

Ways to Speed up your claim – Critical Cases

There are only a few specific reasons in which you can speed up the processing of your claim at this point – Dire Need, Wounded Warrior, Terminal Illness, Compassionate Allowance or if you are suicidal or homicidal. Not everyone will qualify as a Critical Case.

Dire Need Request

Dire Need is designated by Social Security as being without or unable to obtain food, medicine or shelter. You must not only have lack of access or money to pay for these but it would also have to pose an immediate threat either to your health or safety. Social Security will need to have some sort of proof in order to process your claim as critical. For example, if you are being evicted from your home you can submit a copy of the eviction notice to the hearing office. A shut off notice from a utility company could also be submitted (cable television or internet shut off notices would not apply). If your doctor has ordered procedures that are critical to your care and your insurance company has denied coverage for these procedures a letter from your doctor stating why the procedures are important to your treatment and why you are unable to have them.

Wounded Warrior

If you are active military or a veteran Social Security can expedite your claim based on what they call a Wounded Warrior classification. If you are or were a military service member who became disabled while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs, you would be eligible for an expedited case. Proof of the injury as a result of active duty is absolutely necessary. If you are receiving disability from the Veteran's Administration, the medical documentation backup from your award of disability would need to be submitted as evidence to the hearing office. You can request the information by submitting VA Form 21-4138 to the Veteran's Administration.

Terminal Illness

The third reason to request an expedited hearing would be due to a terminal illness. A letter from your doctor stating the diagnosis and the fact that you are terminal would need to be submitted along with any medical records showing proof of testing and/or diagnosis.

Compassionate Allowance

The fourth category for expediting a hearing is Compassionate Allowance. Some conditions listed as Compassionate Allowance are Acute Leukemia, Heart Transplant Waiting List, Liver Cancer and Early Onset Alzheimer's Disease. For a complete list of Compassionate Allowances please see the resource section.

Suicidal and/or Homicidal

The last category is listed as suicidal and/or homicidal. If you are hospitalized due to a suicide attempt or suicidal thoughts, the medical record from the hospital can be submitted to the hearing as evidence. Psychiatric medical records are rarely released directly to the patient but you can contact the hearing office and notify them of the recent hospitalization and request that they obtain the records for your claim. A letter can also be submitted to the hearing office with a request for them to obtain the medical records.