



Transition to the AMA Guides 6th Edition, 2025

Stakeholder presentation

Agenda

- Welcome.
- History and background.
- Workers' Compensation Research and Evaluation (REG) group analyses.
- Clinical comparison.
- Timelines:
 - Rule.
 - Implementation.
- Q&A.
- Closing remarks.



Welcome remarks

Mary Landrum, Deputy Commissioner of Operations



History and background

Jennifer Self, Manager Health Care Quality Review

History and background

Texas Labor Code
Section 408.124

28 Texas
Administrative Code
Section 130.1

**AMA Guides to the
Evaluation of
Permanent
Impairment**

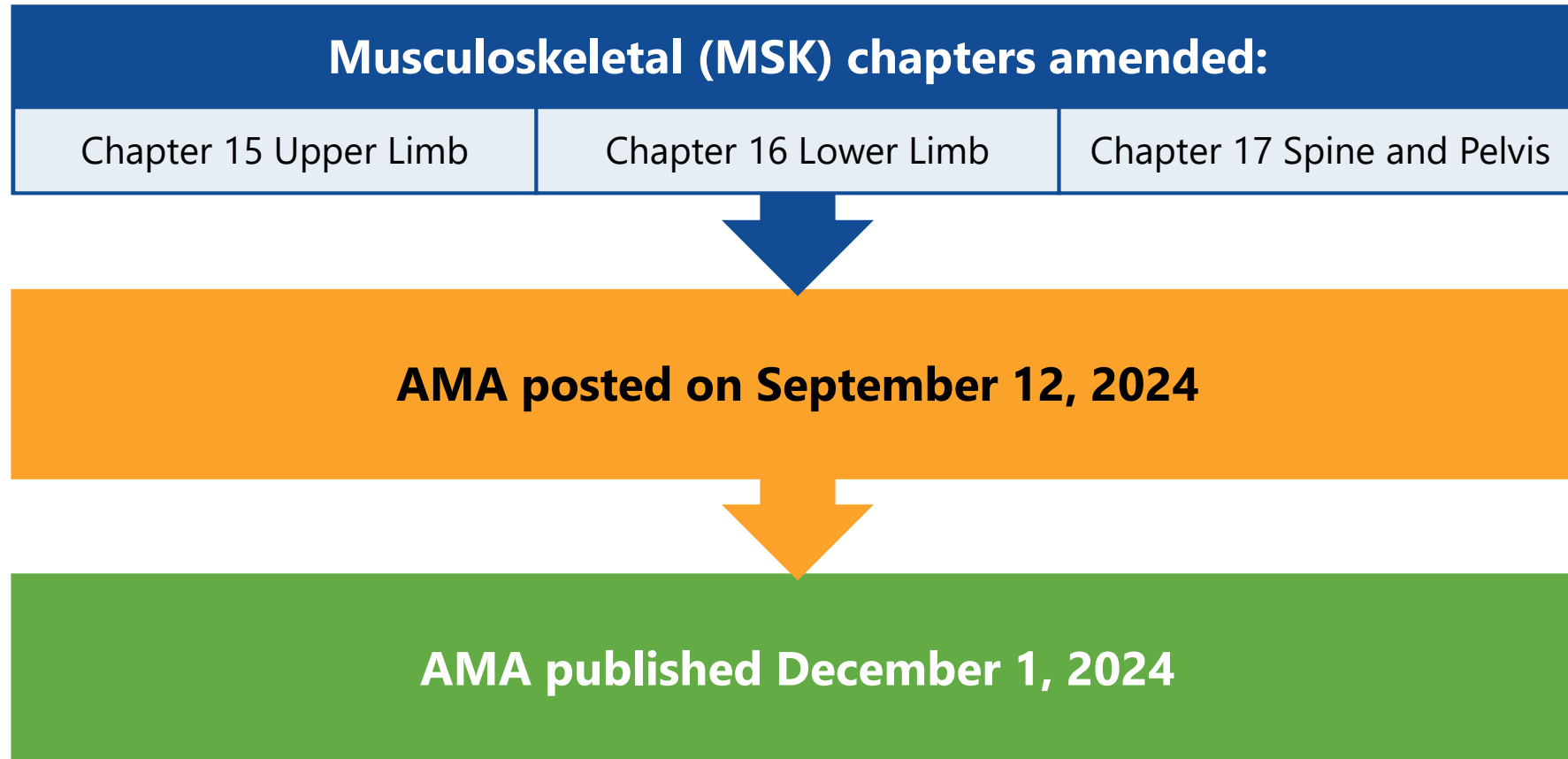
3rd - 1989 (2nd
printing - applicable
to exams prior to
10/15/2001)

4th - 1993 (1st-4th
printing - applicable
to exams after
10/15/2001)

5th - 2001

6th – 2008, 2021,
2022, 2023, 2024,
2025

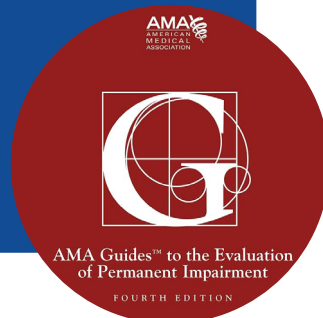
Musculoskeletal changes to the 2024 AMA Guides



Administrative comparison

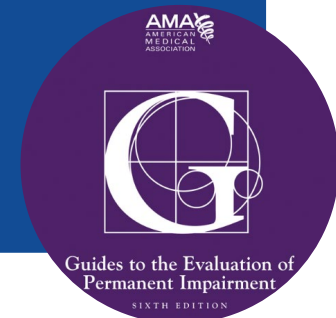
- Physician-driven.
- Function-focused.
- More flexible.
- Embraces subjective components.
- Accepts variance in clinical interpretation.

AMA Guides 4th Edition



- System-driven.
- Diagnosis-focused.
- Highly standardized.
- Minimizes subjective inputs.
- Prioritizes inter-rater reliability.

