United States Department of Labor
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

A.H., Appellant	)	
and	)	**Docket No. 26-0515**
	)	**Issued: September 16, 2026**
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, HALEDON POST OFFICE, Haledon, NJ, Employer	)	

Appearances:
Appellant, pro se
Office of Solicitor, for the Director

Case Submitted on the Record

DECISION AND ORDER

Before:
ALEC J. KOROMILAS, Chief Judge
PATRICIA H. FITZGERALD, Deputy Chief Judge
JANICE B. ASKIN, Judge

JURISDICTION

On May 13, 2026, appellant filed a timely appeal from a March 27, 2026 merit decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP). Pursuant to the Federal Employees' Compensation Act[1] (FECA) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 501.2(c) and 501.3, the Board has jurisdiction to consider the merits of the case.[2]

ISSUE

The issue is whether appellant has met his burden of proof to establish disability from work for the period December 14, 2024 through January 17, 2025, causally related to his accepted November 5, 2024 employment injury.

[1] 5 U.S.C. § 8101 *et seq.*

[2] Following the issuance of the March 27, 2026 decision, OWCP received additional evidence. The Board's *Rules of Procedure* provides: "The Board's review of a case is limited to the evidence in the case record that was before OWCP at the time of its final decision. Evidence not before OWCP will not be considered by the Board for the first time on appeal." 20 C.F.R. § 501.2(c)(1). Thus, the Board is precluded from reviewing this additional evidence for the first time on appeal. *Id.*

FACTUAL HISTORY

On November 9, 2024, appellant, then a 41-year-old city carrier technician, filed a traumatic injury claim (Form CA-1) alleging that, on that date, he sustained a left ankle sprain and a bruise on the palm of his right hand, with a small laceration, when he slipped on stairs while delivering mail in the performance of duty. He stopped work on November 6, 2024. OWCP accepted the claim for sprain of unspecified ligament of left ankle, and contusion of right hand.

OWCP received a report of work status (Form CA-3) indicating that appellant returned to full-time regular-duty work with no restrictions on December 16, 2024.

On January 1, 2026, appellant filed a claim for wage-loss compensation (Form CA-7) for disability from work during the period December 14, 2024 through January 17, 2025.

On an accompanying time analysis form (Form CA-7a), which appellant signed on January 1, 2026, appellant reported the hours and type of leave claimed; however, he combined the dates requested rather than list them individually on the form.

In a January 9, 2026 development letter, OWCP informed appellant that it had received his claim for wage-loss compensation benefits for the period December 14, 2024 through January 17, 2025. It explained that his Form CA-7a for the claimed period of disability was not correctly completed. OWCP requested that appellant resubmit a Form CA-7a and "break down each specific date on each line of the CA-7a and have all the fields completed including the reason of your claim. Please do not combine any dates together. Each day must be entered separately as shown below." It afforded him 30 days to submit the necessary evidence. No response was received.

By letter dated January 27, 2026, OWCP advised appellant that it had received the enclosed CA-7 form claiming compensation for the period beginning November 5, 2024 and ending January 17, 2025. It related that it could not process the claim because he claimed intermittent wage loss, but had not fully completed a Form CA-7a. OWCP requested that appellant resubmit his Form CA-7 with a fully completed Form CA-7a, through the employing establishment. Appellant was again advised that the Form CA-7a should be completed for each day in the period listed separately.

A memorandum of telephone call (Form CA-110) dated February 6, 2026, noted that appellant had left a message for OWCP on February 4, 2026 requesting clarification as to how to complete his CA-7 and CA-7a forms. OWCP responded to appellant's call on February 6, 2026, discussed the letters dated January 9, 2026, and informed him regarding the information necessary.

By decision dated March 27, 2026, OWCP denied appellant's claim for disability from work for the period December 14, 2024 through January 17, 2025,[3] finding that he had not submitted a corrected Form CA-7a as requested.

[3] The Board notes that it appears that OWCP inadvertently stated that the claimed period of disability was from December 14, 2025 through January 17, 2026 rather than December 14, 2024 through January 17, 2025 as set forth in appellant's January 1, 2026 CA-7 and CA-7a forms.

LEGAL PRECEDENT

An employee seeking benefits under FECA has the burden of proof to establish the essential elements of his or her claim, including that any disability or specific condition for which compensation is claimed is causally related to the employment injury.[4] For each period of disability claimed, the employee has the burden of proof to establish that he or she was disabled from work as a result of the accepted employment injury. Whether a particular injury causes an employee to become disabled from work, and the duration of that disability, are medical issues that must be proven by a preponderance of probative and reliable medical opinion evidence.

OWCP's procedures provide that if additional evidence is necessary before a claim for compensation can be adjudicated or a payment can be processed, the claims examiner should decide from whom to request this information, and the most appropriate and efficient method for obtaining so that the payment can be processed as soon as possible.[5]

ANALYSIS

The Board finds that appellant has not met his burden of proof to establish entitlement to wage-loss compensation for the period December 14, 2024 through January 17, 2025, causally related to his accepted November 5, 2024 employment injury.

In his January 1, 2026 Form CA-7, appellant claimed wage-loss compensation for disability from work for the period December 14, 2024 through January 17, 2025. In his accompanying Form CA-7a, he reported the hours and type of leave claimed; however, he combined the dates requested rather than list them individually on the form.

OWCP, in its January 9, 2026 development letter, requested that appellant resubmit a corrected Form CA-7a noting each specific date, on each line of the CA-7a, for which he claimed wage-loss compensation. It afforded him 30 days to respond. By letter dated January 27, 2026, OWCP again requested that appellant resubmit his CA-7 form with a fully completed CA-7a form. During a telephone call on February 6, 2026, it again informed him regarding the information necessary to properly complete the Forms CA-7 and CA-7a. Appellant, however, failed to submit another Form CA-7 and a corrected Form CA-7a as requested. As such, the Board finds that he has not met his burden of proof.[6]

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.

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[4] *See D.A.*, Docket No. 26-0214 (issued April 21, 2026); *M.F.*, Docket No. 24-0445 (issued May 23, 2024); *C.B.*, Docket No. 20-0629 (issued May 26, 2021); *D.S.*, Docket No. 20-0638 (issued November 17, 2020); *B.O.*, Docket No. 19-0392 (issued July 12, 2019); *D.W.*, Docket No. 18-0644 (issued November 15, 2018); *Kathryn Haggerty*, 45 ECAB 383 (1994); *Elaine Pendleton*, 40 ECAB 1143 (1989).

[5] Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Compensation Claims, *Development of Compensation Claims,* Chapter 2.9015(b)(1) (March 16, 2026).

[6] *See* Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *Development of Compensation Claims*, Chapter 2.901.4b and 2.901.5 (version 1.0, issued March 16, 2026).

CONCLUSION

The Board finds that appellant has not met his burden of proof to establish entitlement to wage-loss compensation the period December 14, 2024 through January 17, 2025, causally related to his accepted November 5, 2024 employment injury.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the March 27, 2026 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is affirmed.

Issued: September 16, 2026
Washington, DC

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

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

Janice B. Askin, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board