

claim on March 14, 2013. The record for this other claim is not before the Board in the present appeal.

On appeal, appellant's counsel maintains that appellant is entitled to a greater impairment rating based on a March 14, 2013 second opinion evaluation. It appears that claim number xxxxxx654 contains evidence pertinent to the present claim. Under its procedures, OWCP has determined that cases should be combined where a new injury case is reported for an employee who previously filed an injury claim for a similar condition or the same part of the body.² In the instant appeal, for a full and fair adjudication, appellant's hearing loss claims should be combined pursuant to OWCP's procedures. This will allow OWCP to consider all relevant claim files in developing appellant's claim. Moreover, to consider appellant's appeal at this stage would involve a piecemeal adjudication of the issues in this case and raise the possibility of inconsistent results. It is the Board's policy to avoid such an outcome.³

Accordingly, the Board will remand the case to OWCP for doubling of claim number xxxxxx654 with the current claim number xxxxxx830. Following this and such other development as deemed necessary, OWCP shall issue a *de novo* decision on appellant's claim for hearing loss.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the February 5, 2015 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is set aside and the case remanded to OWCP for further proceedings consistent with this order of the Board.

² Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8(c)(1) (February 2000).

³ See *William T. McCracken*, 33 ECAB 1197 (1982).

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Christopher J. Godfrey, Chief Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Patricia H. Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Colleen Duffy Kiko, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board