

Designated Doctor and Certifying Doctor Certification Training

Basic Concepts and Common Mistakes



What's new

Recent and pending changes...

§133 and §134 Billing and reimbursement Rule changes Effective June 1, 2024

<https://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/dd/index.html>

From the link above see the heading: News and designated doctor program updates; then Billing and Reimbursement Training for Designated doctor and other certifying doctor exams (as of 6/1/24)

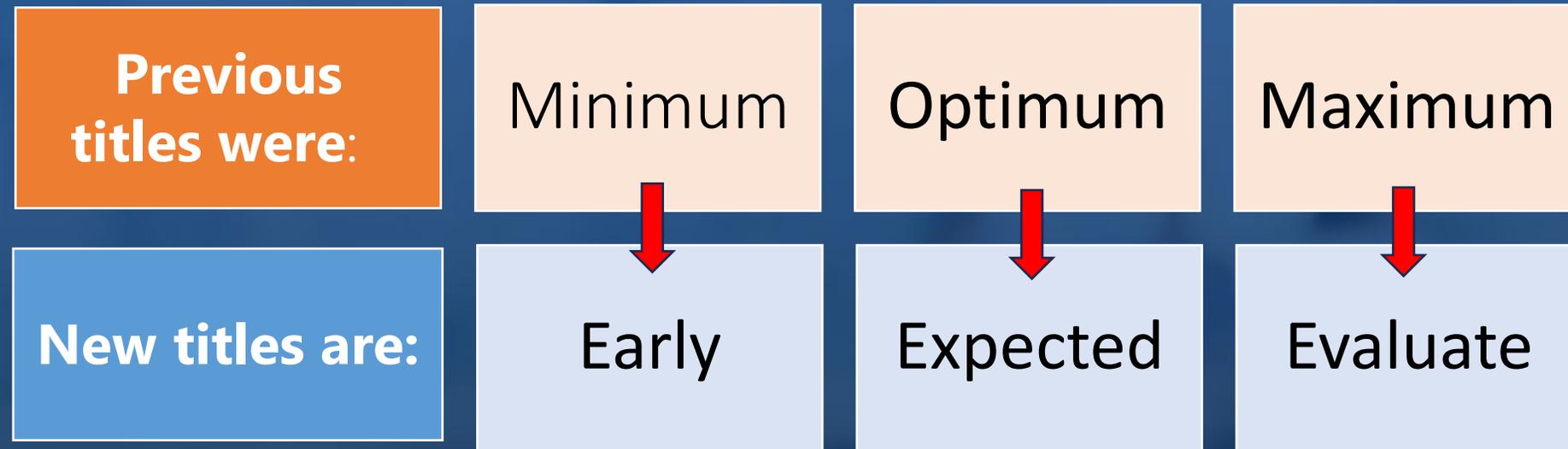
Also see the heading: Other resources; to view DWC Rules §127.1-127.25 and §180.23 in their entirety.



Changes to MDGuidelines (MDG)

The MDG website was updated with a new look and navigation changes.

Effective September 30, 2024



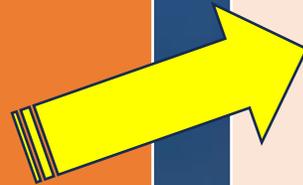


Coming soon...

On Demand DD Trainings

Educational videos and training documents accessible at any time

Posted now:
**Pulmonary Disease
and PFTs**
Soon to come....



Trainings on:
Neuro-psych Testing
EMG/NCV
FCE
Imaging



Coming soon...

On Demand DD Trainings

Educational videos and training documents accessible at any time

Posted now:
UPDATED as of
January, 2026



**TRAUMATIC
BRAIN
INJURY**

NEW

Optional Resource and Training:

**DD Narrative Report
Templates**



DD Narrative Report Templates

These optional templates are posted on the DD Program webpage where you can download them for your use:

Designated Doctor Narrative Report Templates

<https://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/dd/index.html>

Include are:

- **Templates** for all the issues DD's can be assigned to address.
- **An instructional video** that provides details on how to use the templates, and information on how DD Reports factor in DD Performance Reviews
- **The DWC Rules** that specify the requirements for DD Reports



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative Reports

Now we will look at some of the most common mistakes found in Narrative reports. During the new webinar we will present later this year, we will be able to address deficiencies and expectations in depth.



