ECOMP filing claim update

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The Postal Service has been slow-ly rolling out electronic claim filing around the country. The initial rollout in the DC metro area began in late July and early August. Electronic claim filing became available in the Pacific Area at the end of September, and the Western Area in early November.

The Postal Service's scheduled rollout for the rest of the nation is:

Northeast Area	12/11/19
Great Lakes Area	01/23/20
Eastern Area	02/12/20
Southern Area	03/16/20

The Postal Service provided NALC with a mandatory service talk that explains the Employees Compensation and Management Portal (ECOMP) claim filing portal and offers guides for filing CA-1, CA-2 and CA-7 forms. Reports of the ECOMP mandatory service talks have been spotty at best. There's probably a good reason for that.

In some districts where ECOMP claim filing has been rolled out, some postal managers are telling injured workers that claims can only be filed online. While that is not true—claims can still be filed using a paper form—the advantages of filing a claim electronically far outweigh the benefits of filing a paper claim.

Reporting an injury has been problematic for many letter carriers. For one, we are a proud craft. The "walk it off" ethos runs strong in our craft. In my years of carrying mail, many of my co-workers wore all sorts of braces for wrists, knees and ankles. They were good letter carriers who were hesitant to file a claim for injuries that were clearly work-related. It may have been personal pride that motivated them, but it's also likely that they were hesitant to report injuries due to the potential for confrontation with their supervisor or manager. Such confrontations are not just wrong, they may violate federal law and postal regulations.

Filing a claim electronically should eliminate such confrontations because the injured worker is in the driver's seat when filing a claim. You can register and file a claim without having to ask for a form. In traumatic injury cases, you still will need to notify the Postal Service, but you do not have to beg for a form.

Injured workers can register and fill out the claim form from their home computer, tablet or smart phone. The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) designed the ECOMP system to make filing a claim easier than filling out the forms. You can register in ECOMP and file a claim from your phone while sitting in a doctor's office; it's that easy.

Another benefit of filing a claim electronically is the injured letter's ability carrier to track the progress of the claim.

When you register and file using ECOMP, the system creates an employee dashboard that lists all of your claims and allows you to track the status of claim forms directly. The dashboard displays the claim number and the status of the claim form. You no longer have to rely on an OWCP claims examiner or Postal Service injury comp office to find out the status of your claim.

This is important because the Postal Service has 10 working days to fill out its section of the claim form and send it to OWCP. Injured workers should check their dashboard regularly to check on the status of the claim. If your claim form has not been processed in time, you should take a picture or screenshot of your dashboard and contact your shop steward, branch OWCP officer or national business agent.

Once OWCP gives you your claim number, ECOMP allows you to upload your medical documentation directly into your file. Postal Service instructions for using ECOMP encourage injured workers to give management privacy-protected medical documentation. Do not do so! You should give your manager a completed CA-17 duty status report. However, your management is not entitled to all of your medical reports.

To upload documents, you will have to enter your claim number, name, date of birth and date of injury. Once that

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information is entered, you may upload a variety of forms and requests including EFT (direct deposit) forms, address changes, case file/document requests, representative designations, general inquiries (non-medical), reconsideration requests, requests for authorization for medical treatment or procedures, requests for hearing/review of the written record, and medical documents.

You can upload documents in a variety of files types, including .jpg, .jpeg, .gif, .png, .tif, .txt, .rtf, .pdf, .doc and .docx. A maximum of 10 pages can be uploaded at a time. It is best to separate documents by date and upload each individually.

If you already have an OWCP claim, you can register on ECOMP and file CA-7 claims for compensation.

The "Injured on the Job" page at nalc.org has links to the ECOMP website and user guides for registering and filing claims.