



LHWCA BULLETIN NO. 13-03

Issue Date: August 5, 2013

Subject: Deployment of the Office of Workers' Compensation (OWCP) Imaging System (OIS) within the Division of Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation (DLHWC).

OWCP Background: In FY 2000, the Division of Federal Employees' Compensation (DFEC), one of the four programs within OWCP, deployed a new imaging system, the OWCP Automated System for Imaging Services (OASIS). All documents from that point forward were captured and stored only electronically for DFEC cases. On February 21, 2001, the OWCP issued Bulletin 01-01, OASIS - Retention Schedule for Paper Documents. This bulletin outlined procedures for the destruction of documents that had been scanned into the DFEC electronic file. On May 5, 2010, the OWCP issued Bulletin 10-01, Converting DFEC Paper Cases into Fully Imaged Official Case Records, which outlined procedures for converting paper files that were created prior to the deployment of imaging into fully imaged files and the resultant destruction of the paper components of the case files after conversion.

DLHWC Background: On May 10, 2012, the DLHWC implemented a pilot imaging system in the Jacksonville District Office using the OASIS software. During this pilot, all new mail received for new and existing cases - other than Defense Base Act (DBA) cases, which were created and maintained in paper form - was imaged into electronic case files such that existing non-DBA cases had both a paper and electronic component. Newly created non-DBA cases had only an electronic component. During this pilot, all documents received in paper were retained; however, the Claims Examiners used only the electronic case file documents for case management activities.

Because the 2012 pilot was deemed to be successful, the DLHWC decided to end the pilot project and move to an imaged environment Program-wide using a newly created imaging system known as the OWCP Imaging System (OIS). Conversion to electronic case files will be accomplished via a phased approach.

On June 17, 2013, the Jacksonville District Office began using the new OIS platform for mail review and case management activities, instead of the prior imaging software. All images previously captured during the initial pilot were migrated into OIS.

On August 12, 2013, the New York District Office will begin imaging all new claims received/created in its jurisdiction. Any office receiving a DBA claim that is created in the New York District Office on and after this date will no longer receive a jacketed paper case file; instead, only an electronic file will be created and made available within OIS, and all district offices will be using OIS to review new DBA claims and correspondence. All other processes associated with the creation of cases will remain the same until those functions are centralized Program-wide.

Also on August 12, 2013, the New York District Office will begin imaging all of its mail for both DBA and non-DBA cases. Mail received in the New York District Office will be scanned and then electronically accessed by contract employees located in the Jacksonville District

Office. Those contract employees will then route every piece of mail into the correct imaged file within OIS (as described below), regardless of the owning district office. The Jacksonville District Office will also continue to image all mail received for Jacksonville non-DBA cases.

Upon successful completion of this phase of implementation, the DLHWC will move to Program-wide electronic files, as well as a Central Mail site and Central Case Create site. An additional Bulletin and Industry Notice will be issued at that time.

Purpose: To outline the process for imaging case documents within the OIS.

Applicability: All DLHWC Contract and Federal Staff

Contractor Actions:

1. Document Receipt. Any document received in either the New York or Jacksonville District Office is prepared for scanning by designated contract staff. The date the document is received by the district office (the Received Date) is preserved. If there are documents that are not scanned on the date they are received, they are bundled in a place designated for that day's mail. Separating mail by Received Date avoids the mixing of mail received on different dates and ensures the integrity of all dates entered into OIS.

2. Envelopes. Upon opening mail, all envelopes will be discarded except in the cases of "returned mail" or during the receipt of an LS-202 or LS-208.

a. When mail is returned by the U.S. Postal Service, the envelope should be retained and scanned into the file along with the returned mail.

b. When the office receives an LS-202 or LS-208, the contactor/mail clerk will compare the date of postmark on the envelope to the date of the form. If the dates are different, the contactor/mail clerk will notate the date of postmark (PM) on the form as follows: "PM [month, day, year]" followed by the clerk's initials. The contractor/mail clerk's notation must be made on a blank place on the form so as not to obscure any information on the original document. The envelope may then be discarded.

3. Document Preparation. Preparing a document for scanning includes removing staples, removing paper clips, taping down small slips of paper, etc. Documents and forms are then sorted into batches based on Received Date and type of document, e.g. new claim forms for a case create queue, mail with case numbers identified and mail without a case number. Slip sheets, called Batch Header Sheets, will be inserted between documents within each batch.

Items received that cannot be accurately scanned into OIS, such as videos and photographs, will be tagged as "physical evidence" and retained in a physical evidence folder. Contract staff will prepare a placeholder document to scan into the OIS file that indicates that an item of physical evidence has been received.

