

aware of her claimed conditions and their relation to her federal employment on December 1, 2012.

By decision dated October 19, 2016, OWCP denied the claim, finding that the medical evidence of record was insufficient to establish causal relationship between the claimed conditions and the accepted employment factors.

Appellant submitted a series of requests for reconsideration. By decisions dated January 4, March 31, and July 12 2017, December 13, 2018, and October 25, 2019, OWCP denied modification in each instance. The Board has duly considered the matter and concludes that this case is not in posture for decision. OWCP's procedures provide that cases should be administratively combined when correct adjudication of the issues depends on frequent cross-referencing between files or when two or more injuries occur to the same part of the body.⁴ For example, if a new injury is reported for an employee who previously filed an injury claim for a similar condition or a condition relating to the same part of the body, or when two or more separate injuries have occurred on the same date, doubling is required.⁵ Herein, appellant has a prior accepted occupational disease claim for bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome and bilateral cubital tunnel syndrome caused by employment factors on or before January 1, 2002, assigned OWCP File No. xxxxxx811. Appellant then filed an occupational disease claim for head, cervical spine, and bilateral shoulder conditions sustained on and after December 1, 2012 in the rehabilitation position offered her under OWCP File No. xxxxxx811, which is the claim presently before the Board assigned OWCP File No. xxxxxx165.

For a full and fair adjudication, the Board finds that the case must be returned to OWCP to administratively combine the current case record with OWCP File No. xxxxxx811, so it can properly determine whether appellant has met her burden of proof to establish a medical condition causally related to the accepted employment factors in the present claim. Following this and other such further development as OWCP deems necessary, it shall issue a *de novo* decision. Accordingly,

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

⁵ *Id.*, *W.H.*, Docket No. 20-0986 (issued April 27, 2021); *L.H.*, Docket No. 18-1777 (issued July 2, 2019).

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the October 25, 2019 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: July 13, 2021
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