

OWCP

Presented by: Jennifer Nolf

Registering and filing OWCP claims

ecomp.dol.gov

- File claim on ECOMP portal
- Ecomp.dol.gov
- Must register for an account first.
- Gives claimant control of claim.
- No reliance on management to submit claim
- Allows OWCP to communicate directly with claimant.



What can I do on ECOMP?

File

- File claim forms

File

- File compensation forms

Track

- Track status of forms or documents

Upload and submit

- Electronically upload and submit documents to existing claim files

Escalate Issues

- Submit an inquiry regarding an unresolved issue

Welcome to your ECOMP Dashboard

To file a new injury/illness claim, click on the "New Claim" link above.

If you are filling a claim for COVID-19, use FORM [CA-1 COVID-19](#).

Documents upload and management may be accessed in the "Documents" link above.

Each existing injury/illness claim you have initiated can be found in the Cases tab of the table below. If you have any forms in Draft Status, they will be listed in the Draft Forms tab of the table. The Action Required tab shows if additional information is required in order to process your claim. This includes returned claim forms. If you do not respond, your entitlement to benefits may be delayed or suspended. If your Action Required tab is empty there is nothing required of you at this time.

By clicking anywhere in the row of an injury/illness claim in the table below, you will be taken to its Case Review page where you can:

- Finish filing any injury/illness claims that are in Draft status.
- View case details including the injury claim information; forms associated with the case; claim status; compensation payment tracking; compensation payment history; and from within the payment period details you may also access the compensation amount, health benefit and life insurance details, payee information, and the formula for compensation. You can also access additional billing information through the "Bill Pay Inquiry" link. Pharmacy information is available through the "Pharmacy Benefit" link.
- File associated claim forms, such as a CA-7 Claim for Compensation, using the "New Case Form" drop down button within the Forms tab of the Case Review page.
- Review and respond to case letters and requests for information. If OWCP needs information to process your claim, the request letter will appear in the Response Required tab. If the request is overdue it will appear in the Overdue Request tab. If you do not respond to these items, your entitlement to benefits may be delayed or suspended. Letters that are informative and require no response appear in the Informational Letters tab.

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Cases (3)

Draft Forms (0)

Action Required (0)

Once you verify your identity in ECOMP, you will have access to case information and letters from OWCP. First, select the case under the

- ▶ Traumatic Injury: Defined as a wound or other condition of the body caused during one work day or shift. Identifiable as to time and place of occurrence.
- ▶ Occupational: work factors, exposure, or injuries over more than a shift

1. How to differentiate between traumatic injuries and Occupational Disease

5 Basis Elements Required

1. Time to Submit Claim
 - a) Continuation of pay -----30 days
 - b) Compensation (inc. medical)----- 3 year
2. Civil Service Employee
3. Fact of Injury
4. Performance of Duty
5. Causal Relationship

Requirements of Every Claim

- ▶ Time
 - ▶ Must file within three years of injury or awareness of the injury being work-related, or;
 - ▶ If agency has actual knowledge of injury within thirty days, then claim may be filed anytime
- ▶ Civil Employee
 - ▶ Does not cover active military
 - ▶ Does cover volunteers for US Government
- ▶ Facts of Injury
 - ▶ Injury must be substantiated but not necessarily witnessed
 - ▶ Medical Diagnosis from physician must be present

Requirements of Every Claim

- ▶ Performance of duty (not a medical Decision)
 - ▶ Injury arose “in the course of employment”
 - ▶ Generally, happened at work
 - ▶ “Incidental to Employment” is covered: fall in bathroom, wet floors, coffee burns, falls on stairs
 - ▶ Injury must arise “out of the employment”
 - ▶ Related to actual duties, not administrative matters
 - ▶ Emotional Stress claims often denied for this reason
- ▶ Casual Relationship (medical evidence)
 - ▶ Medical evidence must state diagnosis is causally related to employment. Rationale required in complex cases

Is “pain” alone a compensable condition?(Fact Of Injury)

- ▶ No. Pain is considered a symptom, not a diagnosis
- ▶ A medical condition, however minor or seemingly incongruous, must be stated. Findings of pain or discomfort alone don not satisfy the medical aspect of the fact of injury determination

- FECA Procedure Manuel 2-803-3

Examples of Traumatic Injuries

- ▶ Back Strains
- ▶ Knee, shoulder, ankle strains
- ▶ Exposure to fumes, dust, smoke (within one shift).
- ▶ Acoustic trauma (explosion, noise).
- ▶ Traumatic stress (angry customer/co-worker/supervisor)

CA-2

- ▶ Occupational Disease: A condition of the body obtained over the course of more than one work day or shift. Generally a result of repeated stress, strain or exposure to factors of employment.

CA-2a

- ▶ Recurrence: A spontaneous return of symptoms without any intervening action.
- ▶ Consequential Injury: An injury to another body part resulting from the original injury.
- ▶ Intervening Injury: An off the job injury to the same body part as the original claim.

