



THREE REVIEW LANES COMPARED

Compare the reviewer, evidence rule, hearing option, form, and usual role of each AMA lane.



HLR
Error review on the existing record

SUPPLEMENTAL
New and relevant evidence

BOARD
Review by a Veterans Law Judge

REVIEW FIRST

The lanes are not interchangeable. A useful comparison starts with what each lane is legally designed to do, not with changing averages or percentages from different populations.

SIDE-BY-SIDE | MAIN LANES

WHAT CHANGES FROM LANE TO LANE?

HIGHER-LEVEL REVIEW

20-0996

A higher-level VA reviewer takes a new look at the same evidentiary record.

- New evidence: No
- Hearing: No
- Informal conference: Optional
- VA Duty to Assist: Reviewer can identify a prior error

SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIM

20-0995

A VA reviewer considers new and relevant evidence together with the prior record.

- New evidence: Required in most cases
- Hearing: May be requested in the process
- VA help gathering identified records: May apply
- Can follow another decision review

BOARD APPEAL

10182

A Veterans Law Judge reviews the issue under the selected Board docket.

- Direct: Closed record, no hearing
- Evidence: 90-day submission window
- Hearing: Hearing plus evidence window
- Three dockets have different records

BEST FIT | USE THE RECORD

MATCH THE LANE TO THE PROBLEM

ERR

Existing-record error

HLR may fit when the needed evidence was already before the VA and the dispute is a factual or legal error.

NEW

Missing proof now available

A Supplemental Claim may fit when new and relevant evidence can answer the stated reason for the prior result.

VLJ

Board review wanted

A Board Appeal may fit when review by a Veterans Law Judge is the goal and the correct docket is selected.

DO NOT MIX | COMMON ERRORS

FOUR COMPARISON TRAPS

1

New evidence with HLR

The HLR reviewer cannot consider evidence that entered after the prior decision.

2

Wrong Board docket

Direct Review, Evidence Submission, and Hearing do not use the same evidentiary record.

3

Mixed success percentages

Percentages from different sources, years, claim stages, and outcome definitions cannot rank the lanes.

4

Static wait promises

Goals, current workload, average days pending, and completed-case wait research measure different things and change over time.

Use live research separately. RateMyVSO can show current workload, pending inventory, docket dispositions, and published-decision wait distributions without turning those measures into a recommendation.

COMPARE LIKE WITH LIKE

A lane comparison should describe legal function and record rules. Changing operational data belongs in dated research sheets with clear sources and denominators.

