

Filing for a Recurrence



Types of Recurrence

There are two types of recurrences:

- *A recurrence of the medical condition is the documented need for additional medical treatment after release from treatment for the work related injury. Continuing treatment for the original condition is not considered a recurrence.*
- *A recurrence of disability is an inability to work after an employee has returned to work, caused by a spontaneous change in a medical condition which had resulted from a previous injury or illness without an intervening injury or new exposure to the work environment that caused the illness.*

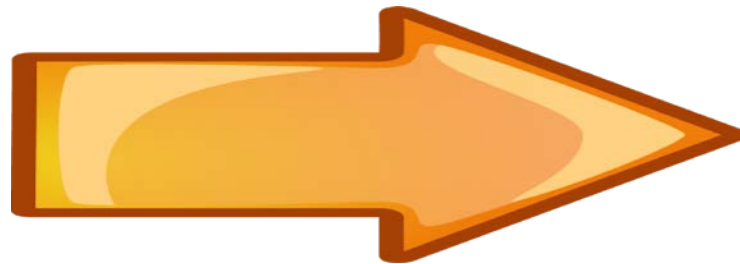


Types of Recurrence

- A recurrence of disability is also a return or increase in disability due to a consequential injury; or, a withdrawal of a specific light duty assignment when the injured worker (IW) cannot perform the full duties of the regular position. This withdrawal must have occurred for reasons other than misconduct or non-performance of job duties.
- A new injury must be reported on a new Form CA-1 or Form CA-2 even if it is to the same body part as the prior injury.

Consequential Injury

- A consequential injury is a new injury which was caused by effects of the accepted work injury.
- In these instances, the IW should not file a new Form CA-1 or Form CA-2 for a consequential injury. A Form CA-2a may be used; however, a medical report with an explanation will suffice.



Examples of Consequential Injuries

Example 1:

Due to the effects of the accepted right knee injury, IW favors his left knee which causes a meniscus tear.



Example 2:

Due to the accepted right knee injury, IW must use crutches and develops tendonitis in her right wrist/hand.

- * All claims for consequential injuries must be supported by probative medical evidence.

Intervening Injury

- An intervening injury is a new injury which is unrelated to the original one, though it may be to the same body part.
- If this injury was not sustained on the job in the performance of duty, it is not compensable.



Time Lost for Follow-up Medical Care

- Follow-up medical care for an accepted condition which causes time loss is not considered a recurrence, but part of the original injury.
- Unless the IW has been released from treatment, time loss is attributable to the original injury and claimed as such.



Filing for a Recurrence

- Complete Form CA-2a, Notice of Recurrence:
 - IW (or if incapacitated, someone on her/his behalf, including supervisor) completes front
 - Supervisor completes back
- The employing agency (EA) submits completed form to OWCP.
- IW arranges for submission of factual and medical evidence described in the form's instructions.

Filing for a Recurrence

- OWCP will not authorize medical treatment until the claim for recurrence is accepted.
- If IW was entitled to COP and 45 calendar days of COP have not been exhausted, he/she may elect to use remaining days of COP if 45 days have not elapsed since first return to work.
- IW may elect to use sick leave or annual leave pending adjudication of the claim for recurrence.

Filing for a Recurrence

- If IW is no longer employed by EA, he/she should file a Form CA-2a and submit it directly to OWCP.
- EA is not required to complete the reverse of the form.



Recurrence or New Injury?

- A clerk who injured her knee, and submitted a claim for a traumatic injury, returns to work and subsequently falls down and injures the same knee. Is this a recurrence or a new injury?
- A clerk who injured her knee, and submitted a claim for a traumatic injury, returns to work and subsequently develops pain in the same knee, with no apparent reason or cause other than the previous injury. Is this a recurrence or a new injury?

Recurrence or New Injury?

Answer

- The clerk who fell and injured the same knee has sustained a new traumatic injury. It is identifiable as to the time and place of occurrence, and arose over one work day or shift.
- The clerk who developed pain in the previously-injured knee has suffered a recurrence. There is no single event, action or apparent reason for the pain except the previous injury.