Basic and Extended Occupational Diseases (CA-2)

- ▶ Orthopedic strains caused by repetitive trauma
- ▶ Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- ▶ Tarsal Tunnel and Plantar Fascitis
- ▶ Eye Strain
- ▶ Exposure to fumes, dust, smoke (more than one shift)

Basic and Extended Occupational Diseases (CA-2)

-Extended almost always require a second opinion to be set up by DOL

- ▶ Hearing loss
- ▶ Asbestosis
- ▶ Emotional Stress
- ▶ Sick building Syndrome

(*Sick building syndrome (SBS)* is a combination of ailments associated with an individual's place of work (office building) or residence.)

Filling out the Forms

Key pieces of Information

- ▶ Time Limitations
- ▶ Employee Narratives
- ▶ Medical Narratives

Filling out the Forms

► Employee Narratives

When filing a claim for workers' compensation, it is generally necessary to develop two different types of employee narrative. The first would involve a step-by-step breakdown of your job duties for your doctor to refer to. You should keep in mind that most people do not understand what must take place for mail to show up in their mailbox. Avoid “postal phrases” when explaining your job to your physician. The second narrative will focus on what parts of your job you find to be responsible for either causing or aggravating the medical condition that you are claiming as an occupational disease.

Filling out the Forms

► Medical/Physicians Narratives

The key to having a claim accepted by OWCP rests with the medical evidence. As a result, the medical narrative, submitted by your treating physician, is of the utmost importance. (checklist)

Which forms to use for each kind of injury

-For Traumatic Injury (TI)

- ▶ A CA-1 should be filled out to create the case, Continuation of Pay (COP) is paid, first 10 days they are absent up to 45 calendar days total
- ▶ A CA-16 authorizing medical care for up to 60 days or until case is accepted.

- For Occupational Disease (OD)

- ▶ A CA-2, similar to a CA-1 but (more detailed)
- ▶ No COP or CA-16 for OD Claims

What if the wrong form is submitted?

- ▶ A CA-1's which describes an occupational disease can be created as a new CA-2 and COP will be denied.
- ▶ A CA-2a (notice of recurrence) which describes a new injury will be developed, but probably denied.
- ▶ Encourage injured worker to file the correct form but DOL will make decision.
- ▶ Management must ensure the claimant completes their portion of any form.

Claims Requirements

- ▶ Diagnosis
- ▶ Objective Findings
- ▶ Causal Relationship
 - ▶ Medical Rationale

Claims Requirements

► Diagnosis

You must ensure that your physician provides: a clear diagnosis of your medical condition (please note that pain is not a diagnosis; it is a symptom), all the objective test results that support the diagnosis, and his rationalized medical opinion about the relationship between your condition and what you relay as having occurred that one day at work.

Claims Requirements

- ▶ Causal Relationship
 - ▶ Medical Rationale

There are four factors to be considered before, the causal relationship between the condition claimed and the injury or disease sustained is examined. Unlike “fact of injury” which involves the determination that a medical condition is present, “causal relationship” involves the establishment of a connection between the injury and the condition found. This factor is based entirely on the medical evidence provided by physicians who have examined and treated the employee.

Can the Agency challenge a claim?

- ▶ Yes, but they cannot refuse to complete and process any paperwork.
- ▶ Agency has only ten working days to submit CA-1's and CA-2's to DFEC.
- ▶ Claimant and Agency should keep a copy of everything sent to DFEC.

SEND

- ▶ CA-1, CA-2, CA-2a, CA-7, should all be sent to Jacksonville, FL with pertinent documents.
- ▶ If it is a new claim, you may attach pertinent statements and medical records to the CA-1 or CA-2 and send them to Jacksonville, FL.
- ▶ Once a case number has been assigned, All Non-CA forms and info should be sent to London, KY
- ▶ If it is a new injury and no case number has been assigned yet, the Agency should keep all new paperwork until a case number is created.

Benefits

- ▶ Lost Wages/Compensation
- ▶ Leave Buy Back
- ▶ Schedule Awards
- ▶ Medical / Surgical
 - ▶ Physician
 - ▶ Authorization
 - ▶ Bill Payment

Benefits

► Lost Wages/Compensation

Compensation for disability is designed to compensate the disabled employee for the loss of earning capacity which he or she suffers as a result of an on-the-job injury. Compensation is claimed through the submission of a Form CA-7.

Benefits

► Lost Wages

Compensation begins after a three calendar-day waiting period.

This waiting period begins on the first day or partial day of wage loss following the day or shift during which the injury occurred. However, the waiting period is waived if the period of wage loss exceeds 14 calendar days or if OWCP determines that the employee has a permanent disability. For those employees who have received Continuation of Pay (COP) and whose disability continues beyond the 45 days, the waiting period begins on the 46th day. However, the three-day waiting period is waived if the period of wage loss exceeds 14 calendar days (which begins on the 46th day for employees who have received COP) or if OWCP determines that the employee has a permanent disability.

Benefits

► Leave Buy Back

When an employee elects to use sick or annual leave during the period of disability, he or she may later, with the concurrence of the employing agency, claim compensation for the period of disability and “buy back” the leave used.

Benefits

► Schedule Awards

Compensation is provided for specified periods of time for the permanent loss or loss of use

of certain members, organs, and functions of the body. Such loss or loss of use is known as permanent impairment.

