



BLBA BULLETIN NO. 24-01

Issue Date: September 20, 2024

Expiration Date: Indefinite

Subject: Modification of procedures for requesting and processing of form SSA-581-OP 135.

Background: The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides a miner's earnings records to the Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation (DCMWC) upon receipt of a completed, signed, and accurate form SSA-581. The miner's entire wage history, starting at age 16, was initially requested on one SSA-581 form. This could include pre-1978 quarterly earnings, as well as post-1977 annual earnings. Prior to 1978, SSA earnings records reflected quarterly earnings for each calendar year. Beginning in 1978, they discontinued quarterly reporting and only recorded yearly earnings. Retrieving pre-1978 quarterly earnings required a review of archived historical data, sometimes on microfiche, leading to delays in obtaining the earnings records. In contrast, the electronic version of the post-1978 earnings is easily accessible. To mitigate delays, DCMWC began requesting pre-1978 quarterly earnings on a separate SSA-581 form, aiming for an expedited response for the post-1977 annual earnings record. However, DCMWC continued to experience delays in receiving pre-1978 quarterly earnings records. SSA has since remedied the issue that caused delays, eliminating the need for Claims Staff to submit two SSA-581 forms for earnings record requests.

Purpose: To streamline procedures for obtaining, completing, and referring SSA-581 forms to the Social Security Administration.

References: 725.404(a)

Applicability: Appropriate DCMWC personnel.

Action: Effective immediately, DCMWC staff will discontinue forwarding two SSA-581 forms when requesting earnings records.

Claims Staff will follow the steps outlined below to complete form SSA-581 processing:

1. Initial claim application submitted with one SSA-581 form requesting entire earnings record:

- a. If the SSA-581 form is complete and requires no changes, Claims Staff will sign, date, and forward the SSA-581 form to SSA to obtain the miners' earnings record.
 - i. Claims Staff will update CAPS with the diary action code (DAC) "581" (DAC Definition: Start and End dates – The OIS Submission Date of the SSA 581.)

- ii. Claims Staff forwarding the SSA-581 form to Social Security will update CAPS with the diary action code “581S” (DAC Definition: Start date – The date the signed SSA-581 form is sent to SSA. End date – The date the Social Security earnings record is submitted in OIS).

2. SSA-581 received is incomplete or requires changes:

- a. Claims Staff will request a completed SSA-581 form from the filing party. If earnings from 1977 and prior to are required, Claims Staff will request those years on the same SSA-581 form used to request earnings for 1978 and after.
 - i. The Claims Staff will update CAPS with diary action code “581” (DAC Definition: Start date – the date the SSA-581 is sent to the filing party for completion. End date – the date the completed SSA-581 is submitted in OIS).
 - ii. Assuming the SSA-581 is filled out correctly and requires no changes, Claims Staff will sign and date the form and forward it to SSA to obtain the miners’ earnings records.
 - iii. Claims Staff forwarding the SSA-581 form to Social Security will update CAPS with the diary action code “581S” (DAC Definition: Start date – the date the signed SSA-581 form is sent to SSA. End date – the date the Social Security earnings record is submitted in OIS).

3. No SSA-581 submitted with the initial claim application:

- a. Claims Staff will request a completed SSA-581 form from the filing party. If earnings from 1977 and prior to are required, Claims Staff will request those years on the same SSA-581 form used to request earnings for 1978 and after.
 - i. The Claims Staff will update CAPS with diary action code “581” (DAC Definition: Start date – the date the SSA-581 is sent to the filing party for completion. End date – the date the completed SSA-581 is submitted in OIS).
 - ii. Assuming the SSA-581 is filled out correctly and requires no changes, Claims Staff will sign and date the form and forward it to SSA to obtain the miners’ earnings records.
 - iii. Claims Staff forwarding the SSA-581 form to Social Security will update CAPS with the diary action code “581S” (DAC Definition: Start date – the date the signed SSA-581 form is sent to SSA. End date – the date the Social Security earnings record is submitted in OIS).

Disposition: Retain this bulletin until incorporated into the DCMWC Procedure Manual.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael A. Chance', with a stylized, cursive script.

MICHAEL A. CHANCE
Director, Division of Coal
Mine Workers' Compensation

Distribution: All DCMWC Staff