The Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA) outlines the benefits for Federal employees with work-related occupational illness. The United States Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP) administers, interprets and ensures compliance of the FECA and is the sole adjudicator of all workers’ compensation claims for National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) employees. You have the right to file a claim for FECA benefits with the DOL/OWCP.

Upon filing a claim, your benefits and responsibilities under the FECA are as follows:

**Responsibilities Until Claim Accepted**

Until your Occupational Disease claim is accepted by the DOL/OWCP:

- Immediately report work-related illness to your supervisor and seek medical care, if required.
- File CA-2 Workers’ Compensation claim in ECOMP [https://www.ecomp.dol.gov/](https://www.ecomp.dol.gov/)
- You are responsible for all medical expenses pertaining to the claimed occupational disease.
- You must use personal (annual or sick) leave, or Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for any absence from work due to the claimed condition.
- You have the right to request light duty if your treating physician provides you with any medical restrictions as specified in your respective bargaining unit agreement.

**Responsibilities If/When Claim Accepted**

If/when your Occupational Disease claim is accepted by the DOL/OWCP:

**Medical Treatment**

Medical treatment encompasses all necessary and customary medical services, including testing, treatment, and intervention to assist in the recovery of work related injuries (e.g., doctor appointment(s), X-rays, physical therapy, prescriptions, surgery, etc.).

**Benefits:**

- You are entitled to receive immediate medical treatment from a physician of your choice. Physician is a licensed Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathy (DO). Selection of any other type of medical practitioner may delay claim adjudication or payment of services. You may search DOL-registered providers at: [http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com/portal/providersearch/agreement.do](http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com/portal/providersearch/agreement.do).
• Reimbursement of services of chiropractors is limited to treatment to correct a spinal subluxation as demonstrated by X-ray to exist.
• Once your choice of physician has been established, any change must be submitted in writing by you for OWCP approval, with the exception of your treating physician’s referrals.

Responsibilities:
• Ensure Form CA-17, Duty Status Report, is completed by your treating physician at the initial and subsequent visits
  ○ Your supervisor completes Side A, and Side B is for your physician to complete.
• Provide medical restrictions to your supervisor so that suitable employment within your capabilities are provided.

Limited Duty
Limited duty is the temporary modification of regular work duties or the assignment of other available necessary work tasks that allows an employee to recuperate and/or rehabilitate from their work-related occupational illness.

Benefits:
• NASA will make every effort to accommodate your medical limitations and work capabilities if such work is available within your medical restrictions.
• A light duty job offer within your medical restrictions will be identified by your supervisor.
• Your supervisor will develop the modified work assignment and will interactively discuss your work capabilities and work tasks.

Responsibilities:
• If you are unable to return to full duty, you must advise your treating physician that modification of your present job assignment is available to you.
• Request your treating physician specify your medical limitations/restrictions in writing.
• Avoid any on or off duty activities inconsistent with your medical limitations/restrictions.
• Return to work when your physician determines that you are capable of doing so, unless you request and receive coverage (if eligible) under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
• Accept suitable employment. OWCP may terminate compensation if a suitable offer of modified duty is refused.

Absence from Work
Absence from work refers to any time away from work due to the work-related occupational disease or medical condition and includes, but is not limited to, time used to attend doctor’s appointments, medical treatments, and/or any periods of work disability.
Benefits:

- You may elect Sick Leave (SL), Annual Leave (AL), LWOP for medical appointments or disability due to an occupational disease or medical condition.
- If you used LWOP for absences from work to receive medical treatment or for work disability you may file OWCP Form CA-7, Claim for Compensation. All absences from work after OWCP accepts your claim are charged as SL, AL, or LWOP, as per your election. (See Leave-Buy-Back).
- Leave is not earned during period(s) of LWOP totaling 80 hours during a leave year.
- If your occupational disease or medical condition qualifies and is approved as a serious health condition covered under FMLA, absences due to your injury may be charged against your 12-week FMLA entitlement.

Responsibilities:

- Request leave for all absences in accordance with standard leave policies and procedures.
- Submit Form CA-7 if eligible, every 2 weeks (on a pay period basis) unless other instructions are provided.
- Ensure all job-related absences are supported with medical documentation that includes the diagnosis, prognosis, objective findings, duration of disability, and expected return to work.

Leave Buy Back (LBB)

LBB is a process of buying back sick or annual leave for any absence from work to receive medical treatment or for periods of work disability related to the accepted occupational disease or medical condition while awaiting the OWCP adjudication of your claim.

Benefits:

- When an employee buys back annual leave in an amount that exceeds the applicable maximum carry-over, such excess will be automatically forfeited. For every 80 hours of leave bought back and changed to LWOP under workers’ compensation, both annual and sick leave must be adjusted by the amount earned in a pay period.
- All indebtedness must be paid to NASA before any leave is credited.
- You cannot complete a LBB after you have been separated from NASA rolls.

Responsibilities:

- You may initiate a request for LBB, in writing, to the NSSC Workers’ Compensation Team within 1 year following your return to duty date, or within 1 year of the date that OWCP approves your claim, whichever is later.
- Ensure medical documentation is provided supporting medical treatment and/or work disability for all absences claimed.
FECA Claim Number

The FECA claim number is a unique number assigned by the OWCP for your work-related claim.

- Ensure all correspondences submitted to the NSSC Workers’ Compensation Team and/or OWCP has this number clearly written on the upper right hand corner.

Out-of-Pocket Costs

Out-of-pocket costs are any work-related expenses directly paid by you for your claim.

Medicine Services:
- Submit Form OWCP-915, Claim for Medical Reimbursement, to request reimbursement for physician appointments, prescription medications, and other services paid directly by you. Itemized bills and proof of payment must accompany all reimbursement requests.

Transportation Expenses:
- You are entitled to file Form OWCP-957 for reimbursement of reasonable and necessary transportation expenses for authorized medical services and treatment. Generally 100 miles roundtrip from the worksite or residence is considered reasonable.

Additional Information

Any person who files a false report to obtain FECA benefits is subject to:

- Criminal prosecution including a fine up to $10,000.00, imprisonment for not more than 5 years, or both.
- Disciplinary action by NASA may be taken irrespective of any criminal prosecution.

If you have any questions concerning this document, please contact:
NSSC Customer Contact Center
1-877-677-2123 (1-877-NSSC123) or nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov