

FACTUAL HISTORY

On August 13, 2025 appellant, then a 60-year-old mail processing clerk, filed an occupational disease claim (Form CA-2) alleging that she sustained injuries of her neck (left side), left shoulder, elbow, wrists, hands, and knees, causally related to factors of her federal employment, including repetitive lifting, pulling, reaching, walking, and standing.³ She noted that she first became aware of her condition and realized its relationship to her federal employment on July 19, 2025. In an accompanying statement, appellant indicated that she was unable to bear weight on her knees as they were swollen and she experienced pain when bending and straightening them. She added that she experienced pain in her neck and left upper extremity when raising her arm. Appellant did not stop work.

In an August 21, 2025 development letter, OWCP informed appellant of the deficiencies of her claim. It advised her of the type of factual and medical evidence needed to establish her claim and provided a questionnaire for her completion. OWCP afforded appellant 60 days to submit the necessary evidence.

In a September 18, 2025 follow-up letter, OWCP advised appellant that it had conducted an interim review, and the evidence remained insufficient to establish her claim. It noted that she had 60 days from the August 21, 2025 letter to submit the necessary evidence. OWCP further advised that if the evidence was not received during this time, it would issue a decision based on the evidence contained in the record. No response was received.

By decision dated November 4, 2025, OWCP denied appellant's claim, finding that she had not established the implicated factors of her federal employment. It concluded, therefore, that the requirements had not been met to establish an injury as defined by FECA.

LEGAL PRECEDENT

An employee seeking benefits under FECA⁴ has the burden of proof to establish the essential elements of his or her claim, including that the individual is an employee of the United States within the meaning of FECA, that the claim was timely filed within the applicable time limitation of FECA,⁵ that an injury was sustained in the performance of duty as alleged, and that any disability or medical condition for which compensation is claimed is causally related to the

³ OWCP assigned the present claim OWCP File No. xxxxxx234. Appellant previously filed CA-2 forms for repetitive use injuries, which OWCP accepted for neck sprain and right bicipital tendinitis under OWCP File No. xxxxxx382, and left trigger finger and acquired deformity of left finger under OWCP File No. xxxxxx614, respectively. OWCP has not administratively combined OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx234, xxxxxx382, and xxxxxx614.

⁴ *Supra* note 1.

⁵ *F.H.*, Docket No. 18-0869 (issued January 29, 2020); *J.P.*, Docket No. 19-0129 (issued April 26, 2019); *Joe D. Cameron*, 41 ECAB 153 (1989).

employment injury.⁶ These are the essential elements of each and every compensation claim, regardless of whether the claim is predicated upon a traumatic injury or an occupational disease.⁷

In an occupational disease claim, appellant's burden of proof requires submission of the following: (1) a factual statement identifying employment factors alleged to have caused or contributed to the presence or occurrence of the disease or condition; (2) medical evidence establishing the presence or existence of the disease or condition for which compensation is claimed; and (3) medical evidence establishing that the diagnosed condition is causally related to the employment factors identified by the employee.⁸

ANALYSIS

The Board finds that appellant has not met her burden of proof to establish an injury in the performance of duty, as alleged.

Appellant alleged bilateral knee, left wrist, hand, and shoulder, neck and elbow injuries of her neck (left side), left shoulder, elbow, wrists, hands, and knees due to repetitive lifting, pulling, reaching, walking, and standing. In August 21 and September 18, 2025 development letters, OWCP informed her of the deficiencies of her claim. It advised appellant of the type of factual and medical evidence needed and provided a questionnaire for her completion. No response was received.

An employee's statement as to how the injury occurred is of great probative value and will stand unless refuted by strong or persuasive evidence.⁹ However, in this instance, appellant did not sufficiently explain how the injury occurred. As noted, she bears the burden of submitting a factual statement describing the implicated factors of federal employment.¹⁰

As the factual evidence of record is insufficient to establish an injury in the performance of duty, as alleged, the Board finds that appellant has not met her burden of proof.

Appellant may submit new evidence or argument with a written request for reconsideration to OWCP within one year of this merit decision, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 8128(a) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 10.605 through 10.607.

CONCLUSION

The Board finds that appellant has not met her burden of proof to establish an injury in the performance of duty, as alleged.

⁶ *L.C.*, Docket No. 19-1301 (issued January 29, 2020); *J.H.*, Docket No. 18-1637 (issued January 29, 2020); *James E. Chadden, Sr.*, 40 ECAB 312 (1988).

⁷ *P.A.*, Docket No. 18-0559 (issued January 29, 2020); *K.M.*, Docket No. 15-1660 (issued September 16, 2016); *Delores C. Ellyett*, 41 ECAB 992 (1990).

⁸ *S.C.*, Docket No. 18-1242 (issued March 13, 2019); *R.H.*, 59 ECAB 382 (2008).

⁹ *C.C.*, Docket No. 10-2054 (issued July 8, 2011).

¹⁰ *Supra* note 8.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the November 4, 2025 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is affirmed.

Issued: February 27, 2026
Washington, DC

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

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

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