

BENEFITS & BEYOND

Social Security Disability

THE
JAN DILS
FOUNDATION

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How Your Doctor's RFC Form Can Hurt Your Case (And What You Need Instead)

When you file a Social Security disability claim, you need a "Residual Functional Capacity" form, or RFC form. Your doctor completes this form, explaining your physical capabilities, and why you need disability. A poorly completed RFC form can get your claim dismissed, so you must monitor your doctor's language and make sure the form reflects your actual capabilities.

Here are some things to watch for: Vague or Extreme Language

The SSA looks for things like "always" or "never". Unless a patient is in a vegetative state, they can usually do something. They want a medically specific description of what you can and cannot do, backed with the doctor's interpretation of how your condition causes these limits.

Example: Patient suffers from peripheral neuropathy secondary to C4-5 fracture. Patient has limited mobility in hands and cannot lift more than 10 pounds three times in succession.

Lack of Supporting Evidence

The SSA wants objective supporting evidence that the doctor has treated you for this condition. They want complete lab notes, treatment notes, and other findings. The clinical notes must match what the doctor checks on the RFC.

Example: The doctor checks "Severe limitations" on the RFC and provides notes stating, "Patient could only walk two minutes on a treadmill at 0 incline. Recorded O2 saturation of 83%. Resting pulse of 93 (suboptimal)"

Missing Details

The SSA can only go by whatever is in the RFC. If the form does not address your mental or emotional status, the SSA will assume you can function in a standard employment environment. If your disabling condition does not affect your physical ability, but affects your

mental status, the form must reflect that.

Example: "Patient becomes fatigued in a highly stimulating environment. Loses focus after 15 minutes of sitting still. Suffers

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Letter From Jan

As we welcome the warm days of July and the start of the summer season, we are thrilled to share our latest updates with you.

In this issue, we dive into the vital role your doctor's Residual Functional Capacity (RFC) form plays in your Social Security disability claim, and what to watch out for to ensure it accurately reflects your limitations. We also discuss why PTSD claims are so frequently misunderstood

by examiners and how to properly document your symptoms to strengthen your case.

Community is at the heart of everything we do, and we are incredibly proud to celebrate our recent Golden Apple Award winner, local teacher Joani Brohard! You will also read about our recent community sponsorships, including the Spring Slam Pickleball Tournament and the upcoming Head for the Hills festival.

Inside the firm, we are shining a well-deserved spotlight on our MVP of the Month, Social Security Case Manager Melissa Lamb, who is celebrating an amazing

11 years with our team. Finally, if you are looking for the perfect dish for your next summer gathering, be sure to try SS Leads Specialist Will Bennett's delicious recipe for Pull-Apart Cheeseburger Sliders!

Thank you for continuing to trust us as your advocates. We wish you a safe, happy, and wonderful July!

Warmly,

Community Corner

Community Impact: Proud Sponsors of the Spring Slam!

We were incredibly proud to once again serve as a sponsor for the 3rd Annual Spring Slam Pickleball Tournament!

Hosted by the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 79, this fantastic community event took place on May 2nd and 3rd at Jackson Park in Vienna, WV. We always love seeing our neighbors come together for some fast-paced fun and friendly competition on the courts, especially when it serves such a wonderful cause.

All proceeds from the tournament went directly toward supporting local youth programs right here in our community. We were absolutely thrilled to sponsor the Spring Slam



again this year and cannot wait to see everyone back in action next time!

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT Congratulations to Melissa Lamb!

We are incredibly proud to announce that Melissa Lamb, Social Security Case Manager, is our MVP of the Month! To make this recognition even more special, Melissa will also be celebrating an amazing 11 years with the firm this July.

Melissa is the true embodiment of dedication and resilience. Even while navigating difficult personal situations, she has consistently shown up every single day with unwavering strength, professionalism, and a beautifully positive attitude. She is a constant pillar of support for those around her, always stepping up and willing to lend a helping hand wherever she is needed most.

Melissa genuinely cares for her team and her clients, and we are so incredibly grateful to have her in our corner.

Congratulations on this well-deserved honor, Melissa!



Why PTSD Claims Are Often Misunderstood (And How to Strengthen Yours)



POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD) is a debilitating condition that affects thousands of individuals. However, when it comes to filing for Social Security Disability or Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, PTSD claims are frequently misunderstood by claims examiners, leading to frustrating delays or denials.

Because mental health struggles are invisible, proving exactly how severely

they impact your ability to hold a job requires specific, thorough documentation.

The Myth of "Service-Only" PTSD

A common misconception is that PTSD only affects Veterans who have experienced combat. While military service is a common and serious cause, PTSD can stem from any severe traumatic event—such as a terrible car accident, workplace injury, assault, or

natural disaster. For Social Security Disability, the root cause of your trauma matters less than proving how your resulting symptoms prevent you from working.

