

# ASSESSMENT OF PERMANENT IMPAIRMENT

Information for workers



Returnto  
**WorkSA**



Government of  
South Australia



## **What is a permanent impairment assessment?**

A permanent impairment assessment determines the level of your permanent impairment resulting from your work injury.

## **Why would I have a permanent impairment assessment?**

You may be entitled to receive lump sum payments and/or have access to serious injury support and common law, based on the degree of your impairment.

## **How do I start the process for a permanent impairment assessment?**

Speak with your claims manager who can guide and support you. You don't need to have legal representation to undertake a permanent impairment assessment.

You can access free legal information and guidance from the Legal Services Commission by phoning 1300 366 424.

More information is on the ReturnToWorkSA website.



## **Who conducts a permanent impairment assessment?**

It is conducted by a medical specialist called an impairment assessor who is accredited by the Minister.

## **What is the role of the impairment assessor?**

They will ask you questions about your injury and undertake an examination to prepare a report in accordance with the *Impairment Assessment Guidelines*. The report will state if your injury has stabilised, has resulted in impairment and the degree of impairment attributable to your work injury.

## **Will the impairment assessor treat me?**

No, the impairment assessor can only provide an assessment for permanent impairment and cannot treat your injury or accept you as a patient.

## **Who chooses the impairment assessor?**

A list of impairment assessors who can assess your injury will be provided to you by your claims manager. You will be asked to select an impairment assessor from this list. Your claims manager will guide and support you through the impairment assessor selection process.

A full list of impairment assessors is available on ReturnToWorkSA's website.





## **Who makes the referral to the impairment assessor?**

ReturnToWorkSA, your claims agent or your self-insured employer.

## **Will I have to attend more than one appointment?**

If you have more than one injury this may mean more than one appointment for assessment with a different impairment assessor/s. Your claims manager will provide you guidance if this happens.

## **How long do I need to wait for an appointment?**

After we have consulted with you on the selection of the impairment assessor and the content of the assessment request letter, we will organise an appointment with the impairment assessor of your choice.



The impairment assessor should ideally see you within 6 weeks of the appointment request. Your claims manager can help you select another assessor if you so choose.

The earlier the assessment, the earlier a determination can be made about your entitlements.

## **What can I expect from the assessment?**

The assessment will be done in person with the impairment assessor who should tell you what is going to happen during the examination, allow time to make a fair and comprehensive assessment and be sensitive to your experience and needs.

Impairment assessors should introduce themselves, explain their field of expertise and the assessment process, use plain English to explain the purpose of the examination, their role and how the evaluation will proceed, describe the part/s of the body to be examined, why it is to be examined, what the examination entails and the extent to which undressing is required.

## **How do I prepare for the assessment?**

You should confirm the appointment with the referrer, assist with the provision of relevant and necessary information for the assessment, discuss any specific needs such as an interpreter, and wear comfortable and appropriate clothing to the assessment.

## **Can I bring a support person with me to the appointment?**

Yes, you can bring an adult support person. They should not answer questions or contribute to the assessment.

## **What happens if there are further tests required to complete my assessment?**

The need for further tests or investigations may be identified prior to or during your assessment. The further tests may delay progression to or finalising an assessment.

## **Do I get a copy of the assessment report?**

Yes. ReturnToWorkSA is required to review the report for compliance with the *Impairment Assessment Guidelines* and may communicate with the impairment assessor if clarification is required. We will seek your input into our clarification and include you in communication and any clarifications made to the report by the impairment assessor.

## **Where can I get more information?**

You should speak with your claims manager at either Gallagher Bassett or EML, speak with your self-insured employer or visit the ReturnToWorkSA website.

## **How do I provide feedback or make a complaint?**

To make a complaint or provide feedback about any aspect of your impairment assessment experience, the first step is to speak with the referrer, usually the claims agent.

If you still feel unsatisfied, you can follow the instructions on the ReturnToWorkSA website about making a complaint or call ReturnToWorkSA on 13 18 55.



## Visit us

400 King William Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

## Opening hours

8:30am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday

## Contact us

Phone 13 18 55  
Email [info@rtwsa.com](mailto:info@rtwsa.com)

## Mail us

GPO Box 2668  
Adelaide SA 5001 Australia DX660

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can call ReturnToWorkSA on **13 18 55** through the National Relay Service (NRS) [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au).

For languages other than English, call the Interpreting and Translating Centre on **1800 280 203** and ask for an interpreter to call ReturnToWorkSA on **13 18 55**.

For braille, audio or e-text of the information in this publication call **13 18 55**.

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