

By decision dated April 21, 2021, OWCP's hearing representative modified the December 18, 2020 decision, finding that appellant had established that the employment incident occurred as alleged, but affirmed the denial of the claim, finding that the medical evidence of record was insufficient to establish a causal relationship between appellant's diagnosed conditions and the accepted August 8, 2020 employment incident. In this decision, it referenced a prior claim.

OWCP File No. xxxxxx679 that was accepted for cervical strain, right shoulder sprain, and left wrist sprain.¹

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.² 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.³ In the present claim, appellant alleged injuries to her right shoulder and middle top of her back. OWCP had previously accepted that she sustained cervical strain (whiplash), right shoulder sprain, and left wrist sprain under OWCP File No. xxxxxx679. However, it has not administratively combined the present claim with her previously accepted claim pertaining to right shoulder sprain.

As OWCP File No. xxxxxx679 also involves a claim to appellant's right shoulder, for a full and fair adjudication, the Board will remand the case to OWCP to administratively combine the case records for OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx663 and xxxxxx679.⁴ Following this and other such further development as OWCP deems necessary, it shall issue a *de novo* decision.⁵

¹ The Board notes that appellant filed a prior claim in OWCP File No. xxxxxx 679 for a traumatic injury sustained on September 29, 2001.

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

³ *Id.*; *L.M.*, Docket No. 19-1490 (issued January 29, 2020); *L.H.*, Docket No 18-1777 (issued July 2, 2019).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *R.G.*, Docket No. 19-1755 (issued July 7, 2020); *L.M.*, *supra* note 3.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the April 21, 2021 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: January 21, 2022
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