



Australian Government

Comcare

# First responders with PTSD

## Claiming workers compensation under the Comcare scheme

Changes to the [Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988](#) (the SRC Act) have simplified the workers compensation claims process for first responders diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) who are covered under the Comcare scheme.

Under the simplified process, if you are diagnosed with PTSD and are or were employed as a first responder before developing PTSD, that employment is presumed to have contributed significantly to the diagnosis. This is known as the 'PTSD presumption' and means that you do not need to prove that the PTSD has a work-related cause.

This fact sheet explains the criteria you must meet to be eligible for the PTSD presumption, and the information you will need to support your claim.

## Am I eligible for the PTSD presumption?

For the PTSD presumption to apply, all the following criteria must be met:

- ☐ You are or were employed by the **Commonwealth Government** or the **ACT Government** as one of the following:
  - > an Australian Federal Police (AFP) employee, AFP Commissioner or AFP Deputy Commissioner
  - > a firefighter
  - > an ambulance officer (including paramedics)
  - > an emergency services communications operator
  - > a member of an emergency service
  - > an Australian Border Force (ABF) employee or ABF Commissioner.
- ☐ You have been diagnosed with PTSD by a psychologist or a legally qualified medical practitioner (LQMP), such as your general practitioner or psychiatrist.
- ☐ The diagnosis was made in accordance with the diagnostic criteria for PTSD in the [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition text revision \(DSM-5-TR\)](#), published by the American Psychiatric Association in 2022.
- ☐ You were employed as a first responder at any time **before** your PTSD symptoms became apparent.
- ☐ Your PTSD was suffered or aggravated on or after **15 December 2023**.

If your symptoms started before you were employed as a first responder, or if the PTSD was suffered or aggravated before 15 December 2023, the PTSD presumption will not apply. However, you can still make a claim for workers compensation through the usual provisions of the SRC Act.

## How to claim

To make a claim, you will need to complete a claim form. There are different forms, depending on who your current employer is:

- > **Commonwealth government employees** complete the online [Comcare claim form](#) (or [printable PDF version](#)).
- > **ACT Government employees** complete the [EML claim form](#).

## Medical certificate

To support your claim, you will need a medical certificate from a LQMP. This can be your general practitioner or psychiatrist. If a psychologist diagnosed you with PTSD, you would still need a medical certificate from a LQMP to support your claim.

The medical certificate should include:

- > your employee details
- > medical health professional details
- > the date of the examination
- > the diagnosis of PTSD
- > the date on which the PTSD was suffered or aggravated
- > the cause or causes of the PTSD
- > and for the PTSD presumption to apply – a statement that shows that your PTSD diagnosis (whether made by a psychologist or by the LQMP providing the medical certificate) was reached in accordance with the DSM-5-TR diagnostic criteria.

You can use [Comcare's preferred medical certificate](#).

Providing this information helps your claims manager make a timely decision. If it is not provided, your claims manager may seek more information from you, your employer or treating health care professional. We will make every reasonable effort to get this information before considering whether an independent medical examination may be required.

## More information

For help to make a claim:

- > for **Commonwealth Government employees**, call Comcare on 1300 366 979 or email [scheme.policy\\_helpdesk@comcare.gov.au](mailto:scheme.policy_helpdesk@comcare.gov.au)
- > for **ACT Government employees**, call EML on (02) 8251 9000 or email [ACTG@eml.com.au](mailto:ACTG@eml.com.au)

Your employer may also help you to make a workers' compensation claim.

For detailed information about the PTSD presumption, see [Scheme guidance – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder suffered by certain employees | Comcare](#)