

dated May 28, 2014, OWCP reviewed the merits of her case and denied her claim, finding that she had not established causal relationship.

In a report dated November 20, 2013, Dr. Richard A. Boiardo, a Board-certified orthopedic surgeon, stated that “as a direct and causal result of the 27 years of repetitive motion exacerbated by an injury on February 7, 2012 to the left wrist, the patient underwent carpal tunnel release on the left wrist.” He diagnosed appellant with bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome and bilateral De Quervain’s tenosynovitis. However, the record does not contain the operative report for her left carpal tunnel release. On appeal, appellant’s attorney noted that the procedure took place on May 23, 2013 and was filed under appellant’s other case number.

The record on appeal establishes that File No. xxxxxx324 contains evidence pertinent to the present claim under File No. xxxxxx573. As Dr. Boiardo’s opinion on causal relationship between appellant’s carpal tunnel syndrome and duties of her employment was based in part on a theory of exacerbation of an occupational illness due to a traumatic event on February 7, 2012, and as OWCP found Dr. Boiardo’s opinion as insufficiently rationalized, medical evidence relating to a left carpal tunnel release procedure under claim File No. xxxxxx324 would be relevant to the present claim.

The Board, therefore, finds that the appeal docketed as No. 14-1513 is currently not in posture for decision. Because the record is incomplete, the Board is unable to render a fully informed adjudication of the case. OWCP procedures require that cases should be combined where proper adjudication depends on cross-referencing evidence between files, such as when “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.”¹ In the instant appeal, for a full and fair adjudication, appellant’s occupational injury claim must be combined with her traumatic injury claim pertaining to a February 7, 2012 incident. Accordingly, the case is remanded to OWCP for reconstruction and proper assemblage of the case record, followed by issuance of an appropriate decision.

¹ Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8(c)(1) (February 2000). See also *O.V.*, Docket No. 14-997 (issued September 29, 2014); *N.L.*, Docket No. 14-864 (issued September 26, 2014).

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the May 28, 2014 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is set aside and the case is remanded for further action consistent with this order of the Board.

Issued: December 24, 2014
Washington, DC

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

Colleen Duffy Kiko, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Patricia Howard Fitzgerald, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board