AMA Guides 6th Edition





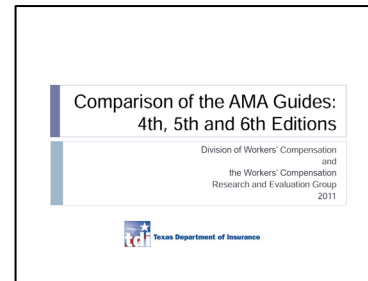
REG analyses

Jennifer Self, Manager Health Care Quality Review

REG analyses

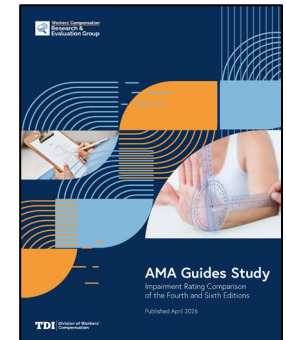
2011

Comparison of the AMA Guides: 4th, 5th, and 6th Editions



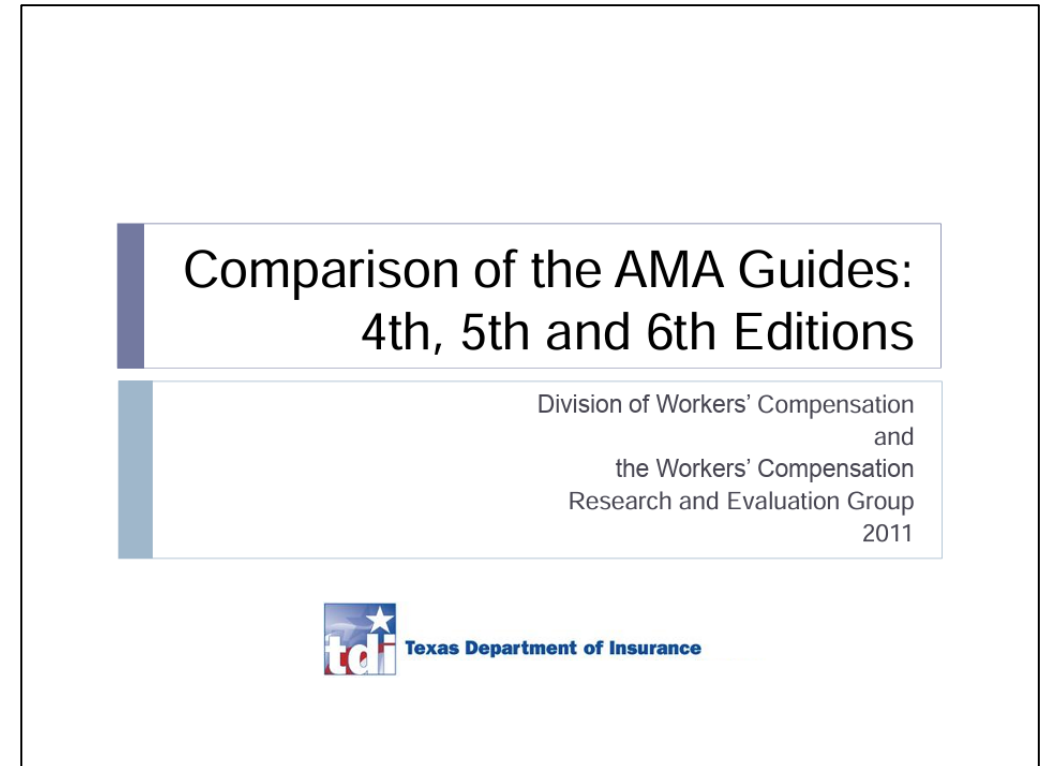
2026

AMA Guides Study – Impairment Rating Comparison of the Fourth and Sixth Editions



2011 REG report

Comparison of the AMA Guides: 4th, 5th, and 6th Editions



AMA Guides 6th Edition update and benefits

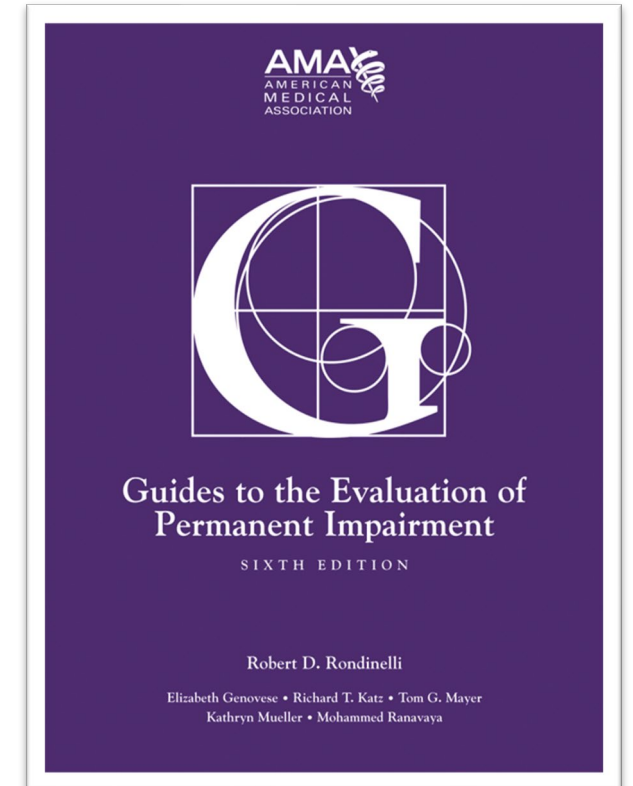
**Emphasizes
updated medical
science**

