

USPS to go to electronic claim filing



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Reporting workplace injuries should be a straightforward, easy process that ensures injuries get treated and benefits paid. In far too many instances, filing a claim becomes an adversarial process that often adds insult to an injury. To lessen the adversarial nature of claim filing, the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) designed an electronic claim filing process with a mandate to have every federal agency on board by 2012.

For a variety of reasons, the Postal Service was slow to adopt electronic

claim filing. However, in 2018 the Postal Service piloted a test program in three districts allowing injured employees to file claims electronically.

The Postal Service recently notified the NALC that all employees soon will be able to file injury claims electronically via the Employees' Compensation Operations & Management Portal (ECOMP). ECOMP is a free web-based application hosted by OWCP that provides federal agencies with an electronic system for recording workplace injuries and illnesses, and processing claims under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA).

This is good news for injured workers who face challenges when filing an on-the-job injury claim.

ECOMP features include injury claim submission and allow for uploading of supporting documents to OWCP case files. The Postal Service will be phasing in access to ECOMP claim filing, beginning with the Washington, DC, district.

To access the system, employees will need to log on to the ECOMP website found at ecomp.dol.gov.

On the upper right side of the ECOMP home page is a "Help" section. Moving your cursor over the "Help" icon will display a drop-down menu that includes a user's guide for injured workers, supervisors and other agency personnel.

The guide for injured workers is very helpful. Injured letter carriers should review the user's guides prior to filing a claim.

Once the Postal Service has activated your district to use ECOMP, you can register by clicking on the blue Register link found on the right side of the ECOMP home page. You must complete the registration process prior to filing a claim.

The Postal Service must allow an injured worker access to a postal computer to file a claim. However, you do not have to use a postal computer; you also can file a claim from your personal computer, tablet or cell phone.

To register, you will be asked to enter your name, home telephone number and email address. You may use any personal email address. Be mindful that you will receive emails from OWCP and notifications about forms you file

in ECOMP. You may want to create an email account specifically for your claim so you don't miss OWCP notifications.

The next step in registering is to enter your Social Security number (SSN) and confirm it. When you file forms CA-1, CA-2 or CA-7 in ECOMP, you will need to enter your SSN, and it must match the one you entered when you registered.

Then you will be asked which government organization you worked at the time of injury. Scroll down and choose "United States Postal Service." A drop-down menu will allow you to select the postal district you work in. Once you choose your postal district, the form will automatically list the Postal Service injury compensation office as your duty station. A message will be displayed indicating that you can file forms CA-1, CA-2, CA-3, CA-6, CA-7, CA-7a and CA-16 through ECOMP.

Next, you enter your immediate supervisor's email address. Postal supervisors' email addresses normally are their last name, followed by a period, followed by their first name, followed by @usps.gov. For example: Smith.John@usps.gov. Do not worry if you enter the wrong email address; the district injury compensation office also will receive a copy of the claim and will email the claim form to your supervisor.

The last step in registering involves creating a password and choosing three security questions. Once you have done that, your account will be created and you can begin filing a claim.

After you file a form in ECOMP, it will be forwarded to your supervisor for the supervisor portion of the form to be completed. Once the supervisor has completed the claim form, a hard copy will be given to the injured worker to sign, an OWCP requirement.

The ECOMP website also allows injured workers to upload documents (medical reports, general inquiries, appeals, etc.) directly into the claim file. The left side of the ECOMP home page asks, "Have you been hurt on the job?" Below that, it asks, "Need to upload a document?"

Clicking on the blue "UPLOAD DOCUMENTS" icon will open the "Upload Documents to Case" page, which will request the case number, last name of the claimant, date of birth and date of injury. Once that information has been entered, follow the instructions to choose the document you want to upload. If you have an existing claim, you do not need to be registered to upload documents.

Electronic claim filing is beneficial to injured workers and should be utilized whenever possible. The "Injured on the Job" section of the NALC website has instructions and links to accessing ECOMP.