

**Forest Service Handbook
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 6109.12 – Employment and Benefits Handbook
Chapter 30 - Injury/Illness Compensation**

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34 - Effects of Federal Employees' Compensation Act Benefits on Other Employee Entitlements

Employees are entitled to additional benefits as a result of a job-related injury or disease/illness. However, there are certain limitations. Eligible employees must be informed of these benefits and limitations by the reporting unit Compensation Specialist.

34.1 - Salary Payments, Leave, and Civil Service Retirement

1. Salary Payments. Compensation payments cannot be made while the employee is receiving regular salary payments, except that scheduled award payments may be made concurrently (sec. 33.26).

2. Leave. (FSM 6163; FSH 6109.11, Chapter 20; FSH 6109.41, FPM 630).

a. Use of Leave. An employee who is using annual or sick leave to cover a period of disability is considered to be in pay status and therefore not eligible for compensation. However, an employee may retroactively substitute COP or compensation, as appropriate, for leave used. This provision, known as buy-back of leave, is described in section 33.25.

b. Earning Leave. An employee otherwise entitled to earn leave will continue to earn leave while on continuation of pay. Earning leave ends when an employee terminates or if retained on the rolls solely for COP.

c. While Receiving Disability Compensation. An employee must voluntarily go into LWOP status to receive compensation. After 80 hours in LWOP status in a leave year, an employee's leave credit is reduced in accordance with provisions in FSM 6163, FSH 6109.41, FPM 630, subchapter 2, section 2-3, item d; and FSH 6109.41, FPM 990-2, book 630, subchapter S2, section S2-3, item d.

d. Excused Absence. The employee should not be charged leave to receive medical treatment on the date of a traumatic injury. Keep the employee in full pay status on the date of a traumatic injury and start COP the following day if medical evidence indicates the employee is disabled. However, if the injury occurs on the work premises before the workday begins for the employee, the time spent receiving medical treatment is also charged to COP. An injured casual firefighter unable to work because of the injury shall be returned from the physician's office or other medical facilities to the point of hire.

e. Lump-Sum Leave. The granting of lump-sum leave upon the separation of an employee will not affect the right to receive disability compensation.

f. Restoration of Annual Leave. If the employee scheduled the use of annual leave in writing prior to the injury or disease/illness and due to the injury or disease/illness was unable to use it, a claim for annual leave restoration can be made. However, regular annual leave (leave not approved in advance and in writing) brought back

and recredited to a prior leave year in excess of the maximum accumulation (usually 240 hours) will immediately be forfeited at the beginning of the leave year following the year to which it is recredited. See 5 U.S.C. 6304 for more details.

34.2 - Service Credit and Retirement

The time an employee spent in disability status for a compensable injury is fully creditable for length of service.

1. Retirement. The personnel office at each level must counsel employees, or dependents, as appropriate, about benefits available under the Civil Service Retirement Act and the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. The employee or dependents may elect the benefits that are more advantageous. Election should be made by the employee, or dependents, as soon as possible, within the required time limit.

a. Eligibility. An employee eligible for Civil Service retirement remains eligible for retirement benefits while receiving disability compensation. Although eligible, the employee cannot receive both simultaneously except under certain limited circumstances (FSH 6109.41, FPM/DPMS 831-1, subchapter 7 and 33.26, item 2).

b. Deductions. Deductions for retirement are not made while the employee is receiving disability compensation.

c. Benefits. An employee who has been receiving medical care under the FECA will not lose those benefits because of retirement under the Civil Service Retirement Act (CSRA).

34.21 - Election of Retirement Annuity or Employee's Compensation

Employees who are disabled or injured in the line of duty may be eligible for both an annuity under the Civil Service Retirement Act and compensation under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). As a general rule, however, they may not receive an annuity and compensation for the same period of time. If eligible for dual compensation, they may elect the benefits that are most advantageous.

34.22 - Dual Benefits

As a general rule, a person may not concurrently receive compensation from OWCP and a retirement or survivor annuity under the Civil Service Retirement System, but may elect to receive the more advantageous benefits. However, a person receiving a schedule award for a permanent disability (5 U.S.C. 8107(c)) may receive both benefits for the duration of the scheduled award payments. An employee may receive compensation concurrently with military retirement pay, retainer pay, and so forth, for service in the armed forces or other uniformed services, subject to the reduction of such pay in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 5532(b).

