

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration

November 8, 2006

Director (00/21)
All VBA Regional Offices and Centers

In Reply Refer To: 211D

Fast Letter 06-21

SUBJ: Measurement of Visual Fields

This purpose of this Fast Letter is to inform field stations that additional testing devices have been approved for the measurement of visual fields in compensation and pension examinations.

Background

Section 4.76 of the Schedule for Rating Disabilities states that for measurement of visual fields, "The usual perimetric methods will be employed, using a standard perimeter and 3 mm. white test object." At the time that section was published, the Goldmann Bowl Perimeter was the industry standard.

In view of the increasing difficulty VHA has had in acquiring and repairing Goldmann Perimeters, we have looked for a way to substitute more modern automated perimetry for visual field examinations in place of the Goldmann Bowl. We recently learned that the Humphrey and Octopus automated perimetric devices, which are standard in current medical practice, have software programs that exactly simulate Goldmann kinetic perimetry. Furthermore, their outputs can be charted on existing Goldmann charts, eliminating the need for any change in rating procedures.

Instructions

Effective immediately:

- The Humphrey Model 750, the Octopus Model 101, and later versions of these perimetric devices with simulated kinetic Goldmann testing capability are

acceptable devices for determining the extent of visual field loss for compensation and pension eye rating examinations.

- To be accepted, the results must be reported on standard Goldmann charts.
- Reports based on Goldmann Bowl perimetry remain acceptable.
- The choice of device among the Goldmann Bowl, Humphrey, and Octopus Perimeters will be made by the examining medical facility. Dr. John C. Townsend, VHA Chief of Optometry, and Dr. James Orcutt, VHA Chief of Ophthalmology have supported and approved this change. They will inform VHA eye examiners about this change in VA policy.

If You Have Questions

Please contact Dr. Vicki Milton, C&P Service Staff (211), via e-mail with questions concerning the instructions contained in this letter.

/s/

Bradley G. Mayes
Acting Director
Compensation & Pension Service