Benefits

- ▶ Medical / Surgical
 - ▶ Physician
 - ▶ Authorization
 - ▶ Bill Payment

The FECA authorizes medical services for treatment of any condition that is causally related to factors of Federal employment. No limit is imposed on the amount of medical expenses or the length of time for which they are paid, as long as the charges represent the reasonable and customary fees for the services involved and the need for the treatment can be shown.

Benefits payable under the Act

- ▶ Paid by Department of Labor:
 1. Pay medical bills
 2. Compensation for wage loss (partial or total)
 3. Awards for permanent impairment of a limb or organ due to a injury (Schedule Awards)

Benefits payable under the Act

► Paid by Employing Agency

1. Continuation of Pay first 45 calendar days following traumatic injury
2. Anything that meets the five requirements
3. No lifetime “caps”
4. No mandatory age to retire
5. Compensation is not taxable
6. Claimant is not responsible for difference between our fee schedule and what a medical provider charges
7. Death benefits if worker is killed while performing duties or dies as a result of an accepted injury

Pre-existing Conditions

- ▶ If a worker's injury is an aggravation of a pre-existing condition, benefits are the same as for a brand new injury
- ▶ However, once the aggravation resolves, benefits are no longer payable
- ▶ Can be traumatic or occupational
- ▶ Physician should be clear about what aspects of the patient's condition is pre-existing and what has been aggravated
- ▶ History of prior conditions and pertinent medical records are required

Myths about FECA

1. Retired employees may not file claims
 - Yes, they can (may or may not be compensable)
2. Medical evidence must be obtained before the CA-1 is completed and sent to FECA
 - Medical evidence is needed for acceptance
3. FECA “takes sides” in adjudication
 - Examiners attempt to be objective
4. If time limits expire on appeal rights, no recourse
 - This is to be decided in the appeals process

Continuation of Pay

► Requirements for Entitlement

- Must have a traumatic injury.
- CA-1 must be submitted within 30 days of the Date of Injury.
- Medical documentation supporting disability must be submitted within 10 days.
- Disability must begin within 45 days of injury.

Reasons for Refusal

- ▶ Not traumatic.
- ▶ Employee not a citizen of the US.
- ▶ Claim not filed within 30 days.
- ▶ Claim not filed until employment terminated
- ▶ Not in performance of duty.
- ▶ Caused by willful misconduct, intent to harm or kill self or others, or by intoxication.
- ▶ First work stoppage occurred more than 45 days following the injury.

Reasons for Stopping COP

- ▶ Medical evidence not received within 10 calendar days.
- ▶ Medical evidence supports that employee is not disabled.
- ▶ Employee refused suitable employment
- ▶ There is no loss in pay.
- ▶ Term of employment has expired.
- ▶ OWCP directs the employer to stop COP.
- ▶ 45 days of COP has expired.

Calculation of COP

- ▶ The pay rate for COP purposes is equal to the employee's regular "weekly" pay (the average of the weekly pay over the preceding 52 weeks). The pay excludes overtime pay, but includes other applicable extra pay except to the extent prohibited by law. Changes in pay or salary (for example, promotion, demotion, within grade increases, termination of a temporary detail, etc.) which would have otherwise occurred during the 45-day period are to be reflected in the weekly pay determination.

Calculation of COP

- ▶ Full Time Regular Carriers
- ▶ Part Time Flexibles
- ▶ Transitional Employees

Calculation of COP

1. For full or part-time workers (permanent or temporary) who work the same number of hours each week of the year, the weekly pay rate is the hourly pay rate (A) in effect on the date of injury multiplied by (x) the number of hours worked each week (B): $A \times B = \text{weekly pay rate}$.
2. For part-time workers (permanent or temporary) who do not work the same number of hours each week, but who do work each week of the year (or period of appointment), the weekly pay rate is an average of the weekly earnings, established by dividing (\div) the total earnings (excluding overtime) from the year immediately preceding the injury (A) by the number of weeks (or partial weeks) worked in that year (B): $A \div B = \text{Weekly Pay Rate}$.

Rehabilitation

► Limited Duty

When an employee has partially recovered from a compensable disability, the Postal Service must make every effort toward assigning the employee to limited duty consistent with the employee's medically defined work limitation tolerance. In assigning such limited duty, the Postal Service should minimize any adverse or disruptive impact on the employee. The following considerations must be made in creating such limited duty assignments for current employees:

Rehabilitation

► Permanent Reassignment

Once a claimant has reached maximum medical improvement or the effects of the injury are considered permanent, the Postal Service will attempt to accommodate the injured employee with a permanent assignment. The procedures listed above for limited duty purposes also cover permanent rehabilitation assignments.

Rehabilitation

► Vocational Rehabilitation

The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) emphasizes returning partially disabled workers to suitable employment through vocational rehabilitation efforts and determining the worker's wage earning capacity on the basis of that employment.

When it appears that the claimant's work-related injury will prevent return to the job held when injured, vocational rehabilitation services are provided to assist the claimant in returning to suitable work. The Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) provides for the imposition of certain penalties against workers who refuse vocational rehabilitation service