

BACK CLAIMS

SPINE DIRECT-CLAIM DENIALS

An orthopedic blueprint for service connection, examination evidence, functional loss, and the current rating schedule.



20,502

CLASSIFIED DENIALS

64%

MISSING NEXUS

19%

MISSING DIAGNOSIS

17%

NO IN-SERVICE EVENT

SHARE OF CLASSIFIED SERVICE-CONNECTION DENIALS

WHY DC 5237 DIRECT CLAIMS ARE DENIED

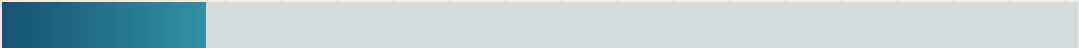
Missing medical nexus



64%

n = 13,044

Missing current diagnosis



19%

n = 3,891

No in-service event



17%

n = 3,567

Among 20,502 classified service-connection denials. These Board patterns describe the published record and do not predict an individual claim.

THE DIRECT-SERVICE-CONNECTION TEST

ALL THREE ELEMENTS MUST BE SUPPORTED

1

CURRENT DIAGNOSIS

Identify the current diagnosed disability and the affected joint or spinal region.

2

IN-SERVICE EVENT

Document injury, symptoms, onset, or another event during qualifying service.

3

MEDICAL NEXUS

Use a reasoned opinion linking the current condition to the in-service element.

FILE

COMPLETE HISTORY

Reconcile service records, lay evidence, post-service injuries, treatment, and symptom progression.