**Diagnosis-based
impairment**

**Functional
outcomes**

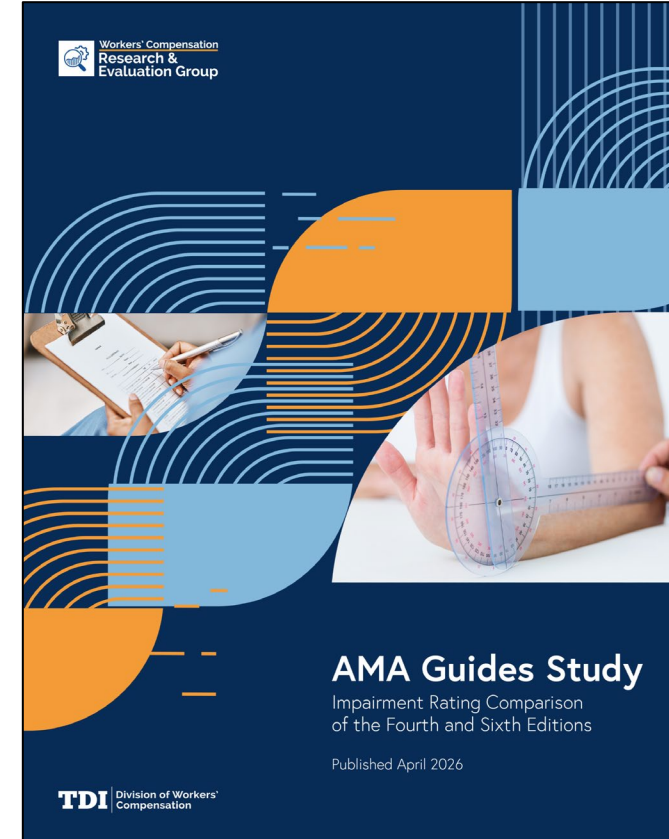
**Improved
consistency in
assigning
impairment**

Digital content



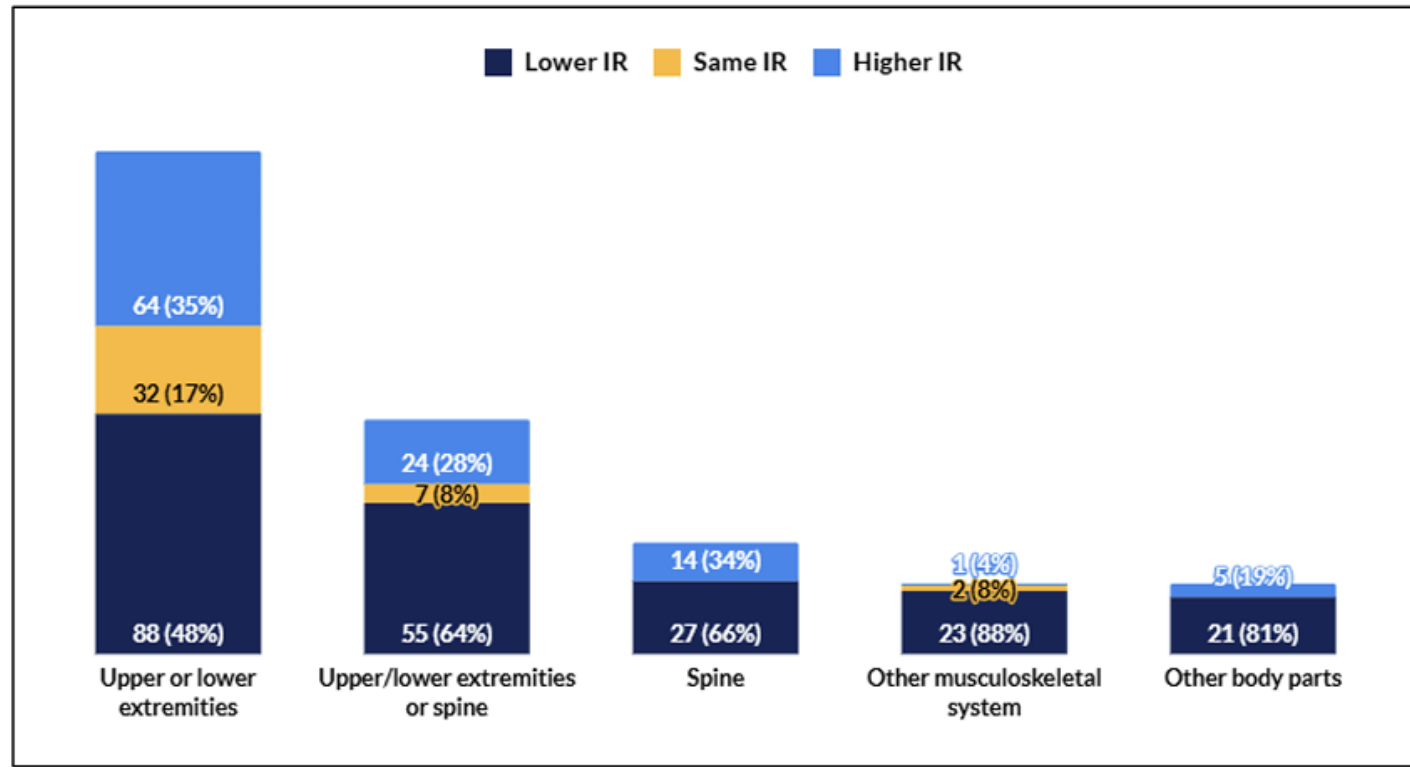
2026 REG report

AMA Guides Study – Impairment Rating Comparison of the Fourth and Sixth Editions



2026 REG report

Figure 3: Number of cases for each body part, comparison of IR assigned, AMA Guides 6th Edition



Source: Workers' Compensation Research and Evaluation Group, 2026.

2026 REG report – key findings



Source: Workers' Compensation Research and Evaluation Group, 2026.



