



Appellant noted that he first became aware of his current condition and realized its relation to his federal employment on October 25, 2021. He retired from the employing establishment on November 5, 2021.

By decision dated March 8, 2022, OWCP denied appellant's occupational disease claim, finding that he had not submitted factual evidence to establish that the employment exposures occurred as alleged. It concluded, therefore, that the requirements had not been met to establish an injury as defined by FECA.

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.<sup>3</sup> 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>4</sup> Herein, appellant has a previously accepted claim for extrinsic asthma, a pulmonary condition, as causally related to occupational exposures under OWCP File No. xxxxxx493, which is also at issue in the present claim under OWCP File No. xxxxxx814. For a full and fair adjudication, this case must be returned to OWCP to administratively combine the current case record with OWCP File No. xxxxxx493, so it can consider all relevant claim files and accompanying evidence in adjudicating his current occupational disease claim.<sup>5</sup>

Following this and other such further development as OWCP deems necessary, it shall issue a *de novo* decision.

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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).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*; *M.L.*, Docket No. 20-1176 (issued April 29, 2021); *L.M.*, Docket No. 19-1490 (issued January 29, 2020); *L.H.*, Docket No 18-1777 (issued July 2, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> *Supra* note 3 at Chapter 2.400.8(c)(1); *W.D.*, Docket No. 19-0961 (issued March 31, 2021); *L.P.*, Docket Nos. 18-1558, 18-1568 (issued June 21, 2019).

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT** the March 8, 2022 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: August 29, 2022  
Washington, DC

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

Janice B. Askin, Judge  
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

James D. McGinley, Alternate Judge  
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board