1. If employees elect to receive FECA benefits, before separation they should also file a retirement application with the Office of Personnel Management. Annuity rights will be

suspended during the period FECA benefits are received, but only by filing a retirement application before separation can they protect the employee annuity rights under the Civil Service Retirement Act. For example:

- a. If disability compensation is reduced below the retirement annuity, the retiree can change election at any time to receive the retirement annuity.
- b. Election of a survivor-type annuity will provide continuity of survivorship protection under the Civil Service Retirement Act. In other words, if an employee died from causes other than the injury causing the disability for which compensated, and designated the spouse as a survivor annuitant, the spouse would be entitled to an annuity under the Civil Service Retirement Act.
- c. Annuity rights are protected should disability compensation be discontinued.

If employees do not apply for retirement, they will be eligible to obtain a refund of their lump-sum retirement credit. If employees apply for and receive a refund, they will lose all right to an annuity.

2. The general rule against receiving disability compensation and an annuity at the same time is subject to the following exceptions:

- a. An employee receiving an annuity may also draw a scheduled award payment from OWCP and be furnished medical services under the FECA.
- b. An employee receiving compensation benefits (as beneficiary of another) may also receive annuity under the Civil Service Retirement Act on the basis of personal service.
- c. The right of any person entitled to an annuity under the Civil Service Retirement Act is not affected by receipt of a lump-sum benefit under OWCP, unless the annuity is payable for the same disability for which compensation has been paid. In the latter case, the annuitant must refund to OWCP as much compensation as was paid for any period extending beyond the effective date of the annuity.
- d. A person eligible for both a retirement annuity and benefits under FECA and whose compensation is suspended because of receipt of a financial settlement from the third party directly responsible for the injury, may be paid annuity during the suspension period as the employee would not be receiving compensation at the same time. Both widow or widower and children of a deceased employee, if eligible for survivor annuity under both the Civil Service Retirement Act and the FECA, must also elect between the two payments. If compensation under FECA is elected, the employee's retirement deductions will be refunded.

34.23 - Insurances

1. Private Insurance. Benefits received from private insurance have no effect on the benefits a disabled employee would be entitled to under the FECA. The money received from such individual policies is not considered as earnings by the OWCP.

2. Federal Employees' Health Benefits Act (FEHBA). (FSH 6109.41, FPM/DPM 890).

a. Eligibility. An employee who is disabled by a job-related injury and is receiving compensation for such injury is eligible to continue coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Association (FEHBA). Deductions will be made for FEHBA by OWCP if the employee wishes to continue coverage. Furthermore, survivors of a deceased employee may be able to continue their coverage under FEHBA.

Enrollment will continue automatically for 365 days; if it appears that the job-related disability will exceed 6 months and the employee appears to be otherwise eligible for coverage, OWCP will request transfer of health insurance enrollment (FSH 6109.41, FPM 890-1, subchapter 17, sec. S17-3). If the disability is for 28 days or less, no charge will be made for the coverage. If the disability is for more than 28 days, the OWCP will begin making contributions and will withhold the employee's share from the employee's compensation. The documentation of information for OWCP is included on form CA-4, Claim for Compensation on Account of Injury or Occupational Disease, and form CA-7, Claim for Compensation on Account of Traumatic Injury.

When an employee who has been receiving monthly payments returns to work, use item 15 of Form CA-3, Report of Termination of Disability and/or Payment, to note that the employee had health benefits coverage and has returned to regular duty. The beginning and ending dates of the pay period in which the employee returns to duty should also be noted. This procedure will prevent duplicate withholding of employee enrollment costs.

b. Deductions. An employee enrolled in a health plan will continue to pay for the health benefits coverage.

c. Benefits. Coverage provided under the FEHBA is not available for injuries covered by the FECA. Therefore, an employee receiving medical treatment or compensation payments from the OWCP will not be eligible for payment of medical expenses for the same injury under the health benefits coverage. However, benefits under FEHBA for any other injury or disease/illness continue to be available to the employee and covered family. Requirements for continuing health insurance and other related information concerning benefits are included in FSH 6109.41, FPM 890-1, subchapter 17.

3. Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) and Optional Life Insurance. (FSH 6109.41, FPM-DPM 870).

a. Eligibility. An employee's regular life insurance coverage (not accidental death or dismemberment) is continued without cost for a period of up to 12 months of nonpay status unless the employee terminates or is terminated. The employee is eligible for continued regular life insurance coverage while receiving OWCP benefits, but after 12 months in nonpay status, certain special procedures are required. Each personnel office should counsel the injured employee, or dependents, about benefits available. Additional requirements apply to retaining optional life insurance. Documentation information for OWCP is included on form CA-4, Claim for Compensation on Account of Injury or Occupational Disease, and form CA-7, Claim for Compensation on Account of Traumatic Injury. Use the following codes in block 32 of form CA-7 to indicate the age of the injured employee enrolled in optional life insurance:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Code</u>
Under 35	971
35-39	972
40-44	973
45-49	974
50-54	975
55-59	976
60 or over	977

FSH 6109.41, FPM 870-1, subchapter S7, provides full details on Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance and Federal Employees' Optional Insurance.

b. Deductions. No deductions for FEGLI are made from an employee's compensation check. However, OWCP will deduct for optional life insurance coverage if the employee is eligible and wants to continue coverage.

c. Benefits. An employee or dependents may receive proceeds from either of these life insurance programs without jeopardizing the claim for disability compensation.

35 - Death Benefits and Reporting

35.1 - Death Benefits

When an employee dies as a result of an injury or disease/illness attributable to employment, the dependents are entitled to compensation paid monthly by OWCP. Death must be shown to be caused by a job-related injury or disease/illness or the job-related injury or disease/illness must be shown to be the proximate cause of death. If an employee receiving or who received FECA benefits relating to an injury or disease/illness, dies of natural causes not related to the compensable injury or disease/illness, most OWCP payments (an exception would be schedule awards) will be terminated and there will be no entitlement to FECA death benefits. See 5 USC 8109 and 8133 (a) and (4) for more details. Also see section 38, item 4 for circumstances under which the Forest Service may make payment.

35.2 - Report of Death

If an employee dies as a result of a job-related injury or disease/illness, the supervisor must immediately notify the reporting office of the death. The reporting office will notify, by telephone or telegraph, the appropriate OWCP district office and the personnel serving the unit. The initial report of death of an employee should state:

1. The full name of the deceased employee.
2. That the deceased was an employee of the Forest Service.
3. The name and location of the project upon which the employee was employed at the time of death.
4. A concise description of the circumstances of the accident or event believed to have caused death.
5. A brief summary, in chronological order, of the pertinent facts and medical evidence in the progress of the disability preceding death for cases in which any one of the following apply:
 - a. Death is attributed to a minor accident.
 - b. There is a prolonged interval between the injury and death.
 - c. Death is from traumatic injury or occupational disease/illness.
 - d. There is a question about whether the death was caused by a job-related injury or disease/illness.
6. The case file number, if established and known.

35.3 - Assisting Dependents

See section 32, exhibit 02, Federal Employee Compensation Act Basic Forms.

1. The supervisor shall prepare and submit:
 - a. Form CA-6, Official Supervisor's Report of Employee's Death. When form CA-6 is used to report death, neither Form CA-1, Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation nor Form CA-2, Federal Employee's Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation, is required.
 - b. A certified copy of the death certificate to the appropriate personnel office.
2. The reporting office shall review these forms and submit them immediately to the appropriate OWCP district office. The reporting office, with the assistance of the unit's personnel office, must also assist dependents in obtaining other benefits available by furnishing

Form CA-5, Claim for Compensation by Widow, Widower and/or Children, or Form CA-5b, Claim for Compensation by Parents, Brothers, Sisters, Grandparents, or Grandchildren.

3. The appropriate administrative official in the reporting office and the supervisor should help the dependents prepare and submit required information. Advise the dependents that the OWCP district office will require certified copies of all certificates, such as marriage, death, and childrens' birth, and that copies must bear the stamp of the person having official custody of such records, such as a county recorder or State registrar. A copy of the autopsy report, if there was one, should be submitted also.

