

U. S. Department of Labor

Office of Workers' Compensation Programs
Division of Federal Employees', Longshore
and Harbor Workers' Compensation
Washington, DC 20210



November 9, 2021

INDUSTRY NOTICE No. 186

TO: EMPLOYERS AND INSURANCE CARRIERS UNDER THE LONGSHORE AND HARBOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT (LHWCA) AND LHWCA EXTENSIONS, AND OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS

SUBJECT: Employees' Compensation and Management Portal (ECOMP)

PURPOSE: To announce that the Longshore Program now offers access to the Employees' Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP) to claimants, beneficiaries, and certain representatives who register for access to ECOMP. Registered users will be able to securely view case data in LHWCA cases.

BACKGROUND: On October 31, 2014, we announced the launch of the Secure Electronic Access Portal (SEAPortal), which currently allows parties to submit case-related documents electronically, including those documents which initially cause a new case file to be created. But SEAPortal does not provide parties with the ability to view case information.

On June 23, 2021, the Longshore Program joined other OWCP programs to offer claimants online access to details of their case files through ECOMP. We have now added a new component of ECOMP that enables registered, designated representatives (called "entities" in the ECOMP system) the same online access to basic case information. That information includes the parties to the claim, date of injury, type of injury, and the associated governing Act. Longshore Special Fund recipients will also have access to their payment history from the Fund. The information is available for each claim a claimant may have.

Please note that currently, ECOMP is only available to claimants with a Social Security Number (SSN).

STEPS FOR CLAIMANT USERS:

There are two steps claimants must follow to gain access to ECOMP:

Step 1 Register: The claimant accesses ECOMP at <https://dlhwc.dol.gov/#/>. To register, the claimant selects the "Register" button at the bottom of the webpage and then completes the "Account Basics," including full name, address, and DOB. To complete registration, the claimant must create a confidential password for future access to the ECOMP system.

Step 2 ID Verify: To access information about their Longshore claim(s), the claimant must verify their identity in ECOMP after registering for an account. A claimant will only have to do this one time. Once their identity has been verified, the claimant will be able to sign in with only their username (email address) and password in the future.

STEPS FOR ENTITY USERS:

Beginning in November, the Entity Management System will become available. This feature allows designated representatives, such as law firms, union representatives, or individual attorneys, to access case data.

Under the applicable regulations, a person who has filed a claim with the Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), "may be represented in any proceeding under the Act by an attorney or other person previously authorized in writing by such claimant, ... to so act." 20 CFR § 702.131. While claimants are not required to select a representative in order to file or process their Longshore claim, they do have the option to request a representative at any time during the life of their claim.

A. Entity Organization Creation

For ECOMP purposes, a representative is referred to as an "entity." A new ECOMP user who wishes to create an entity will first need to create a new account and then proceed through the identity verification process. The new user will need to provide their date of birth and social security number in order to complete the identity verification process. OWCP does not store social security numbers for these users; they are used only during the initial identity verification process. After completion of the identity verification process, the new user will have the option to create a new entity.

1. The new entity user will be prompted to provide basic registration information, including organization name, organization type and which OWCP program(s) they are registering with. The available entity organization types for Longshore are Law Firm/Attorney, Union, and Authorized Representative (e.g. a family member who the claimant has authorized to represent them).
2. The new entity user will be allowed to request that claimants contact them prior to designating them as an entity in ECOMP. An affirmative selection will generate a prompt for the claimant to verify that they have contacted the entity prior to attempting to link with them in ECOMP, but OWCP cannot enforce this contact requirement.
3. Prior to creating the entity account, the user will be required to agree to two conditions of use for Longshore claims:
 - a. Acknowledge that the information provided is correct and that the user is assuming responsibility for the entity and will be the Entity Manager.
 - b. The entity will be visible and selectable for assignment.
4. Upon completion of this process, the entity organization will be created in ECOMP. This process is self-executing.

B. Entity Organization Maintenance

Once the entity organization is created several features are available to the Entity Manager.

1. The Entity Manager can view the active users in the entity, view pending (and rejected) requests to join the entity, and invite members to join the entity.

