

Service Delivery Time Considerations for a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist

Total Severity of Need Score	Frequency of Need
0-2	Monitor
3-4	3 - 5 times/year
5-6	3 - 4 times/semester
7-12	1 - 2 times/month (20 - 60 minutes each)
13-20	1 - 2 times/week (30 - 120 minutes each)
21-28	2 or more times/week (30-90+ minutes each)

- Services may include direct instruction as related to the IEP or IFSP.
- All listed times serve as a guidance.

Frequency of Service Guidelines

Note: Service is considered instruction to the student. Service does not include consultation, material preparation, site preview, drive time, or assessment. Additional time should be considered in Part 2 for these components.

- Monitor: The student does not require O&M services provided by a COMS at this time. Reassessment should occur if need appears to change, or student is due for reevaluation.
- Three to Five Times per Year: The student is instructed by a COMS three to five times per year (service time is dependent on concepts being taught).

The Michigan Orientation & Mobility Severity Rating Scale - Revised

Table of Contents

Introduction 01

About 01

History 01

Rationale 01

Purpose and Development 02

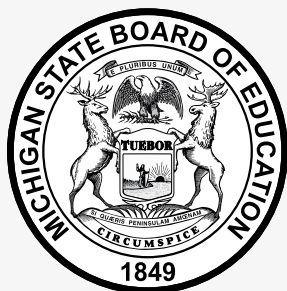
Category Definitions for the O&MSRS 03

Completing the O&M Severity of Need Profile and Severity of Need Summary 03

Part One: Severity of Need Profile 04

Part Two: Additional Considerations to Support Student Success 10

Part Three: Calculating Suggested Service Time 13



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Introduction

About

The Michigan Orientation & Mobility Severity Rating Scale - Revised (O&MSRS-Revised) has been developed to assist certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS) in making recommendations for services for students who are blind or low vision (BLV) in Michigan. The Severity Rating Scale is not an assessment/evaluation instrument, but rather a tool for assisting in determining service delivery times. A comprehensive assessment should be completed before using the O&MSRS-Revised tool.

The O&MSRS-Revised consists of seven severity of need profile categories. Each category is structured in terms of impact on independent travel skills commensurate with same-aged peers. The scale within each category is not all-inclusive, and many criteria overlap from one severity of need to the next. Additional considerations may be made based on the student's individual needs. This tool is to be used as a guide. It is important to remember that service time is the decision of the student's individualized education program (IEP) team or individualized family service plan (IFSP) team.

History

In 2008, a task force consisting of COMS throughout Michigan and from the Michigan Department of Education - Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO), renamed to the Michigan Department of Education Resource for Blind/Low Vision (MDE RBLV), formed to revise the O&MSRS to address the standardization of service delivery to students who are BLV. Proposed revisions were presented and discussed during a working session at the 2008 Michigan Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (MAER) conference. The draft scales were also presented at the 2008 international Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired conference, where they received much support and useful comments. The need for consistency when determining the level of orientation and mobility (O&M) services for students who are blind or low vision was voiced repeatedly. Wall-Emerson and Anderson (2014) shared results from a national survey that indicated the O&MSRS and O&MSRS+ had 84 - 90% validity (p.155), which meant the tool was relatively valid. In 2024, a stakeholder group consisting of COMS from across Michigan and MDE-LIO met virtually over multiple sessions to discuss and revise the O&MSRS and O&MSRS+. The Michigan O&MSRS-Revised is the result of these discussions.

Rationale

The O&MSRS and O&MSRS+ had not been revised since 2008. The *Michigan Administrative Rules for Education* (MARSE), R 340.1708 Visual Impairment, including blindness definition, was updated in 2023. The O&MSRS and O&MSRS+ were merged to better reflect the service delivery needs of students who are BLV.

Purpose and Development

The Michigan O&MSRS-Revised is for use with students who are BLV in preschool through grade 12. The purpose of this document is to define criteria and guidelines for using the Michigan O&MSRS-Revised with students identified as BLV. It is intended to assist the IEP team in selecting an appropriate level of service delivery for O&M training for students who are BLV. The O&MSRS-Revised may assist in supporting a change from one service delivery model to another.