35.4 - Transportation, Burial, and Termination of Employee's Status

1. Transportation of Employee's Body. The OWCP will pay for embalming and transporting, in a hermetically sealed casket, an employee's body to the home or last place of residence if the employee dies while in travel status. This benefit is in addition to the burial allowances. However, the dependents must present appropriately receipted bills and other required information.

2. Burial Expenses. The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs will pay reasonable funeral and burial expenses up to \$800 for such items as casket, burial lot, opening and closing of grave, and undertaker's services.

3. Termination of Deceased Employee Status as Employee. The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs will pay an additional \$200 to the personal representative of the decedent to cover expenses of terminating the decedent's status as a Federal employee. No receipts are required to substantiate the expenses and the amount paid is automatic. It is conditional only upon the claim being accepted as a job-related death.

36 - Third-Party Cases

Employees or their dependents have the right to keep at least one-fifth of the net amount of money or other property remaining after deducting the expenses of a suit or settlement. In addition, they may keep an amount equal to reasonable attorney fees proportionate to the refund to the Government. However, employees must participate with the Government in the recovery from a liable third party, since the employee may become liable for unrecovered amounts due the Government. Any surplus amount recovered by the injured employee or other dependent from a responsible third party shall be credited against future payment of benefits to which the injured employee or other dependent may be entitled under the FECA on account of the same injury or death.

Proper procedures must be followed in the event the injury to, or death of, the employee is caused by a third party.

1. Information to Employees. The reporting office, assisted by the personnel office, must inform employees of the proper handling and reporting of third-party cases. Such information must:

- a. Caution the employee against furnishing the third party or any other representative with any information or signed statements accepting money and granting releases, unless authorized by OWCP. Such actions could materially prejudice the claim for compensation.
- b. Caution the employee against signing documents authorizing review of medical and other reports in OWCP files until legal advice has been received from the Department of Labor, personal attorney, or a representative of the Office of the General Counsel.
- c. Caution the employee that any settlement must include present and future OWCP payments.

2. Office of Workers' Compensation Programs Requirements. When an injury or death occurs under circumstances creating a legal liability upon some persons, third party, other than the United States Government, OWCP may require the injured employee or dependents to:

- a. Prosecute an action for damages against the person(s) legally liable.
- b. Settle or compromise a suit for damages.
- c. Assign the injured employee's or dependents' right of action to the Federal Government.

Refusal to take such actions may deprive the employee or dependents of rights to any benefits provided by the FECA.

3. Procedures to Follow. To alert OWCP, the supervisor must note on form CA-1 or form CA-2, that a third party is involved and may have caused the injury suffered by the employee. If necessary, attach a statement of facts to the form CA-1 or form CA-2. The Counsel for Claims, Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of Labor, supervises third party claims over \$2,000. Third-party claims under \$2,000 are handled by the appropriate OWCP district office. When the OWCP district office is notified of a possible third-party claim, they will take the following actions:

- a. Notify either the employee or dependents of their rights and responsibilities and furnish them appropriate instructions.
- b. Recommend that the employee or dependents engage an attorney of their selection in some instances.
- c. Help in securing evidence, locating witnesses, and furnishing legal advice about problems arising in connection with subrogation under the FECA.

4. Settlement of Damages. The employee will refrain from making settlement until possible liability of a third party has been determined by the OWCP district office. The OWCP district office will direct the employee when to settle the case.

5. Forest Service Requirements. Personnel shall notify the appropriate Forest Service fiscal office of any accident involving a responsible third party. Submit copies of all reports and/or investigations to the responsible fiscal officer. The fiscal officer should participate in the accident investigation.

37 - Reporting Job Corps Enrollees' Injuries and Occupational Disease/ Illnesses

Job Corps enrollees are entitled to the benefits provided by the FECA, except that compensation for disability does not begin to accrue until the day after the date of termination of enrollment. Job Corps enrollees and Action Volunteers are not eligible for COP.

Procedures for handling injuries of Job Corp enrollees are very similar to those required for injury claims of regular employees. Detailed instructions are found in Job Corps Health Program Manual, JCH, part II, Technical Supplements F and K.

In addition to following those instructions, make and forward two additional copies of form CA-1, Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Compensation for Continuation of Pay/Compensation, and form CA-2, Federal Employee's Notice of Occupational Disease and Claim for Compensation, to the appropriate Job Corps Regional Office.