Clinical comparison

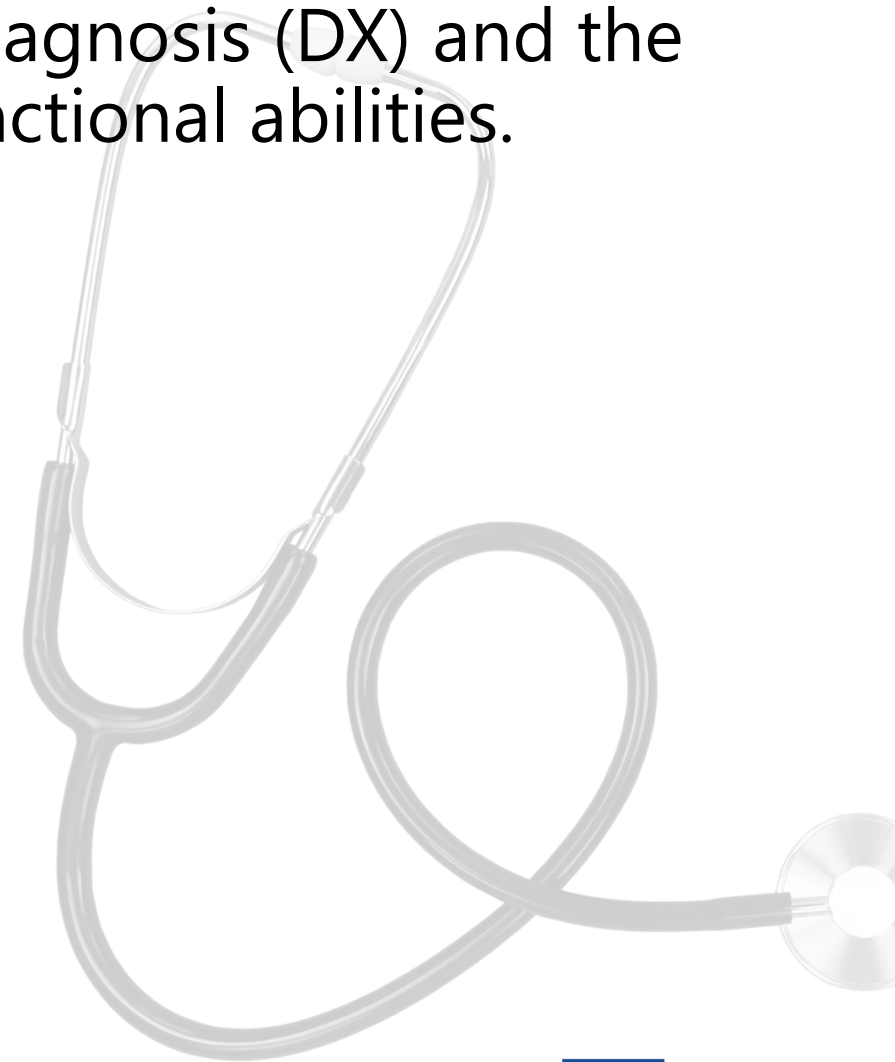
R. David Bauer, M.D., Medical Quality Review Panel

Why 2024 MSK AMA Guides 6th?

- One of the few constants in life and health care is change.
- Both medicine and the science of impairment evaluation has advanced significantly.
- Strong emphasis on evidence-based approaches.
- Impairment assessments are grounded in the latest research and best practices, leading to more accurate, consistent, and reliable evaluations.

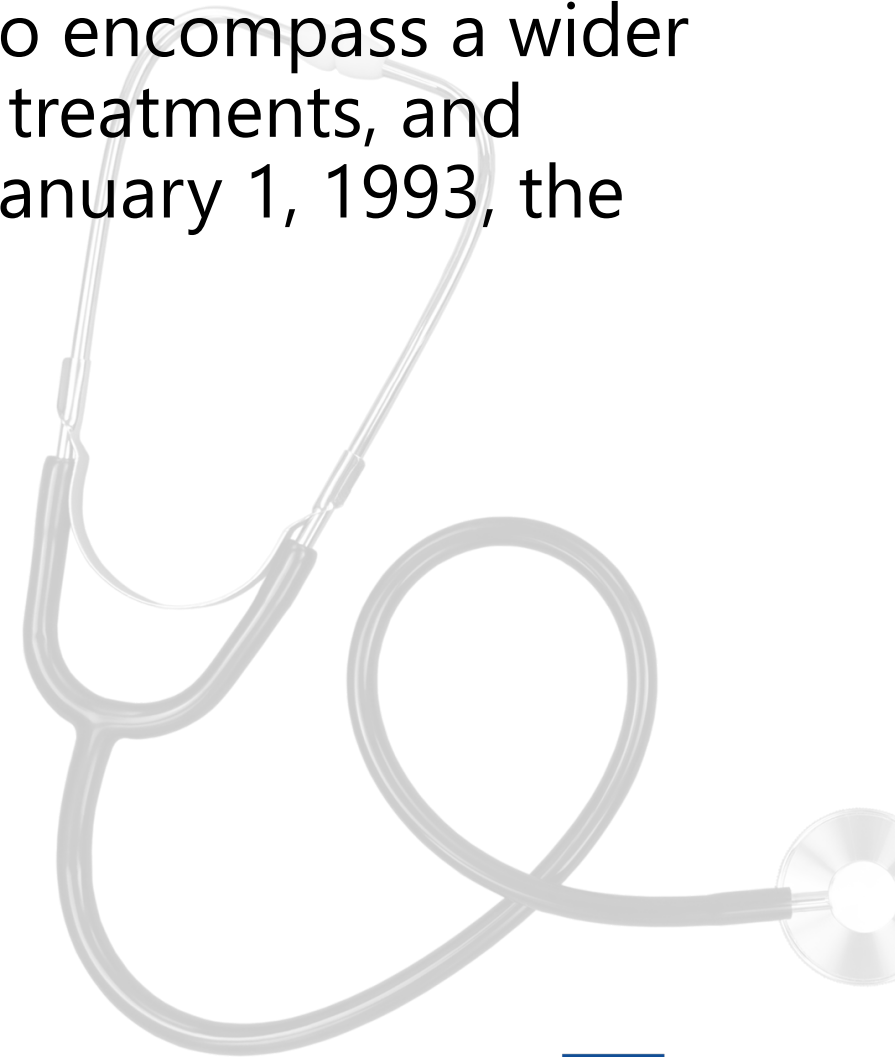
MSK impairment clinical comparison improvement (MMI)

- Based on a confirmed and clinically relevant diagnosis (DX) and the impact of this diagnosis on the individual's functional abilities.