The Michigan O&MSRS-Revised may be completed for:

- Initial assessment
- IEP team meeting
- Tracking progress at end of each school year
- Visual status changes
- Placement changes
- Change in service frequency
- Other

Suggested steps for the evaluation of students with a visual impairment:

1. Assess the student to determine his or her O&M strengths and needs using a variety of assessment tools.
2. Complete the Michigan O&MSRS-Revised to determine service delivery times and additional needs.
3. Include recommendations of O&M services in the O&M report and share at the IEP team meeting.

The O&MSRS-Revised consists of the following seven categories:

- Impact of Vision on Access to the Environment
- Use/Proficiency of Travel Tools
- Independence in Travel in Current/Familiar Environments
- Independence in Travel in Unfamiliar Environments
- Conceptual Understanding
- Complexity or Acquisition of Skill
- Assistive Technology (AT)

The severity of need for each of the scales is sequentially structured based upon a student's need for O&M instruction commensurate with same-aged peers. The COMS, with input from the IEP team (including caregivers, parents, faculty, and relevant ancillary staff), will determine the appropriate service time.

Each of the seven categories is structured in terms of impact on independent travel skills as it relates to the student's age-appropriate needs. The severity of need descriptors within each category purposely overlap to some degree. To aid the COMS in the selection of the severity of need that is most characteristic of the student with a visual impairment, multiple evaluation tools may be necessary.

Category Definitions for the O&MSRS-Revised

1. Impact of Vision on Access to the Environment

The student's visual function and its effect on travel.

2. Use/Proficiency of Travel Tools

The student's need for use and skill level of a white cane or alternative mobility device.

3. Independence in Travel in Current/Familiar Environments

The student's ability to travel safely and proficiently in a familiar environment (e.g., school, neighborhood) based on current literature of age-appropriate travel levels and expectations.

4. Independence in Travel in Unfamiliar Environments

The student's ability to travel safely and proficiently in an unfamiliar environment (e.g., a new school or neighborhood) based on current literature of age-appropriate travel levels and expectations.

5. Conceptual Understanding

The student's understanding of environmental, body image, spatial, and positional concepts and how O&M progress is affected by that understanding.

6. Complexity or Acquisition of Skill

The type of environment in which instruction is required (e.g., business district, new school, neighborhood) and level of difficulty in learning it.

7. Assistive Technology

The student's current need/ability to utilize AT (GPS, low vision aids, mobile applications, etc.) while traveling in all environments.

Directions for Completing the Orientation & Mobility Severity of Need Profile and Severity of Need Summary

1. For each category, enter the appropriate severity of need score in the corresponding form field.
2. The severity of need score will auto-calculate on page 9. Use the frequency of need table on page 9 to determine the service delivery time. Enter the frequency of need in Part 3 on page 11.
3. Complete Part 2: Additional Considerations to Support Student Success. Enter the additional time needed to Part 3.
4. Calculate the total time needed and enter the Suggested Service Time (Direct and Indirect) on page 11.

References

Wall-Emerson, R., & Anderson, D. (2014). Michigan Severity Rating Scales: Usage and validity. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 151-156.

Part One: O&MSRS Revised Severity of Need Profile

Student:	Birth Date:
Grade/Program:	Date:

The severity of need score is determined after conducting a functional vision evaluation, orientation and mobility assessment, and expanded core curriculum needs assessment.

1. Impact of Vision on Access to the Environment

Document the types of environments in which the student's visual function or future need may affect travel. Travel environments may include but are not limited to:

- orientation and/or navigation in the school
- orientation and/or navigation in the home
- orientation and/or navigation in the community
- sidewalk travel
- rural travel
- street crossings in residential areas, semi-business, or business areas
- stair travel
- environmental conditions (inclement weather, full sun, dark, atypical travel).
- public transportation

Score	Level
0	Visual function does not affect travel in any environment.
1	Visual function affects travel in 1-3 assessed environments.
2	Visual function affects travel in 4-5 assessed environments.
3	Visual function affects travel in 6-7 assessed environments.
4	Visual function affects travel in more than 7 assessed environments.

