

Disability Evaluation System (DES) frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Q: What is a DES?

A: The Disability Evaluation System (formally known as Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) reviews Soldiers with a service connected injury, illness, or disease who have reached optimal medical care, but will not meet retention standards, for either retention or medical discharge, in accordance with AR 40-501.

Q: What system manages the DES process?

A: The DES is the Department of Defense mechanism for determining fitness for duty, separation, or retirement of Service members because of disability in accordance with Chapter 61 of Title 10, United States Code.

Q: Which Soldiers will be referred to the DES?

A: Soldiers with an approved line of duty (LOD) or who served 30 days or more in an active duty status when the disqualifying duty related injury was incurred. The disqualifying medical condition must be directly related to a service connected disqualifying disability.

Q: Who refers a Soldier to the DES?

A: The Deputy State Surgeon-Clinical (DSS-C) is the ONLY authorized GAARNG clinician who can refer a Soldier to the DES. Other recommendations can be made by the Soldier's Primary Care Physician but those have to be reviewed and approved by the DSS-C.

Q: What items do Soldiers need for their DES packet?

A: Soldiers will be provided a DES checklist by the Program Manager (PM) during their initial counseling.

Q: How should the unit submit the DES packet?

A: The Soldier, the designated unit representative, and Case Manager (CM) will work together to compile all required documents per the DES Checklist. The MSC Medical Readiness NCO (MRNCO)/CM will ensure all medical documents have been loaded into the Soldier's Health Readiness Record (HRR) in the Medical Electronic Data for Care History and Readiness Tracking (MEDCHART) prior to the submission of the DES packet to the PM. The MSC will submit the completed packet through the DES distro email ng.ga.gaarnng.list.ngga-MEB@army.mil, Subject: DES, Rank, Last Name, Last Four SSN

Q: How much time do Soldiers have to submit a DES packet?

A: Soldiers will have a 60-day suspense from the date of the DES Counseling to submit their DES packet, if needed. The entire packet must be completed and sent by the MRNCO/CM via the distro by the suspense date.

Q: Can a Soldier request an extension?

A: If needed, MRNCO can request a one-time 30-day extension from the PM.

Q: What happens after a successful submission of the DES packet?

A: Once a Soldier is accepted into a Medical Treatment Facility (MTF), he/she will be assigned a Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer (PEBLO). A PEBLO is the non-medical case manager who provides information, assistance, and case status updates to the affected Soldier throughout the DES process. The PEBLO will contact the Soldier to notify them of their appointments at their assigned MTF.

Q: Will the unit be notified during the DES process?

A: The unit or MRNCO will not receive notifications or updates from the MTF once the DES is in progress.

Q: What happens when the DES is complete?

A: The Soldier's separation orders and instruction memo will be emailed to the DES PM. The MPM will notify G-1 Retirements Branch so the State separation orders can be published.

Q: Can Soldiers drill while completing the DES process?

A: Yes, Soldiers can drill within the limits of their profile.

Q: What's the difference between pending and active DES?

A: Pending DES means the Soldier has been referred to DES but the packet is awaiting submission by the unit or to the MTF. Active DES means the Soldier has been assigned at a MTF and assigned a PEBLO.

Q: Can I complete the VA's separation health assessment – Part A by myself?

A: The Part A self-assessment is meant for the Soldier to complete by themselves. No provider required. Additional documentation with further guidance is available if needed.

Q: Will Soldiers have to extend to complete the DES Process?

A: The Soldier has the option not to extend. However, if the Soldier wants to move forward with the DES process and the ETS date is less than 1 year, the unit MUST extend the Soldier before submission of DES packet.