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative Reports

DD reports are reviewed throughout the progression of the workers' compensation claim processes, such as:

- Contested case hearings
- Complaint reviews
- Performance based audits
- DD Performance reviews, and
- Inquiries to the DD Education program



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports

What are the most common report errors?

Insufficient explanations for the DD's answers are the most common deficiency we see in narrative reports.

This happens most often in:

- Determination of the compensable injury
 - Including Extent of Injury determinations
- Determination of MMI



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports

Many of the report rules include language about the requirement for explanation and detail:

Regarding all questions:

"...sufficiently explain how the doctor determined the answer to each question within a reasonable degree of medical probability?" **127.220(a)(3)**

Other rules pertain to multiple questions or specific ones...



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports

Regarding MMI:

“...Assignment of an impairment rating for the current compensable injury shall be based on the injured employee’s condition on the MMI date...” **130.1(c)(3)**

“...report must include...narrative history of the medical condition that outlines the course of the injury and correlates the injury to medical treatment...” **130.1(d)(1)(B)(iv)**



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports

Continued - Regarding MMI:

“...report must include findings of the certifying examination, **including both normal and abnormal findings** related to the compensable injury and an **explanation** of the analysis performed to find whether MMI was reached.” **130.1(d)(1)(B)(iii)**



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports

Insufficient explanation also occurs in:

- Determination of Impairment rating

Regarding Impairment rating:

“...provide the following: (i) a **description and explanation of specific clinical findings** related to each impairment, including 0% impairment ratings...” **130.1(c)(3)(D)(i)-(ii)**

“...report must include diagnosis and clinical findings of permanent impairment as stated in subsection (c)(3).” **130.1(d)(b)(vi)**

Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports

History deficiencies

- Not documenting the IE's stated mechanism of injury (MOI)
 - ✓ Compare / contrast to the first and subsequent reports in the records
- Not documenting what the patient's current complaints are
 - ✓ Compare / contrast to the first and subsequent reports in records
- Lack of adequate summary of the pertinent positives and pertinent negatives of the subjective complaints and objective findings and their timing to the DOI.
 - ✓ Is the timing of complaints or findings plausible based on the natural evolution of tissue injury?



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports - Specifics

- **Examination deficiencies**

- ✓ Not documenting an examination of a body part that the DD includes as compensable
- ✓ Not evaluating ROM or other clinical findings of contiguous areas
- ✓ Taking ROMs at face value, despite a ROM loss being excessive for the MOI / imaging findings / compensable diagnosis
- ✓ Documenting "Full range of motion" and assigning a 0% rating but without recording objective measurements
- ✓ Not recording a location of circumference measurements for LE atrophy.
- ✓ Not providing a thorough neurologic exam for nerve / nerve root / spinal cord / brain injury

Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports - Specifics

- Not documenting the diagnosis(es) the DD determined to be compensable AND what evidence in the records, your certifying exam and EBM supports that / those diagnosis(es)
 - ✓ What from the MOI / Subjective / Objective **in the records** were factors in the determination?
 - ✓ What from the MOI / Subjective / Objective **from your DD examination** were factors in the determination?
 - ✓ What **from the EBM** was a factor in the determination?



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports - Specifics

- IR inaccuracies / deficiencies

- ✓ Assigning IR for an earlier date of MMI, based on YOUR exam, without sufficient explanation.
- ✓ Assigning IR for non-organic findings or implausible findings #
- ✓ Assigning a peripheral nerve injury involving the digits as a digital nerve injury
- ✓ Evaluating only ROM and atrophy for a LE injury and NOT considering other methods of IR ^



Common Mistakes in DD Narrative reports - Specifics

- **IR inaccuracies / deficiencies**

- ✓ Rating DRE II solely on the basis of non-verifiable radicular complaints with a normal neuro exam and with a DD determined compensable injury of sprain/strain.
- ✓ Rating DRE II for findings present during treatment but absent at MMI, without sufficient explanation
- ✓ Not understanding the difference between a clinical radiculopathy and a “ratable” radiculopathy

