

WAC 415-106-560 Can my disability retirement type change? Your disability retirement type may change depending upon the circumstances.

If your original disabling condition or conditions worsen, improve, or you recover, the department may adjust your benefit.

(1) Worsening - If the condition or conditions that caused your disability worsen, your retirement may be changed to a catastrophic duty disability. The timing of this change is dependent on medical determination dates. You must submit an application and provide sufficient medical evidence to support a claim that your condition or conditions qualify you for a catastrophic duty disability. The worsening must be caused by or directly related to the original injury or injuries or illness and not due to the natural aging process or a succeeding cause.

Example 1: A member retires on a disability retirement due to a knee injury. The member has surgery related to the knee injury after retirement and suffers side effects from the surgery that prevent the member from performing any substantial gainful employment. The member is eligible to have their benefit adjusted because the aggravation is directly related to the original injury.

Example 2: A member retires on a disability retirement due to a knee injury. The member reinjures the knee in a skiing accident and is rendered unable to perform any substantial gainful employment. The member is not eligible to have their benefit adjusted because the aggravation is the result of a succeeding cause and not the original injury.

Example 3: A member retires on a disability retirement due to a knee injury. The condition gradually worsens over time until the member is no longer capable of substantial gainful employment. The member is not eligible to have their benefit adjusted because the aggravation is due to aging.

(2) Improvement - If your condition or conditions improve such that you are capable of substantial gainful employment, the department will adjust your catastrophic duty disability benefit to a disability benefit.

(3) Recovery - If your condition or conditions improve such that you are able to return to work in a PSERS-eligible position, the department will terminate your disability retirement or convert you to a normal retirement benefit if you are eligible.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 41.50.050 and 41.37.230. WSR 24-08-071, § 415-106-560, filed 4/2/24, effective 4/3/24.]