

federal employment, including repetitive typing, filing, and writing. She did not stop work. On March 29, 2017 OWCP accepted appellant's occupational disease claim for bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, radial styloid tenosynovitis, and cervical radiculopathy under File No. xxxxxx060.

On October 10, 2017 appellant underwent a right carpal tunnel release. On February 6, 2018 appellant underwent a left carpal tunnel release.

On April 24, 2018 appellant filed a claim for compensation (Form CA-7) for a schedule award relating to her March 27, 2017 occupational disease claim.

In an October 1, 2018 report, Dr. J.M. Morgenstern, a Board-certified orthopedic surgeon, examined appellant and applied the sixth edition of the American Medical Association's, *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* (A.M.A., *Guides*)¹ to his findings to reach an impairment rating of 11 percent of the right upper extremity, 1 percent of the left upper extremity, and 5 percent whole person impairment.

On October 23, 2020 OWCP combined OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx060 and xxxxxx725 with the former serving as the master file.

The Board further notes that the record indicates that appellant also has a previously accepted December 12, 2015 traumatic injury for lumbago, lumbar strain, contusion, and thoracic strain under OWCP File No. xxxxxx379, as well as a December 12, 2016 traumatic injury accepted for back and neck strain OWCP File No. xxxxxx417.

On October 28, 2020 Dr. Arthur S. Harris, a Board-certified orthopedic surgeon, and DMA, reviewed appellant's combined claims of master File No. xxxxxx060 and OWCP File No. xxxxxx725 and found that she had an additional three percent permanent impairment of each upper extremity.

By decision dated December 15, 2020, OWCP granted appellant a schedule award for an additional three percent permanent impairment of each of her upper extremities.

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 where two or more injuries occur to the same part of the body.² For a full and fair adjudication of appellant's schedule award claim, the case shall be remanded for OWCP to administratively combine OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx379 and xxxxxx417 with OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx725 and xxxxxx060 under master File No. xxxxxx060. Following this and other such further development as deemed necessary, OWCP shall issue a *de novo* merit decision on appellant's schedule award claim.

¹ A.M.A., *Guides*, 6th ed. (2009).

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

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the December 15, 2020 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is set aside and the case is remanded to OWCP for further proceedings consistent with this order of the Board.

Issued: November 8, 2021
Washington, DC

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

Janice B. Askin, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Valerie D. Evans-Harrell, Alternate Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board