If additional members are invited (or if an entity user requests to join the entity), the entity organization must be reviewed by an OWCP program administrator. A request will be sent to the administrator and the Entity Manager will be notified that the request is pending review. The administrator may reach out to the Entity Manager directly before approving (or denying) the request. This administrative approval process will be used to help ensure that duplicate entity organizations are not inadvertently created; however, this administrative review process in no way means that OWCP is endorsing services of the entity organization; rather, the review and approval is administrative in nature.

Note – The ability to add additional members to the organization is not enabled for the entity type Authorized Representative since this is a single person, unlike Law Firm and Union organizations, which may include multiple individuals.

2. If new members are added to the entity, the Entity Manager can designate specific individuals as additional Entity Managers. In addition, the Entity Manager will decide if the new entity member will be available for selection by claimant users. For example, in a law firm entity, the Entity Manager may decide to have the attorneys available for selection by claimants, but not the paralegals or the administrative staff.
3. The Entity Manager can update the entity's basic information, to include contact information such as address, phone number or website.
 - ***NOTE*** – *Changing the entity's address in the entity's profile in ECOMP will NOT update the representative's address in the OWCP case file(s) to which that entity is assigned. The mailing address in ECOMP and OWCS (Longshore's claims system) are not integrated. If the mailing address for the representative changes, that change must be submitted by the representative to OWCP outside the ECOMP system.*
4. The Entity Manager can update the claimant contact preference that alerts the claimant whether contact with the entity is requested prior to selection in ECOMP.
5. The Entity Manager can update the visibility configurations:
 - a. Case Visibility – Full visibility allows all members of the entity to access and view the claimant's case file, e.g. all members of a law firm. Partial visibility allows only the specifically designated representative chosen by the claimant as the primary contact to view the claimant's case file, e.g. the specific lawyer chosen by the claimant. This functionality is restricted for Union entity types since the claimant will be required to choose a single primary contact; the entire union will not have access to the case unlike a law firm. This setting is also not applicable to the entity type Authorized Representative since this entity type consists of only one individual.
 - b. Claimant Visibility – This setting allows the user to choose whether the entity will be visible for selection by a claimant. The default will be set to Yes, and the entity will be visible in search results and a claimant will be able to select the entity. If the setting is changed to No, the entity will not show in any search results. While the expectation is that most entities will choose to be visible to claimants, this option is available for users who may wish only to represent a specific claimant, and once that claimant selection has been

processed the user does not wish to be available for other claimants to choose.

- c. Entity Visibility - This setting allows the user to choose whether the entity will be visible to other users to request to join the entity. The default will be set to Yes, and the entity will be visible in search results and allow other registered users to request to join the entity. If the setting is changed to No, the entity will not be shown in any search results. While the expectation is that most entities will choose to be visible to other users so that they can request to join, this option is available for entities who may not wish to display in any search results once all members of the organization have been added to the entity.

C. Joining an Existing Entity Organization

A new ECOMP user who wishes to join an existing entity organization will first need to create a new account and then proceed through the identity verification process as described in Section A. After completing the identity verification process, the new user will have the option to join an existing entity. The join request will be sent to the Entity Manager(s), who will confirm or reject the request.

D. Entity Functionality

1. All members of an entity organization have a case dashboard. This dashboard lists all cases associated with that entity (where the claimant has designated a representative in ECOMP and the representative has agreed to represent the claimant). For each assigned case, the designated representative will be able to view case information. The case file data available to the representative is the exact same as what is viewable by the claimant.
2. The entity members can also view new claimant requests that they be designated for representation and agree to represent the claimant or reject the request. The claimant will be notified via email of the decision. If the designation is denied, the representative must provide a reason, and this reason will be provided to the claimant.
3. The entity member can also use their case dashboard to disassociate from a case at any time, which would immediately remove the entity member's ability to access the case.

E. Selection by Claimant

While claimants are not required to select a representative in order to file or process their claim, they have the option to request a representative at any time in the life of their claim. A claimant will be advised that designating an entity representative in ECOMP does **NOT** mean that that individual or group has agreed to represent the claimant.