38 - Payments by Forest Service

In certain situations, the Forest Service can make payments for medical treatment, transportation, disability compensation or a combination. Such situations usually exist when the FECA does not apply. However, in some instances the Forest Service may make initial payment although OWCP will later make reimbursements. In those situations, the Forest Service will bill the OWCP for amounts paid.

1. Medical Attention Act of March 3, 1925. This Act authorizes medical assistance of two basic kinds described subsequently. Provisions apply only to injuries and diseases/illnesses which did not occur in the line of duty. They do not supersede or conflict with the FECA with respect to injuries sustained in the performance of duty. The benefits to the Forest Service, the financial status of the employee, and the Forest Service's moral responsibility for the employee's physical welfare should be given careful consideration when determining the extent of medical attention. Medical attention and hospitalization should be furnished only when failure by the Forest Service would either deprive the employee of needed treatment or cause the employee to become a public charge of local government agencies while away from the employee's place of residence.

Appropriate expenses include:

- a. Medical attention for Forest Service employees at isolated locations.
- b. Transportation of employees to hospitals or other places where medical assistance is available.

c. Removal of bodies of deceased employees to the nearest place where they can be prepared for shipment or for burial.

d. Hospitalization and other necessary medical care, subsistence, and lodging for transients without permanent residence, or other temporarily employed persons away from their places of residence. These services are limited to a period not to exceed 15 days during the disability.

2. Department of Agriculture Organic Act of September 21, 1944. This Act allows appropriated funds to be used to purchase medical supplies and services and other assistance necessary for immediate relief of employees engaged in any hazardous work for the Forest Service. This includes the employment, on a contract basis, of physicians and others to attend seriously ill or injured employees located in isolated locations (28 Comp. Gen. 226).

3. Granger-Thye Act of April 24, 1950. This act provides the following assistance to persons injured in their line of work:

a. Immediate Relief for Employees of Contractors and Permittees. The Forest Service is authorized to furnish medical care including; hospitalization, subsistence, and lodging for a period not to exceed 15 days to persons serving without Federal compensation and injured while assisting in the suppression of forest fires or other emergency work under the direction of the Forest Service pursuant to the terms of a contract, agreement, or permit. This authority should not be used when other arrangements can be made or if the injury is covered by the State or other compensation acts.

b. Immediate Financial Assistance to Temporary Employees Injured on Duty. To avoid hardship, a temporary employee injured while performing official work and not eligible for continuation of pay may be paid by the Forest Service for loss of time due to the injury at rates not in excess of those provided by the FECA. No compensation payments will be made until after a 3-day waiting period; the period of compensation may not exceed 15 days. If the employee has annual or sick leave credit and uses such leave, the disability compensation will not be paid for the first 3 calendar days following the expiration of such paid leave. Payment of disability compensation to temporary employees injured in official work should only be made if the injured employees are in need of immediate financial assistance to avoid hardship because of delay incidental to the settlement of the claim by OWCP. The appropriate personnel officer should notify the appropriate fiscal officer of the amounts paid under this authorization to be claimed as reimbursement from the OWCP by the Forest Service.

4. Preparation and Transportation of Remains, Dependents, and Effects. (5 U.S.C. 5742.) This law provides for compensation for the transportation of an employee's body while away from an official duty station either in the United States or overseas. It also provides for transportation of the remains of a member of an employee's immediate family when stationed outside the conterminous United States. Transportation for a deceased employee's dependents

and effects from duty stations outside the conterminous United States is also provided. However, this coverage does not apply when similar coverage would be provided by the FECA.

39 - Appendixes

39 - Appendix A

DENIAL OF CLAIMS AND APPEAL RIGHTS

The claimant is notified in writing by the OWCP district office of its decision on the claim. If benefits are denied, claimants are advised by the OWCP district office of defects in their claims and are allowed to correct such defects, before a final determination is made by OWCP. No appeal to the Employee's Compensation Appeals Board is possible until the OWCP district office has taken final action and has issued a compensation order rejecting the claim. OWCP will notify employees in writing of their appeal rights and responsibility when the compensation order is issued. See 5 U.S.C. 8124 for more details.