Score:

2. Use/Proficiency of Travel Tools (Cane/Alternate Mobility Device)

Document the level to which the student uses their travel tool (cane, alternative mobility device).

Score	Level
0	Visual skills are sufficient for independent travel without a travel tool, or mastery of cane skills are demonstrated.
1	Skill in use of travel tool impacts safety or efficiency only when traveling in complex, unfamiliar environments.
2	Skill in use of travel tool impacts safety or efficiency only when traveling in unfamiliar outdoor environments.
3	Skill in use of travel tool impacts safety or efficiency when traveling in all unfamiliar indoor and outdoor environments.
4	Skill in use of travel tool impacts safety or efficiency when traveling in all familiar and unfamiliar environments.

Score:

3. Independence in Travel: Familiar Environments

Document the student's travel in familiar environments. Document prompts by tallying the number of prompts given in one training session. The COMS and the student will predetermine how prompts may be administered.

One prompt is equivalent to each touch or verbal direction. Examples of prompts:

- Touching the student to remind them when to turn
- A physical and verbal prompt at the same time
- Giving directions to a location the student has traveled before
- Using reminder cards for directions or signs for turns to a location the student has traveled before

Student's travel should be scored as compared to peers within their geographic area. It should be noted that students who live in urban settings should have opportunities for instruction in rural areas and vice versa. Considerations should be made for the student's age-appropriate skills, safety, cognitive supports, and current and potential needs.

Score	Level
0	Student travels independently and efficiently in all current familiar travel environments commensurate with peers within their geographic area.
1	Student demonstrates skill with 1-2 prompts needed for travel in current familiar environments.
2	Student demonstrates skill with 3-5 prompts needed for travel in current familiar environments.
3	Student demonstrates skill with 6-7 prompts needed for travel in current familiar environments.
4	Student demonstrates skill with more than 7 prompts needed for travel in current familiar environments.

Score:

4. Independence in Travel: Unfamiliar Areas

Document the student's travel in unfamiliar environments. See Independence in Travel: Familiar Environments for prompts.

If this is a student's initial evaluation, a route in an unfamiliar area can be taught, and the student should be asked to repeat the route to determine prompts needed. Student's travel should be scored as compared to peers within their geographic area. It should be noted that students who live in urban settings should have opportunities for instruction in rural areas and vice versa. Considerations should be made for the student's age-appropriate skills, safety, cognitive supports, and current and potential needs.

Score	Level
0	Student travels independently and efficiently in all unfamiliar travel environments commensurate with peers within their geographic area.
1	Student demonstrates skill with 1-2 prompts needed for travel in current unfamiliar environments.
2	Student demonstrates skill with 3-5 prompts needed for travel in current unfamiliar environments.
3	Student demonstrates skill with 6-7 prompts needed for travel in current unfamiliar environments.
4	Student demonstrates skill with more than 7 prompts needed for travel in current unfamiliar environments.

Score:

5. Conceptual Understanding

Select the level that best describes the student's conceptual understanding. Conceptual Understanding looks at the following concepts for development of travel skills:

- Body Awareness/Movement (understanding body planes, proprioception, etc.)
- Laterality/Directionality (left/right, up/down, compass directions, etc.)
- Quantitative/Comparative Sizes/Time/Distance (big/small, short/tall, measurement, etc.)
- Positional (90-degree turns, 180-degree turns, parallel/perpendicular, etc.)
- Environmental (descriptions of rural, urban, classroom, school, etc.)

Score	Level
0	Conceptual understanding is sufficient for development of travel skills.
1	Need exists for instruction in one area of conceptual understanding.
2	Need exists for instruction in two areas of conceptual understanding.
3	Need exists for instruction in three areas of conceptual understanding.
4	Need exists for instruction in four or more areas of conceptual understanding.

Score:

6. Complexity or Acquisition of Skill

Consider the student's skill acquisition.

