



Noise Induced Hearing Loss

Information for Audiologists and Audiometrists

This information has been provided to help you understand worker rights and responsibilities under the South Australian *Return to Work Act 2014* and the claims agent's considerations when deciding a worker's entitlements.

What are the steps for lodging a claim for compensation?

A worker should lodge their claim for compensation through their employer. Workers can also lodge a claim over the phone or via a hard copy claim form.

Information about how to lodge a claim can be found on the ReturnToWorkSA website.

A worker is not required to be legally represented to lodge a claim. The worker does have the right to be supported by another person or be legally represented should they choose.

How long does the claims agent have to decide a claim for compensation?

Claims agents must determine a claim for medical expenses and lump sum compensation as soon as reasonably practicable. The time taken to determine a claim will depend on the availability of information needed to make an evidence-based decision.

The claims agent will only communicate decisions relating to a claim for compensation to the worker, the employer and, where applicable, the worker's legal representative.

Who chooses the worker's provider for their hearing services?

The worker chooses who provides their hearing services. The worker can change their service provider at any time.

The choice of service provider, or a decision to change service provider will not invalidate the worker's claim or change their entitlement to claim for the necessary costs of medical expenses reasonably incurred.

What are necessary costs of medical expenses reasonably incurred?

The claims agent will decide whether the costs of hearing aid and other services are a necessary cost reasonably incurred.

The test of what is a necessary cost reasonably incurred is an objective one. The term "necessary" ordinarily means something that is essential or required. Reasonably incurred means whether the worker acted reasonably in incurring the expense and that the costs are proportionate to the need or benefit.

What is reasonable for one worker might not be reasonable for another.

Costs for hearing aids provided in addition to hearing aids supplied under the Hearing Services Australia Scheme or other scheme, are not generally considered necessary. Costs for replacing lost or accidentally damaged hearing aids may not be considered reasonable, depending on the circumstances.

Claims agents can provide the worker with information about replacing hearing aids relevant to the worker's specific circumstances.

Can a worker seek pre-approval of the necessary costs of hearing aids and services reasonably incurred?

A worker can apply for pre-approval of medical expenses that are necessary costs reasonably incurred.

The claims agent must decide within one month (from the date required information is received) an application for pre-approval of costs to be incurred by the worker (e.g. for hearing aids).

An application for pre-approval must:

- be supported by medical evidence provided by a medical practitioner; and include
 - the worker's full name, telephone number and address
 - the worker's date of birth
 - the claim number
 - the employer's name
 - the nature of the injury
 - the date that the injury was suffered
 - details of the service, appliance, medicine or other materials forming the basis of the application
 - details of the reason for making the application.

What information must be supplied following the fitting of a hearing aid?

The [Audiology fee schedule and policy](#) details the information required for the assessment and fitting of hearing aids. (Search 'Audiology Fee Schedule' on www.rtwsa.com)

What can the worker be charged for hearing aids and accessories?

The costs a worker can be charged for hearing aids, hearing services and accessories are detailed in the Audiology fee schedule and policy. The Audiology fee schedule and policy are published annually by ReturnToWorkSA.

The maximum gazetted fee of a hearing aid is \$2020 per aid.

A service provider cannot charge the worker more than the fee schedule. If the worker is charged more than the gazetted fee, the claims agent will reimburse the worker the full amount and recover the difference from the service provider.

Once supplied and paid for, hearing aids and any associated accessories become the property of the worker.

What do I do if my client's hearing aid is lost?

The worker bears some responsibility for the loss of hearing aids. Care should be taken with hearing aids to reduce the risk of loss.

If a worker's hearing aid is lost, have the worker complete the [Request for Repair or Replacement Hearing Aid](#) form which is available for download on the ReturnToWorkSA website. The worker must complete and sign the form. ReturnToWorkSA will contact the worker for further information and consider whether the costs of replacement is a necessary cost reasonably incurred.

What do I do if my client's hearing aid no longer meets their needs?

ReturnToWorkSA expects hearing aids to be adjustable to meet the needs of the worker over the device's expected life. If however the service provider believes the hearing aids are not meeting the needs of the worker, the worker must complete the Request for Repair or Replacement Hearing Aid form located on the ReturnToWorkSA website.

The claims agent will contact the worker to understand why the hearing aid is no longer meeting their needs and what issues are present with the hearing aid to warrant a replacement.

The claims agent may request a report and records from the provider to understand what has contributed to the need for repair or replacement device(s).

What do I do if my client's hearing aid is damaged or faulty?

The worker should complete the Request for Repair or Replacement Hearing Aid form which is located on the ReturnToWorkSA website. The claims agent will look to see if the devices are covered by a consumer warranty or insurance, and whether components of the hearing aids can be replaced or repaired.

The claims agent will contact the worker to understand how and when the hearing aid was damaged or became faulty.

The claims agent may request a report and records from the provider or manufacturer to understand what has contributed to the damage or fault. A quote for repair, or replacement will be obtained to determine whether the claimed costs are a necessary cost reasonably incurred.

The worker bears some responsibility for the care and maintaining the condition of hearing aids. Care should be taken with hearing aids to ensure they continue to work as intended.

How often can hearing aids be replaced under the Return to Work scheme?

The expected minimum suitability and operational life span for a hearing aid is 5+ years.

Where do I go if I require more information about audiology fees and service expectations?

More information is available on the ReturnToWorkSA website - www.rtwsa.com or scan the QR code



Where can a worker go to get information about the claims process their rights and obligations?

The claims agent can provide workers with their rights and obligations.

Workers can also get information through their union, the Workers Compensation Advocacy Service or the Legal Services Commission. Information for workers is also available on the ReturnToWorkSA website - www.rtwsa.com or scan the QR code.

