

PERMANENT IMPAIRMENT ASSESSMENT

Information for workers



Returnto
WorkSA



Government of
South Australia

What is a permanent impairment assessment?

While most people who have a work injury make a full recovery and return to work, about 10% of people are left with some residual and permanent impact, otherwise known as permanent impairment.

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

Why would I have a permanent impairment assessment?

If you have a permanent impairment 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 SA Unions Workers Compensation Service on (08) 8279 2220, the Legal Services Commission on 1300 366 424, or by speaking to your union representative.

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 for Industrial Affairs and Public Sector.

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.





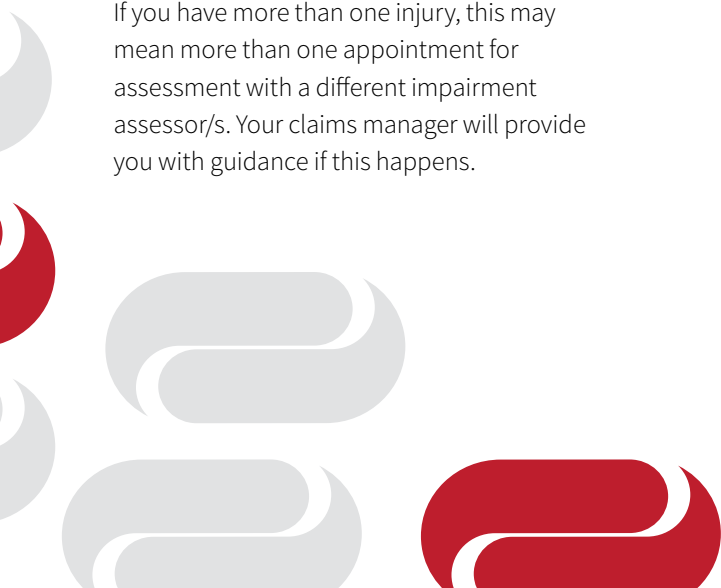
Who makes the referral to the impairment assessor?

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

You will have an opportunity to review the referral and provide feedback or additional information if you would like to.

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 with guidance if this happens.





How long do I need to wait for an appointment?

After your claims manager has consulted with you on the selection of the impairment assessor and the content of the assessment request letter, an appointment with the impairment assessor of your choice will be organised by the referrer.


The impairment assessor should ideally see you within six weeks of the appointment request. Your claims manager can help you select another assessor if you decide to.

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 will 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?

To prepare, 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
- wear comfortable and appropriate clothing to the assessment
- arrive 15 minutes before the appointment to allow time for check in
- bring photo identification.

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 impairment assessor before the appointment.

Can I record the assessment?

Recording of the assessment is only permitted with the consent of all parties, including the assessor, and must be agreed prior 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.

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. ReturnToWorkSA will seek your input into any clarification and include you in communication and any clarifications made to the report by the impairment assessor.

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 permanent impairment assessment 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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