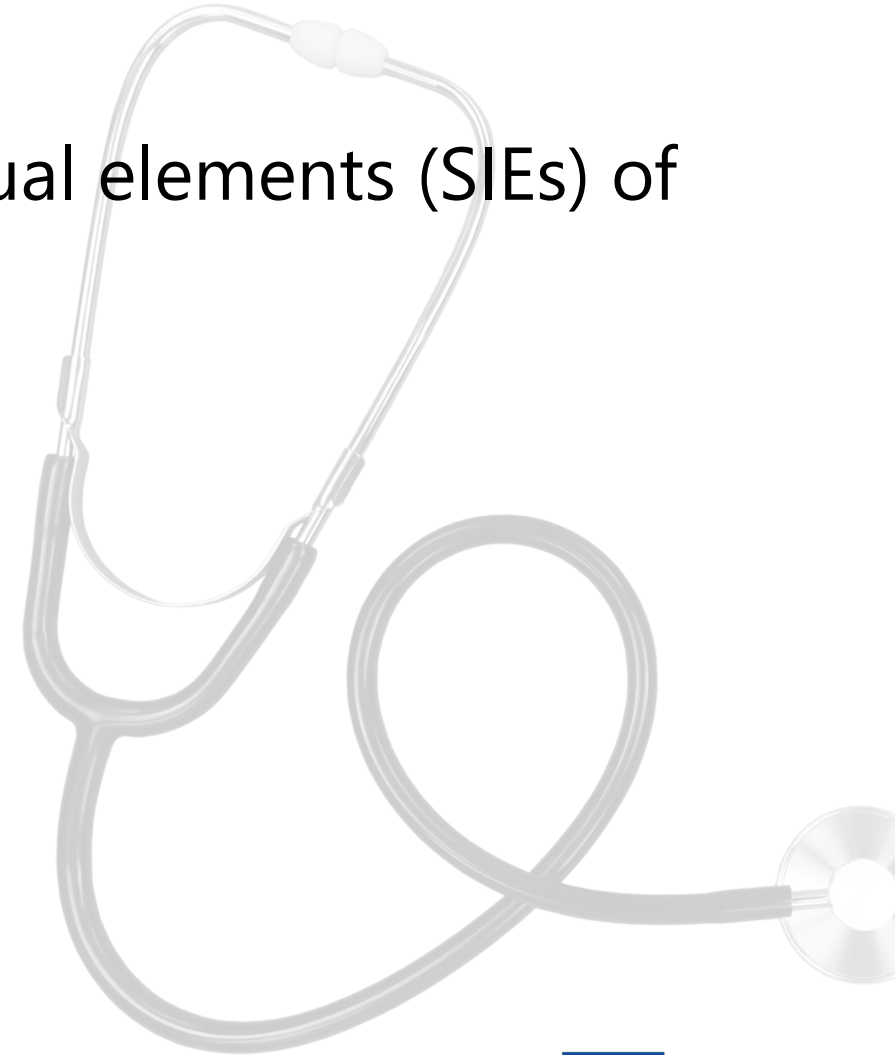
Clinical comparison

- Diagnosis-based impairment (DBI) expanded to encompass a wider range of diagnoses, including new conditions, treatments, and medical advancements that were unavailable January 1, 1993, the publication date of AMA Guides 4th Edition.



Clinical comparison

- Clinically relevant diagnosis (DX).
- Based on objectively verifiable specific individual elements (SIEs) of the:
 - Clinical history (CH) and (MOI).
 - Physical examination (PE).
 - Relevant clinical studies (CS).



Clinical comparison

- Follow the same format and approach in the DBI tables.
- Sections and tables are specifically numbered to facilitate easy identification of the diagnostic row in the evaluator's report.



Clinical comparison

- Diagnostic rows are displayed vertically, making them easier to read on a web platform.
- This layout enhances readability.



