



RAM GROUP

WHERE SUCCESSFUL AGENTS FIND A HOME...

Life Insurance - The "Field Underwriter"

These are general field underwriting guidelines.

The items below are particularly important if you are trying to get preferred rates for your clients.

Courtesy of RAM GROUP 800-686-4238

- Age** Use actual birthdates. Some companies use age nearest birthday, while others use actual age (age last birthday).
- Build** Ask the client's actual height and weight. For preferred rates, the rules aren't too stringent, but cutoffs need to be met. For example, limit at 5'5" is about 180 lbs. for most companies, and about 220 lbs. at 6'0". The limits for standard rates with some companies are much more lenient. For example, at 6'0" West Coast Life will go up to 285 lbs. Also ask if any significant weight loss in the last 12 months. If so, the client may NOT get credit for having lost all the weight, since many people regain after large sudden weight losses. Often underwriters will credit half the weight lost.
- Family history** Family history for cancer, heart disease (and stroke) and diabetes is important. Ask if parents or siblings have had these things. If so, did they die already from one of these? If so, find out at what age. Occurrences before age 60 will keep your client from being offered preferred rates in most cases.
- Blood pressure** BP needs to be controlled for at least ONE YEAR to get preferred rates. Taking blood pressure control medications is usually OK with most companies. Before age 60, readings need to be consistently better than 140/90 and over age 60, they need to be consistently below 150/90.
- Cholesterol** Needs to be controlled for at least ONE YEAR with or without medications. Companies differ on the maximum levels for preferred rates, with West Coast Life accepting up to 230, while others limit the total to 220 for their preferred rates.
- Nicotine/Tobacco** Ask exact use: cigarettes, cigar use, chewing, nicotine gum, nicotine patches, etc. Each company has its own criteria, with some companies not granting preferred unless NO nicotine use of any kind for 3 years. Several companies will grant preferred rates after no use for only one year. US Financial Life's special program can accept nicotine use including infrequent cigarette use and still allow preferred non-smoker rates. If client quit entirely, ask the exact date. With most companies, one full year without tobacco is required for non-tobacco rates.

- Medications** Ask about all medications taken including over the counter. Get doses on each medication if possible. Even over the counter medications can affect insurance exam lab work.
- Driving History** Some speeding tickets in last 3 years are tolerable, but reckless driving, DUI, and/or suspended license are serious issues. Ask about each of these and if any tickets, find out what for and how many in the last 3 – 5 years.
- Aviation** Aviation and some sports activity are ratable with most companies. If the client is a commercial pilot, they can get the best rates if they do NO private flying. If they are a private pilot, ask if they are IFR rated. We need to know type of aircraft, total hours and hours in the past several years, as well as anticipated flying in the next 12 months.
- Drug – alcohol use** Companies vary. For some, to get preferred, you need to have no treatment or abuse of alcohol or drugs for 10 years, and for others it needs to be 20 years. If there has been more than one treatment (the client relapsed), it's much tougher. With most companies, once through alcohol treatment, if the client drinks at all, they can be declined.
- Past medical issues** Ask about any serious illness or hospitalizations in the last 5 years. This is especially important if the client has had any type of cancer or heart disease including heart attack, stroke, stent, etc. Ask what, when, and about recent checkups and follow up. In many cases, if the client had past problems like this and no recent follow up, they will not be treated well. Ask whether any lifestyle changes were made since the problems occurred. For example, after a heart attack or bypass operation, did the client quit smoking, lose weight, start exercising more, etc.?
- Foreign Travel** In our post 9-11 world, foreign travel is important. Ask whether the client intends to travel outside the US in the near future. Ask where, why, and how frequently. Which countries? Which cities? How long in each location? Travel for pleasure? Business?
- Citizenship** The person must be a US citizen OR be documented with Green Card and/or appropriate visas and Social Security Number.