

strain, cervical strain, left shoulder strain, bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, and aggravation of congenital spondylolisthesis.

Appellant filed a claim for compensation (Form CA-7) for a schedule award.

By decision dated August 23, 2016, OWCP granted appellant a schedule award for two percent permanent impairment of each upper extremity. The award ran for 12.48 weeks from January 9 through April 5, 2016.

On June 13, 2022 appellant filed a Form CA-7 for an additional schedule award.

By decision dated October 19, 2022, OWCP granted appellant an additional schedule award for a total of 29 percent permanent impairment of the left upper extremity, 7 percent permanent impairment of the right upper extremity, 30 percent permanent impairment of the left lower extremity, and 30 percent permanent impairment of the right lower extremity. The award ran for 285.12 weeks from July 19, 2021 through January 4, 2027.

By decision dated February 28, 2023, OWCP issued a corrected schedule award determination, finding a total of 29 percent permanent impairment of the left upper extremity, 30 percent permanent impairment of the left lower extremity, and 30 percent permanent impairment of the right lower extremity. It determined that, as a prior thumb impairment had been included in a separate case, appellant was not entitled to an additional schedule award for permanent impairment of the right upper extremity. The award ran for 262.28 weeks from July 19, 2021 through August 4, 2026.

The Board has duly considered this matter and 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.³ 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.⁴ This will allow OWCP to consider all relevant claim files in developing this schedule award claim.⁵ Herein, appellant filed a traumatic injury claim on April 6, 1998, assigned OWCP File No. xxxxxx320, which was accepted for lumbar strain, cervical strain left shoulder strain, bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, and aggravation of congenital spondylolisthesis and is the claim presently before the Board. She subsequently filed two claims for right upper extremity conditions, assigned OWCP File Nos.

³ Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8c (February 2000).

⁴ *Id.*; *S.G.*, Docket No. 21-0396 (issued September 27, 2021); *R.L.*, Docket No. 20-0901 (issued July 27, 2021); *M.E.*, Docket No. 21-0094 (issued May 27, 2021); *L.M.*, Docket No. 19-1490 (issued January 29, 2020); *L.H.*, Docket No 18-1777 (issued July 2, 2019).

⁵ *Supra* note 4; *see I.H.*, Docket No 22-1127 (issued May 12, 2023).

xxxxxx764 and xxxxxx618. Under File No. xxxxxx618 OWCP granted appellant a schedule award for eight percent permanent impairment of the right thumb.

For a full and fair adjudication, the case shall be remanded to OWCP to administratively combine the current case record, OWCP File No. xxxxxx320, with OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx764 and xxxxxx618, so it can review all appellant's relevant claim files in determining whether she has submitted sufficient evidence to establish additional permanent impairment of a scheduled member or function of the body due to the accepted employment injury. Following this and such further development as deemed necessary, OWCP shall issue a *de novo* decision. Accordingly,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the February 28, 2023 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: February 13, 2024
Washington, DC

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

Patricia H. Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

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