

other intervertebral disc degeneration, lumbar region, and lumbar radiculopathy; and OWCP File No. xxxxxx728 is an unaccepted October 27, 2021 lumbar injury.

By decision dated February 17, 2022, OWCP denied the claim as the evidence did not establish that the employment incident occurred on January 4, 2022 as alleged. It further found that the employing establishment provided evidence that he had not pushed any carts on January 4, 2022, but that he was in training for his light-duty position. OWCP also denied the claim, in part, as it had denied a prior claim under OWCP File No. xxxxxx728 for an October 27, 2021 traumatic lumbar injury with left-sided radiculopathy, which appellant had attributed to pushing food carts while in the performance of duty.

On March 14, 2022 appellant requested reconsideration.

By decision dated June 9, 2022, OWCP denied modification of the February 17, 2022 decision.

The Board, having duly considered this matter, finds 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.¹ 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, or if overlapping periods of disability are alleged, doubling is required.² Herein, appellant has a claim for a back injury, which was assigned OWCP File No. xxxxxx284. She also has claims for back injuries in OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx908, xxxxxx651, xxxxxx033, xxxxxx644, and xxxxxx728.

For a full and fair adjudication, the case must be remanded to OWCP to administratively combine the current case record, OWCP File No. xxxxxx284, with OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx908, xxxxxx651, xxxxxx033, xxxxxx644, and xxxxxx728. On remand, OWCP shall review all relevant evidence to determine whether appellant has established an injury, occupational or traumatic, in the performance of duty. Following this and other such further development as deemed necessary, it shall issue a *de novo* decision. Accordingly,

¹ Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8(c) (February 2000).

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

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the June 9, 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: January 18, 2023
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