

one of the exceptions to medical improvement set out in § 220.179(a)(1), (2), (3) or (4) applies.

(b) The month in which the annuitant demonstrated his or her ability to engage in substantial gainful activity (following completion of a trial work period);

(c) The month in which the annuitant actually does substantial gainful activity where such annuitant is not entitled to a trial work period;

(d) The month in which the annuitant returns to full-time work, with no significant medical restrictions and acknowledges that medical improvement has occurred, and the Board expected the annuitant's impairment(s) to improve;

(e) The first month in which the annuitant failed without good cause to do what the Board asked, when the rule set out in paragraph (b)(2) of § 220.179 applies;

(f) The first month in which the question of continuing disability arose and the Board could not locate the annuitant after a suitable investigation (see § 220.179(b)(3));

(g) The first month in which the annuitant failed without good cause to follow prescribed treatment, when the rule set out in paragraph (b)(4) of § 220.179 applies; or

(h) The first month the annuitant was told by his or her physician that he or she could return to work provided there is no substantial conflict between the physician's and the annuitant's statements regarding that annuitant's awareness of his or her capacity for work and the earlier date is supported by the medical evidence.

(i) The month the evidence shows that the annuitant is not longer disabled under the rules set out in §§ 220.177 through 220.180, and he or she was disabled only for a specified period of time in the past as discussed in § 220.21 or § 220.105;

§ 220.182 Before a disability annuity is stopped.

Before the Board stops a disability annuity, it will give the annuitant a chance to explain why it should not do so.

§ 220.183 Notice that the annuitant is not disabled.

(a) *General.* If the Board determines that the annuitant does not meet the disability requirements of the law, the disability annuity will generally stop. Except in the circumstance described in paragraph (d) of this section, the Board will give the annuitant advance written notice when the Board has determined that he or she is not now disabled.

(b) *What the advance written notice will tell the annuitant.* The advance written notice will provide—

- (1) A summary of the information the Board has and an explanation of why the Board believes the annuitant is no longer disabled. If it is because of medical reasons, the notice will tell the annuitant what the medical information in his or her file shows. If it is because of the annuitant's work activity, the notice will tell the annuitant what information the Board has about the work he or she is doing or has done, and why this work shows that he or she is not disabled. If it is because of the annuitant's failure to give the Board information the Board needs or failure to do what the Board asks, the notice will tell the annuitant what information the Board needs and why, or what the annuitant has to do and why;

(2) The date the disability annuity will stop;

(3) An opportunity for the annuitant to submit evidence within a specified period to support continuance of disability before the decision becomes final; and

(4) An explanation of the annuitant's rights to reconsideration and appeal after the decision becomes final.

(c) *What the annuitant should do if he or she receives an advance written notice.* If the annuitant agrees with the advance written notice, he or she does not need to take any action. If the annuitant desires further information or disagrees with what the Board has told him or her, the annuitant should immediately write or visit a Board office. If the annuitant believes he or she is now disabled, the annuitant should tell the Board why. The annuitant may give the Board any additional or new information, including reports from

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doctors, hospitals, railroad or non-railroad employers, or others that he or she believes the Board should have. The annuitant should send these as soon as possible to a Board office.

(d) *When the Board will not give the annuitant advance written notice.* The Board will not give the annuitant advance written notice when the Board determines that he or she is not now disabled if the Board recently told the annuitant that—

(1) The information the Board has shows that he or she is not disabled;

(2) The Board was gathering more information; and

(3) The disability annuity would stop.

§ 220.184 If the annuitant becomes disabled by another impairment(s).

If a new severe impairment(s) begins in or before the month in which the last impairment(s) ends, the Board will find that disability is continuing. The impairment(s) need not be expected to last 12 months or to result in death, but it must be severe enough to keep the annuitant from doing substantial gainful activity, or severe enough so that he or she is still disabled.

§ 220.185 The Board may conduct a review to find out whether the annuitant continues to be disabled.

After the Board finds that the annuitant is disabled, the Board must evaluate the annuitant's impairment(s) from time to time to determine if the annuitant is still eligible for disability cash benefits. The Board calls this evaluation a continuing disability review. The Board may begin a continuing disability review for any number of reasons including the annuitant's failure to follow the provisions of the Railroad Retirement Act or these regulations. When the Board begins such a review, the Board will notify the annuitant that the Board is reviewing the annuitant's eligibility for disability benefits, why the Board is reviewing the annuitant's eligibility, that in medical reviews the medical improvement review standard will apply, that the Board's review could result in the termination of the annuitant's benefits, and that the annuitant has the right to submit medical and other evidence for the Board's consideration during the

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continuing disability review. In doing a medical review the Board will develop a complete medical history of at least the preceding 12 months in any case in which a determination is made that the annuitant is no longer under a disability. If this review shows that the Board should stop payment of cash benefits, the Board will notify the annuitant in writing and give the annuitant an opportunity to appeal. In § 220.186 the Board describes those events that may prompt it to review whether the annuitant continues to be disabled.

§ 220.186 When and how often the Board will conduct a continuing disability review.

(a) *General.* The Board conducts continuing disability reviews to determine whether or not the annuitant continues to meet the disability requirements of the law. Payment of cash benefits or a period of disability ends if the medical or other evidence shows that the annuitant is not disabled under the standards set out in section 2 of the Railroad Retirement Act or section 223(f) of the Social Security Act.

(b) *When the Board will conduct a continuing disability review.* A continuing disability review will be started if—

(1) The annuitant has been scheduled for a medical improvement expected diary review;

(2) The annuitant has been scheduled for a periodic review in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section;

(3) The Board needs a current medical or other report to see if the annuitant's disability continues. (This could happen when, for example, an advance in medical technology, such as improved treatment for Alzheimer's disease or a change in vocational therapy or technology raises a disability issue.);

(4) The annuitant returns to work and successfully completes a period of trial work;

(5) Substantial earnings are reported to the annuitant's wage record;

(6) The annuitant tells the Board that he or she has recovered from his or her disability or that he or she has returned to work;