

# Fact Sheet

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## Integrated Disability Evaluation Services | Frequently Asked Questions

### Part A - Program Related FAQs:

#### **Q1: Who should I call if I have IDES processing questions that are not answered below?**

A1: The IDES Program Manager at DSN: 314-483-6212.

#### **Q2: What is the IDES?**

A2: The IDES is a joint program between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that allows the disability evaluation system of the Army (and those of the other military services) to run concurrently with the VA's while Soldiers are still on active duty.

#### **Q3: When does it begin?**

A3: It began on 1 Oct 11. As of that date, any Soldier that enters the disability evaluation process (DES) will be processed under the IDES.

#### **Q4: What does the collaboration between DoD and VA mean for the Soldier?**

A4: There are several advantages the IDES has for the Soldier which include:

- Enhanced Case Management: Collocated DoD and VA staff work together throughout the process providing consistent case management.
- A Combined DoD-VA Report of Disability Ratings: Soldiers now go through the evaluation process only one time and receive a side-by-side report of the DA's and VA's ratings, and do so while they are still on active duty.
- Increased Transparency: Soldiers know their VA disability rating before separating from military service.
- Faster Processing and Delivery of Benefits: Because the VA renders its benefits decision before Soldiers separate, their benefits begin a month after separation, the shortest period permissible under the law.

#### **Q5: To whom does the IDES apply?**

A5: The IDES applies to all Service Members regardless of branch of service or component (i.e., Active, Guard, and Reserve).

#### **Q6: What are the fundamental differences between the legacy disability evaluation system and the IDES?**

A6: IDES provides Soldiers with a single disability rating report before they leave the Army and their VA benefits begin upon separation. Under the legacy system, Soldiers who were determined to be medically unfit for continued service were first rated by the Army on the level of their disability in relation to its impact on their ability to perform their duties and were then separated from the Army. Once the Soldier was separated, he/she was on their own to apply for and complete the VA's evaluation process often repeating tests and examinations performed during the Army's legacy process.

**Q7: Is the IDES process different for CONUS vs. OCONUS Soldiers?**

A7: No, but some OCONUS IDES Soldiers physicians can submit an IDES ETP to PCS the Soldier to a CONUS WTU due to their extreme medical condition. The OCONUS Soldiers will start and complete all of their IDES processing at the CONUS WTU location.

**Q8: What are the intended benefits of IDES to the Army?**

A8: The IDES was developed and implemented to improve unit readiness; create an evaluative process which is more effective, efficient, and supportive of Service Members; and reduce the number of non-deployable Service Members .

**Q9: Why wasn't the IDES fully implemented OCONUS?**

A9: The IDES could not be fully implemented OCONUS because the VA does not have the requisite infrastructure available OCONUS to support a synchronized and integrated disability evaluation effort.

**Q10: Is IDES participation optional?**

A10: No.

**Q11: Does IDES only apply to combat-related disabilities?**

A11: No. It evaluates all potentially unfitting injuries and illnesses.

**Q12: Does IDES also provide VA disability evaluation for Soldiers that are ETSing and retiring?**

A12: No. IDES is only for Soldiers that require medical board processing.

**Q13: Do the Army and the VA evaluate disability differently?**

A13: Yes. By law, the Army (and other military branches) only evaluates Soldiers' disabilities in relation to the impact on the Soldier's ability to perform the military mission. The VA, however, is tasked with evaluating how Soldiers' disabilities impact their general quality of life and ability to secure employment.

**Q14: Can Soldiers with an approved IDES ETP PCS transfer choose where they will go?**

A14: No, but they do have input, similar to the input that Soldiers have with duty assignments. The Army makes its destination determination based on several factors, including the Soldier's preference, his/her treatment needs, and the current capacities of the CONUS MTFs and WTUs.

**Q15: What do I need to do to help my Soldiers?**

A15: First and foremost, is your direct involvement in ensuring your Soldiers and their Family Members, if applicable, get the support they deserve as they enter IDES. This will be a stressful time for most. Secondary tasks include ensuring your Soldiers make all required appointments, monitoring e-Profile to identify Soldiers that have been/may be entered into the IDES, and continuous coordination with the WTB and the medical staff. Lastly, when your Soldier goes on their IDES TDY mission, ensure your unit provides transportation to and from their OCONUS Airport.

**Q16: Are there unit funding implications?**

A16: Not at this time. All PCS and TDY related IDES costs will be centrally funded.

**Part B - Process Related FAQs:**

**Q1: How is the IDES process initiated?**

A1: IDES begins two ways. The first and most common is with the approval a permanent profile (DA 3349) that recommends a MEB. The second is when HRC's MOS Administrative Retention Review (MAR2) process refers the Soldier for an MEB and the profile is updated to reflect that decision. From that point, the process is the same.

**Q2: What happens when my Soldier is referred for an MEB?**

A2: Referral into the IDES triggers multiple overlapping and cascading actions. A Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer (PEBLO) from your local Military Treatment Facility (MTF) will contact you and your Soldier as well as a representative from the Warrior Transition Battalion - Europe (WTB-E). They will schedule the required medical briefings, exams and administrative appointments, and will act as guides for you, your Soldier, the Soldier's Family, and your unit.

**Q3: When will my Soldier depart for their IDES TDY?**

A3: Most Soldiers depart for their IDES TDY within 60 days from receiving their approved permanent profile.

**Q4: Who will publish TDY orders, book flights, and process travel vouchers for my Soldier in Defense Travel System (DTS)?**

A4: IDES Section located at WTB-Europe is responsible for processing all DTS functions to include TDY orders, booking flights, providing flight itineraries, and processing travel vouchers.

**Q5: What if my Soldier wants to stay in Europe after separation?**

A5: Soldiers may request an Overseas Separation once they've been notified that they will enter the IDES.

**Q6: Will my Soldiers have to physically move to a new residence if reassigned to the WTB-E under the IDES exception to policy?**

A6: It depends on the circumstances.

**Q7: Who is the approval authority for an ETP?**

A7. The Commander, WTB-E.

**Q8: What if my Soldiers are under investigation or the subject of legal action?**

A8: The same rules that apply to any other PCS apply here. Flags for adverse action will prevent them from PCSing and beginning a medical board. They must remain in your unit until the action is completed. If at that point they are still eligible for disability evaluation, the process will begin.

**Q9: What if Soldiers go through the whole process and the Army finds them fit for duty?**

A9: A small number (expected to be less than 10%) of those that enter the IDES will be found fit and returned to duty. If there are no positions available at the CONUS installation to which they PCS for IDES processing, they will have to PCS to another duty station.

**Q10: What can my Soldiers do to prepare if they think they may end up in the IDES?**

A10: There are some very important actions they can take ahead of time to make the process easier when/if the time comes:

- Decide where they would prefer to live if separated from service. Although not guaranteed, their preferences are considered when the Army determines their CONUS destination.
- If a Soldier has a non-U.S. spouse/other non-U.S. Family Members who does/do not possess the requisite U.S. immigration documentation, the Soldier should start gathering as much U.S. immigration related information and documentation as possible in

preparation for a potential PCS to CONUS. Leaders can educate Soldiers about this, but cannot mandate action, either directly, or implicitly. Consult your CJA or Finance Office for more information.

**Q11: Do Soldiers have to pay out of pocket for IDES-related moves and activities?**

A11: No, IDES PCS and TDY related expenses are centrally funded.