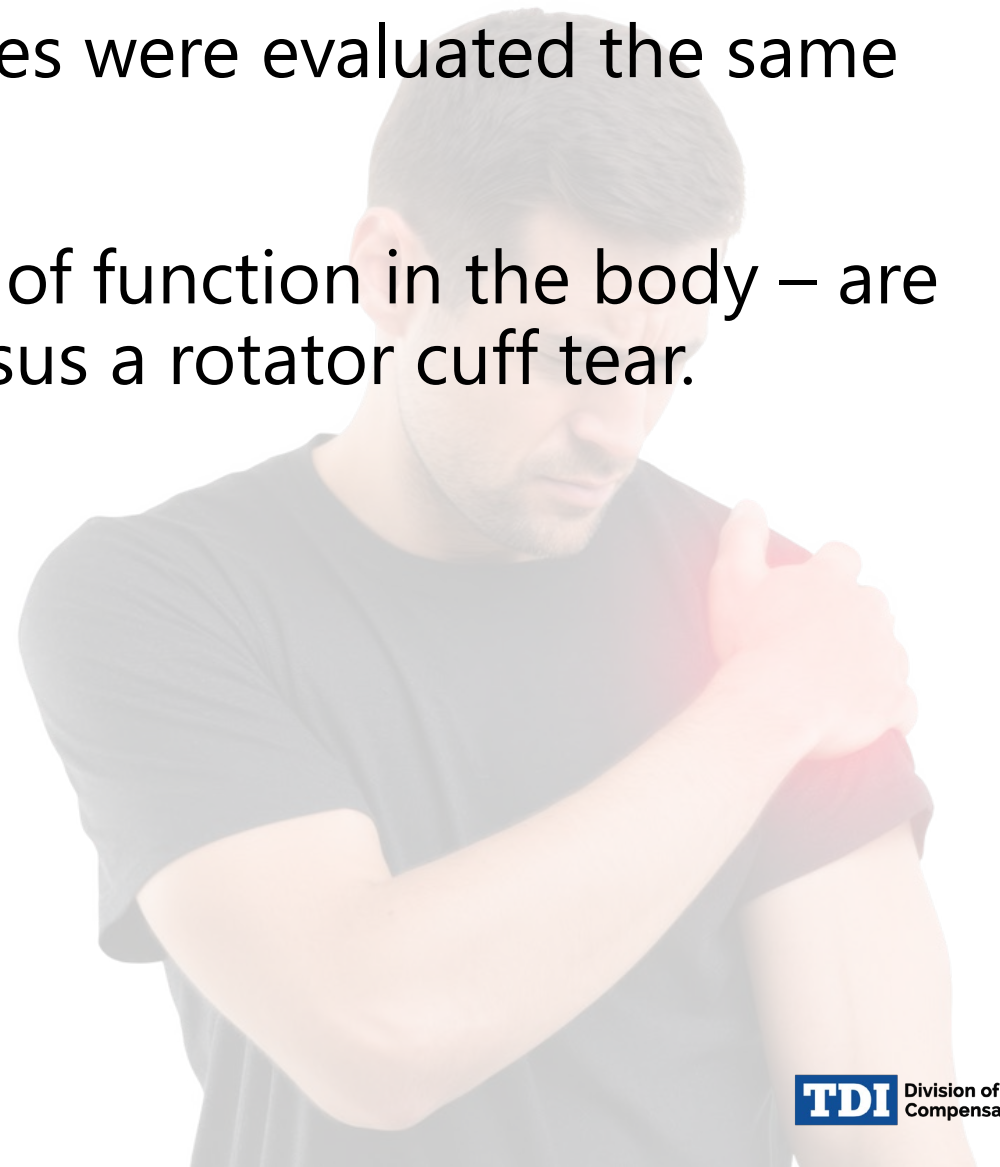
Clinical comparison

- Templates for guidance:
 - Table 15-01g Upper Limb impairment Evaluation Record Template.
 - Table 16-01g Lower Limb Impairment Evaluation Record Template.
 - Table 17-01g Spine and Pelvis Impairment Evaluation Record Template.



Example: assigning impairment ratings using 4th vs. 6th

- In the 4th Edition the different diagnoses were evaluated the same way.
- The ultimate impairments – i.e. change of function in the body – are ultimately different for a labral tear versus a rotator cuff tear.

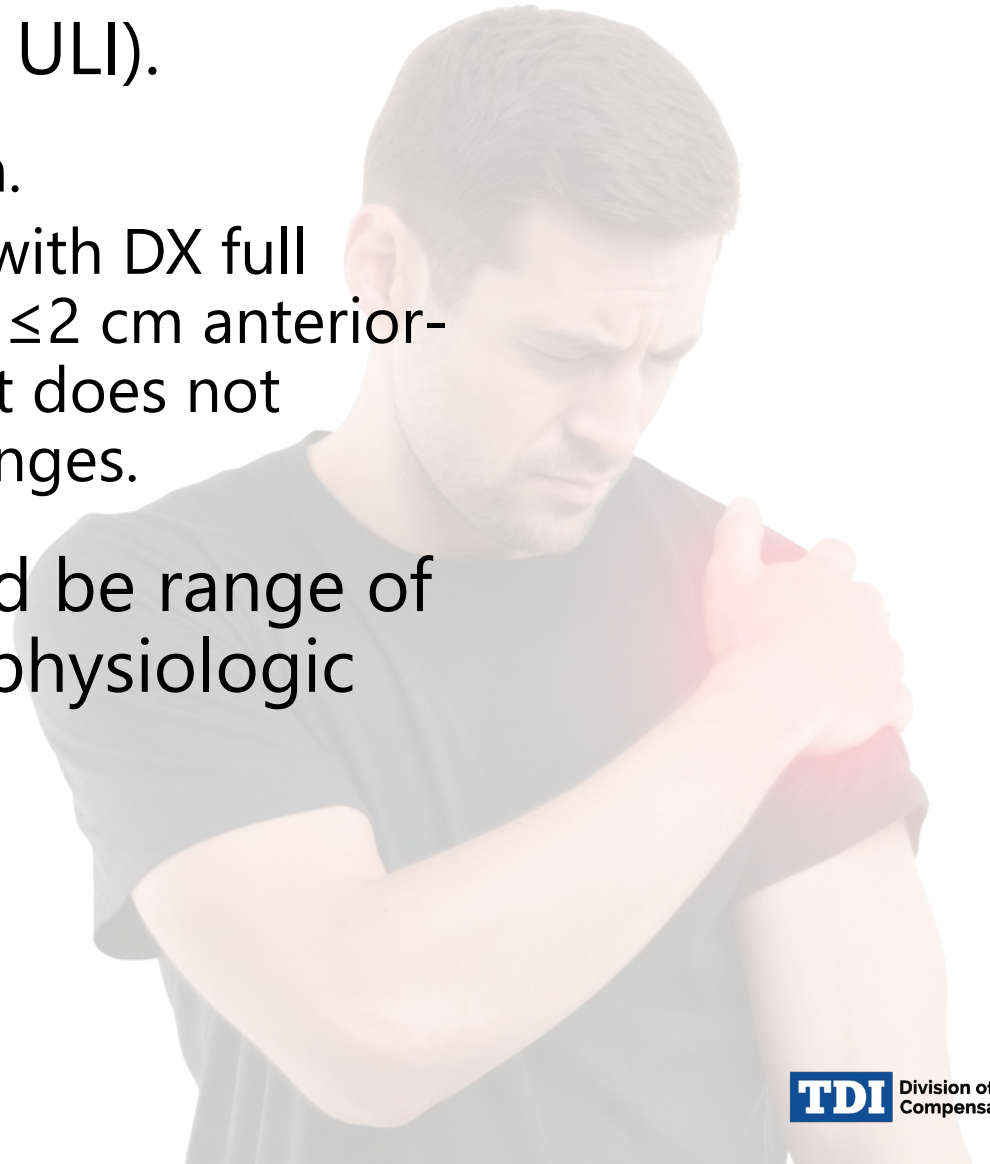


Example: assigning impairment ratings using 4th vs. 6th

- Rotator cuff injuries occur through two main mechanisms: acute traumatic overload (such as a fall on an outstretched arm or sudden forceful lifting) and chronic degenerative changes from repetitive stress, age-related tendon wear, and altered shoulder biomechanics.
- Shoulder Labrum (SLAP lesions) occur after a fall on an outstretched arm with the biceps tendon in traction which will tear the superior labrum. Labral injury mechanisms range from chronic repetitive microtrauma in overhead or high-load sports to acute traumatic events.

