



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP)

## Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Webinar Series

# 2021 Stakeholder Update

Presented by:

**Christopher Godfrey, Director; OWCP**

**Rachel Pond, Director; DEEOIC**

**Douglas Pennington, Deputy Director; DEEOIC**



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# Opening Remarks

Christopher Godfrey, Director; OWCP



## Benefits Paid (to date)

- **Part B Compensation:**
  - \$7.3 billion dollars
- **Part E Compensation:**
  - \$5.6 billion dollars
- **Medical Benefits:**
  - \$7 billion dollars
- **Total Compensation + Medical Benefits Paid:**
  - \$19.8 billion dollars
- **Cases Filed:**
  - 220,000
- **Claimants Paid:**
  - 127,000





## Benefits Paid (Fiscal Year 2020)

- **Part B Compensation:**
  - \$272 million dollars
- **Part E Compensation:**
  - \$376 million dollars
- **Medical Benefits:**
  - \$788 million dollars
- **Total Compensation + Medical Benefits Paid:**
  - \$1.4 billion dollars





# Pandemic Related Updates

## Continuation of Operations:

- Employee telework (100% since March 2020).
- No date set to resume in-office operations, once in-office operations resume, most employees will be working in the office 1 day per week.
- All active paper case files have been scanned into the OWCP Imaging System (OIS) and are now available for staff to access remotely.
- Employees have demonstrated the ability to maintain quality & timeliness while in a 100% telework posture.





## Pandemic Related Updates (Continued)

### Continuation of Operations:

- Outreach has shifted from in-person events to monthly webinars, which regularly have between 100 to over 200 participants.
  - DEEOIC plans to continue webinars even after in-person events eventually resume
- Resource Centers remained available to assist claimants by phone and effective May 5<sup>th</sup>, have been available to assist claimants through in-person pre-scheduled appointments





## DEEOIC Future Plans

- All Energy claims are now distributed based on nationwide staffing, and not geographically, resulting in claims examiners having more equitable caseloads in every office.
- OWCP is currently working across programs to allow claimants access to the case files electronically. This is expected to begin for employee-claimants in Fiscal Year 2022.
- OWCP is placing a greater focus on training its employees on all aspects of procedures, including customer service, through various mechanisms, including web-based training modules, and hands-on training through the use of tools such as Microsoft Teams.





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# Program Updates

Rachel Pond, Director; DEEOIC

&

Douglas Pennington, Deputy Director, DEEOIC





## EEOICPA Information

- Administered by the Labor Department's Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation (DEEOIC).
- Provides lump-sum compensation and medical benefits to current and former nuclear weapons workers.
- Survivors of qualified workers may also be entitled to benefits.





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## Our Mission

**Our mission is to protect the interests of workers who were injured or became ill on the job, or their families, by making timely, appropriate, and accurate decisions on claims and providing prompt payment of benefits to eligible claimants.**



# Additional Pandemic Related Updates

## Claims Processing:

- The Program is still experiencing some delays related to the closing of the Federal Records Centers (FRC) and delays in obtaining records from the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Social Security Administration (SSA).
- Claims development will resume upon receipt of delayed evidence.
- Contact the District Office to request a status of your claim: 1 (888) 805-3389.





# Quality Assurance

- Enhance the District Office, Final Adjudication Branch and Medical Benefit Adjudication Units work product(s) by identifying opportunities for improvement at all levels and ensuring consistency in programmatic outcomes.
- Review case files based on a recurring random sample on an established bi-weekly schedule.
- Assess the overall accuracy and written quality of information communicated in correspondence, decisions and other written work products contained in case records.



## Quality Assurance (continued)

For FY 2021, the planned review target breakdown:

- **DO Recommended Decisions (RDs)**
- **FAB Final Decisions**
- **MBAU Letter Decisions/RDs**





