

February 12, 2002 while pulling a patient up in bed, OWCP File No. xxxxxx650. He advised that on May 4, 2005, appellant sustained low back pain as a result of helping a patient in a wheelchair, OWCP File No. xxxxxx767. The hearing representative indicated that on November 2, 2008 appellant sustained neck and lumbar strains while assisting a patient back into bed, OWCP File No. xxxxxx505. He noted that a “careful and thorough review of the medical evidence in the case at issue (and OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx650, xxxxxx767, and xxxxxx505) fails to reflect medical evidence in which a physician has displayed an accurate history of injury, definitive diagnosis, and indicated unequivocally that the diagnosed condition is causally related to the accepted employment trauma...”³ The Board is unable to view OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx650, xxxxxx767, and xxxxxx505 on the Integrated Federal Employees’ Compensation System.

The Board has duly considered the matter and notes that the case is not in posture for a decision. The claim before the Board, OWCP File No. xxxxxx805, pertains to a claim where OWCP denied appellant’s traumatic injury claim for head, neck, back and right side conditions, which occurred on February 1, 2016, because the weight of the medical evidence failed to establish that these conditions were causally related to the February 1, 2016 work incident. In the February 2, 2017 decision, OWCP’s hearing representative noted reviewing evidence from OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx650, xxxxxx767, and xxxxxx505 in reaching his decision. However, as noted, OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx650, xxxxxx767, and xxxxxx505 are not presently accessible by the Board. Pursuant to its procedures, OWCP has determined that cases should be combined where correct adjudication depends on cross-referencing between files.⁴ For a full and fair adjudication, the Board must be able to review the contents of OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx650, xxxxxx767, and xxxxxx505.

The case will be remanded to OWCP to combine these claim files.⁵ Following this and such other development as deemed necessary, OWCP shall issue an appropriate merit decision on the matter to preserve appellant’s appeal rights.

³ The hearing representative also indicated that there was evidence that appellant had a low back injury on April 14, 2001 that had been developed by OWCP under File No. xxxxxx345. However, he did not indicate that he had reviewed or considered evidence from that claim file. OWCP File No. xxxxxx345 is not before the Board on the present appeal.

⁴ Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8(c) (February 2000).

⁵ OWCP shall also consider whether, pursuant to its procedures, OWCP File No. xxxxxx345 should be combined with the present claim.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the February 2, 2017 decision be set aside and the matter remanded to OWCP for further proceedings consistent with this order.

Issued: September 6, 2017
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