DD Narrative reports

The DD Narrative Report and Form requirements, and DD Performance Review procedure

are both posted along with the DD Narrative Report Templates and video on the DD page:

<https://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/dd/index.html>

View all DD Rules in their entirety at:

<https://www.tdi.Texas.gov/wc/rules/index.html>

28 TAC Chapter 102-180 (PDF)

Impairment Rating

Concept of Combined Values



Combined Values for Impairment Rating

Each organ system/body area should be expressed as a whole person impairment, then:

- Whole person impairments should be combined using the Combined Values Chart (pp. 322 – 324)
- “Combining” assures that the impairment can’t exceed 100%.
- It reduces the remaining portion of the whole person that is available for the second impairment.



SUMMARY / Reminder

Combined Values for Impairment Rating

Each organ system/body area should be expressed as a whole person impairment, then:

- Whole person impairments should be combined using the Combined Values Chart (pp. 322 – 324)
- “Combining” assures that the impairment can’t exceed 100%.
- It reduces the remaining portion of the whole person that is available for the second impairment.

NOW, more of What's New

Recent and pending changes...

Pop quiz Questions!

**Now included in the DD Certification Course
Pre-recorded Presentations**

Each pre-recorded presentation now has slides with questions related to the information covered in previous slides.

Doctors are to submit their answers to the questions in the required Attestation Form that is completed after viewing each presentation.

Pop Quiz Questions

Each presentation has two or more questions

- 1. DWC Process Overview**
- 2. Extent of Injury**
- 3. Maximum Medical Improvement and ODG**
- 4. Return to Work and MDG**

