

BACK CLAIMS

SPINE GENERAL RATING FORMULA

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



STRUCTURAL FIELD REFERENCE

FOUR POINTS TO UNDERSTAND

100%

UNFAVORABLE ANKYLOSIS OF ENTIRE SPINE

The highest schedular level under the general formula.

50/40%

THORACOLUMBAR ANKYLOSIS OR FLEXION

Fifty percent requires unfavorable ankylosis of the entire thoracolumbar spine. Forty percent includes flexion at 30 degrees or less or favorable ankylosis.

40/30%

CERVICAL ANKYLOSIS OR FLEXION

Forty percent includes unfavorable cervical ankylosis. Thirty percent includes cervical flexion at 15 degrees or less or favorable ankylosis.

20/10%

MOTION, GUARDING, SPASM, OR TENDERNESS

Lower tiers use regional motion ranges and specified effects on gait or spinal contour.

Use the regulation in effect for the rating period. Measure functional loss accurately, keep distinct manifestations separate, and avoid compensating the same symptom twice.