39 - Appendix B

**OFFICE OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROGRAMS DISTRICT OFFICE ADDRESSES
FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION ACT (FECA)**

District No. 1

Room 1800, John F. Kennedy Bldg.
Government Center
Boston, Massachusetts 02203
Tel. FTS 8-223-1815

District No. 2

1515 Broadway (at West 44th)
New York, New York 10036

Tel. FTS 8-265-3378

District No. 3

Gateway Building, Room 15100
3535 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104
Tel. FTS 8-596-1457

District No. 6

400 West Bay Street, Box 35049
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

Tel. FTS 8-946-3426

District No. 9

1240 East 9th Street Rm. 867
Cleveland, Ohio 44199

Tel. FTS 8-293-2049

District No. 10

230 South Dearborn St. 8th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604
Tel. FTS 8-353-5650

District No. 11

1910 Federal Office Building
911 Walnut Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
Tel. FTS 8-758-2723

District No. 12

Drawer 3558, Federal Building
1961 Stout Street
Denver, Colorado 80294
Tel. FTS 8-327-5402

District No. 13

450 Golden Gate Avenue
Box 563606
San Francisco, California 94102
Tel. FTS 8-556-6183

District No. 14

4010 Federal Office Building
909 First Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98174
Tel. FTS 8-399-5521

District No. 15

300 Ala Moana Boulevard
Room 5108, Box 50209
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815
Tel. Dial San Francisco FTS
Operator 8-556-0220 Request
Honolulu, No. 808-546-8336

District No. 16

525 Griffin St., Federal Bldg.
Griffin and Young Sts., Rm. 100
Dallas, Texas 75202
Tel. FTS 8-729-4712

District No. 25

Foom 405, 666-11th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20211
Tel. FTS 8-724-0713

District No. 50

711 14th Street, N.W.
P.O. Box 28608
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel. FTS 8-724-0051

39 - Appendix C

Table of Schedule Awards

Scheduled benefits are awards for permanent impairment of certain members or functions of the body including certain internal and external organs. The following table shows the number of weeks of compensation payable in the event an employee suffers the permanent loss of or loss of use of specified body members. Payments are made at the total weekly compensation rate and are in addition to any payments for periods of temporary disability.

<u>Anatomical Member</u>	<u>Weeks of Compensation</u>
Arm	312
Leg	288
Hand	244
Foot	205
Eye	160
Thumb	75
First Finger	46
Great Toe	38
Second Finger	30
Third Finger	25
Toe (other than great toe)	16
Fourth Finger	15
Complete loss of hearing (one ear)	52
Complete loss of hearing (both ears)	200

39 - Appendix C--Continued

<u>Anatomical Member</u>	<u>Weeks of Compensation</u>
Breast	52
Kidney	156
Larynx	160
Lung	156
Penis	205
Testicle	52
Tongue	160

Disfigurement--Proper and equitable compensation not to exceed \$3,500 as determined by the OWCP in addition to any other compensation payable under this schedule, is authorized for serious disfigurement of the face, head, or neck, if it is likely to handicap a person in securing or maintaining employment.

The degree of loss of vision or hearing under this schedule is determined without regard to correction.

If a loss of earning capacity persists after scheduled payments are completed, compensation may be continued for loss of earning capacity. (See Federal Employees' Compensation Act for more details; copies may be obtained from the Government Printing Office.)

39 - Appendix D

Privacy Act of 1974

In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579, 5 U.S.C. 552a), you are hereby notified that: (1) the Federal Employees' Compensation Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. 8101 et seq.), is administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs of the U.S. Department of Labor. In accordance with this responsibility, the office receives and maintains personal information on claimants and their immediate families; (2) the information will be used to determine eligibility for and the amount of benefits payable under the Act; (3) the information may be used by other agencies or persons in handling matters relating, directly or indirectly, to the subject matter of the claim, so long as such agencies or persons have received the consent of the individual claimant, or have complied with the provisions of 20 CFR 10; (4) furnishing all requested information will facilitate the claims adjudication process, and the effects of not providing all or part of the requested information may delay the process, or result in an unfavorable decision or a reduced level of benefits (disclosure of social security number is voluntary; the failure to disclose such number will not result in the denial of any right, benefit or privilege to which an individual may be entitled).