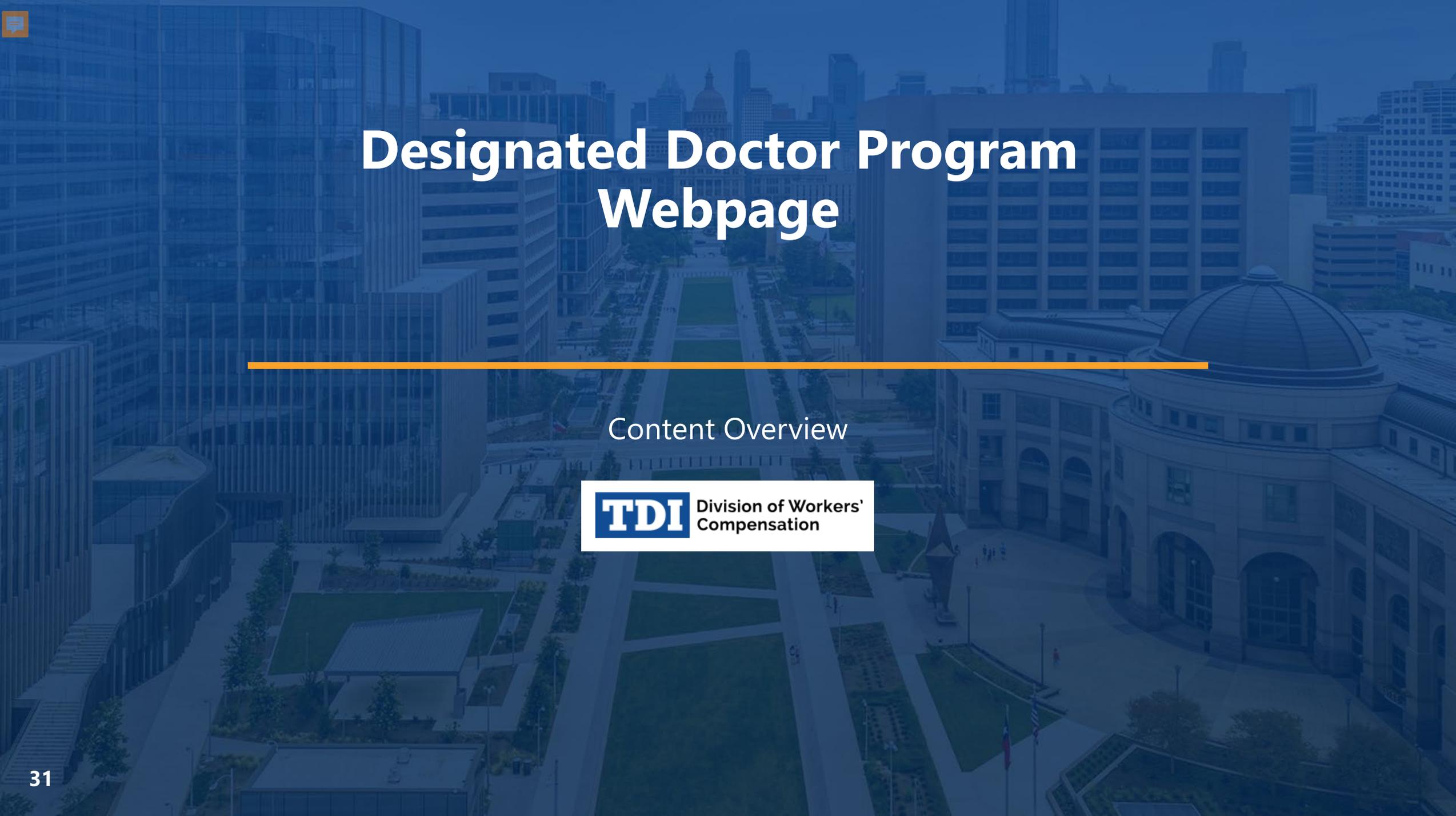


Pop Quiz Questions

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1. **DWC Process Overview**
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Designated Doctor Program Webpage

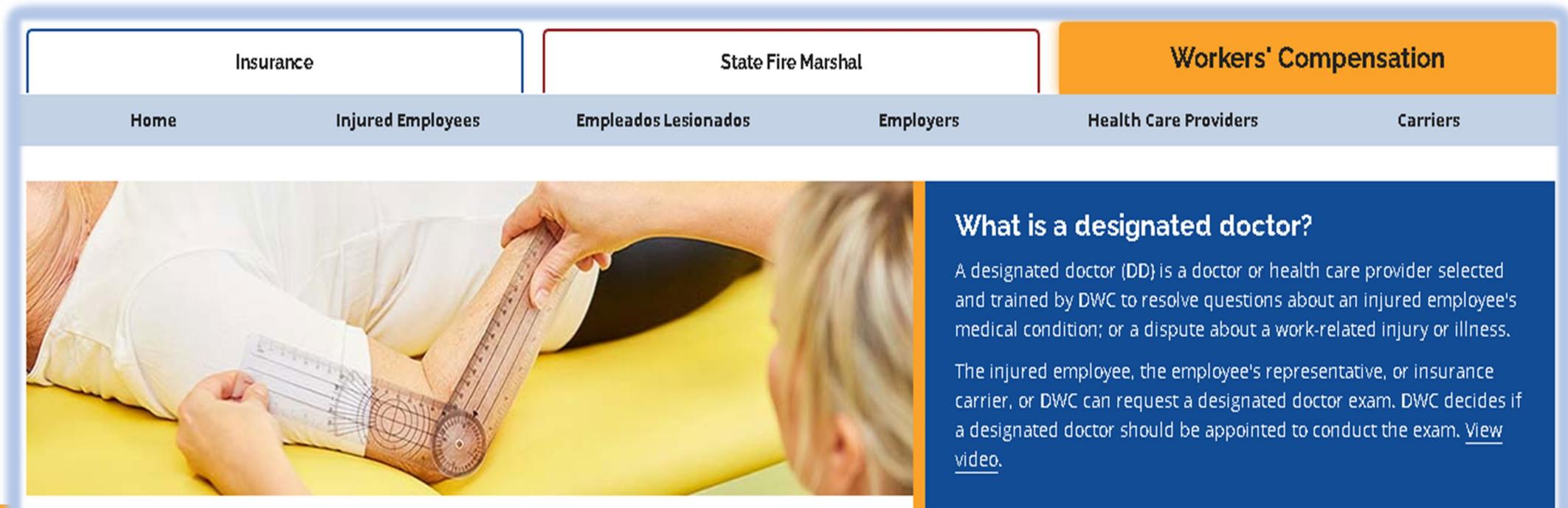
Content Overview



Designated Doctor (DD) Webpage

The webpage was recently revised for simpler navigation and easy access to helpful resources.

