

Advance collection of evidence to support a claim for RRB benefits is encouraged to facilitate any future application processing. RRB insured status is preferred, but is not required for accepting advance proofs.

## **910.5 Advance Proof of Age And Military Service**

Advance collection of proof of age and M/S allows us to secure a potential beneficiary's correct birth date and to credit an employee's M/S months prior to the earliest possible ABD. It is especially important to establish an employee's DOB for future benefit estimates and Medicare enrollment. Since APPLE screens permanently store proof information, data may be entered at any time to create records under any employee's SSA number.

### **910.5.1 Proof of Age**

When a person presents advance POA documents, examine the evidence for acceptability (see FOMI-905.5.2) transcribe the pertinent facts to the appropriate APPLE evidence screen; and return the documents to the person.

Advance-filed age proofs remain on APPLE and may be viewed, supplemented, or deleted until an application for benefits is processed. When evidence records are used in an APPLE award action, the screens are "frozen".

#### **A. Discrepant Documents**

When multiple birth dates are indicated on available documents, and F/O examination of evidence does not determine the accurate birth date, enter all evidence on the APPLE screens and notify RIS by e-mail that a headquarters decision is needed.

#### **B. Evidence Has Low Probative Value**

If APPLE has no previously submitted document of greater value, enter the information from the evidence presented and counsel the person on obtaining additional supporting proof. Low probative value is not a consideration in the use of SSA's MBR or NUMIDENT as POA. See FOM1 905.5.5 for information on when to use MBR or NUMIDENT as POA.

#### **C. Conflicting DOB ON EDM Record**

Employer and SSA records supply unverified DOB information to EDM. If an EDM DOB is wrong, MARC and REAP annuity estimates may be wrong, so correct detected errors whenever possible.

Form BA-6 advises current workers to request a change when the displayed DOB is wrong. Historically, documentation has not been required for EDM DOB changes.

When an employee submits POA that differs from the DOB shown in EDM, transcribe the evidence to APPLE, and follow the GL-7 instructions in FOMV-609.1. DO NOT attach a photocopied POA to the Form GL-7.

D. Headquarters Handling

Field personnel will send an e-mail message to RIS when conflicting proofs require a headquarters determination of DOB. RIS will examine the APPLE screens and develop the correct birth date according to rules for benefit applications.

NOTE: If there are unresolved conflicting birth dates on an evidence record when an application is entered, APPLE will select the date with the best proof weight or, if the evidence does not clearly establish the DOB, the claim will be referred for manual handling.

**910.5.2 Proof of M/S**

Periods of M/S that are creditable as railroad service months and compensation will be credited toward the employee's benefit eligibility as soon as the proof is verified and entered to EDM. Early recording of M/S is important in establishing RRA insured status for eligibility queries and allowing uninterrupted processing of future benefit claims.

A. APPLE Entry:

Transcribe advance proofs of active military duty in the U.S. Armed Forces to APPLE. Headquarters personnel will enter proven military months as credited railroad months and compensation, or as SSA wages, on the EDM earnings record.

B. Priority Handling:

During periods of heavy F/O workload, it may be necessary to prioritize processing proofs of military service. On such occasions, encourage mailing of proofs to F/O, and return the documents with RL-158. When possible, record evidence delivered in person while the customer is present.

1. Advise the customer that written verification of credited M/S will be available within 90 days. If a customer requests written verification, establish a pending file to query EDM after 90 days and send a reply showing the number of additional service months that are credited to the employee.
2. Send E-mail requests for expedited headquarters processing only for customers who
  - Need M/S credit for benefit insured status; or

- Will be filing an AA-1 application within 90 days; or
- Have no M/S added to EDM 90 days after APPLE input.

C. Customer Inquiries:

1. Use EDM screens to verify that qualifying railroad service was performed. When creditability is obvious, informally advise employees how many more service months will be credited, but if there are months when both RR work and M/S was performed, or doubtful credit is involved, wait for credits to be entered on EDM by headquarters before confirming the additional service months.
2. The following information taken from regulations and RRB legal opinions will help answer questions about M/S credit. (See FOMI 215 for full requirements of creditability.)
  - The U.S. military draft ended July 3, 1973. Any M/S period that began after 7-3-73, is voluntary service and creditability is restricted.
  - The State of National Emergency covering M/S in the Korean conflict and Vietnam era ended 9-14-78. Any period of M/S that began after 9-14-78, but before 8-2-90, was voluntary AND not in a war service period and it is not creditable as compensation.
  - The most recently declared State of National Emergency, referred to as the Gulf Wars, began 8-2-90 and has not been declared ended.
  - Beginning 1957 SSA credits active duty M/S earnings similarly to other wage credits. Prior to 1957 SSA gave only \$160 per month credit for M/S not used by the RRB.
  - When M/S cannot be used as Tier 2 railroad credits, the earnings are included in calculating the annuity Tier 1.
  - M/S before 1975 is considered for use as compensation and as wages when a claim is filed. If creditable both ways, it is used to the employee's advantage either for a VDB or for a Tier 2 increase.
  - Annual 2-week active duty training time performed by reservists is reported to SSA as wages, but "summer camp" M/S rarely meets all qualifications for increased RRA credit. When in doubt, submit evidence, but do not confirm credit until EDM is updated.
  - If the RRB uses a period of M/S as railroad months, SSA must remove those earnings from their benefit computations - even if SSA eligibility is lost without M/S.

## 910.10 Other Advance Evidence

To plan ahead of the time an application is filed, a potential applicant may provide proof of marriage(s), divorce, spouse's age, and other documents that may be needed when an application is filed. When these proofs are presented to an RRB office, examine the documents and advise the customer regarding their acceptability.

On line information systems allow us to collect, evaluate and permanently store most claims documentation, so it is not appropriate to instruct customers to retain and, in the future, resubmit their proof documents when they file an application.

### A. APPLE Entry

Transcribe pertinent proof information to the appropriate APPLE screens and return the documents to the employee or other person who presented them. Advise the customer that the evidence will be retained in our permanent mechanical files for use when filing an application.

In case of discrepant documentation, complete multiple APPLE screens, including appropriate remarks, and e-mail the responsible headquarters unit to request examiner review of the APPLE records.

### B. G-91 Series And Imaging

If no appropriate Apple screen exists when evidence is received, transcribe the information to a suitable G-91 series form, return the evidence to the customer, and send the G-91 to Headquarters (RIS or SIS) to be batched for imaging.

Acceptable unique material, not suitable for Form G-9, may be photocopied by an RRB employee and forwarded directly to headquarters (RIS or SIS) for imaging.

