

Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) & Medial Branch Block (MBB) Prior Authorization Submission Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure clean, complete RFA and MBB prior authorization submissions and reduce preventable first-pass denials.

Before You Begin: Treat MBBs and RFA as One Workflow

- Confirm practice workflow links First MBB → Second MBB → RFA
- Ensure documentation from each step flows forward to support RFA approval
- Verify payer-specific coverage rules for facet joint procedures

Payer & Frequency Review

- Confirm payer authorization requirements for MBBs and RFA
- Verify limits on RFA frequency (typically 1 RFA every 6–12 months)
- Confirm required intervals between MBBs
- Track prior MBBs and RFAs to stay within coverage limits

Diagnosis & Clinical Criteria

- Diagnosis of facet-mediated pain clearly documented
- No untreated radiculopathy documented
- Clinical notes support facet-based pain presentation
- Pain diagram included and consistent with diagnosis

Imaging Requirements (If Required by Payer)

- Imaging available to rule out radiculopathy or alternative pathology
- Imaging findings consistent with facet-mediated pain
- Imaging documentation aligns with clinical notes

Conservative Care Documentation

- Conservative therapies attempted prior to MBB documented
- Type, duration, and outcomes of conservative care clearly stated
- Documentation supports medical necessity for facet interventions

First Medial Branch Block (MBB #1) Documentation

- Pre-procedure pain score documented
- Post-procedure pain score documented on-table
- Percentage of pain relief documented (typically 50–80%, many payers require ≥80%)
- Relief percentage clearly calculated and stated
- Documentation supports facet-mediated pain diagnosis

Second Medial Branch Block (MBB #2) Documentation

- All documentation from MBB #1 repeated and complete
- Pre- and post-procedure pain scores documented
- On-table post-block pain score recorded
- Pain relief percentage documented and meets payer threshold
- Relief percentage consistent with first MBB

Pain Relief & Outcome Documentation (Critical for RFA Approval)

- Pain scores documented before and after each block
- Pain relief percentages clearly stated for both MBBs
- Relief documentation supports progression to RFA
- Language is consistent across notes, reports, and authorization request

Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) Readiness

- Documentation from both MBBs attached to RFA authorization
- Relief thresholds met per payer policy
- Conservative care, imaging, and pain scores included
- Frequency and timing requirements met

Final Pre-Submission Review

- All required documents attached
- MBB and RFA documentation aligned and consistent
- Pain scores, relief percentages, and timelines verified
- Authorization request reviewed for completeness before submission