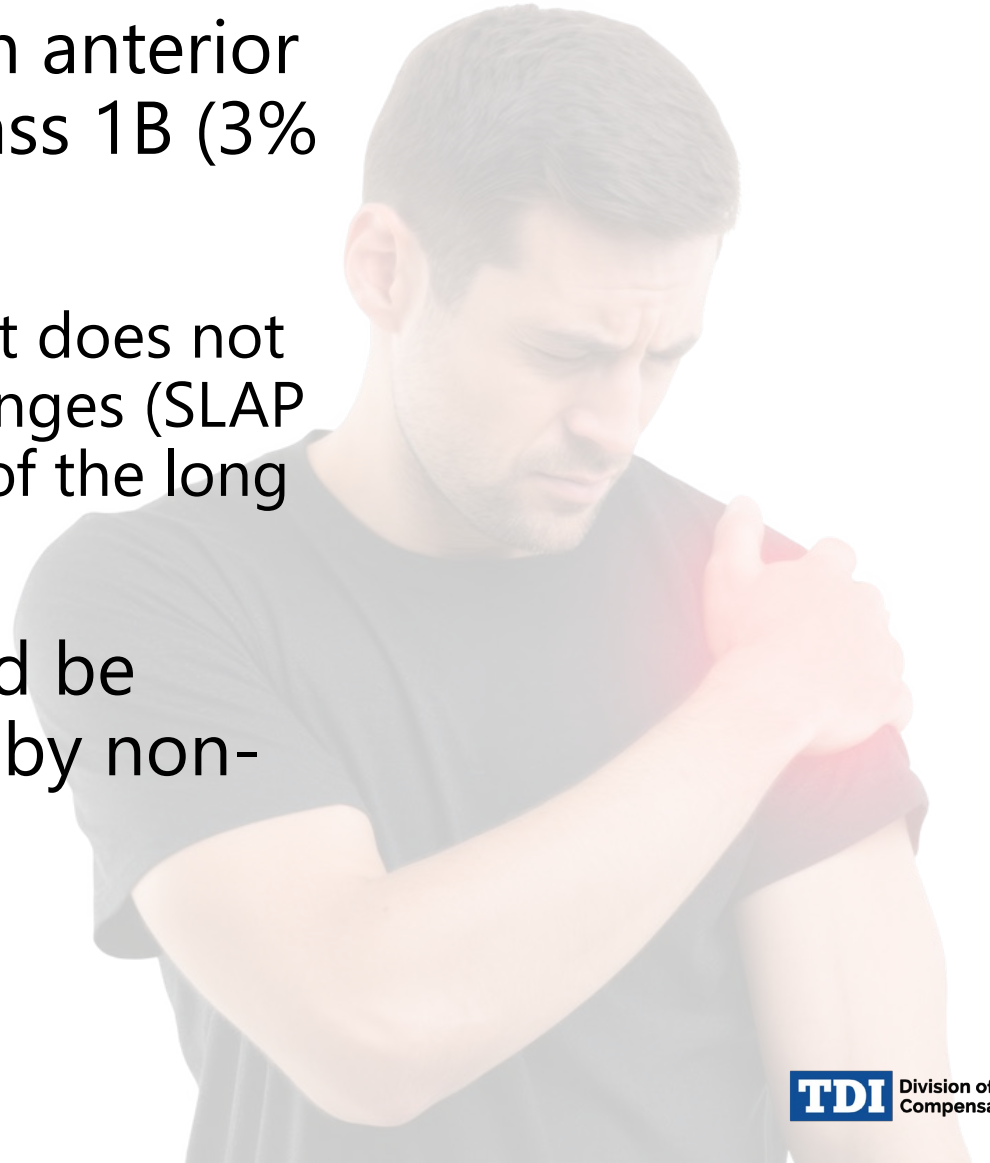
Example: using the 6th Edition

- Rotator cuff tear 15-22-10 class 1C (5% ULI).
 - Reduced active functional range of motion.
 - Imaging or findings at surgery consistent with DX full (complete) rotator cuff tear with >1 cm to ≤ 2 cm anterior-posterior full-thickness tear pathology that does not include age-appropriate degenerative changes.
- In the 4th Edition the only criteria would be range of motion, which can be reduced by non-physiologic factors.
- Does not reflect true natural history.



Example: using the 6th Edition (2025)

- Labral lesions and superior labrum from anterior to posterior (SLAP) lesions 15-22-11 class 1B (3% ULI).
 - Labral lesion or SLAP lesion pathology that does not include age-appropriate degenerative changes (SLAP lesions often includes injury to the origin of the long head biceps tendon).
- In the 4th Edition the only criteria would be range of motion, which can be reduced by non-physiologic factors.
- Does not reflect true natural history.



Clinical comparison



Advancements in AMA Guides Musculoskeletal Impairment Evaluations: Improved Reliability and Ease of Use



Comparative Analysis of Upper Limb Impairment Rating Processes in the American Medical Association Guides Sixth Edition 2024 Versus 2008: Impact on Stakeholders



Reliability and Methodological Advancements in the 2024 AMA Guides for Rating Lower Limb Impairment



Reliability of the 2024 AMA Guides' Enhanced Methodology for Rating Spine and Pelvis Impairment

