



AMA Guides® to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment

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AMA Guides® to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment, Sixth Edition, 2023, Update Effective January 1

CHICAGO--The multidisciplinary AMA Guides Editorial Panel approved and issued the *AMA Guides® to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment*, 6th Edition, 2023 updates on Oct. 17 at a public Editorial Panel meeting at the Chicago headquarters of the American Medical Association with live and virtual participation.

The 2023 update applies current practices and standards to the nervous system content (Chapter 13), which received unanimous support during the 2022 public comment period. Additional updates were made specific to evaluation of the ear, nose and throat (Chapter 11) and range of motion methodology in the upper extremities content (Chapter 15). A [summary of the changes](#) is available at [AMA Guides Digital](#).

“This is the most substantive revision to the AMA Guides to date,” commented Douglas W. Martin, MD, AMA Guides Editorial Panel co-chair and Medical Director for UnityPoint Health St. Luke’s Occupational Medicine in Sioux City, Iowa. “The nervous system content was completely revised and now better aligns with other Sixth Edition chapters. I think most stakeholders in the impairment rating community will be pleased with the changes as we’ll see more consistency in those ratings. We’ve added grade modifiers, which will narrow the ranges that we were seeing for some of the same impairments,” added Dr. Martin, who is the President of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

The changes also encourage the use of the diagnosis-based impairment (DBI) method as preferred method over range of motion methods for upper extremity impairments. “Range of motion can be inconsistent or difficult to consistently reproduce, so this is a step towards improving inter-rater and intra-rater reliability for these ratings” explained AMA Guides Editorial Panel co-chair J. Mark Melhorn, MD, who is an orthopedic hand surgeon practicing in Wichita, KS., with a subspecialty in work related injuries. It should be understood that range of motion may still be used in some instances where the DBI method does not reflect the appropriate functional loss.



Effective Jan. 1, 2023, the AMA will consider the updated *AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment*, Sixth Edition, 2023, to be the most recent edition of AMA Guides Sixth and the most current version of the AMA Guides. The 2023 update is available for review on [AMA Guides Digital](#) with the accompanying educational modules to be posted on [AMA EdHub™](#) in January 2023. Editions that preceded AMA Guides Sixth 2023 will not be updated. These updates will be available on [AMA Guides Digital](#). All AMA Guides editions also are available as eBooks and can be purchased through [Gilmore Global](#).

The AMA supports use of the most current edition of the AMA Guides® to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment to provide fair and consistent impairment evaluations for patients and claimants, including injured workers. The AMA established the AMA Guides Editorial Panel to curate the most current scientific evidence and medical knowledge to ensure delivery of fair and consistent impairment ratings.

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