



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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GENERAL GOVERNMENT
DIVISION

B-210883

MARCH 7, 1983

The Honorable Lawton Chiles
United States Senate



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Dear Senator Chiles:

Subject: Review of Allegations by a Postal Service
Employee Regarding Claim for Injury
Compensation--General Mail Facility, Miami,
Florida (GAO/GGD-83-49)

On August 23, 1982, you asked us to review allegations made by Shirley Spratling concerning her compensation for a job-related injury at the Miami, Florida, General Mail Facility. We reviewed case files and talked with Postal Service Headquarters and Southern Region officials. We also held detailed discussions with officials at the Miami General Mail Facility who handled Ms. Spratling's injury claims, work assignments, and remuneration since her accident.

Information furnished by the Postal Service shows that Ms. Spratling was paid through a period of full incapacitation immediately following her injury and was provided supplemental benefits through a 45-day continuance of pay period. ^{1/} The matter of Ms. Spratling's entitlement to compensation is now being reviewed by the Department of Labor's workers' compensation office.

According to the injury compensation specialist in Miami, no action has been taken on the case recently because the Department of Labor has not received information it requested on September 9, 1982, from Ms. Spratling's personal physician. Follow-up requests for the information were made on two occasions by the Postal Service.

When the Department receives the information, it will decide what benefits Ms. Spratling is entitled to. We cannot, therefore, comment on the final outcome.

^{1/}Under workers' compensation, the employing agency automatically provides compensation for up to 45 days immediately following incapacitating work-related injuries. After 45 days, further benefits can only be paid directly by the Department of Labor.

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You should be aware, however, that the Service has asked the Department of Labor to recover most benefits already provided to Ms. Spratling during the 45-day period and deny additional benefits she is requesting through workers' compensation. The Service believes her inability to work was related, in part, to other factors, including an injury unrelated to work and a pregnancy.

Although we are not in a position to judge the medical merits of the case, we found no evidence that the Postal Service intentionally mishandled this matter. We did note that it took the Postal Service 2 months to process and forward one of Ms. Spratling's claims to the Department of Labor.

Information concerning Ms. Spratling's condition and the events surrounding the injury has been discussed in detail with your staff.

As agreed with your office, copies of this report are being provided to the Postmaster General and others on request. We would be pleased to meet with you or your staff should you desire additional information on this matter.

Sincerely yours,



William J. Anderson
Director