



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

DASG-HS-AS

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL  
5109 LEESBURG PIKE  
FALLS CHURCH VA 22041-3258



04 FEB 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION:

SUBJECT: Medical Waivers for Individuals with a History of Refractive Eye Surgery

1. Reference DASG-HS-AS Memorandum 8 May 2000, subject as above.
2. The 8 May 2000 memorandum is superseded by the following updated guidance.
3. The following waiver recommendation policy is provided for your use in making waiver determinations. It does not supersede current medical standards contained in Army Regulation (AR) 40-501, but rather provides guidance to waiver authorities who may want to consider waivers for refractive surgery. The waiver review process shall be used to evaluate individuals on a case-by-case basis and applies to both active and reserve components.
4. This policy applies to medical waivers for individuals otherwise disqualified under AR 40-501 medical standards because of a history of PRK or LASIK surgery (e.g., Chapter 2 for accession waivers, Chapter 5 for special program waivers). Medical waivers for a history of radial keratotomy (RK), astigmatic keratotomy (AK), or any other form of refractive surgery are not recommended in most cases. Exceptions are outlined in paragraph 6.
5. Individuals submitted for a medical waiver for PRK or LASIK shall be uniformly evaluated using the following criteria:
  - a. General. Individuals shall provide:
    - (1) Documentation of the pre- and post-operative refractive error.
    - (2) Documentation of the best spectacle corrected visual acuity. Waiver authorities should determine if the visual acuity meets AR 40-501 standards for the specific purpose or program being considered for a waiver (e.g., Chapter 2 for accession waivers, Chapter 5 for special program waivers).
    - (3) Documentation that at least three months have elapsed since the date of the last laser surgery or enhancement procedure and;

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(4) Documentation that there has been no significant visual side effects secondary to the surgery affecting daily activities.

b. Examination. Applicants must have a current comprehensive eye examination, to include a dilated fundus examination, performed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. Laser Refractive Surgery Waiver Form (Encl 1) should be completed for all individuals seeking a waiver. This may be overprinted on a DA Form 4700.

c. Medical History. Applicants must provide copies of all medical records including the pre-operative eye examination (noting refractive error and keratometry readings); all operative reports or procedure notes; and all follow-up notes.

6. Medical waivers for RK or AK are not recommended in most cases. However, critical needs of the service may be considered and a waiver granted providing the applicant meet the medical retention standards of Chapter 3, AR 40-501. For instance, a physician applying for a Medical Corps appointment who underwent RK over one year ago and has no current visual problems would be a viable waiver candidate. Additionally enlisted soldiers with a history of RK who are applying for an appointment as a commissioned or warrant officer may be viable waiver candidates. Recommend that any waivers being considered for RK be sent to this office, ATTN: DASG-HS for review by The Surgeon General's Ophthalmology Consultant.

7. Data on all accession waivers should continue to be forwarded to Department of the Army, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, ATTN: AMSARA, 503 Robert Grant Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910 for inclusion in the Department of Defense Accessions Medical Standards Analysis and Research Activity.

8. POC is Ms. Wortzel, DSN 761-0020.

Encl



JAMES B. PEAKE, MD  
Lieutenant General  
The Surgeon General

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