

4-F – Disabled and Unfit for Military Service

Can you be drafted in the military if you have a disability?

What constitutes a disability that would make you ineligible to be drafted?



As a father of a 19-year-old in a volatile time where a tweetstorm of thoughtless insults can turn into a firestorm of bombs, I worry about the future of my son and all young men of his generation. Currently, the United States Armed Forces is an all-volunteer military force, and there has not been a draft since 1973. However, reactivating the draft is a possibility in the event of a

need to supplement the military -- all men between 18 and 25 are potentially subject to military conscription or “[the draft](#).” In the event that Congress and the President authorize a mobilization to increase the number of active troops, a lottery would be held based on birthdays which determines the order of men to be drafted. Those with low lottery numbers receive examination orders and are ordered to report for a physical mental and moral evaluation at a Military Entrance Processing Station ([MEPS](#)) to determine whether they are fit for military service. Once the person is notified of the results, a registrant will be given ten days to file a claim for exemption.



Disability is a reason for an exemption. The United States military requires that all enlisted and commissioned personnel be ready for “active duty.” This means one must at all times be physically, emotionally, and psychologically ready to serve – to the military’s standards of fitness. The military has standards for fitness to be inducted into the military, and the purposes of the standards are to ensure that inductees are:



- (1) Free of contagious diseases that probably will endanger the health of other personnel.
- (2) Free of medical conditions or physical defects that may require excessive time lost from duty for necessary treatment or hospitalization, or probably will result in separation from the Service for medical unfitness.
- (3) Medically capable of satisfactorily completing required training.

- (4) Medically adaptable to the military environment without the necessity of geographical area limitations.
- (5) Medically capable of performing duties without aggravation of existing physical defects or medical conditions.



What types of Disabilities are disqualifying?

The goal of the military preparedness is to develop a fighting force without the need of special accommodation for disability. In as much as a person would need an accommodation, including, but not limited to, specialized equipment, medication, or additional services, may potentially

lead to a danger to the unit. As such, the military lists the conditions and impairments that are disqualifying.

Physical Disabilities – There is a listing of a plethora of physical disabilities that are potentially disqualifying for a person that is conscripted. This includes issues regarding functioning of bodily systems and physical deformities.



- Blindness or low vision that does not correct with glasses
- Deafness or hard of hearing, even with the use of a hearing aid
- History of Bariatric Surgery
- Anything that interferes with the proper wearing of a military uniform or equipment
- Limitation of motion
- HIV or AIDS
- Anaphylaxis due to stinging insects or systemic allergic reactions to food
- Diabetes
- Rheumatologic conditions
- Migraine headaches or trauma as a result of head injuries
- Chronic insomnia

Learning, Psychiatric, and Behavioral Disabilities –

The military is currently very selective with regards to allowing persons with learning or other mental disabilities to be inducted into the military. Part of becoming an effective soldier is to learn to suppress one's individual needs for the needs of the unit. Thus neurodiversity is not valued as much as conformance to the operation as a unit that can follow orders. As such, many cognitive, learning, or developmental conditions would be disqualifying:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

– A person may be disqualified from military duty if

- (1) The applicant has not required an Individualized Education Program or work accommodations since the age of 14.
- (2) There is no history of comorbid mental disorders.
- (3) The applicant has never taken more than a single daily dosage of medication or has not been prescribed medication for this condition for more than 24 cumulative months after the age of 14, and prior to enlistment.



- (4) During periods off of medication after the age of 14, the applicant has been able to maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average without accommodations.
- (5) Documentation from the applicant's prescribing provider that continued medication is not required for acceptable occupational or work performance.
- (6) Applicant is required to enter service and pass Service-specific training periods with no prescribed medication for ADHD.

In 2011, according to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), approximately 11% of children 4-17 years of age (6.4 million) have been diagnosed with ADHD. Apparently, dependence on stimulants for ADHD is disqualifying. These medications include Strattera, Adderall, Ritalin, Vyvanse and many other medications. Currently, one in three children with ADHD take medications for this disability.

History of learning disorders, including but not limited to dyslexia – a person will be disqualified UNLESS applicants demonstrated passing academic and employment performance without utilization of academic and or work accommodations at any time since age 14.

Autism - Pervasive developmental disorders) including Asperger Syndrome, autistic spectrum disorders, and pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified.

Psychosis - Current or history of disorders with psychotic features such as schizophrenic disorders, delusional disorders, bipolar disorders or other and unspecified psychoses.



