

Practice Areas

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY
CONSUMER BANKRUPTCY
WORKERS' COMPENSATION

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

GINSBERG LAW OFFICES

1854 INDEPENDENCE SQUARE, SUITE A
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30338
TELEPHONE: 770-393-4985
FAX: 770-393-0240

Blogs

www.msdisability.net
www.ssdanswers.com

March 17, 2010

How to apply the “Grid Rules” to win a Social Security Disability case: *Peripheral Neuropathy Case Study*

When you apply for Social Security Disability (SSDI) benefits, there are different approaches that can be utilized to ensure a favorable outcome. One of these approaches is the use of the “Grid Rules.” The purpose of the Grid Rules is to provide medical-vocational guidelines in order to focus more on the age, education, and work background of the individual in relation to how the disease at hand impacts and limits one’s capacity to function in daily life, both at home and at work.

The Grid Rules differentiate one’s physical capacity to work into three different categories: sedentary, light and medium. Restrictions for lifting, sitting, and standing placed by one’s physician give credence to one’s claim of limited functional capacity. The degree of limitation is determined by the Grid Rules.

There are some limitations to the use of Grid Rules. The Grid Rules generally apply to those who are age 50 and older. For those who are below the age of 50, a partially favorable decision can be awarded based on the Grid Rules. In addition, medical conditions that limit one’s physical capacity to work qualify under the Grid Rules; mental health problems do not qualify for awarding benefits under the Grid Rules.

For example, peripheral neuropathy is a medical condition that limits one’s physical capacity to function in daily life. Peripheral neuropathy presents as numbness and pain in the extremities due to nerve damage, sometimes associated with diabetes. While symptoms may vary from person to person, some of the more common symptoms associated with peripheral neuropathy include numbness and tingling in the hands and feet, burning pain, sharp, jabbing, or electric-like pain, extreme sensitivity to touch, lack of coordination, muscle weakness or paralysis, and possibly bowel or bladder issues. Pain relievers, TENS units, anti-seizure medications, and antidepressants are often used to treat peripheral neuropathy.

When applying the Grid Rules to a case where the claimant’s peripheral neuropathy symptoms interfere with his or her physical capacity to work, the age, education and previous work experience are considered. The following are combinations of these three criteria which may qualify a claimant for disability benefits as set forth by the Grid Rules:

Grid Rule	Age	Education	Work Experience
201.01 (Sedentary)	55+	Limited/less	Unskilled/none
201.02 (Sedentary)	55+	Limited/less	Skilled/semi-skilled (non-transferable skills)
201.04 (Sedentary)	55+	High School graduate or more	Unskilled/none
201.06 (Sedentary)	55+	High School Graduate or more	Skilled/semi-skilled (non-transferable skill)
201.09 (Sedentary)	50-54	Limited/less	Unskilled/none
201.10 (Sedentary)	50-54	Limited/Less	Skilled/semi-skilled (non-transferable skill)
201.12 (Sedentary)	50-54	High School graduate or more	Unskilled/none
201.14 (Sedentary)	50-54	High School Graduate or more	Skilled/semi-skilled (non-transferable skill)
201.17 (Sedentary)	45-49	Illiterate/unable to communicate in English	Unskilled/non
202.01 (Light)	55+	Limited/less	Unskilled/none
202.02 (Light)	55+	Limited/less	Skilled/semi-skilled (non-transferable skill)
202.04 (Light)	55+	High School Graduate or more	Unskilled/none
202.06 (Light)	55+	High School Graduate or more	Skilled/semi-skilled (non-transferable skill)
202.09 (Light)	50-54	Illiterate/unable to communicate in English	Unskilled/none
203.01 (Medium)	60-64	Marginal/none	Unskilled/none
203.02 (Medium)	60-64	Limited/less	None

Remember that medical records and employment records are important documents to present as evidence when making your case for qualifying under the Grid Rules. The medical records will show, from your physician's expert perspective, what your fundamental physical limitations are based on your disease process and his or her examinations, as well as the treatments of the disease and their effect on your ability to work. The employment records will show how these physical limitations translate into the inability to perform the work based on the job description and the qualifications necessary to perform the job, including lifting, sitting and standing requirements.