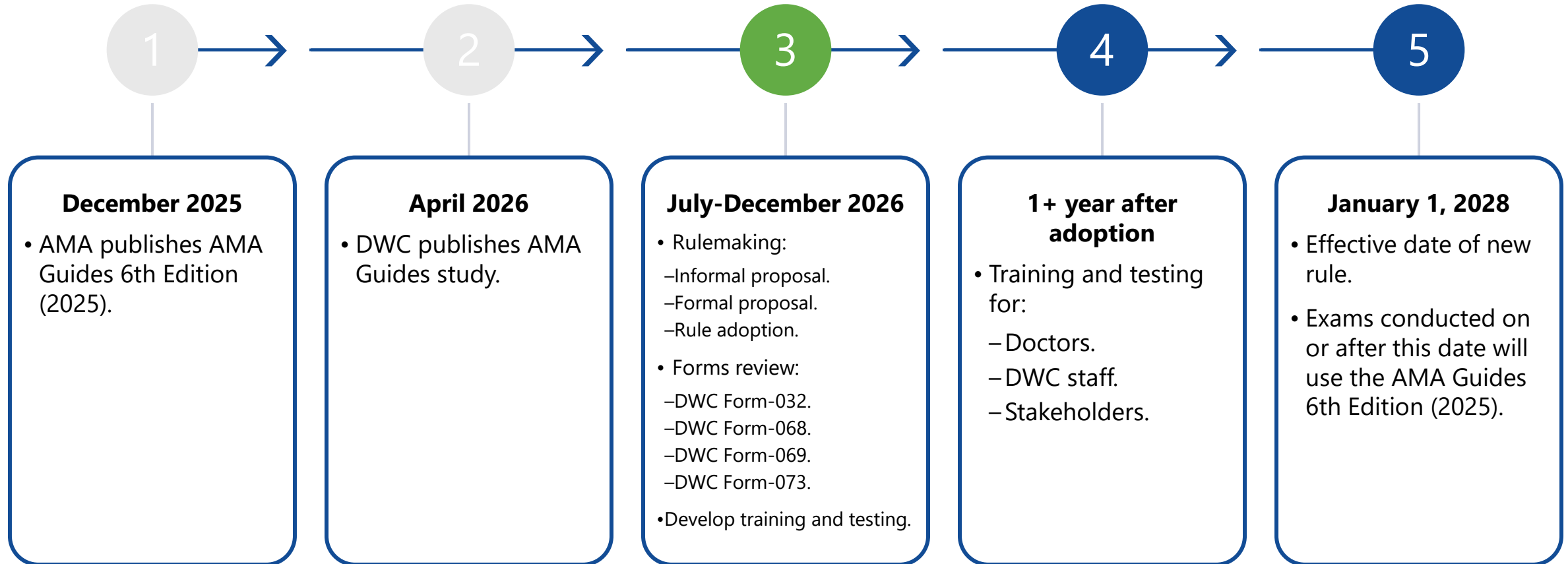




Timelines, rules, and implementation

Amy Rich, Director of Health Care Provider and Return-to-Work
Education

AMA Guide 6th Edition 2025 adoption timeline



Note: Dates are tentative and subject to change.

AMA Guides rulemaking process

- [Informal proposal](#) and [memo](#) published on July 13, 2026.
- Public comment period ends **August 13, 2026, at 5 p.m.**
- Next:
 - Formal proposal (comment period and hearing).
 - Adoption.

Note: Income benefit calculations are determined by [Labor Code Section 408.121](#). DWC does not have the authority to change through rulemaking activity. The 90th Texas Legislative Session convenes on January 12, 2027.

Implementation

During the rulemaking process DWC will:

- Develop training for the Medical Quality Review Panel, designated doctor (DD) and certifying doctor faculty, DWC staff, and stakeholders.
- Review forms for possible revisions.
 - DWC Form-032, Request for Designated Doctor Examination.
 - DWC Form-068, Designated Doctor Examination Data Report.
 - DWC Form-069, Report of Medical Evaluation.
 - DWC Form-073, Work Status Report.

Implementation

During the rulemaking process DWC will evaluate options and develop DD and certifying doctor:

- Required training.
 - Using AMA Guides 6th Edition (2025).
 - Identify method of training.
 - Identify who, where, and when.
- Required testing.
 - Identify impairment rating questions.
 - Develop new questions.
- Certification process.
 - Process for AMA Guides 4th Edition to address claims that have had an exam before the effective date but not yet finalized after effective date.
 - New process for AMA Guides 6th Edition.

How can you stay updated and involved?



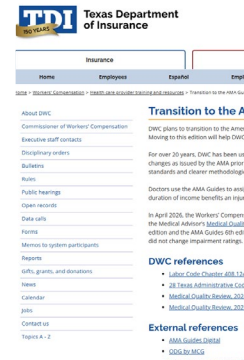
Send public comments for the informal working draft to RuleComments@tdi.texas.gov by COB **August 13, 2026**.



Sign up to DWC's email list.



Visit the DWC rules webpage.



Visit the new AMA Guides transition webpage.



AMA Guides transition webpage



Texas Department
of Insurance

Q ENHANCED BY Google

Topics: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z All

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AMERICA
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Transition to the AMA Guides 6th Edition, 2025 version

DWC plans to transition to the American Medical Association "Guides to Evaluation of Permanent Impairment" (AMA Guides) 6th edition (2025). Moving to this edition will help DWC administer the workers' compensation system more effectively.

For over 20 years, DWC has been using the AMA Guides 4th edition, published in 1993 (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th printing, including corrections and changes as issued by the AMA prior to May 16, 2000). Transitioning to the 6th edition (2025) allows system participants to use modern medical standards and clearer methodologies, improving ease-of-use, precision, and reliability among evaluating doctors for critical exams.

Doctors use the AMA Guides to assign impairment ratings to injured employees in workers' compensation claims. These ratings help set the duration of income benefits an injured employee may receive.

In April 2026, the Workers' Compensation Research and Evaluation Group (REG) released the [AMA Guides Study](#), developed under the Office of the Medical Advisor's [Medical Quality Review, 2024 Audit Plan](#). The study compared impairment ratings calculated using the AMA Guides 4th edition and the AMA Guides 6th edition (2024). REG noted that the AMA Guides were updated again in December 2025 and that those updates did not change impairment ratings. As a result, DWC plans to transition to the AMA Guides 6th edition (2025), as it is the most current edition.

DWC references

- [Labor Code Chapter 408.124](#)
- [28 Texas Administrative Code Section 130.1](#)
- [Medical Quality Review, 2024 Audit Plan](#)
- [Medical Quality Review, 2025 Audit Plan](#)

External references

- [AMA Guides Digital](#)
- [ODG by MCG](#)





Q&A

Mary Landrum, Deputy Commissioner of Operations



Closing remarks

Mary Landrum, Deputy Commissioner of Operations