4. Scanning. Contract staff scans batches of documents and then reviews the quality of the image in comparison to the paper document. Documents are scanned using a 200 Pixels Per Inch (PPI) setting.

a. Contract staff will compare each scanned image to the paper original and confirm that the image is a clear, legible, and accurate reproduction of the original paper document. In each case where the original document has been annotated with a date and initials, the date and initials must be clearly viewable. Any images that do not satisfy these criteria will be re-scanned.

b. If the image quality is still poor after re-scanning, but the image is an accurate reproduction of the original document, e.g. because the original document is itself unclear or illegible, a "description" is attached to the document within OIS indicating that the scan "accurately depicts original." If the image quality is still poor and the scan is not an accurate reproduction of the original document, a "description" is attached to the document within OIS indicating that it was the "best scan possible" and the original document is retained in a physical evidence folder.

c. After scanning and quality review, the documents are queued for indexing.

5. Indexing. Indexing a document includes assignment of unique document identifiers for each imaged document. The Contractor keys in the following data elements for each document:

a. Case Number

b. Document Category (a broad classification of the document, such as Priority Correspondence)

c. Document Subject (a more defined classification of the document, such as Congressional, but this element is only added for certain prescribed document types)

d. Author Date (the date on the document, e.g. the date the form was signed or the date of the medical report)

e. Received Date (the date that the document was received by the district office)

6. Verification. When entering the indexing data for the document, the contractor verifies that the document belongs to the case/claimant. If the document does not match, it is rejected for review and determination of the correct case number.

7. Release. After a document has been indexed and it has been verified that it belongs to the case to which it has been associated, it is released into that case within OIS. When the Responsible Claims Examiner (RCE) for that case logs into OIS, the unreviewed mail will appear in the RCE's "Unreviewed Assigned" tab, located on the OIS Home Page. Mail is routed to the RCE in OIS based on OIS user ID and the RCE designation in the Longshore Case Management System (LCMS). There are three date columns visible in the OIS interface with the headings "Received Date," "Capture Date" and "Submission Date." Received Date represents the date the document was received by DLHWC. Capture Date represents the date that the contractor scanned the document and converted it from a paper document to a digital document. Submission date represents the date the contractor partially indexed the document and released it into OIS for the RCE to view.

8. Storage. Original paper documents that have been scanned are stored by date for a period of 60 days and then disposed of as directed by the DLHWC. Records and transcripts of formal hearings received from the Office of Administrative Law Judges will be retained after scanning and forwarded to the District Office having jurisdiction over the case.

9. Accuracy and Review. The Contractor routinely reviews image quality and indexing accuracy to maintain an acceptable level of quality. The Contractor then compiles a monthly report, due by the fifth business day of every month, and submits it to the Federal Contracting Officer Representative.

DLHWC Claims Staff Actions:

1. Indexing/Quality Assurance. The claims staff, while reviewing newly created cases and new mail in OIS will take the following actions:

- a. Verify document legibility and page sequence.
- b. Verify that the document belongs in the case to which it has been indexed.
- c. Verify that other indexing data, such as Category and Author Date, have been correctly entered.
- d. Add the Subject index from the drop down menu and save the newly indexed document with a review status of "Review Complete."
- e. Report to the District Director if a document is not legible as a result of the scanning process. The District Director will in turn report the problem to the DLHWC Director or his/her designee, to include the case number, the Received Date for the document in question, the Author Date for the document in question, and a description of the document and problem(s) identified.
- f. Report to the District Director any keying errors found so they also can be reported to the Contractor by the DLHWC Director or his/her designee. If possible, the data element should then be corrected by the Claims Examiner.

2. Bronzing. For all documents created in the District Office that are to be associated with a case file, claims staff will create an electronic document, upload or "bronze" the electronic document into OIS, and index it. In addition to outgoing correspondence, all RCE notes and documentation of telephone calls will be bronzed and indexed in the OIS file. For any outgoing document that requires the District Director's signature, once the document has been printed and signed, claims staff will scan and upload the signed document into OIS.

If any District Office other than New York and Jacksonville receives mail on a new OIS DBA case, the District Director or his/her designee will annotate the received mail with the date of receipt and his/her initials, scan and bronze it into OIS, and forward the original document to Jacksonville for official scanning. Once the scanned and indexed document is routed electronically to the RCE as "unreviewed mail," the RCE may ask the DD to delete the first bronzed copy from OIS.

3. Designated Managers and/or Project Managers. Designated individuals in the National Office will take the following actions to ensure quality of the imaging/indexing process:

- a. Conduct monthly inspection of operations logs (see 1(e) and 1(f) above) and review image quality in response to customer feedback.

- b. Certify that data accuracy has been checked each reporting period.
- c. Report such issues to the Contractor who will take all appropriate measures to correct the problem including, if possible, re-scanning the document.

Impact to Stakeholders: None anticipated as the mailing address for new claims and mail for existing claims has not changed; only the internal processing of paper documents.

Disposition: This bulletin is to be retained until Part 1 of the DLWHC Procedure Manual has been updated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Rios', with a large, stylized initial 'A' and 'R'.

Antonio A. Rios
Acting Director, Division of
Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation