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*Information about
the medical arbiter
examination process*

*What is a
medical arbiter
examination?*



Workers' Compensation Division
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State of Oregon
Workers' Compensation Division
Appellate Review Unit



What is a medical arbiter examination?

When you, your attorney, or your insurer disagree with the notice closing your claim, the State of Oregon Workers' Compensation Division may be asked to review that closure. The review process is called *reconsideration* and is completed by the Appellate Review Unit of WCD. As part of the reconsideration process, an impartial medical examination may be requested by you, your attorney, your insurer, or by the Appellate Review Unit itself. This examination is known as a *medical arbiter examination*.

The Appellate Review Unit arranges the medical arbiter examination with a doctor or a panel of doctors trained by WCD to conduct impartial examinations. To ensure impartiality, the examination is scheduled with a doctor you have not seen before.

The doctor will only examine body areas related to the **accepted** condition(s) in your claim, as instructed by the Appellate Review Unit. *No doctor/patient relationship will be established.* The doctor is also asked not to share examination findings with you at that time or *discuss further treatment for your condition.*

After performing an impartial examination, the doctor will send a written report to the Appellate Review Unit, with copies going to you, your insurer, and all attorneys involved in the proceeding.

Why has a medical arbiter examination been scheduled?

The examination has been scheduled because there is a disagreement involving the impairment findings used to close your claim. An important part of the reconsideration process, the medical arbiter examination provides *necessary* information so that a decision can be made about the degree of your permanent disability, if any.

When is the medical arbiter examination?

An appointment letter will notify you of the date, time, and location of your examination. You **must** be on time for your examination. If you are unable to keep this appointment, you must call our office, 800-452-0288, ext. 7816. Call as soon as possible if you must reschedule.

Where is the medical arbiter examination?

The medical arbiter examination will be scheduled with a doctor as near to where you live as possible. Injured workers living outside the state may be required to return to Oregon to be examined. You will receive specific information about the examination location from the appellate service team.

Do I get reimbursed for my travel expenses and lost wages?

Your workers' compensation insurance company will reimburse or advance reasonable travel costs and reimburse lost wages. If necessary, reasonable child care, meals, and lodging costs will be paid. You should send your receipts directly to your insurance company. To ask for a travel advance, call your insurance company as soon as possible to allow it time to process your request.

What should I do if I can't keep my medical arbiter appointment?

Call the appellate service team as soon as possible if you cannot go to the appointment. If you do not attend the medical arbiter appointment and do not have a good reason for missing the exam, **your disability benefits may be suspended.** You **must** contact us within 24 hours after the missed appointment. Ask for the appellate service representative on your appointment notice, or call 503-947-7816 or 800-452-0288, ext. 7816.

Points to remember:

Medical arbiter examinations can vary in length. While most are brief, some take more than an hour. Also, the arbiter physician may require additional testing. Make sure you ask for adequate time off work to attend the medical arbiter examination. Avoid scheduling other appointments close to the time of your medical arbiter evaluation.

Do not bring any medical records, X-rays, or other diagnostic studies with you to the medical arbiter examination, unless notified to do so by the Appellate Review Unit. We will make sure the doctor has copies of all your records.

A representative of the appellate service team will try to contact you by phone prior to your appointment to answer any questions you have about the medical arbiter examination, so notify the Appellate Review Unit if you move or get a new phone number during the reconsideration process.

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