

IMPAIRMENT

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AMA Guides 3rd Revised Edition

impairment – the loss of, loss of use of, or derangement of any body part, system or function.

disability - limiting, loss or absence of the capacity of an individual to meet personal, social, or occupational demands, or to meet statutory or regulatory requirements. (p. 251)

Activities of Daily Living should be permanently affected.

- self care and hygiene
- communication
- normal living postures
- ambulation
- travel
- nonspecialized hand activities
- sexual function
- sleep
- social and recreational activities

Colorado Revised Statute §8-42-101(3.7)

“A physician shall not render a medical impairment rating based on chronic pain without anatomic or physiologic correlation. Anatomic correlation must be based on objective findings.”

Impairment Rating Tips

1. To receive an impairment for a spinal rating a patient with myofascial findings must first have “a minimum of six months of medically documented pain and rigidity with or without muscle spasm.”
2. For extremities any permanent change in range of motion may qualify for a rating.
3. Permanent nerve damage generally qualifies for a rating.
4. The AMA Guides provides for impairment rating based on surgery in many cases.

Isolated Mental Impairment (no physical injury)

Pursuant to C.R.S. §8-41-301(2)(a), mental impairment “. . .consists of a psychologically traumatic event that is generally outside of a workers’ usual experience and would evoke significant symptoms of distress in a worker in similar circumstances. A mental impairment shall not be considered to arise out of and in the course of employment if it results from a disciplinary action, work evaluation, job transfer, layoff, demotion, promotion, termination, retirement, or similar action taken in good faith by the employer.”