



Australian Government

Comcare

Health care professionals

Supporting first responders with PTSD to make a claim for 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 an employee is diagnosed with PTSD and is or was 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 eligible first responders do not need to prove that their PTSD had a work-related cause.

This fact sheet explains the criteria that first responders must meet to be eligible for the PTSD presumption, and the information that they may seek from you to support their claim.

Determine whether the PTSD presumption applies

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

First responder covered under the Comcare scheme

- ☐ The employee is or was 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.

PTSD diagnosis

- ☐ The employee has been diagnosed with PTSD by a psychologist or a legally qualified medical practitioner (LQMP), such as a 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.

Date of injury

- ☐ The employee was employed as a first responder at any time before PTSD symptoms became apparent.
- ☐ The PTSD was suffered or aggravated on or after **15 December 2023**.

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

Provide a medical certificate

To make a claim, the employee will need a medical certificate from a LQMP. If the diagnosis was made by a psychologist, the employee will still need to provide a certificate from a LQMP to accompany the claim.

The medical certificate should include:

- > employee details
- > medical health professional details
- > date of the examination
- > the diagnosis of PTSD
- > date on which the PTSD was suffered or aggravated
- > cause or causes of the PTSD
- > and for the PTSD presumption to apply – a statement that shows the PTSD diagnosis (whether made by a psychologist or by the LQMP that issues 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 claims managers make timely decisions. If it is not provided, the claims manager may seek more information from you. We will make every reasonable effort to get this information from you before considering whether an independent medical examination may be required.

More information

For more information on supporting a first responder make a claim for PTSD:

- > for **Commonwealth Government employees**, call Comcare on 1300 366 979 or email scheme.policy_helpdesk@comcare.gov.au
- > for **ACT Government employees**, call EML on 1800 365 227 or email ACTG@eml.com.au

For detailed information about the PTSD presumption, see

[Scheme guidance – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder suffered by certain employees | Comcare](#)

For more on supporting people with a work-related injury or illness, see [Resources for healthcare professionals | Comcare](#)