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## Common Reasons for Erroneous Denials of Disability Claims

Disability applications submitted to Social Security are forwarded to the state's Disability Determination Services (DDS) agency for processing. Two-thirds of the disability applications reviewed by a DDS claims examiner are denied. Many of the claims are denied due to common errors that need to be addressed at the appellate stage.

The image shows a portion of a Social Security Benefits application form. The title 'Social Security Benefits' is visible at the top. The form includes various fields for personal information such as 'PERSON'S SSN', 'DATE OF BIRTH', 'SEX', 'RACE', 'MARRIAGE STATUS', 'RELATIONSHIP TO BENEFITARY', 'TELEPHONE', and 'STATE'. There are also checkboxes for 'EMPLOYMENT' and 'IS PATIENT'S CONDITION RELATED TO'. The form is partially filled out with handwritten information.

When a disability application is reviewed, the DDS claims examiner bases the decision on the medical records and often doesn't understand the extent to which the claimant's limitations affect his ability to work. The severity of the claimant's symptoms may not be properly evaluated, especially when he has multiple impairments. Sometimes, the physical or mental demands of the claimant's previous jobs are underestimated and the claims examiner incorrectly believes the claimant will still be able to perform similar jobs in spite of his condition. Missing files or evidence is another reason for claims being denied.

## How Does My Age Affect the Social Security Disability Claim?

When you file a disability claim, your age is taken into consideration when the Social Security Administration is deciding if you can still work. Past relevant work experience and education are also assessed. As you get closer to retirement age, the SSA assumes that you are less trainable and it will be more difficult for you to adjust to a new job or career. Therefore, older people have a greater chance of getting their disability claims approved.



When claimants are between the ages of 18 to 49, there is the presumption that they can still perform a variety of jobs unless they have a severe functional limitation. If an older claimant can't handle manual labor due to the limitations caused by the medical condition and only has minimal formal education, it's easier to qualify for disability benefits.

## What Should I Do If My Disability Benefits Are Delayed?

Once your Social Security disability claim has been approved, the payments should start after you have been disabled for five months. The Social Security Administration also gives you a written notice stating the amount of the monthly disability payments and when they will be distributed. If the receipt of your disability benefits has been delayed without an explanation, there are certain steps you can take to address this issue.



1. **Contact the Local Social Security office:** Inform the supervisor that you haven't started receiving your disability benefits. The supervisor may contact the payment center and arrange for the payment to be sent to you.
2. **Directly Contact the Payment Center:** This is also another option. Inform them that your payment hasn't been received yet and get an update regarding how soon they will be able to send it. Keep a record of all communication between you and the Social Security offices in case you have to follow-up with them about the status of your payments.

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