####  Section A. Finalizing the Rating Decision

#### Overview

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| In This Section | This section contains the following topics: |

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| Topic | Topic Name |
| 1 | Printing or Uploading, and Distributing the Rating Decision |
| 2 | Providing Copies of the Rating Decision |

#### 1. Printing or Uploading, and Distributing the Rating Decision

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| Introduction | This topic contains information about printing/uploading, and distributing the rating decision, including* retaining evidence
* printing or uploading the rating decision
* filing rating decisions
* prohibition against altering signed rating decisions
* distributing the *Narrative* section of the rating decision.
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| a. Retaining Evidence | Retain all evidence pertinent to the rating decision in the claims folder.***Reference***: For information on non-retention of records referring to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), alcohol or drug abuse, or sickle cell anemia, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart ii, 4.A.5. |

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| b. Printing or Uploading the Rating Decision | For cases with a paper claims folder, print the signed file copy of the rating decision, preferably on blue paper, except as specifically provided for overprint rating decisions.A final rating decision involving an electronic claims folder should upload automatically into the eFolder upon finalization of the decision. It is not to be routinely printed for incorporation into the eFolder.  |

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| c. Filing Rating Decisions | File rating decisions in the claims folder upon completion of all action by the authorization activity.***Notes:**** For cases with a paper claims folder only
* The signed, original copy of the rating decision is the file copy.
* If authorization must defer action on the completed rating, reverse file the rating decision on the inside left flap of the claims folder prior to returning the folder to the files activity, *and*
* Ensure the claim status is returned to *Open* in Modern Award Processing Development (MAP-D) or the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS).
* For cases with an eFolder
* ensure any *deferred* rating decision is uploaded to the eFolder, and
* change the claim status back to *Open* in MAP-D or VBMS.

***Reference***: For more information* on preparing copies of rating decisions, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 7.A.2.
* updating claim status in VBMS, see [VBMS\_Job Aid Deferrals](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/VBMS/docs/VBMS_Job_Aid_Deferrals_Changing_Claim_Status_20140310.pdf).
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| d. Prohibition Against Altering Signed Rating Decisions | Do *not* write or mark upon, or otherwise alter any signed rating decision that has been signed and submitted for promulgation. Handwritten changes to a rating decision, including the *Codesheet*, are prohibited because they do not show up in the electronic documents. ***References***: For information on* correcting rating decision errors, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 7.B.3, and
* handling changes in the diagnostic code, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 7.B.1.c.
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| e. Distributing the *Narrative* Section of the Rating Decision | Copy and send the *Narrative* section of the rating decision to the claimant with notification of the decision. However, if notification of the decision is sent using the Automated Decision Letter (ADL), do not send a copy of the rating decision to the claimant.***Important***: * the *Codesheet* of the rating decision is intended for internal processing and should not be routinely distributed to the claimant.
* copies of draft decisions should not be released to the claimant.

***Reference***: For more information on ADL, see the [ADL Process Guide](http://vbacodmoint1.vba.va.gov/bl/21/Transformation/docs/ADL%20SOP.docx).  |

#### 2. Providing Copies of the Rating Decision

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| Introduction | This topic contains information about providing copies of the rating decision, including* making copies
* power of attorney (POA) copy of the rating decision
* copies for Insurance Service
* copies for 38 U.S.C. Chapter 31 purposes
* copies for the medical activity, and
* copies of rating decisions restoring competency.

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| a. Making Copies | Whenever additional copies of the rating decision are required * make appropriate entries in the “ COPY TO” field of the *Codesheet,* and
* provide and appropriately forward copies of all pages of the rating decision.
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| **b. POA Copy of the Rating Decision**  | Provide the VA beneficiary’s power of attorney (POA) representative with a printed copy of the rating decision in the following situations* cases involving a paper claims folder
* Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) who do not have work queues (such as certain county representatives) in VBMS, or
* VSOs who cannot view the eFolder due to restriction of access to records protected by [38 U.S. C. § 7332](https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/38/7332).

For cases with an eFolder* It is not necessary to provide a paper copy of the rating decision to the POA if VBMS shows that the “A*llow POA access to eFolder*” box is checked. This can be verified under the POA tab on the VETERAN PROFILE screen in VBMS.

***Note***: The National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO), designated under POA code 046, is recognized by VBMS as a POA. This organization has the same VBMS access to rating decision review as all other VSOs with VBMS work queues.***Reference***: For more information on POAs/VSOs, see M21-1, Part I, 3.B. |

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| c. Copies for Insurance Service | Prepare a copy of a rating decision for Insurance Service *only* if it is specifically requested by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Insurance Center in Philadelphia.However, when a Rating Veterans Service Representative (RVSR) believes a Veteran in receipt of compensation is suffering from a terminal illness * hand deliver a copy of the rating to the Veterans Service Center Manager (VSCM), Pension Management Center Manager (PMCM) or designee, and
* annotate the rating sheet to show “*Insurance copy delivered to [name of employee]–Potential Terminal Case*.”

In the case of an electronic rating decision, send the VSCM, PMCM, or designee an e-mail informing him or her that, “*for insurance purposes, a rating decision has been completed for a Veteran with a terminal illness (M21-1, Part III, Subpart.iv, 7.A.2.c)*”.***Exception***: There is no need to inform the VSCM or PMCM if the folder contains a duplicate copy of *VA Form 29-4364*, *Application for Service Disabled Veteran’s Life Insurance (RH)*.***Reference***: For more information on preparing rating decisions for insurance purposes, see M21-1, Part IX, Subpart ii, 2.9. |

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| d. Copies for 38 U.S.C. Chapter 31 Purposes | The Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) division must be provided a copy of the rating decision when* the evaluation of a service connected (SC) disability is increased
* service connection is granted for an additional compensable disability, or
* an SC disability is reduced in evaluation or severed.

To identify an active recipient of benefits under Chapter 31, look for the following Flashes in Share* *active Chapter 31 case*
* *in receipt of Chapter 31*, or
* *Chapter 31 Subsistence Allowance Module (SAM*).

Use the information in the table below to provide copies to VR&E |

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| If the rating decision is… | Then… |
| on paper | provide a copy of the rating decision to the local VR&E office. |
| electronic | * send a copy of the rating decision via encrypted e-mail to a designated VR&E mailbox.
* If VR&E has access to VBMS, then an encrypted e-mail, with the Veteran’s claim number and date of rating decision, should be sent to a designated VR&E mailbox. There is no need to attach a copy of the rating decision.

***Note***:* Local VSC and VR&E management should make arrangements, if none are in place, to designate a specific, secure VR&E mailbox.
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| e. Copies for the Medical Activity | Prepare an extra copy of the rating decision for a VA medical center (VAMC) that *requests* a determination of service connection or entitlement to compensation under [38 U.S.C. 1151](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/38/1151). |

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| f. Copies of Rating Decisions Restoring Competency | Provide a copy of any rating decision establishing the Veteran as competent to the VSCM, PMCM or designee when payments are being made to a guardian of an incompetent Veteran.In the case of an electronic rating decision, notify the VSCM, PMCM or designee by e-mail that competency was restored for an incompetent Veteran. Provide the name and claim number, and the date of the rating decision.***Reference***: For more information on rating determinations of competency, see M21-1, Part III, Subpart iv, 8.A. |