

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 military service (MS) allows us to secure a potential beneficiary's correct birth date and to credit an employee's MS 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 [FOM1 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 RSBD 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 a POA that differs from the DOB shown in EDM, transcribe the evidence to APPLE, and follow the GL-7 instructions in [FOMV 609.01](#). 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 MS**

Periods of MS 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 through APPLE. Early recording of MS 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. Upon accessing the Proof of MS screen, PF14 will take you to the EDM Military Service Information screen (EDMUD207). After data entry, EDM will invoke the MS module to determine if the military months can be credited as 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 Form RL-103A, *Return of Acceptable Proofs*. When possible, record evidence delivered in person while the customer is present.

1. Advise the customer that written verification of credited MS 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 to CESC ([CESC-Compensation&EmployerServicesCenter@rrb.gov](mailto:CESC-Compensation&EmployerServicesCenter@rrb.gov)) for expedited Headquarters processing only for customers who
  - Need MS credit for benefit insured status; or
  - Will be filing an AA-1 application within 90 days; or
  - Do not have a MS creditability determination 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 MS 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 MS credit. (See FOM1 215 for full requirements of creditability.)
  - The U.S. military draft ended July 3, 1973. Any MS period that began after 7-3-1973, is voluntary service and creditability is restricted with the exception listed below:
    - After 6-30-1973, Involuntary applies only to reservists called or recalled to federal active duty.
  - The State of National Emergency covering MS in the Korean conflict and Vietnam era ended 9-14-1978. Any period of MS that began after 9-14-1978, but before 8-2-1990, 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 8-2-1990 and has not been declared ended.
  - Beginning 1957 SSA credits active-duty MS earnings similarly to other wage credits. Prior to 1957 SSA gave only \$160 per month credit for MS not used by the RRB.
  - When MS cannot be used as Tier 2 railroad credits, the earnings are included in calculating the annuity Tier 1.

- MS 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" MS 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 MS as railroad months, SSA must remove those earnings from their benefit computations - even if SSA eligibility is lost without MS.

## 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.

Online information systems allow us to collect, evaluate, and permanently store most claims documentation. Therefore, it is not appropriate to instruct customers to retain and, in the future, resubmit their proof documents when they file an application. Be sure to image the proof document prior to returning the proof to the applicant.

### 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.

In situations where a CR user must modify another CR's APPLE entries on a previously validated proof, the subsequent CR user must first verify the proof is on WorkDesk. Then, make the requested change on the APPLE Screen and notate in the Remarks field the original user's sign-on name, the original proof entry date, and the current date of correction. The original user is the C/R name listed on the APPLE Proof Menu Screen prior to modifications.

Ex: The RR employee submits a Proof of Marriage. The Proof of Marriage is entered on APPLE, but the spouse's SSN is unknown at that time. The original CR enters the proof with all 9s in the spouse's SSN field on the Proof of Marriage Screen. The spouse comes along later to file her

application, and the SSN needs to be updated on the proof in order to complete the spouse's application. The original CR is out of the office on extended leave. The current CR will verify the proof is on imaged on WorkDesk and modify the Proof of Marriage to add the spouse's SSN. They will also add in Remarks that the MA's SSN was updated on MM/DD/YY, original entered on MM/DD/YY by USERID.

B. G-91 Series and Imaging

Proofs should be photocopied unless prohibited and scanned to WorkDesk. If unable to photocopy or scan the proof, Form G-91 should be used.

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 image the G-91 to Headquarters (RSBD) along with any proof of MS. Acceptable unique material, not suitable for Form G-91, may be photocopied by an RRB employee and imaged directly to headquarters (RSBD).

