

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

In the Matter of EDWARD F. SMITH and DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,
IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE, San Francisco, Calif.

*Docket No. 97-731; Submitted on the Record;
Issued October 26, 1998*

DECISION and ORDER

Before WILLIE T.C. THOMAS, MICHAEL E. GROOM,
BRADLEY T. KNOTT

The issue is whether appellant met his burden of proof in establishing that he sustained a cardiovascular condition causally related to factors of his federal employment.

On March 15, 1994 appellant, an information officer, filed a claim for an occupational disease, Form CA-2, alleging that after inadvertently lifting a large quantity of packages from a cart on March 10, 1994, he experienced pain in the upper shoulder and chest and a tingling sensation in his left arm. Appellant stopped working on March 10, 1994, sought medical treatment and returned to work on March 15, 1994.

By decision dated September 12, 1996, the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs denied the claim, finding that the medical evidence failed to establish that appellant sustained a cardiovascular condition that was causally related to factors of federal employment.

The Board has duly reviewed the case record and finds that appellant has not established he sustained a cardiovascular condition causally related to factors of federal employment.

To establish that an injury was sustained in the performance of duty, an appellant must submit the following: (1) medical evidence establishing the presence or existence of the condition, for which compensation is claimed; (2) a factual statement identifying employment factors alleged to have caused or contributed to the condition; and (3) medical evidence establishing that the employment factors identified by the claimant were the proximate cause of the condition, for which compensation is claimed or, stated differently, medical evidence establishing that the diagnosed condition is causally related to the employment factors identified by the claimant. The medical evidence required to establish causal relationship, generally, is rationalized medical evidence. Rationalized medical opinion evidence is medical evidence, which includes a physician's rationalized opinion on the issue of whether there is a causal relationship between appellant's diagnosed condition and the implicated employment factors. The opinion of the physician must be based on a complete factual and medical background of the

claimant, must be one of reasonable medical certainty and must be supported by medical rationale explaining the nature of the relationship between the diagnosed condition and the specific employment factors identified by appellant.¹

In the present case, the medical evidence appellant submitted does not contain any rationalized opinion from a physician addressing how appellant's cardiovascular condition is causally related to factors of federal employment. Appellant submitted hospital progress notes, discharge summaries and results of diagnostic tests dated from March 10 through 25, 1994. While these medical records document that appellant had hypertensive cardiovascular disease, hypertension, substernal chest pain and possible angina and one of the hospital records dated March 24, 1994 described appellant's symptoms of sharp arm and chest pain and tingling resulting from lifting a heavy object at work none of the medical evidence addresses how appellant's cardiovascular condition was caused by appellant's lifting incident at work or any other factors of his federal employment.

By letter dated July 30, 1996, the Office informed appellant of the type of medical evidence needed to establish his claim for a cardiovascular condition, but appellant did not submit evidence responsive to the request. As appellant has not submitted sufficient medical evidence establishing that his cardiovascular condition was causally related to factors of his federal employment, he has failed to establish his claim.

The decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs dated September 12, 1996 is hereby affirmed.

Dated, Washington, D.C.
October 26, 1998

Willie T.C. Thomas
Alternate Member

Michael E. Groom
Alternate Member

Bradley T. Knott
Alternate Member

¹ See *Victor J. Woodhams*, 41 ECAB 345, 352 (1989).