## Important Update

### National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) Cybersecurity Modernization Initiative:

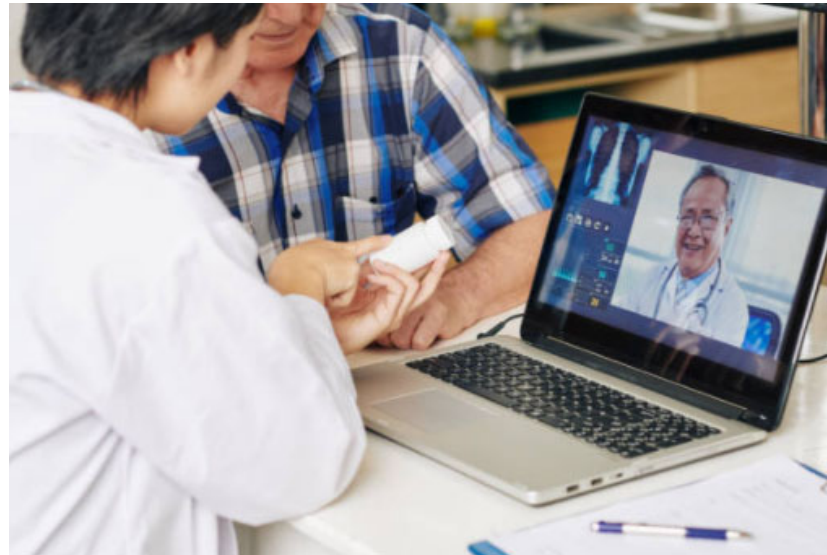
- Starting May 3, 2021, the NIOSH began updating its cybersecurity, delaying its ability to process dose reconstructions.
- We're working with NIOSH to process dose reconstructions for claimants with terminal illnesses, and NIOSH is working on manual processes that may allow them to return other cases prior to full implementation of the updates.
- More information can be found on the [NIOSH website](#).



# Additional Updates

## Telemedicine:

- During this period of heightened concern regarding exposures to high-risk populations, DEEOIC recognized the need to implement temporary procedures to allow for the use of telemedicine under certain circumstances.





# Telemedicine Bulletin Extensions

- **Bulletin No 21-02**: Telemedicine for Home and Residential Health Care and Durable Medical Equipment
  - Extends the expiration date of Bulletin 20-06 to September 30, 2021
- **Bulletin No 21-03**: Telemedicine for Routine Physician Appointments
  - Extends the expiration date of Bulletin 20-07 to September 30, 2021







## Procedure Manual (PM)

- The PM's purpose is to provide DEEOIC staff with internal guidance related to the adjudication process, authorities, tools and procedures.
- DEEOIC makes the PM publically available to assist claimants and stakeholders in understanding how our claims adjudication process works.





# Procedure Manual Updates

- **Transmittal 20-04**: PM v4.3, September 14, 2020
  - A new claim distribution system amongst the district offices with rotational assignment process on new claims based on an equitable distribution process.
  - Clarified the functions of the Resources Centers in assisting with claim intake and information collection.
  - Added information about handling SEC claims and identified newly designated SEC classes.
  - Clarified language to assist staff conduct a uniform assessment of exposure in claims meeting certain presumptive standards
  - New procedure for evaluating home and auto modifications needed to address effects of work related illnesses.



## Procedure Manual Updates (continued)

- **Transmittal 21-01**: PM v5.0, April 2, 2021
  - Updated guidance regarding engagement with representatives and proper tracking of designated representatives in ECS.
  - Clarified SEC class coverage for the K-25 Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Oak Ridge, TN.
  - Made updates to credentialing requirements for impairment rating physicians.
  - Provided guidance on handling claims for certain conditions when a claimant cannot undergo certain diagnostic testing.
  - Explained new process for scheduling oral hearings.



## Resource Center Operating Status

- Open to visitors, by appointment only. A claimant may schedule an in person appointment with the Resource Center for assistance related to their claim.
- Resource Center employees are available by telephone to answer questions, file claim forms, conduct Occupational History interviews, and provide services necessary to continue operations.
- The Resource Centers will continue to maintain a drop box outside the office access door for individuals to deliver claim related documentation. Staff are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. to receive documents that require submission to the Department of Labor.



# Resource Center Updates

- When needed and following CDC guidance on social distancing & personal protective equipment, the RCs provided at-home customer service to terminal claimants throughout the last year.
- Portsmouth Resource Center Relocation – The Portsmouth RC relocated to a new location on March 25, 2021:
  - The new address is:  
New Boston Shopping Center  
3612 Rhodes Avenue  
New Boston, OH 45662





## Resource Center Updates (continued)

- RCs began assisting claimants with subscribing to the Program Policy and Medical Provider Email Distribution lists on March 10, 2021. To date, RCs have enrolled 1,527 claimants and 224 medical providers.
- The Resource Centers will resume conducting in-person outreach events in July 2021 in accordance with COVID-19 guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).





# DEEOIC Online Resources

- [DEEOIC website](#)
  - About Energy Workers Program, Claimant and Provider Enrollment Information How-to Guides, Featured Stories, Latest Program Highlights, Procedure Manual and Other Directives, Statistics and Public Reading Room, Program Guidance and Resources.
- [DEEOIC Resource Centers](#)
  - A list of the EEOICPA Resource Center locations and a map that shows their geographical jurisdictions.
- DEEOIC Public Mailbox: [DEEOIC-public@dol.gov](mailto:DEEOIC-public@dol.gov)



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# Questions



Questions can also be submitted to [DEEOIC-Outreach@dol.gov](mailto:DEEOIC-Outreach@dol.gov)

Thank you very much for attending the  
DEEOIC 2021 Stakeholder Webinar