<https://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/dd/index.html>



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Designated Doctor (DD) webpage. It features three main menu items: "Insurance", "State Fire Marshal", and "Workers' Compensation", with "Workers' Compensation" highlighted in orange. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for "Home", "Injured Employees", "Empleados Lesionados", "Employers", "Health Care Providers", and "Carriers". The main content area is split into two sections. On the left is a photograph of a medical professional in a white coat using a goniometer to measure a patient's arm. On the right is a blue text box with the heading "What is a designated doctor?" and a paragraph explaining the role of a designated doctor (DD) in resolving medical questions or disputes. The text includes a link to "View video".

You will find, certification and renewal information...

Become a designated doctor or renew certification

You must take the required training, pass the required test (on 5/13/13 or after) and apply. Renewal requires attending required training and reapplying every two years.

Designated doctors must subscribe to, own or have access to the following required guidelines:

- [MDGuidelines](#) (MDG) or call 800-442-4519.
- [Official Disability Guidelines](#) (ODG) or call 800-488-5548.
- AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment, 4th Edition.
 - Online [AMA Guides](#) (4th - 6th included, use 4th edition only).
 - Printed AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment 4th Edition is not sold by the AMA Guides, you may find other options to purchase online.

[Steps to success](#) - a great must read for new DDs!

Links to training and testing resources ...

Training

Registration for training: [Designated doctor events & training calendar](#)

Training materials:

- [Required certification course presentations](#)
- [Optional webinar presentations and workshops](#)
- [Self-study - extended 2015 certification course presentations](#)
- [Tips for viewing designated doctor presentations](#)

[Supplemental information packet](#) - Includes: DD Program contact information, disqualifying associations, DWC acronyms, and more.

Testing

PSI Services administers designated doctor tests at locations across Texas.

Contact [PSI](#) to schedule a test or call 855-746-8173.

Use the [TXCOMP](#) Health Care Provider System to find your expiration date.

- [PSI candidate bulletin](#) - information from PSI on how to schedule and rules for the testing process.
- Designated doctor [sample test questions](#).
- Designated doctor [minimally acceptable candidate profile](#).

News and program updates ...

News and designated doctor program updates

- [Adopted rule on designated doctor procedures and requirements and lifetime income benefits to implement House Bill 2468](#), 11/14/24
- [Reminder: Changes to designated doctor and maximum medical improvement and impairment rating billing and reimbursement rules](#), 9/6/24
- [Billing and Reimbursement Training for Designated Doctor and Other Certifying Doctor Exams](#) (after 6/1/24), [slides](#) | [handout 1](#) | [handout 2](#) | [memo](#) (PDF)
- [Training dates for changes to designated doctor and maximum medical improvement \(MMI\) and impairment rating \(IR\) billing and reimbursement rules](#), 3/27/24
- [Adopted rules on billing and reimbursement for certain workers' compensation-specific services, including designated doctor examinations](#), 2/26/24
- [Increase in Fees for Designated Doctor and Certifying Doctor Training](#), 10/25/23

- Amendments to [28 Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) Chapter 127 and Section 180.23](#) involve changes in DD testing and certification, MMI/IR rules, and qualifications to examine traumatic brain injuries.
 - [28 TAC Chapter 127](#) adoption order.
 - [28 TAC §180.23](#) adoption order.
- [Memo about changes to the DD program](#), 6/5/23
- [Changes to the designated doctor program rules PowerPoint](#).

Changes in qualifications for traumatic brain injury exams

- [Designated doctor traumatic brain injury and psychological impairment](#).
- [Traumatic brain injury references](#).

[News archive](#)

 **Stay connected!**
[Sign up for updates.](#)

DD faculty bios, Narrative Templates and DD Forms...

Meet the faculty

- [David Alvarado, D.C.](#)
- [James Bales, M.D.](#)
- [Karrn E. Bales, D.O.](#)
- [David Bauer, M.D.](#)
- [Simon J. Forster, D.C., DABCO, Cert MDT.](#)
- [Martin B. Jones, M.D.](#)
- [Calvin W. Plumb, D.C.](#)
- [Michael S. Sheppard, D.C.](#)
- [Kristy R. Simank, D.C.](#)
- [Lori B. Wasserburger, M.D.](#)

Narrative report templates

DWC developed report templates for designated doctors (DDs). These templates provide a standardized approach to organizing the narrative that will assist the DD in meeting the narrative report requirements. While these templates are not required, DWC strongly encourages their use.