Recurrence or New Injury?

- A furniture mover, who develops a back strain from lifting over more than one work day or shift , submits a Form CA-2 and returns to work. He lifts more furniture upon his return to work. Is this a recurrence or a new injury?
- A furniture mover, who develops a back strain from lifting over more than one work day or shift, submits a Form CA-2 and returns to work. Because of his restrictions he does not lift, but develops increased pain. Is this a recurrence or a new injury?

Recurrence or New Injury?

Answer

- The furniture mover who returned to work, lifted more furniture, and reinjures his back, has sustained a new traumatic injury or occupational disease, depending on the circumstances.
- The furniture mover who returned to work, but did not continue lifting and his pain returns or worsens with no intervening cause, has suffered a recurrence.

Recurrence – Case Study #1

A custodian for the U.S. Postal Service sustains a severe burn to his left arm when he accidentally spills acid on it. He is out of work for 30 days and his claim is approved by OWCP. One week after he returns to work, his left arm becomes very painful and symptomatic in the area of the burn. He is out of work another week. His arm was covered by a bandage and was not touched by any object that he knows of. What kind of claim would this be and what form(s) should be issued?

Recurrence – Case Study #1

Answer

Since there is no apparent reason for the new condition other than the previous injury, this would be classified as a recurrence and a Form CA-2a should be issued.



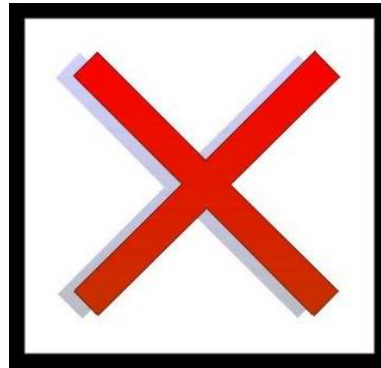
Recurrence – Case Study #2

An office worker in the Pentagon drops a box of papers and injures her left foot. She files a claim for traumatic injury which is approved by OWCP. Two months later, she rolls her desk chair over her left foot and is required to stay home once again. What kind of claim would this be and what form(s) should be issued?

Recurrence – Case Study #2

Answer

Although the injury involves the same foot, it would be classified as a new injury since the injury is caused by another event. Since it happened during a single work shift, it would be classified as a new traumatic injury. Form CA-1, Form OWCP-1500, and Form CA-17 should be issued.



Questions

There are two types of recurrences; these are a recurrence of the medical condition and a recurrence of disability. If an injured employee has a need for additional medical treatment after release from treatment for a work related injury, this would be classified as a recurrence of:

- a) The medical condition
- b) Disability

Questions

A consequential injury is a new injury which was caused by effects of the accepted work injury. In these cases, the injured employee should file a:

- a) Form CA-1, Notice of Traumatic Injury
- b) Form CA-2, Notice of Occupational Disease
- c) Form CA-2a, Notice of Recurrence

Questions

When filing a Form CA-2a, Notice of Recurrence, no medical treatment is authorized until the claim for recurrence is accepted.

- a) True
- b) False

Take Away Tips

- 1) A recurrence of the medical condition is the documented need for additional medical treatment after release from treatment for the work related injury.
- 2) A recurrence of disability is an inability to work after an employee has returned to work, caused by a spontaneous change in a medical condition which had resulted from a previous injury or illness without an intervening injury or new exposure to the work environment that caused the illness.
- 3) A consequential injury is a new injury which was caused by effects of the accepted work injury. A Form CA-2a should be used for these instances; however, a medical report with an explanation will suffice.

Take Away Tips

- 4) An intervening injury is a new injury which is unrelated to the original one, though it may be to the same body part.
- 5) Follow-up medical care for an accepted injury which causes time loss is not considered a recurrence, but part of the original injury.
- 6) OWCP will not authorize medical treatment until the claim for recurrence is accepted.
- 7) If the injured worker is no longer employed by the employing agency, he/she should file a Form CA-2a and submit it directly to OWCP. The employing agency is not required to complete the back of the form.