1. **Purpose and Scope.** This chapter provides an overview of field station functions and operations. Field Stations are staffed full-time or part-time, and allow the Program to perform outreach where the coal mining population is not in close proximity to a District Office.

2. **Filing and Processing of Claims.** In administering the Black Lung Benefits Act, each field station shall:
   
   a. Accept individual claims.
   
   b. Examine and review the initial claim application for accuracy, completeness, or other deficiencies.
   
   c. Assist claimants in completing initial claim application and correcting any deficiencies.
   
   d. Assist claimants in developing evidence necessary for processing claims.
   
   e. Package and forward claims to the appropriate district office (DO) for processing.
   
   f. Assist claimant in preparation and submission of Form OWCP -957 (Claimant Reimbursement Voucher) and the OWCP-915 to the District Office.

3. **Technical Advice and Guidance.**
   
   a. Assist Callers and Visitors. Determine actions to be taken or the information or advice to be given to the claimant or beneficiary.
   
   b. Advise claimant of rights and benefits allowable under the law.
   
   c. Answer written and face-to-face inquiries about general or specific aspects on the program or individual claims.
   
   d. Offer assistance in post-entitlement claims, such as the completion of the annual benefits questionnaire (CM-929), representative payee issues, responses to overpayment actions, and medical treatment problems.
4. **Field Station Support Functions** include:

   a. Preparing letters and memorandums for the claimant's signature when claimant desires or needs to cite or amplify unusual aspects of the case.

   b. Maintaining files on program policy and procedures, operating instructions, travel, etc. The FS should maintain a supply of all forms used in filing claims and be equipped to access the Automated Support Package for claims information whenever possible.

5. **Public Information/Community Liaison.** Field Station personnel:

   a. Participate in meetings and distribute DCMWC forms, pamphlets, DOL press releases, and other information on the DCMWC to local groups in their areas of geographic jurisdiction.

   b. Maintain liaison with SSA and state compensation offices in the area serviced to coordinate information concerning claims taking and processing.