

## The NALC OWCP toolkit



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**L**etter carriers have one of the highest injury rates of all federal workers. That's not surprising, considering the work we do. You cannot describe a letter carrier's job without using action words such as reaching, lifting, pushing, pulling or carrying. To do our jobs, we must be in constant motion.

On any given day, a letter carrier somewhere suffers an on-the-job injury. And when that happens, most letter carriers must trust postal managers and supervisors to follow correct procedures to guarantee protection under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA).

In the best of all situations, the supervisor will be properly trained in the Postal Service's obligations under FECA, and the injured worker will be provided the proper information to begin the claims process. Unfortunately, that does not always happen. And due to the nature of our work, we often are injured away from the office, leaving us unable to contact our shop steward or branch office for advice.

This frequently leaves injured letter carriers at the mercy of poorly trained postal managers—managers who often see injured workers as an extra burden. When that happens, injured workers can suffer additional injustice if the Postal Service fails to promptly provide the assistance FECA requires.

**For injured letter carriers who are unsure of their rights and seeking assistance in filing a claim, the answers can be as close as in the palm of your hand.** The "Injured on the Job" section of the NALC website provides a simple, step-by-step guide for understanding your rights when filing a claim. Injured workers can access the page by going to [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) on a computer or smartphone.

There are two ways of accessing the "Injured on the Job" page on a smartphone. Go to [nalc.org](http://nalc.org), and when the NALC home page loads, scroll down to "Workplace Resources." When you press the plus sign, a list of Quicklinks will appear. From there you just touch "Injured on the Job."

You can also scroll down to "What Can I Do on this Site?" From there, you select the option "Deal with an injury on the job," which will also take you to the "Injured on the Job" page.

As you scroll down the "Injured on the Job" page, you will see a series of questions regarding the nature of your injury, beginning with, "Was your injury due to a specific event?"

A letter carrier suffering a traumatic on-the-job injury can click on the plus sign and scroll down to find a simple set of directions to successfully file a claim, beginning with which claim forms to request and management's responsibilities in providing them to you. As you scroll farther down, you will find instructions and helpful information regarding how to fill out the forms, how to submit the forms, your right to see your own doctor and management's responsibilities in submitting the forms to OWCP.

Below the traumatic injury section, you will see, "Did your injury occur over more than one day?"

From there you can scroll down and find instructions on how to file a CA-2 for an occupational disease. The instructions here are distinct from those for a traumatic injury. Letter carriers need to be mindful of filing the proper form for the proper injury. Filing the wrong form can cause long delays in getting the claim accepted.

Below the occupational injury section, you will find, "Did you reinjure yourself?" This section provides information on CA-2a claims for recurrence. Letter carriers should refer to the June 2014 Compensation Department column in *The Postal Record* prior to filing a CA-2a, as it is a form that has limited use.

The "Injured on the Job" page at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) also has useful links on how to appeal a denied claim, how to file for a schedule award for a permanent impairment, and links for managing an accepted claim. You also will find an archive of Compensation Department columns covering a wide range of topics helpful to injured workers.

**The NALC recognizes that every letter carrier may not have a computer or smartphone.** If this is the case, a call to your branch OWCP specialist or national business agent's office can get you the information you need to deal with an on-the-job injury.

