

did not stop work and noted that she had been placed on light-duty restrictions of no pushing or lifting more than 10 pounds effective November 26, 2018.

In a January 16, and 23, 2019 development letters, OWCP advised appellant of the deficiencies of her claim. It requested additional factual and medical evidence from her, and provided a questionnaire for her completion. OWCP afforded appellant 30 days to respond.

By decision dated May 19, 2019, OWCP denied appellant's occupational disease claim in OWCP File No. xxxxxx206, finding that the alleged employment factors had not occurred as described. It determined that based on the description of the circumstances that prompted the filing of the Form CA-2 in OWCP File No. xxxxx661, appellant was claiming a new occupational disease under the current OWCP File No. xxxxxx206.¹

Appellant filed an additional occupational disease claim (Form CA-2) under xxxxxx206 on September 6, 2019 and alleged that she had developed tendinitis of the right rotator cuff due to factors of her federal employment, including picking up heavy pans and moving them to a cart and then pushing the cart throughout her department. She noted that she had previously filed a recurrence claim for this condition under OWCP File No. xxxxxx661.

In a September 13, 2019 letter, OWCP found that appellant had filed two separate Form CA-2s for the same injury. It informed her that both her right wrist and right shoulder conditions were considered under the December 27, 2018 Form CA-2 under the current OWCP File No. xxxxxx206.

On September 18, 2019 appellant requested reconsideration and provided additional evidence.

By decision dated December 18, 2019, OWCP modified its prior decision, finding that she had established a factual basis for her occupational disease claim, but the claim remained denied as the medical evidence of record contained no opinion from a physician, establishing causal relationship between the diagnosed bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome and right shoulder injury and the implicated work duties.

On February 21, 2020 appellant again requested reconsideration. By decision dated March 10, 2020, OWCP denied modification of the December 18, 2019 decision.

The Board, having duly considered the matter, finds that this case is not in posture for decision. OWCP's procedures provide that cases should be administratively combined when correct adjudication depends on cross-referencing between files and when two or more injuries occur to the same part of the body.² As the instant claim under OWCP File No. xxxxxx206 and the claim under OWCP File No. xxxxxx661 both involve injuries to appellant's right shoulder,

¹ On April 24, 2019 appellant requested reconsideration. By decision dated May 20, 2019, OWCP declined to reopen her claim for consideration of the merits in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 8128(a).

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

these claims must be administratively combined for a full and fair adjudication.³ This will allow OWCP to consider all relevant claim files and accompanying evidence in developing appellant's current occupational disease claim.

Accordingly, the Board will remand the case to OWCP to administratively combine OWCP File No. xxxxxx661 and OWCP File No. xxxxxx206. Following this and other such further development as deemed necessary, OWCP shall issue a *de novo* merit decision.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the March 10, 2020 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is set aside and this case is remanded for further proceedings consistent with this order of the Board.

Issued: November 20, 2020
Washington, DC

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

Janice B. Askin, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Patricia H. Fitzgerald, Alternate Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

³ *S.D.*, Docket No. 19-0590 (issued August 28, 2020).