Code 9434, which falls under 38 CFR § 4.130. The rating depends on the severity of the symptoms and their impact on occupational and social functioning.

Here's an overview of the rating criteria for Major Depressive Disorder:

- **0%:** This rating is not assigned for Major Depressive Disorder alone. However, if symptoms are present but do not result in functional impairment, a non-compensable evaluation may be considered under another diagnostic code if warranted.
- **10%:** Occupational and social impairment due to mild or transient symptoms which decrease work efficiency and ability to perform occupational tasks only during periods of significant stress, or; symptoms controlled by continuous medication.
- **30%:** Occupational and social impairment with occasional decrease in work efficiency and intermittent periods of inability to perform occupational tasks (although generally functioning satisfactorily, with routine behavior, self-care, and conversation normal), due to such symptoms as: depressed mood, anxiety, suspiciousness, panic attacks (weekly or less often), chronic sleep impairment, mild memory loss (such as forgetting names, directions, or recent events).



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- **50%:** Occupational and social impairment with reduced reliability and productivity due to such symptoms as: flattened affect; circumstantial, circumlocutory, or stereotyped speech; panic attacks more than once a week; difficulty in understanding complex commands; impairment of short and long-term memory (e.g., retention of only highly learned material, forgetting to complete tasks); impaired judgment; impaired abstract thinking; disturbances of motivation and mood; difficulty in establishing and maintaining effective work and social relationships.
- **70%:** Occupational and social impairment, with deficiencies in most areas, such as work, school, family relations, judgment, thinking, or mood, due to such symptoms as: suicidal ideation; obsessional rituals which interfere with routine activities; speech intermittently illogical, obscure, or irrelevant; near-continuous panic or depression affecting the ability to function independently, appropriately and effectively; impaired impulse control (such as unprovoked irritability with periods of violence); spatial disorientation; neglect of personal appearance and hygiene; difficulty in adapting to stressful circumstances (including work or a work-like setting); inability to establish and maintain effective relationships.
- **100%:** Total occupational and social impairment, due to such symptoms as: gross impairment in thought processes or communication; persistent delusions or hallucinations; grossly inappropriate behavior; persistent danger of hurting self or others; intermittent inability to perform activities of daily living (including maintenance of minimal personal hygiene); disorientation to time or place; memory loss for names of close relatives, own occupation, or own name.



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Rating Criteria Explanation:

- **10% to 30%:** These ratings are for mild to moderate symptoms that cause some impairment in work efficiency and social functioning but allow for generally satisfactory performance of daily activities.
- **50% to 70%:** These ratings are for more severe symptoms that significantly impair work efficiency, social functioning, and ability to perform daily activities.
- **100%:** This rating is for the most severe cases where there is total occupational and social impairment due to symptoms such as persistent delusions or hallucinations, grossly inappropriate behavior, persistent danger of self-harm or harm to others, or inability to perform activities of daily living.

Additional Considerations:

- **Treatment:** The VA considers the effectiveness of treatment in managing symptoms and their impact on functioning.
- **Duration and Frequency of Symptoms:** The VA evaluates the duration, frequency, and severity of depressive symptoms when determining the rating.
- **Functional Impact:** The VA considers how depressive symptoms affect occupational, social, and personal functioning.



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Evidence Required

To support a claim for Major Depressive Disorder, veterans typically need:

- **Medical Records:** Documentation of diagnosis, symptoms, and treatment history from healthcare providers.
- **Mental Health Evaluation:** Assessment by mental health professionals documenting the severity of symptoms and their impact on functioning.
- **Medication and Treatment History:** Documentation of medication usage and effectiveness, as well as any psychotherapy or other treatments received.
- **Functional Impairment:** Statements from healthcare providers or personal statements describing how depressive symptoms affect daily activities, work, and social relationships. By providing comprehensive medical evidence and documentation of the functional impact of Major Depressive Disorder, veterans can ensure their condition is accurately rated according to VA criteria.