



By decision dated January 25, 2024, OWCP denied appellant's occupational disease claim, finding that the evidence of record was insufficient to establish a neck condition causally related to the accepted factors of his federal employment.

The Board, having duly considered this matter, finds that the 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> Herein, appellant's claim under OWCP File No. xxxxxx758 also involved a neck injury, which is at issue in the present claim under OWCP File No. xxxxxx013. For a full and fair adjudication, this case must be remanded for OWCP to administratively combine the current case record with OWCP File No. xxxxxx758, so it can consider all relevant claim files and accompanying evidence in adjudicating appellant's current occupational disease claim.<sup>5</sup> Following this and other such further development as OWCP deems necessary, it shall issue a *de novo* decision. Accordingly,

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT** the January 25, 2024 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: July 9, 2024  
Washington, DC

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

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*; *M.L.*, Docket No. 20-1176 (issued April 29, 2021); *L.M.*, Docket No. 19-1490 (issued January 29, 2020); *L.H.*, Docket No 18-1777 (issued July 2, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> *Supra* note 3 at Chapter 2.400.8(c)(1); *W.D.*, Docket No. 19-0961 (issued March 31, 2021); *L.P.*, Docket Nos. 18-1558, 18-1568 (issued June 21, 2019).