

INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Information for workers



Returnto
WorkSA



Government of
South Australia

What is an independent medical examination?

It is a medical examination that provides an independent opinion about your work injury and treatment to assist with decisions about supporting your recovery and return to work, as well as entitlement to compensation.

Who is an independent medical examiner?

They are medical specialists with qualifications relevant to your injury. They are not employed by ReturnToWorkSA, the claims agent or self-insured employer, but are engaged to provide a professional opinion. They cannot treat or offer to treat you.

Do they replace my treating doctor?

No, they do not replace your treating doctor. They review and provide an independent opinion about your injury.

Why would I have an independent medical examination?

ReturnToWorkSA, the claims agent or self-insured employer may seek:

- to obtain information not available from your treating doctor; or
- to provide an opinion about issues raised in discussion with your treatment team; or
- assist with determination of your claim; or
- in preparation for a future assessment of permanent impairment.

NB: An independent medical examination is not for the purposes of assessing permanent impairment entitlements.

Who pays for the independent medical examination?

ReturnToWorkSA, the claims agent or a self-insured employer will pay for the independent medical examination and any necessary costs, reasonably incurred, to attend the examination (e.g. travel).


Who makes the referral?

ReturnToWorkSA, the claims agent or a self-insured employer. They will select an appropriately qualified medical specialist with expertise in your work injury.

The referral process usually includes a report request from the referrer to the independent medical examiner containing information and questions necessary to better understand the extent of the injury or illness and how it impacts on your work. Those questions include things like:

- diagnosis
- relationship between an injury and employment
- past and present medical history as it relates to the work injury
- the cause of the injury or condition
- any associated conditions that may be affecting the current work injury
- how the injury impacts you in your capacity to work, and in your daily activities
- current treatment and its effectiveness.

NB: An injured worker can request their own independent medical examination, directly or through their legal/union representative. Information about requesting an independent medical examination can be obtained from the injured worker's claims manager or union/legal representative.



Can I have a telehealth examination?

The examination must be face-to-face with the independent medical examiner.

An exception may be made if you have a psychiatric injury and require an independent medical examination.

What am I required to do for the independent medical examination?

You are required to attend the independent medical examination. Refusal to participate or not attend may impact on your entitlement to compensation.

To prepare for the independent medical examination you should:

- confirm the appointment with the referrer and discuss any special needs such as an interpreter
- wear comfortable and appropriate clothing for the examination
- arrive 15 minutes before the appointment to allow time for check in
- bring photo identification.

What is an independent medical examination report?

Following an independent medical examination, the examiner will prepare a report.

The report, based on the information provided to the examiner and your examination, will be sent to the referrer.

What happens during an independent medical examination?

The examiner should introduce themselves, explain their field of expertise, and use plain English to explain the purpose of the examination, their role, and how the examination will proceed. They should 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.

The examiner should conduct the examination in a respectful and professional manner, making all efforts to preserve modesty and not exacerbate your work injury or cause any additional discomfort. You are not expected to undertake any activity during the examination that cannot be done safely.

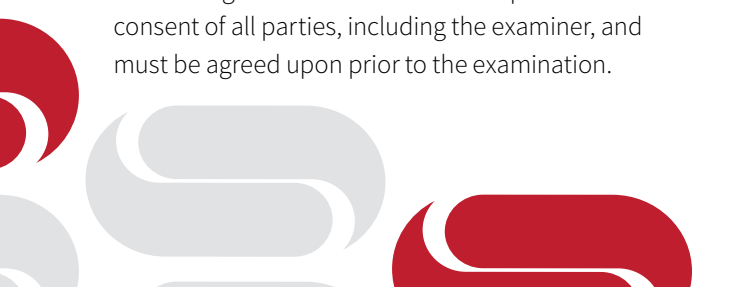
Can I bring a support person with me to the appointment?

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

You should advise the referrer that you intend to bring a support person so they can advise the examiner before the appointment.

Can I record the examination?

A recording of the assessment will require the consent of all parties, including the examiner, and must be agreed upon prior to the examination.



Will I get a copy of the independent medical examination report?

Yes, your claims manager will provide you a copy of the report within seven days. Your employer and treating doctor can also request a copy.

Where can I get more information?

You can speak with:

- your claims manager at either Gallagher Bassett or EML
- your self-insured employer
- your legal representative
- SA Unions Workers' Compensation Service on (08) 8279 2220
- the Legal Services Commission on 1300 366 424
- 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 independent medical examination experience, the first step is to speak with the referrer, usually the claims agent or your self-insured employer.

If you still feel unsatisfied, you can:

- make a complaint to ReturnToWorkSA by calling 13 18 55
- speak with SA Unions Workers' Compensation Service
- speak with your legal representative
- call the Ombudsman SA on (08) 7322 7020.



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

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**.

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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