- [Video](#)
- [General](#)
- [MMI](#)
- [IR](#)
- [EOI](#)
- [Disability](#)
- [RTW](#)
- [RTW SIBs](#)
- [Other issues](#)
- [DD narrative report and form requirements](#)
- [28 TAC Section 127.220 DD Reports](#)
- [Health care providers receiving referrals from designated doctors](#)

Designated doctor forms

- [DWC Form-032](#), *Request for Designated Doctor Examination.*
- [DWC Form-067](#), *Designated Doctor Certification Application.*
- [DWC Form-068](#), *Designated Doctor Examination Data Report.*
- [DWC Form-069](#), *Report of Medical Evaluation.*
- [DWC Form-073](#), *Work Status Report.*
- [DWC Form-120](#), *Designation of Administrative Services Company Administrator.*

Information on the TXCOMP Provider System...

TXCOMP appointment features

Doctors and their administrators must use [TXCOMP](#) to:

- accept and manage designated doctor appointments, and
- file required reports online.

[DD TXCOMP implementation memo](#)

Slideshow: [TXCOMP appointment features for DDs and RMEs training](#)

Tips to successfully upload your reports in TXCOMP:

- Files format must be one of the following:
 - Microsoft Word (.doc and .docx),
 - Microsoft Excel (.xls and .xlsx),
 - Read-only Portable Document Format (.pdf), or
 - Tagged Image Format (.tif and .tiff).

- Read-only Portable Document Format (.pdf), or
- Tagged Image Format (.tif and .tiff).
- Files size must be less than 10MB.
- File name must be less than 100
- When uploading a DWC Form-069 and narrative both file names together must be less than 100 characters.

* **DW069** No file chosen

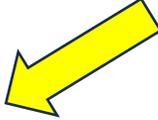
* **Narrative** No file chosen

- These special characters are not allowed in the file name: < > : " / \ | ? * , ; -

Note: Compressed or "zipped" files are not accepted.

More resources for DDs...

Other resources

- [Health care providers receiving referrals from designated doctors.](#)
- [Appeals Panel decisions \(APDs\) for designated doctors.](#) 
- Fast Facts [Financial Disclosure](#).
- Run report for number of [designated doctors and appointments by county and month](#).
- [Designated Doctor Performance Review Procedure](#).
- [Bulletins](#).
- [DWC rules](#). 
- [Billing and Reimbursement for Designated Doctor Examinations and Required Medical Examinations](#). (prior to 6/1/24)

And informational videos on current topics...





Here is the link again...

<https://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/dd/index.html>

OR....

Start at TDI Website (www.tdi.Texas.gov), and click on the Workers' Compensation tab



On the Workers' Compensation page, scroll down to the gray area at the bottom and click on: Become a designated doctor..

The screenshot shows the navigation menu with 'Workers' Compensation' selected. Below the menu is a social media bar with icons for Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and RSS. The footer is divided into four columns: 'About DWC', 'Connect with us', 'Do more online', and 'Rules, bulletins, and data calls'. A red arrow points from the 'Connect with us' column to the 'Do more online' column, and a blue arrow points from the 'Do more online' column to the 'Become a designated doctor' link.

Insurance	State Fire Marshal	Workers' Compensation			
Home	Injured Employees	Empleados Lesionados	Employers	Health Care Providers	Carriers

Connect with us

- Contact us
- DWC Media Relations
- Consumer hotline 800-252-7031
- Report an injury
- Report fraud
- Request public records

