



# BRIEFLY...

## OWCP HAS TAKEN STEPS TO ADDRESS THE BACKLOG OF WAR HAZARDS CLAIMS

### Why We Did the Audit

Since the early 1940s, the U.S. government has ensured workers' compensation for contracted workers overseas who suffer injuries, disabilities, deaths, or detentions. War Hazards Compensation Act claims are funded through the Employees' Compensation Fund and congressional appropriations. In 2024, \$700 million in funding under special benefits was appropriated for War Hazards.

By mitigating financial risks associated with work in dangerous environments, War Hazards Compensation Act claims encourage companies to participate in government contracts, ensuring availability of essential services and support in conflict zones. Based on inquiries the OIG received regarding concerns about a backlog of claims, we conducted a performance audit to determine:

Has the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) ensured efficiency and thoroughness in processing War Hazards Compensation Act claims, addressed any backlog of unprocessed or unpaid claims, and implemented a secure process for collecting and safeguarding associated claims data?

To make this determination, we analyzed OWCP War Hazards Compensation Act claims data from January 2014 through October 2024, interviewed OWCP War Hazards Compensation Act claims officials and OWCP management, and reviewed related regulations and policy documents.

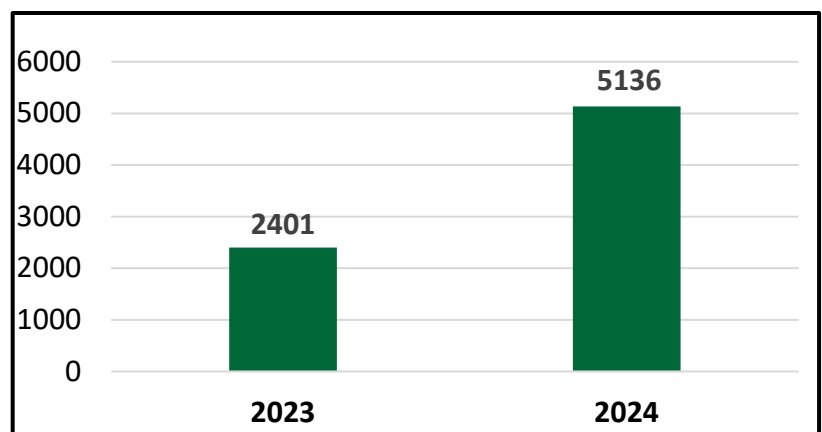
### What We Found

We found OWCP had a thorough method for processing and paying War Hazards Compensation Act claims, including a valid and secure approach to collecting and safeguarding associated claims data. Moreover, OWCP is implementing new processes to improve efficiency and security of case and claims submission by the insurance carriers.

In addition, we determined a backlog did exist; however, it did not result from any process failure but was instead due to an increased volume of claims that resulted from expanded eligibility. OWCP had taken steps to swiftly increase its output for processing and paying claims, including allocating additional staff, which has helped address the backlog.

OWCP is also developing and implementing additional strategies—such as sampling enhancements, draft decision documents, and consolidated claims—to improve War Hazards case management, streamline processing times and reduce the backlog, helping prevent future issues. OIG analysis determined OWCP's process and its planned improvements, including the continuation of additional staffing resources, will allow OWCP to continue to address the backlog. As of October 2024, OWCP has approved and paid more cases in 2024 so far than in all of 2023 (see Figure).

**Figure: Number of War Hazards Cases (Approved and Paid), 2023 and 2024\***



\*Numbers for 2024 are from January 1 through October 17.

Source: OWCP Weekly War Hazards Report, October 17, 2024

### Read the Full Report

For more information, go to:

<https://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2025/23-25-003-04-432.pdf>.