

COMMON MISTAKES MADE BY EMPLOYEES IN THE OWCP (Workman's Comp) PROCESS

1. **No Representative:** Employees attempt to navigate the OWCP process without benefit of a representative/ coordinator who has experience and can advocate on their behalf. We recommend that all injured federal workers having problems seek an AFGE representative to assist them in the process.
2. **Employee Uses Leave for an Occupational Illness or Injury:** A common problem is employees who use their sick leave or annual leave instead of demanding Continuation of Pay (COP) and wage loss compensation. Employees with an occupational injury (CA-1) are always entitled to COP and wage loss compensation after COP ends. Employees with an occupational illness (CA-2) are not entitled to COP, but are entitled to wage loss compensation.
3. **Trusting Your Agency to File Appropriate Forms:** You must not assume your supervisor or agency OWCP representative understands the process, or rely on them to file the appropriate forms in a timely manner. It is your responsibility to ensure the appropriate OWCP forms are filed timely. Although your supervisor is supposed to provide you the appropriate forms, there is no penalty for failure on the agency's part to do so, and you may lose benefits if the forms are not timely.
4. **ALWAYS fill out a CA-1 or CA-2 in Employee Health and have it dated and get a signed copy.**
5. **Failing to Timely Respond to Department of Labor (DOL) Requests:** Many injured employees fail to respond to DOL requests for information and documentation. Employees who do not respond in a timely manner risk temporary cessation of Worker's Compensation payments (medical and wage loss) as well as potential denial of their claim. It is vitally important to respond as quickly as possible to a DOL request.
6. **Failure to Communicate with OWCP Representative:** Employees who do not keep in constant communication with their chosen claim examiner / representative may inadvertently miss a timeframe, submit the wrong documentation or otherwise jeopardize their claim. It is extremely important to keep in constant touch with your representative and advise them of all correspondence you receive from DOL or the Agency and any events that occur (i.e. changes or modifications in your job duties).