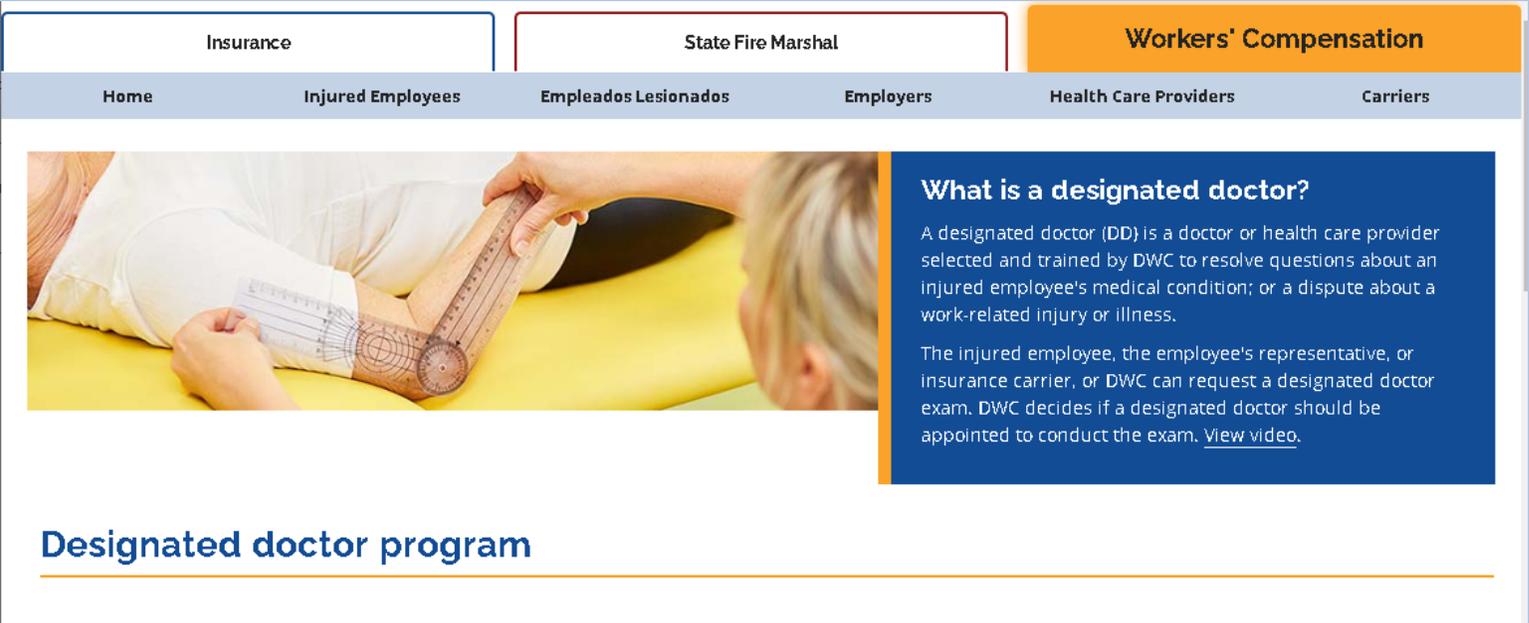
Do more online

- Become a designated doctor
- Verify employer coverage
- Request a safety consultation
- File a complaint
- Report a safety violation
- Learn about return to work

Rules, bulletins, and data calls

- Rules and laws
- Enforcement orders
- Administrative decisions
- Research and Evaluation Group
- Bulletins and reports
- Data and statistics

And you're there...



The screenshot shows the TDI website's navigation menu with 'Workers' Compensation' selected. The main content area features a photograph of a person's arm being measured with a ruler. To the right of the photo is a blue box with the heading 'What is a designated doctor?' and text explaining the role of a designated doctor (DD) and how to request an exam. Below the photo and text is a link for 'Designated doctor program'.

Insurance State Fire Marshal **Workers' Compensation**

Home Injured Employees Empleados Lesionados Employers Health Care Providers Carriers

What is a designated doctor?

A designated doctor (DD) is a doctor or health care provider selected and trained by DWC to resolve questions about an injured employee's medical condition; or a dispute about a work-related injury or illness.

The injured employee, the employee's representative, or insurance carrier, or DWC can request a designated doctor exam. DWC decides if a designated doctor should be appointed to conduct the exam. [View video.](#)

[Designated doctor program](#)

Questions? Contact DD Education at desdoc.education@tdi.Texas.gov or 512-804-4765

Access the Supplemental information packet from the Training section of the website for a list of other program contact information and helpful DD resources.