Connecting Symptoms to the Workplace

To win a PTSD claim, you must translate your psychiatric symptoms into workplace limitations. Evaluators need to understand exactly why you cannot perform job duties. Common symptoms that severely disrupt employment include:

- **Panic Attacks:** Unpredictable panic attacks can force you to leave your workstation suddenly, making it impossible to remain on-task or be productive.
- **Severe Absenteeism:** PTSD often causes chronic sleep disturbances, severe depression, or days where leaving the house feels impossible, leading to a high rate of missed workdays.
- **Concentration Issues:** Hypervigilance, intrusive memories, and brain fog can completely destroy your ability to focus, follow instructions, or complete basic tasks in a timely manner.
- **Social Limitations:** Irritability or an inability to handle conflict can make interacting with coworkers, supervisors, or the general public impossible.

The Importance of Documenting Mental Health Symptoms

A diagnosis alone is not enough to win your claim. You must have consistent, ongoing medical records that paint a clear picture of your daily struggles.

Your medical files should include detailed notes from a psychiatrist, psychologist, or licensed therapist. It is incredibly important to be completely honest with your doctors about your worst days. If you minimize your symptoms—such as downplaying the frequency of your panic attacks or how often you miss work—your medical records will not reflect the true severity of your condition, and your claim may be denied.

Whether you are navigating the VA system or filing for Social Security Disability, you do not have to fight for your benefits alone.

At Jan Dils Attorneys at Law, we know what the evaluators are looking for. Call us at **877JanDils** or contact us online at **JanDils.com** to get the legal support you need.

What's Cooking?

PULL-APART CHEESEBURGER SLIDERS



From the Kitchen of **Will Bennett**, SS Leads Specialist, the ultimate crowd-pleaser for your next game day, family dinner, or weekend get-together?

INGREDIENTS

SPECIAL SAUCE

- ½ cup mayo
- ⅓ cup sweet Thai chili sauce
- 2 tbsp tamari or soy sauce
- 1 tbsp ketchup
- 1 clove garlic, grated

FOR THE SLIDERS:

- 1 lb ground beef, chicken, or turkey
- 2 to 3 tbsp Gochujang (Korean chili paste)
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp onion powder

- 1 tsp garlic powder
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 package (12-count) dinner rolls (halved lengthwise)
- 4 to 6 slices sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 cup shredded spicy cheddar or pepper jack cheese
- ¾ cup dill pickles and/or pepperoncini

FOR THE GARLIC BUTTER TOPPING:

- 3 tbsp salted butter, at room temperature
- 4 to 6 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh basil or parsley, chopped
- 2 tbsp grated parmesan cheese
- 2 tsp sesame seeds

DIRECTIONS: **1. Whip Up the Sauce:** In a small bowl, combine all the Special Sauce ingredients and mix well. Set aside. **2. Preheat:** Preheat your oven to 400°F. **3. Brown the Meat:** In a skillet set over medium heat, cook your choice of ground meat until browned all over, breaking it up as it cooks. Stir in the Gochujang, Worcestershire sauce, onion powder, and garlic powder, then season with salt and pepper. Cook for another 2-3 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat. **4. Assemble the Base:** Place the bottom half of the dinner rolls onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Layer them with the slices of sharp cheddar cheese, then evenly spoon the cooked meat mixture over the top. Drizzle about 1/3 cup of your special sauce over the meat. Next, add the shredded spicy cheddar or pepper jack, and arrange your pickles and/or pepperoncini over the cheese. **5. Top & Brush:** Place the top half of the dinner rolls over the filling. In a small bowl, mash together the room-temperature butter, chopped garlic, basil/parsley, parmesan cheese, and sesame seeds. Spread or brush this savory butter mixture evenly across the tops of the rolls. **6. Bake & Serve:** Bake in the preheated oven for 10-15 minutes, or until the cheese is beautifully melted and the tops of the rolls are toasted and golden brown. Serve warm alongside the remaining special sauce for dipping. Enjoy!

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P.O. Box 112
Parkersburg, WV 26102

PERSONAL INJURY / VETERANS DISABILITY / SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY

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headaches requiring absolute darkness and silence (migraines) and up to 48 hours recovery time”.

Illegible, Incomplete, or Unresponsive Forms

All sections of the form must be complete for the SSA agent to make a decision on your case. If the doctor hand-writes the form and the agent cannot read the answers, they usually will not request a second copy. If the responses are little more than “yes” or “no,” the form is useless.

Best solution: CALL our office and we’ll provide you with the best form to give your doctor with the relevant questions.

At Jan Dils Attorneys at Law, we know that proving your case to the SSA is hard enough without having to look over your doctor’s shoulder too. We can

give you some help to ensure your doctor’s RFC form helps your claim succeed. Call us at **877JanDils** or contact us online at **JanDils.com**.

