

## **The Occupational Disease, continued**

By Elizabeth Breen, North City Shop Steward

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Details are extremely important for all OWCP claims, but it is even more essential for Occupational Disease Claims. When filing a claim for workers' compensation it is very important to write a detailed employee narrative. This would involve a step-by-step breakdown of your job duties for your doctor to refer to and what part of your job you find to be responsible for either causing or aggravating the medical condition that you are claiming as an occupational disease. You should keep in mind that most people don't know what it takes for the mail to show up at their address, so avoid postal phrases in your narrative. An example of an appropriate narrative will be available on our website.

Make sure you submit all the medical evidence necessary to support your claim. There are checklists available for specific medical conditions in order to serve as an aid. They will also be available on our website. This evidence is essential to the acceptance of your Occupational Disease Claim. You must urge your doctor to be as specific as possible in diagnosing your injury and showing how specific job functions have caused, aggravated or accelerated your condition. It is important that your doctor not use ambiguous language in his or her medical statement.

Within about two weeks of submitting your CA-2 Claim you will receive a postcard in the mail that contains your OWCP case file number. Put this number on the upper right hand corner of all correspondence, billing and documents with OWCP.

If OWCP approves your claim, they will pay for medical treatment related to the accepted condition.

If you are unable to work because of an Occupational Disease, you may claim compensation for wage loss, using Form CA-7, or use sick or annual leave or leave with out pay. Occupational Disease Claims are different than Traumatic Injury claims (CA-1) in that there is no Continuation of Pay (COP). Occupational Disease claims generally take longer to adjudicate, sometimes 3-6 months. It should expedite the process however, if the proper medical support and the information on the checklist have been provided with the CA-2 or submitted soon after.

As always, let your steward or the Branch Office know if you have any questions concerning your claim. This is a broad subject, with many details and too often a pain in the neck, no pun intended. Talk to you next month, take care!

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