§ 4.75 General considerations for evaluating visual impairment.

(a) Visual impairment. The evaluation of visual impairment is based on impairment of visual acuity (excluding developmental errors of refraction), visual field, and muscle function.

(b) Examination for visual impairment. The examination must be conducted by a licensed optometrist or by a licensed ophthalmologist. The examiner must identify the disease, injury, or other pathologic process responsible for any visual impairment found. Examinations of visual fields or muscle function will be conducted only when there is a medical indication of disease or injury that may be associated with visual field defect or impaired muscle function. Unless medically contraindicated, the fundus must be examined with the claimant’s pupils dilated.

(c) Service-connected visual impairment of only one eye. Subject to the provisions of 38 CFR 3.350(a), if visual impairment of only one eye is service-connected, the visual acuity of the other eye will be considered to be 20/40 for purposes of evaluating the service-connected visual impairment.

(d) Maximum evaluation for visual impairment of one eye. The evaluation for visual impairment of one eye must not exceed 30 percent unless there is anatomic loss of the eye. Combine the evaluation for visual impairment of one eye with evaluations for other disabilities of the same eye that are not connected, the visual acuity of the other eye will be considered to be 20/40 for purposes of evaluating the service-connected visual impairment.

(e) Anatomical loss of one eye with inability to wear a prosthesis. When the claimant has anatomical loss of one eye and is unable to wear a prosthesis, increase the evaluation for visual acuity under diagnostic code 6063 by 10 percent, but the maximum evaluation for visual impairment of both eyes must not exceed 100 percent. A 10-percent increase under this paragraph precludes an evaluation under diagnostic code 7800 based on gross distortion or asymmetry of the eye but not an evaluation under diagnostic code 7800 based on other characteristics of disfigurement.

(f) Special monthly compensation. When evaluating visual impairment, refer to 38 CFR 3.350 to determine whether the claimant may be entitled to special monthly compensation. Footnotes in the schedule indicate levels of visual impairment that potentially establish entitlement to special monthly compensation; however, other levels of visual impairment combined

The Organs of Special Sense

THE ORGANS OF SPECIAL SENSE

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with disabilities of other body systems may also establish entitlement.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1114 and 1155)

(73 FR 66549, Nov. 10, 2008)

§ 4.76 Visual acuity.

(a) Examination of visual acuity. Examination of visual acuity must include the central uncorrected and corrected visual acuity for distance and near vision using Snellen's test type or its equivalent.

(b) Evaluation of visual acuity. (1) Evaluate central visual acuity on the basis of corrected distance vision with central fixation, even if a central scotoma is present. However, when the lens required to correct distance vision in the poorer eye differs by more than three diopters from the lens required to correct distance vision in the better eye (and the difference is not due to congenital or developmental refractive error), and either the poorer eye or both eyes are service connected, evaluate the visual acuity of the poorer eye using either its uncorrected or corrected visual acuity, whichever results in better combined visual acuity.

(2) Provided that he or she customarily wears contact lenses, evaluate the visual acuity of any individual affected by a corneal disorder that results in severe irregular astigmatism that can be improved more by contact lenses than by eyeglass lenses, as corrected by contact lenses.

(3) In any case where the examiner reports that there is a difference equal to two or more scheduled steps between near and distance corrected vision, with the near vision being worse, the examination report must include at least two recordings of near and distance corrected vision and an explanation of the reason for the difference. In these cases, evaluate based on corrected distance vision adjusted to one step poorer than measured.

(4) To evaluate the impairment of visual acuity where a claimant has a reported visual acuity that is between two sequentially listed visual acuities, use the visual acuity which permits the higher evaluation.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1155)

(73 FR 66549, Nov. 10, 2008)

§ 4.76a Computation of average concentric contraction of visual fields.

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