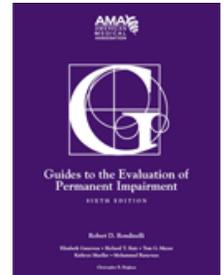


AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment, 6th Edition to be Released December

The AMA has announced the upcoming release of the 6th edition of the [Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment](#), commonly referred to as “**The Guides**”. While originally scheduled to be released earlier this year its release has been pushed back to late December. It has been nearly seven years since the release of the 5th edition, and in keeping with our tradition, we will dedicate several newsletters discussing the changes and nuances that will help you with your clients.

In 2001, when the 5th edition was released, there were substantial changes in the methodology used to assess permanent impairment. This was particularly the case with the spine and extremities. While we have not had a “sneak peak” at the 6th edition, the product brochure suggests some substantial changes will be introduced in this edition as well. Hopefully, the changes will be for the better and offer some degree of uniformity between chapters that does not presently exist.



Using the latest evidence in diagnosis and clinical tests, the promotional literature states that the new sixth edition offers the following key features:

1. Standardized approach across organ systems and chapters
2. Expanded use of diagnostic approach to help physicians consider relevant clinical tests and patient outcomes in performing the rating
3. Required clinical information needed to rate a given condition
4. Clear step-by-step grading instructions in each chapter to promote consistent scoring of impairment ratings and to improve physician consistency
5. Simplified methodology presented between chapters
6. Contemporary, evidence-based concepts and terminology of disablement from the ICF
7. The latest scientific research and evolving medical opinion provided by nationally and internationally recognized experts
8. More comprehensive and expanded diagnostic approach
9. Transparent process to allow the evaluator to document functional assessment clinical tests and physical findings
10. Uniform grids to help physicians calculate impairment ratings

With the release of prior editions, my offices presented basic introductory programs for attorneys, adjusters and the related industry professionals so they could understand the guides and how it applies to them. In keeping with that tradition, we are planning an introductory 2 hour program for late Winter early Spring 2008 in Hartford. The seminar is titled “**Transitioning into the 6th Edition**” and since we

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A MEDICAL-LEGAL NEWSLETTER FOR PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS BY DR. STEVEN W. SHAW

have not even seen the text, we have our homework cut out for us. Those of you who attended the prior programs know that we come prepared and present an even balanced and information filled training. Like the program offered in 2001, I have asked Dr. Michael Yoel to co-present. Both Dr. Yoel and I are board certified chiropractic orthopedists and are fellows of the Academy of Chiropractic Orthopedics. We did our orthopedic specialty training together and we also completed a masters degree program in Biomechanical Trauma. He and I co-wrote the Cervical Radiculopathy management protocols for the Council on Chiropractic Orthopedics published several years ago. I have also asked several medical specialists to join us and participate in a panel discussion and Q&A.

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