- How long does it take a student to learn a new concept or environment?
- Is the student learning a complex environment?
- Do they need extra time to gain each skill?
- Is the student independently able to learn a new environment?
- Select the level that best describes the number of lessons a student needs to gain a new skill.
- If this is a student's initial O&M IEP, work with your IEP team to determine an appropriate score for this section.

Score	Level
0	Student independently learns new environments or skills with no specialized instruction.
1	Student learns new environment or skills after 1-9 lessons.
2	Student learns new environment or skills after 10-18 lessons.
3	Student learns new environment after 19-27 lessons.
4	Student learns new environment after more than 27 lessons.

Score:

7. Assistive Technology (AT)

Select the level that best describes the student's instructional level with AT (GPS, low vision aids, mobile applications, etc.) while traveling in all environments.

Score	Level
0	Student needs no instruction in the use of assistive technology (AT) or has mastered using all the features.
1	Student independently uses AT but may need a review of existing skills.
2	Student independently uses AT and needs instruction in advanced techniques.
3	Student needs instruction and is learning basic techniques for existing AT.
4	Student needs to be introduced to new AT.

Score:

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- Services may include direct instruction as related to the IEP or IFSP.
- All listed times serve as guidance.

Enter the frequency of need in the frequency of need field on page 11.

Frequency of Service Guidelines

Note: Service is considered instruction to the student. Service does not include consultation, material preparation, site preview, drive time, or assessment. Additional time should be considered in Part Two for these components.

- **Monitor:** The student does not require O&M instruction provided by a COMS at this time. Reassessment should occur if need appears to change, or student is due for reevaluation.
- **Three to Five Times per Year:** The student is instructed by the COMS three to five times per year. (Service time is dependent on concepts being taught.)
- **Three to Four Times per Semester:** The student is instructed by the COMS three to four times per semester. (Service time is dependent on concepts being taught.)
- **One to Two Times per Month:** The student is instructed by the COMS one to two times a month for 20 to 60 minutes each.
- **One to Two Times per Week:** The student is instructed by the COMS one to two times a week for 30 to 120 minutes each.
- **Two or More Times per Week:** The student is instructed by the COMS two or more times a week for 30 to 90+ minutes each.

Part Two: Additional Considerations to Support Student Success

This section documents time needed for material preparation, communication with the IEP/IFSP team or other pertinent individuals, and training of school personnel. Use this table to document time needed for non-instructional service. The service provider determines the appropriate time frame and number of minutes needed.

1. Material Preparation, Drive Time, or Training Site Preview

Estimate the time needed by the orientation and mobility specialist to ensure student materials and travel locations are appropriate and allow the time for preparing materials for equitable access for the student's O&M training. Examples of this may include modifying materials, producing tactile materials, and previewing training sites. Consider time needed for communication with complex instructional situations (alternate travel techniques, alternate modes of travel such as wheelchairs or walkers, building accessibility issues, etc.) Additional drive time may need to be considered for students who must be transported to a training site.

Check the appropriate box or boxes and describe the additional time in the in the box below.

☐ Yearly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Monthly ☐ Weekly

Notes:

2. Communication

Consider time needed for communication with members of the IEP team, other school personnel, parents/guardians, medical personnel, and any outside agencies concerning the student's O&M program. Service provider determines the appropriate time frame and number of minutes needed.

Check the appropriate box or boxes and describe the additional time in the box below.

☐ Yearly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Monthly ☐ Weekly

Notes:

3. Training for Parents, Caregivers, and School Personnel

Consider the time needed to provide parents, caregivers, and school personnel in-service training, instruction for using and supporting AT or mobility tool use, and best practices for working with a student who is BLV. Consider school personnel's experience working with a student who is BLV and knowledge of safe travel skills. Service provider determines the appropriate time frame and number of minutes needed.

Check the appropriate box or boxes and describe the additional time in the the box below.

☐ Yearly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Monthly ☐ Weekly

Notes:

Part Three: Calculating Suggested Service Time

Considerations	Time/Frequency
Frequency of Need	
Additional Considerations Time	
Suggested Service Time (Direct and Indirect)	

Service Delivery Notes