

appellant's physician opined that the March 13, 2013 work injury caused her complaints but that evidence from her other claims indicated that she had preexisting conditions.

OWCP procedures provide that cases should be doubled when a new injury is reported for an employee who previously filed an injury claim for a similar condition and further indicates that the cases should be doubled as soon as the need to do so becomes apparent.¹ As it referenced prior claims in denying appellant's claim for a right upper extremity condition, it should have combined the case files in accordance with its procedures.²

As the current record does not contain the evidence referenced by OWCP in denying appellant's claim, the Board is unable to properly address the relevant issue in this case. The case is thus not in posture for decision as the record before the Board is incomplete and would not permit an informed adjudication of the case. On remand, OWCP should combine the present case record with claim numbers xxxxxx801, xxxxxx908, and xxxxxx856. After combining the case records, it should consider all the evidence and, following any necessary further development, issue an appropriate decision on appellant's claim.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the January 28, 2016 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is set aside and the case is remanded for further proceedings consistent with this order of the Board.

Issued: August 8, 2016
Washington, DC

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

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

² *Id.*; see also *Order Remanding Case*, Docket No. 15-0756 (issued September 16, 2015).