



Australian Government

Comcare

Comcare News

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2009 incapacity payments increase

If you answer 'yes' to all three of the following questions, it is likely you will receive an increase to your incapacity payments:

1. Do you receive incapacity payments from Comcare?
2. Are you an ex-employee of the Commonwealth or ACT Government?
3. Are you under 65 years of age?

The Normal Weekly Earnings amount Comcare uses to calculate your incapacity payments has increased. The increase is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Price Index*, which this year is 4.2 per cent. This adjustment took effect on 1 July 2009. You will have noticed the increase in your payments on payday 9 July 2009.

2009 superannuation pension advice

ARIA (formerly ComSuper) usually increases the superannuation pension in June and December each year. Comcare has been advised by ARIA, however, that the superannuation pension was not increased in June this year.

If you have any questions about your actual superannuation payments and rates please contact your superannuation fund directly. ARIA's contact number is 1300 000 177.

2009 statutory rate increases

The statutory rates applicable to the payment of some Comcare benefits also increased from 1 July 2009.

The changes will only affect a small number of ex-employees who receive minimum benefit incapacity payments.

The adjustments were made on payday 9 July 2009, backdated to 1 July 2009.

If you have questions about the changes to statutory rates, please contact your Claims Services Officer at Comcare on 1300 366 979.

The Comcare 'Birthday Pack'

The Birthday Pack is designed so you have one annual review date – your Birthday. Comcare will prompt you for this information by sending you the Birthday Pack 6-8 weeks before to your Birthday. It will contain a medical certificate and other forms relevant to your treatment such as medication and fortnightly incapacity payments.

At present your treatment is approved at different times of the year. The Birthday Pack will make it easier for you, as you will only have to provide Comcare with this information once per year. On receipt of this information, Comcare will send an appropriate approval for a 12-month period. Comcare may approve for a shorter period where necessary.

If your doctor reviews your medical status more than once a year, Comcare will follow the recommendations received from your doctor at that time.

If you have received the Birthday Pack and have questions about how to proceed, please contact your Claims Services Officer.



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Employment

If you are receiving fortnightly incapacity payments and you commence any paid or unpaid (voluntary) employment or self-employment, please notify Comcare immediately in writing as this may affect your entitlements.

Failure to notify Comcare in these circumstances may result in a recoverable overpayment and may be regarded as a criminal offence.

Change in circumstances

If you receive incapacity payments from Comcare, you must advise Comcare in writing if you have received, or are about to commence receiving, a superannuation pension and/or lump sum from your superannuation fund—superannuation payments you receive may affect your incapacity payments.

If you do not advise Comcare of any superannuation payments, it may result in an overpayment which will be recovered from you at a later date.

Household help

A serious compensable injury or illness may make it difficult for you to cope with home duties. Comcare may reimburse certain costs to help you manage day-to-day activities. If you believe you may be entitled to household or gardening assistance because of your compensable condition, please contact Comcare for an application form.

Your treating doctor will be required to endorse the application. Comcare may also arrange for you to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist to establish what level of assistance you require. This will ensure that Comcare only pays for services that relate to your accepted compensable condition(s).

Sending in accounts and receipts to Comcare

If you are claiming medical expenses incurred as a result of your compensable condition, please send Comcare the accounts/receipts when you receive them. This will help ensure a prompt payment or reimbursement.

Do you need someone to talk to Comcare for you?

If you need a representative to communicate with Comcare for you, then you will need to give Comcare specific written approval for them to do so. The representative that you appoint could be a lawyer, union official, doctor, friend or family member. Comcare also requires your written approval to discuss your claim with your spouse/partner.

Written approval is required to ensure that your privacy is protected. Comcare is required under the *Privacy Act 1988* to protect any personal information it holds.

Contacting Comcare

Please call 1300 366 979 and ask to speak to your Claims Services Officer or write to Comcare at GPO Box 9905 Canberra 2601.