Depression - History of depressive disorders, including but not limited to major depression, dysthymic disorder, and cyclothymic disorder requiring outpatient care for longer than 12 months by a physician or other mental health professional, or any inpatient treatment in a hospital or residential facility.

Mood Disorders - Depressive disorder not otherwise specified, or unspecified mood disorder

- (1) Outpatient care was required for longer than 24 months (cumulative) by a physician or other mental health professional.
- (2) The applicant has not been stable without treatment for the past 36 continuous months.
- (3) The applicant required any inpatient treatment in a hospital or residential facility.

Adjustment disorders - History of a single adjustment disorder within the previous 3 months, or recurrent episodes of adjustment disorders.

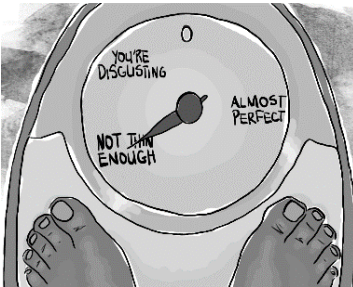
Behavior Disorders - Current or history of disturbance of conduct, impulse control, oppositional defiant, other behavior disorders, or personality disorder.

(1) History (demonstrated by repeated inability to maintain reasonable adjustment in school, with employers or fellow workers, or other social groups), interview, or psychological testing revealing that the degree of immaturity, instability, of personality inadequacy, impulsiveness, or dependency shall likely interfere with adjustment in the Military Services.



(2) Recurrent encounters with law enforcement agencies (excluding minor traffic violations) or antisocial behaviors are tangible evidence of impaired capacity to adapt to military service.

Encopresis (fecal incontinence) after 13th birthday.



Eating Disorders - History of anorexia nervosa or bulimia, and other unspecified disorders of eating occurring after the 13th birthday.

Stuttering - Any current receptive or expressive language disorder, including but not limited to any speech impediment or stammering and stuttering of such a degree as to significantly interfere with production of speech or the ability to repeat commands.

Suicidal behaviors - History of suicidal behavior, including gesture(s) or attempt(s) or history of self-mutilation or injury used as a way of dealing with life and emotions.



PTSD or OCD - History of obsessive-compulsive disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder

Anxiety - History of anxiety disorders, panic disorder, agoraphobia, social phobia or other acute reactions to stress UNLESS:

- (1) The applicant did not require any treatment in an inpatient or residential facility.
- (2) Outpatient care was not required for longer than 12 months (cumulative) by a physician or other mental health professional.
- (3) The applicant has not required treatment (including medication) for the past 24 continuous months.

- (4) The applicant has been stable without loss of time from normal pursuits for repeated periods even if of brief duration; and without symptoms or behavior of a repeated nature that impaired social, school, or work efficiency for the past 24 continuous months.



Current or history of dissociative, conversion, or factitious disorders, depersonalization (300.6), hypochondriasis, somatoform disorders, or pain disorder related to psychological factors

Current or history of psychosexual conditions, including but not limited to transsexualism, exhibitionism, transvestism, voyeurism, and other paraphilias. Whenever I think of this factor, I cannot help but remember [Maxwell Q. Kinger from M.A.S.H.](#)



Medical Marijuana is disqualifying!

Current use of Marijuana, or any of alcohol dependence, drug dependence, alcohol abuse, or other drug abuse is disqualifying. A history of such use may be disqualifying as well.

Documentation required to establish disability

As part of my practice, when a person requires an accommodation, I am a stickler for developing a history of disability and receipt of accommodations, and then when subsequent accommodations are needed, the proof will be at hand. In the same way, this information is essential in establishing ineligibility for the draft. It is good practice to obtain all copies of Individual Education Plans, reports of disability by doctors, and prior requests for accommodations, and provisions of accommodation, as well as a medication log. All of this information should be kept in a binder as well as electronically.

But, what happens if you want to serve your country?

Rest assured, you can play a role to serve your country. If you believe that you are still able to serve, you can always seek a waiver of disability. But even with a

disability, you can work in a civilian role in the military. A federal mandate states that all U.S. Military bases must have 10% of their civilian workforce composed of individuals with disabilities. The [U.S. Navy boasts](#) that they have been ranked number five in the nation among all employers—private sector corporations included—who employ individuals with disabilities.

References –

Department of Defense - Medical Standards for Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction in the Military Services – Policy No. 6130.03 - <http://dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/613003p.pdf>

Army Regulation 40–501, Medical Services - Standards of Medical Fitness - http://www.apd.army.mil/pdffiles/r40_501.pdf