



No. xxxxxx771, appellant alleged that she sustained a work-related left knee contusion. She underwent left knee arthroscopy on March 10, 2004. In OWCP File No. xxxxxx395, appellant alleged that she sustained a left knee sprain on December 17, 2007.

The Board has duly considered the matter and finds that this case is not in posture for decision. OWCP procedures provide that cases should be combined when correct adjudication of the issues depends on frequent cross-referencing between files. For example, if 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, doubling is required.<sup>3</sup> In the instant case, appellant had two prior claims for left knee conditions, assigned File No. xxxxxx771 and File No. xxxxxx395. She then filed an occupational disease claim for the same body part, assigned File No. xxxxxx468, which is currently before the Board.

For a full and fair adjudication, the case must be returned to OWCP to administratively combine the current case record with File Nos. xxxxxx771 and xxxxxx395, and determine whether appellant has provided sufficient rationalized medical opinion evidence to establish that she sustained a permanent aggravation or acceleration of her left knee arthritis due to factors of her federal employment.<sup>4</sup> Following this and such further development as OWCP deems necessary, it shall issue a *de novo* decision.

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT** the July 27, 2017 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is set aside and the case remanded for further action consistent with this decision of the Board.

Issued: May 1, 2018  
Washington, DC

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

Patricia H. Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief Judge  
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Alec J. Koromilas, Alternate Judge  
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

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<sup>3</sup> Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8(c) (February 2000).