If a claimant wants to designate a representative who is not registered in ECOMP, they may continue to submit that designation in writing to OWCP in the same manner they always have – outside of ECOMP Entity. Claimants who have previously designated representatives for their case files will not be required to go through the ECOMP designation process to continue representation by the same representative. But if that representative wants access to a claimant's case through ECOMP, the claimant must be fully registered in ECOMP and

use the process outlined below. There is no other alternative for the representative to gain access through ECOMP.

A registered claimant who wishes to associate with an entity representative in ECOMP must complete the following steps for each case.

1. For each case, the claimant will be able to see if a representative is already connected to that case in ECOMP. If a representative is not currently connected with that case in ECOMP, the claimant is presented with the option to select a representative.
2. Designating a representative occurs on a case-by-case basis; if the claimant wishes to have a representative on multiple cases, they will have to designate the representative individually in each case.
3. If an entity is currently associated with a case, the claimant will be able to view information regarding the designated representative at any time. If a representative has been designated, the case page will show the representative's name as well as an option to revoke the association. The claimant can revoke the association at any time, and doing so will immediately remove the entity's ability to access case data.
4. The claimant will be required to choose a primary contact and whether to restrict case access to only that specific individual (e.g. a specific attorney), or allow full visibility for the entity (e.g. all members in the law firm). For union representatives, the claimant will be required to choose a primary contact; full visibility for the entire organization is not an option. For the entity type Authorized Representative, there is only the single primary contact since this entity type consists of only one individual.
5. The claimant will be advised that the representative will be able to view the case data in ECOMP in the same way the claimant is able to.
6. The claimant will be notified that OWCP does not endorse or promote any of the representatives who are registered in ECOMP and that OWCP cannot require that a representative accept a request for representation.
7. The claimant will be asked to confirm that they previously contacted the representative, if the entity organization chose this option when creating the entity.
8. Prior to confirming the representative, the claimant will be required to read and confirm understanding that while a representative is not required in order to file or pursue a claim, they are choosing to have a representative assist them. The claimant will be advised that the representative has the authority to view data in the case.

F. Longshore Claims Staff Actions

Three new memos have been created to document case specific actions within ECOMP's Entity Management System:

1. ECOMP Entity Transaction Memo – This memo will be added to the OWCP case file when any entity related case specific transaction occurs in ECOMP, such as:
 - Representation Requested (when a claimant first chooses a representative);

- Representation Request Denied (when a representative denies a claimant's request for representation, in which case the reason for the denial will show on the memo);
 - Representation Request Revoked by Claimant (when the claimant revokes a request for representation prior to the representative deciding); or
 - Entity primary contact or visibility selections are updated by the claimant (e.g. if claimant changes to full visibility for the entity).
2. Authorization of Representative Memo – This memo will be added to the case file after the claimant has chosen a representative in ECOMP and the representative has agreed to represent the claimant in ECOMP. A task will be generated for the claims staff to alert them of the authorization.
 3. Removal of Representation Memo – This memo will be used to document that a representative is no longer associated with a case. This may stem from an action by the claimant or by the representative. If either removes the association, all case access for the representative is terminated. This memo will document the specific transaction and will be placed into the file.

G. Training videos and Help Available Online

Help guides are available in ECOMP to assist claimants and representatives in this process. Step-by-step video instructions for claimant specific questions will be contained in ECOMP's Help site. New and existing representatives will also find step-by-step instructions on creating and joining entities in ECOMP. These and other guides can be found by selecting the "HELP" menu in the upper right-hand corner of the page (this HELP menu is available on every page of the Longshore ECOMP site).

Obtaining basic case information online through ECOMP is faster than contacting Longshore district suboffices and is available around the clock. We encourage all claimants to use ECOMP.

We anticipate future improvements and enhancements to ECOMP as technological capabilities improve. All questions concerning ECOMP should be directed to the district suboffices.

ANTONIO RIOS
Director, Division of
Federal Employees, Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation