

# How the VA Rates Radiculopathy

Regulatory Source: 38 CFR § 4.124a – Diagnostic Codes 8520–8720

VA Source: <https://ecfr.gov>

## Summary:

Radiculopathy is nerve pain caused by spine compression, usually showing up as numbness, tingling, or weakness in arms or legs. The VA rates it based on severity of nerve damage and impact on movement or feeling.

## VA Rating Table:

Rating	Explanation
0%	Symptoms are present but mild and not severe enough to interfere with daily functioning. No objective findings on exam or imaging.
10%	Mild incomplete paralysis. Minor sensory loss or tingling, no significant motor impact. Often used when nerve involvement is confirmed but minimally impairs life.
20%-40%	Moderate incomplete paralysis. More noticeable sensory loss, weakness, numbness, or pain that interferes with mobility or function.
60%-80%	Severe incomplete paralysis with marked loss of motor function or sensation. May impair mobility or use of limb significantly.
90%-100%	Complete paralysis of the affected nerve. No motor or sensory function in the area affected (e.g., foot drop, full limb dysfunction).

## Required Evidence:

- Confirmed diagnosis of radiculopathy or nerve impingement (typically via MRI or EMG/NCS testing)
- C&P; exam or neurologist evaluation showing sensory/motor deficits
- Functional statements about how symptoms affect mobility or use of limb
- Secondary link to service-connected back or neck injury

## Pro Tip:

If you have back or neck issues, radiculopathy is one of the most common and overlooked secondary claims. File it for each affected extremity (left/right, upper/lower).